



## IMPORTACNCE OF INSCRIPTIONS FROM SORO REGION OF BALSORE DISTRICT OF ODISHA

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Seven inscriptions have been discovered from Soro region of Balasore Districty of Odisha so far. Among them four inscriptions belong to 7<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Here is an analysis on those inscriptions.

### **Soro Plate of Sambhuyasa**

1. Donor ....Sambhuyasa
2. Title ....Maharaja & Bappadanudhyata
3. Place of issue .... Tamparaadama
4. Date ....Samvat 260,Kartika,di,30
5. Officer ....(1)Mahasandhivigrahi-Narayana  
(2)Tapita-Mahattara Vcidesasvamin
6. Topography ....(1)Uttra Toshal(Province)  
(2)Saraphahara Vishaya(District)  
(3) Ghantakarna Kshetra  
(4)Saraphasanga grama(village)
7. Donee ....Bharana Svamin of Bharadvaja gotra and Kandva-Sakha

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This copper plate was discovered along with three other copper plates while digging the foundation of a house of Karman Bibi, wife of Abdul Rasid of Badakhey P.S. of Soro in the District of Balasore. She presented them to the Orissa State Museum where they are now preserved.

These plates (four in numbers) have been edited by Sri N.G. Majumdar<sup>1</sup>.

This Plate (A) measures about 31/4" by 34/5"

Sri Majumdar gives the following gist of the grant<sup>2</sup>:

This plate records a grant of eight Timpiras of land by Maharaja Sambhuyasa of the Maudgala family in a village called Ghansame Vishaya, in Uttara-Tosali. It was issued from the royal camp at Tamparavadama to a Brahmin named Bharana Svami, belonging to the Bharadvaja gotra and the Kanva sakha (of the Yajurveda). The draft was made by the Mahasandhivigrahika Narayana and the plate was heated by the Mahttara Videsa Svamin. Is is dated in the year 206, the 30<sup>th</sup> day of Kartika. This date, in view of paleography, referable to the Kalachuri and becomes therefore equivalent to C.E. 508/9.

### **Soro Plate of Bhanudatta**

6. Donor ....Bhanudatta
7. Title ....Mahapratihara Maharaja
8. Place of issue .... Varanja
9. Date ....Samvat 5,Phalguna,di,10.7
10. Officer ....(1)Sandhivigrahika-Arunadatta  
(2)Pedapalaka-Pratishthita Chandra
6. Topography ....(1) Saraphahara Vishaya(District)  
(2)Va(hirva)ta (Village)
7. Donee ....(1)Mahamahattara- Priyamitra Svamin



(2)Vatamitra Swamin

(3)Dhruvamtira Svamin

(4)Arungamitra Svamin of Vatsa gotra and Vajasaneya Charana

This plate is one of the four plates discovered from the land of Karman Bibi of Soro as stated earlier. Along with the other three plates this was also edited by N.G.Majumdar and it is named as the plates 'D' by him. This plate measures 5 1/4" X 3 3/4". There is a seal at the centre on the top of the plates. The legends of it are not clear. Majumdar gives the following note on the text:<sup>3</sup>

This plate (D) was issued from a place called Viranja by the Mahapratihara, Maharaja Bhanadatta. This same Bahirvataka village which is mentioned in plate C as having been granted to Drukvasvamin and Arungesvamin, in here by granted once again. The donees this time are Priyamitravarmin. Vatramitrasvamin, all of them belong to the Vatsa gotra and Vajasaneya Charana. In this plate the village is stated as being within the Sarephara Vishay and not Varukana *Vishaya* as in plate C. The grant was written by the Sandhivigrahika Arupadatta and heated by Pedapalaa Pratishtitachandra. The date is the year 5, the 17<sup>th</sup> day of Phalgunas.6

#### **Soro Plate of Somadatta**

1. Donor ....Somadatta
2. Title ...Mahabaladhikrita and Mahasandhivigrahika
3. Place of issue .... Sanchataka
4. Date ....Samvat 15,Magha,di,20-4
5. Officer ....(1)Lekhaka-Subhasimha  
(2)Pedapala-Divakara  
(2)Engraver-Narayana
6. Topography ....(1)Varukana Vishaya(District)  
(2)Saraphahara (District)  
(3) Ghantakarna Kshetra  
(4)Vahirvataka(village)
7. Donee ....(1)Dhruvamtira Svamin  
(2)Arunga Svamin

This copper plate grant is one of the four plates discovered from Soro and edited by N.G.Majumdar. the circumstances under which the plates were discovered is given in note No.22 above. This plate is No.C of Mujumdar's paper. The plate measures 6.75" by 4.2".

Sri Majumdar gives his view on the grant as follows:<sup>4</sup>

This plate is another grant of the same Mahabaladhikrita, Antaranga, and Mahasandhivigrahika Somadatta. It was issued from a place called Sanchataka, the grant consisting of a village called Bahirvataka, situated in Varukana Vishaya in Sarephara. The donees are Dhruvamtirasvamin and Arungasvamin of the Vatsa gotra and the Vajasaneya charana (of the Yayurveda).The grant was written by Subhasimha and heated by the Pedapalaka Divakara, while it is engraved by Narayana. The date of grant is the regnal year 15, the 24<sup>th</sup> day of Magha.

#### **Soro Plate of Somadatta**

1. Donor ....Somadatta



2. Title ....Mahabaladhikrita,Antaranga and Mahasandhivigrahika
3. Place of issue .... Amrakshaka
4. Date ....Samvat 15,Vaisakha,di,10-3
5. Officer ....(1)Sandhivigrahika Kesavadatta-Lekhaka  
(2)Mahattara Suryadeva-Tapita  
(2)Engraver-Narayana
6. Topography ....(1)Uttara Tosali(Province)  
(2)Odra Vishaya(District)  
(3) Sarephahara Vishaya (District)  
(4)Adayara Grama(village)
7. Donee .....(1)Dhruvamisra Svamin  
(2)Arungamisra Svamin Et. Of Vatsa gotra and Vajasaneya  
(charana)

This copper plate is one of the four plates discovered from Soro and edited by N. G. Majumdar under the heading 'B'. this plate measure 7" by 5.2".

It is interesting to note here that Udra Visaya (District) was in Uttara Tosali. In some ancient literature, it is found that that Odra was a separate tribe. Even in Bharata's *Natyasastra*<sup>5</sup> we find the mention of Odhara or Odra.

This plate records the grant of a village called Adayara situated in the Sarephahara Visaya in Uttara Toshali which again formed a part of the Odra Visaya. The done are Druvamisra Svamin, Aranga Svamin and others of the Vatsasa gotra and the Vajasaneya charana (of the Yajurveda). The grant was issued by the Mahabaladhikrita, Anaranga and Mahasandhivigrahika Somadatta, from his camp at Amarakshaka. It was written by the Sandhivigrahika kesava and headed by the Mahattarakara Suryadeva. It is dated in the 15 regnal year, the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Vaisakha<sup>6</sup>.

### Analysis

The above inscriptions found from Soro area is of all India importance. Through these inscriptions, the struggle for mastery in northern India between Harsavardhan and Sasanka comes to lime light. Sasanka rapidly rose to power after achieving independence. The *Harsa-Charita* reveals that before he entered into conflict with Harsavardhana of Kanau in 606 C.E., he had established his suzerainty over an extensive territory of Eastern India comprising a number of vassal states, which has been described as Sasanka Mandala<sup>7</sup>. The *Arya-Manju-Sri-Mula-Kalpa* also covertly alludes to the greatness and personality of Sasanka. It describes Soma (Sasanka) as an unparalleled hero and will become king up to Banaras and beyond<sup>8</sup>. Again, while speaking about Rajyavardhan it mentions that he will be as powerful as Soma (Sasanka)<sup>9</sup>. This certainly suggests a status and power of Sasanka which an author prejudiced in favour of Rajyavardhan<sup>10</sup>.

The Midnapur charter<sup>11</sup> of Subhakirti reveals that Sasanka's suzerainty extended as far as Midnapur district, which was then known as Dandabhukti, by the 8<sup>th</sup> year of his reign. He appointed Subhakirti as the governor of Dandabhukti with the title of Mahapratihara. In the copper plate charter, Subhakirti claims that he rules over Dandabhukti while the illustrious Sasanka is protecting the earth, whose girdle is formed by the four oceans (*Sri Sasanka Mahimpati Catrujjaladhi Mekhala*).



About this time, Prthvimaharaja, the Durjaya king of Pistapura, had marched up to the river Vaitarani and donated the Paralakhemudi carter from Viranja (Viraja). During this time Sasanka was in possession of Kanauj after the murder of Rajyavardhan<sup>12</sup>. He gave up the trophy of victory and rushed towards the east to meet the Durjaya menace. The Durjaya king not only threatened the southern frontier of his empire but also posed danger of his country. It appears that Sasanka defeated Prthvimaharaja somewhere near Viranja and drove him to Pistapura. As a result this victory, Utkala, Kongoda and Kalinga came under the sphere of Sasanka's influence (the *Sasanka-mandala*).

The adventure of Prthimaharaja made Sasanka realize the necessity of strengthening the security measure in the southern quarter of his dominion. The Midnapur Charter<sup>13</sup> of Sasanka reveals that Utkala and Dandabhukti were jointly placed in charge of Somadatta (*Sahitam-Utakaladesena-Dandabhuktim-Prasasati*). He was called a Samanta Maharaja meaning a feudatory king. Evidently, it denoted a higher status than Mahapratihara held by the former governor Subhakriti. The charter records the gift of the village Kumbharapadraka in favour of a Brahmin named Bhattisara of Kasyapa gotra.

The Sailodbhava ruler of Kongoda, Madhavaraja II describes Sasanka as Maharajadhiraja in his Ganjam charter<sup>14</sup> dated in the Gupta Year 300 (C.E.620). He, like Somadatta, assumed the feudatory title (*Maharaja Mahasamanta*). It seems that Sasanka did not depose the ruling dynasties of the kingdoms which came under his sway but allowed them to continue when they acknowledged his overlordship.

There is no direct evidence of the occupation of Kalinga by Sasanka. There are however, reasons to believe that his political sway extended over that territory in the aforesaid Ganjam charter (C.E.620) where Madhavaraja has described Sasanka as his powerful overlord. But in his undated Khurda charter<sup>15</sup> as well as in the Purusottampura charter (Samvat 13)<sup>16</sup> he does not refer to any overlord and describes himself as a sovereign ruler performing Asvamedha sacrifice. The Khurda charter may be chronologically placed between the Ganjam and the Prushotampuru Charter i.e. sometime after A.D.620 and before Circa 625A.D. and his independence may be ascribed to the death of Sasanka.

In the history of the Eastern Gangas of Kalinga, we find a gap of thirty years from A.D.595 to A.D.626. During this period, the Eastern Gangas seem to have suffered temporary setback in their career because of the invasion made first by the Durjaya king, Prthvimaharaja and then by Sri Sasanka.

Thus, we find that by A.D.620 the whole of coastal Odisha was under the suzerainty of Sasanka. But the political condition was found to have been changed suddenly sometime after 620 A.D. as indicated by the Khurda and the Purushottampura charters of the Sailodbhava king Madhavavarman and corroborated by the two Soro charters of Somadatta<sup>17</sup>.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Epigraphia Indica* (Hereinafter referred to as *EI*), Vol.XXIII, pp.197-203.
2. *Ibid.*, p.203, Also see S.N.Rajguru(ed), *Inscription of Orissa*, Vol.I, pt-ii, Bhubaneswar,1958,op.cit., pp.118-119.
3. *EI.*, *Ibid.*, pp.203-204., S.N. Rajguru, *Ibid.*, p.132.
4. *EI.*, *Ibid.*, pp.202-203., S.N. Rajguru, *Ibid.*, p.137.
5. *Natyasastra*, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Vol. LXVIII, Pt.II, 1984, p.209.



6. *EI.*, *Ibid.*, p.202., S.N. Rajguru, *Ibid.*, p.140.
7. *Prakatakalankamudayamanam visankata visanotikir pankasankara sankarsakura sakkarasoka kudakuta sankamaka satakase sasankamandalam*. The rise of the blotted moon certainly refers to Sasanka and the moon, the bulla and Siva used in connection with him in the *Harsacharita* are also represented in his coins
8. *Imperial History of India*, p. 49.
9. *Ibid.*, p.50.
10. B.P. Sinha, *Decline of the kingdom of Magadha*. Patna, 1954, p.64.
11. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Hereinafter referred to as *JASB*), Calcutta, Vol. XI, 1945, No.1, p.9.
12. E.B. Cowel & F.W. Thomas (ed.) *Harsacharita*, London, 1987, p.9.
13. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XI, 1945, No.1, pp.7-8.
14. *EI*, VI, pp.143-146ff.
15. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. LXXII, 1904, Pt. I, pp.282-286 ff.
16. *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, No.3 and 4, pp.20-22 ff.
17. *EI*, Vol. XXIII, p. 202 ff.