Twitter Thread by AfghanHindu

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#Hinduism in the #Afghan Frontier, a glorious history of resilience and heroism unparalleled in human history.

#Megathread #Hinduism #Afghanistan

Somewhere in the pages of history, a story of courage and bravery has remained unheard. Up in the high mountains of Afghanistan, a Hindu dynasty ruled for almost 200 years and watched over the ‘Khyber pass’ – the entry point to India. (2/n)

This family of brave kings fought the Islamic invasion from the west with all their might for over a hundred years. The banks of river Indus stands witness to their valiant defense of the motherland. Their story needs to be heard. Their sacrifice needs to be honored. (3/n)

This tale is recited not by a professional story teller, so there are bound to be inconsistencies, mistakes and neither is the author a Historian so above all, take it with a pinch of salt. (4/n)

Our main focus here are the #HinduShahis of Kabulistan, although I will add all I know of the dynasty which made #Sistan an 'ill omened frontier' for the Arab imperialists, the #Zubils of modern day #Helmand province.

Let's begin with a brief introduction. The Hindu Shahi dynasty came to being when a Brahmin (debated) who goes by the name of Lalliya in the Shri Rajtarangini and Kallar in Arab sources, usurped the throne of the Turk Shahi Kshatriyas who were buddhist.

Now why do I call them Kshatriya? Arabs and Tibetans attested the title 'Turk' on anyone who's ethnicity was unknown to them in this region. They were certainly Kshatriyas according to Xuanzang (AD 644) specifically designated the ruler of Kapisa as Kshatriya, and ...

Hsuen Tsang clearly describes the ruler of Kapisa/Kabul, whom he had personally met, as a devout Buddhist and a Kshatriya and not a Tu-kiue/Tu-kue (Turk). This proves but one thing, the population of the Afghan frontier was dominated by Hindus, for Varna (caste) is its essence.

This is because the cult of buddha was in complete ruin in Afghanistan due to the destruction brought upon by #Mihirkula, the scion of the Alchon Huns and a Shaiva Hindu by faith (adopted later). His forays into India were crushed by the mighty Guptas.

When Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang visited northwestern India in c. 630 CE, he reported that Buddhism had drastically declined, and that most of the monasteries were deserted and left in ruins. The Turk Shahis and by extension the Tang dynasty tried to undo this damage....

With royal patronage given to buddhist schools and monasteries, while this was happening, there was conversely a migration of Indian monks and artistic styles from India to Central Asia, as "Brahmanical revivalism" was pushing Indian Buddhist monks out of their country.

Now remember, a revivalism happens after decline. Which means Hinduism predates any other religion in Afghanistan ■■. Travelogues of Hsuan Tsang and Fa Hien attest to this and so do buddhist and zoroastrian accounts where these creeds were established by....

Overthrowing the already established Brahminical religion aka Hinduism. But history is certainly not a forte with Central Asians. Nevertheless, Hinduism's history in Central Asia is beyond the scope of this thread. But I will still try and give it a shot.

Greek Goddess, Aphrodite with a bindi or third eye (ca 100 A.D)
This gold cast figurine of Greek Goddess (of love, beauty & procreation) Aphrodite was excavated from Tillia tepe (literally "Golden Hill" or "Golden Mound") an archaeological site in the northern Afghanistan...

province of Jowzjan near Sheberghan, excavated in 1978 by a Soviet-Afghan team led by the Greek-Russian archaeologist Viktor Sarianidi, a year before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This proves irrevocably that places as far us Uzbekistan and Tajikistan were influenced by...

Hinduism. Or what could possibly be the reason for white skinned greecs to rule Afghanistan and commission their gods with Hindu influence unless they had to assimilate with a population that was considerably Hindu if not the majority?

Bholeshankar Baba and Weshparkar -
The mural is from one of the Panjakent's temples (in Tajikistan) depicts the god, Weshparkar, the Sogdian equivalent to Hindu deity Shiva. Both art and religion in Sogdiana were heavily influenced by contact with India.

The Sogdians of Central Asia were the master traders of the Silk Road from the fifth to eighth century A.D. Their wealth enabled Sogdians from the highest nobles to members of the middle class to commission lavish murals that adorned temples, palaces, and modest homes alike.

At the Sogdian city of Panjakent in modern-day Tajikistan, archaeologists have unearthed murals that depict deities, fables, and military campaigns of the day. The following images of murals from Panjakent are © The State Hermitage Museum (Saint Petersburg, Russia).

Painting of Bhole Baba ■■
Now preserved in The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Acc. No. V (B-2704) Russia. This painted wood panel; of Lord Shiva with Trishul was found in a room in a Panjikent house, VII/24, Panjikent (Tajikistan) ....

and is said to belong to 7/8th century Sogdian civilization.

"Although largely faded, the once–bright blue colors used to depict the body of the Hindu deity Shiva still dominate this image. Framed by a decorated arch supported by two half-columns.

The painting includes two worshipers dressed in Sogdian attire, located to the right and left of Lord Shiva's feet. Why am I writing all this, they are just a few Hindu influenced murals. Does that mean Afghans or Central Asians for that matter were Hindus?

Hindus have never conquered Central Asia, rather it's the complete opposite. Well think again, for the tale just begins.

Let me tell you an interesting tale of a Hindu King who happened to conquer Mazar-i-Sharif. In the 2000s, a Sanskrit inscription in Sharda script was discovered in Mazar-i-Sharif in North Afghanistan which was quickly transported to safety to the Taxila museum in Islamabad.

The inscription was a hitherto unknown Hindu Shahi king called Shahi Veka who, in this inscription, consecrates a temple for Shiva and consort Uma.

The inscription, with eleven lines written in "western Sarada" style of Sanskrit of 10th century AD, had several spelling mistakes.

"As the stone is slightly broken at the top left corner, the first letter `OM' is missing", he said.

According to the inscription, "the ruler Veka occupied by eight-fold forces, the earth, the markets and the forts.

It is during his reign that a temple of Siva in the embrace with Uma was built at Maityasya by Parimaha (great) Maitya for the benefit of himself and his son".

Dani said "the inscription gives the name of the king as Shahi Veka Raja and bestows on him the qualification of `Iryatumatu Ksanginanka'…. and (he) appears to be the same king who bears the name of Khingila or Khinkhila who should be accepted as a Shahi ruler".

Dani further said "he may be an ancestor of Veka deva. As his coins are found in Afghanistan and he is mentioned by the Arab ruler Yaqubi, he may be an immediate predecessor of Veka deva.

Both the evidences of inscription and coins suggest that Veka or Vaka should be accepted as an INDEPENDENT RULER of northern Afghanistan.

Thus we find another branch of the Shahi ruler in northern part of Afghanistan beyond the Hindukush.

Veka is said to have “conquered the earth, the markets and the forts by his eight-fold forces, suggesting that he must have himself gained success against the Arab rulers of southern Afghanistan”.

Dani observed that going by the findings it seemed that during the rule of the Hindu Shahi ruler Bhimapala there was a break in the dynasty – one branch, headed by Jayapala, ruled in Lamaghan and Punjab, and another branch, headed by Veka, ruled in northern part of Afghanistan.

“The northern branch must have come to an end by the conquest of Alptigin in the second half of tenth century AD”, he said.
A painted terracotta panel of Lord Shiva from Bactria, North Afghanistan (circa 6th century CE) with a trishula, four arms and three heads.

The Islamic Saffarid Conquest of Afghanistan (869-870 CE) led to the abrupt end of the production of Hindu art in the country.

To be clear, this is neither Hindu-Shahi territory or even timeframe.

It's earlier by 3-400 years and much more north of the Hindu Shahi domain (in Bactria). Interesting to see the production of Hindu Art in the erstwhile Buddhist dominated Afghanistan (but not surprising!) Quote taken from @IndianHistory0.

But it's Hindu art. It can simply means Hindus were 'imported' for this contribution. They were not natives. Afghans are an Iranic people and Hinduism was born in the Indian subcontinent, so how could they possibly follow it? Leaving aside this brain dead argument, ...

one can only wonder that the irony is mind baffling!
Let's see if any muslim source mentions Hindus living in the core Pushtun areas of Afghanistan.

We begin with the ■ud■d al-■■lam which was written in the 10th century by an anonymous author.

*GHAZNIN (spelt: Ghazaq), a town situated on the slope of a mountain (babar■k■h), extremely pleasant. It lies in Hind■st■n and formerly belonged to it, but now is among the Muslim lands (andar Isl■m-ast). It lies on the frontier between the Muslims and the infidels.

K■BUL, a borough possessing a solid fortress known for its strength. Its inhabitants are Muslims and Indians, and there are idol-temples in it. The royal power (mulk) of the raja of Qinnauj [?] is not complete (tam■m nagardadh) until he has made a pilgrimage to those idol-temples

and here too his royal standard is fastened (liv■-yi mulkash bandand).
PARV■N (spelt: Barv■n), a pleasant town and a resort of merchants. It is the Gate of Hind■st■n.

■AMÜR (), SINDAN, SÜB■RA (spelt: Siy■ra), KANBAYA, four towns on the coast, in which live Muslims and Hindus (Hinduv■n). In that locality (andar-n?) is a Friday-mosque (mazgit- i ■dh■na) and an idol-temple. The people of these towns have long hair (müy-i furu-hishta)

QANDAH■R, a large town in which there are numerous idols of gold and silver. It is a place of hermits and Brahmans (z■hid■n va brahman■n). It is a pleasant town to which appertains a special province (n■hiyat-i khassa).
K■NS.R, a small town with idol temples.

NÜNÜN, a town which is said to possess more than 300,000 idols.
B.KS■N, a populous village of which the inhabitants shave (bisuturand) their hair and beards. In it there are numerous idols of gold and copper (r■yin).

H.M■N■N, a place of Indian hermits. (The inhabitants) are Brahmans who say that they are of the prophet Abraham's tribe, God's blessings be on him.
This instance remind me of a thread by @saka_Lord where he pointed out interesting theories on Hindu origins of Pashtun tribes.

LAMGHAN, a town situated on the middle course [? cf. p. 58, 1. 4] of the river, on (its) bank (bar miy■na bar kar■n-i r■dh). It is the emporium (b■rg■h) of Hind■st■n and a residence of merchants and it possesses idol-temples.

DINAR (supra: Dunp■r), a town situated opposite (bar■bar) Lamghän on the bank of a river. It is the residence of merchants from all Khor■s■n. It has idol-temples. In both these towns reside Muslim merchants, and both are prosperous and pleasant.

VAYHIND, a large town. Its king Jaypäl is under the orders (of the raja) of Qinnauj. In it live a few Muslims, and the Hind■st■n merchandise, such as musk, precious things (gauhar), and precious stuffs, mostly come to this country.

*NINHAR, a place of which the king makes show of Islam (musalm■ni num■yadh), and has many wives, (namely) over thirty Muslim, Afgh■n, and Hindü (wives). This is often quoted.

The rest (va digar mardum) of the people are idolaters. In (Ninh■r) there are three large idols..

GARDIZ, a frontier town between Ghaznin and Hind■st■n, situated on the summit of a mound (tall) and possessing a strong fortress (hi■ar) with three walls. The inhabitants are Kh■rijites.

Al Biruni calls Afghans Hindus and Afghanistan as "Frontier India".

Abu Fazl calls the Si'ah Posh (literally: Black robbed) Kaffirs as Hindus.

As late as the mid-12th century, some Pashtuns had not yet converted to Islam.

According to the "Ajaib al-Makhluqat" of Muhammad al-Tusi (written in 1160-1167 AD), there was a large tree with circumference of seventeen arsh (?) in a Tamarisk forest of the Pashtun country.

particular tree was known as 'the tree of Brahman' (■■■■ ■■■■■) and Pashtuns would prostrate before it. Credits @Pashz7
My pashtun brethren went on and on trying to convince me how bowing before a tree named 'Brahman' was some sort of Iranic Paganism but surely not Hinduism!

Our Iranic Afghan brethren didn't just stop at worshipping Hindu Gods, they made statues of Hindu Brahmins as well. This is supposed to be very unlikely as people of Central Asia are highly egalitarian unlike the Casteist dark skinned Hindus. https://t.co/0aftmqOgJ5

> The whole of Afghanistan was famous for worship of Bhagwan Shri Surya Dev, nowadays called the Solar Cult (similar to the ancient city of Multan) to hide its Hindu origin. (1/n) https://t.co/2OAvLvouSU
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> — AfghanHindu (@HinduAfghan) April 5, 2021

Sculpted head of a Brahmin warrior of the area now known as Afghanistan, dating from the 3rd-4th century A.D.

The Hindu Shahiya dynasty is now extinct, and of the whole house, there is no longer the slightest remnant in existence. We must say that, in all their grandeur, they never slackened in the ardent desire of doing that which is good and right, that they were men of noble sentiment

and noble bearing. ~ Al Biruni.

In southern and eastern Afghanistan, the regions of Zamindawar (Zamin I Datbar or land of the justice giver, the classical Archosia) and Zabulistan or Zabul (Jabala, Kapisha, Kia pi shi) and Kabul, the Arabs were effectively opposed for more than

two centuries, from 643 to 870 AD, by the indigenous rulers the Zunbils and the related Kabul-Shahs of the dynasty which became known as the Buddhist-Shahi.

With Makran and Baluchistan and much of Sindh this area can be reckoned to belong to the cultural and political frontier zone between India (Hind) and Persia.

It is clear however that in the seventh to the ninth centuries the Zunbils and their kinsmen the Kabulshahs ruled over a predominantly Indian rather than a Persian realm. The Arab geographers, in effect commonly speak of that king of "Al Hind" ...(who) bore the title of Zunbil

Thus, says Dr André Wink that "the cult of Zun was primarily Hindu, not Buddhist or Zoroastrian." Which is very important to consider because the Zun Temple in present day Musa Qala, Helmand province was built on a Shaivite Temple on a mound.

I can and surely will add much more to it. But according to me it has been proven so far, Afghanistan was a Frontier Region OF India and shared the religion of Hinduism and later Buddhism with it.

Afghans won't accept this, but you somehow forgot that....

our scriptures have in depth called this region OURS. Afghanistan is derived from Sanskrit, most places still have Sanskrit derived names. I named Hindu kings (more to come) amd Temples (more to come) and quoted many Historians and Travellers who noticed the region.

Yours truely