

*Aum Namah Śivāya*

Early Śaiva Sects in Dakṣiṇa Kosala



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1285092

August 2008

Aum Namah Śivāya : Early Śaiva  
Sects in Dakṣiṇa Kosala / Natasja  
BOSMA – 2008  
Godsdienstwetenschap

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents —	1
Introduction —	2
Chapter 1: Dynasties of Dakṣiṇa Kosala —	5
Chapter 2: Epigraphical Traces of Early Śaivism —	17
Chapter 3: Archaeological Traces of Early Śaivism —	30
Chapter 4: Early Śaiva Sects in Dakṣiṇa Kosala —	42
Appendices —	50
List of Maps —	72
List of Figures —	72
List of Plates —	73
Bibliography —	75
Plates	



## Introduction

Dakṣiṇa Kosala is the ancient name for the region comprising the modern province Chhattisgarh and the districts Sambalpur, Balangir and Kalahandi of Orissa.<sup>1</sup> The region north of Dakṣiṇa Kosala was called Mekalā. Both 'countries' were close connected to each other, and at one point Dakṣiṇa Kosala and Mekalā merged together to become Mahā-Kosala. Scholars often cite Sir Alexander Cunningham's description of the region:

... the whole of the upper valley of the Mahanadi and its tributaries from the source of the Narbada at Amarakantak, in the north, to the source of Mahanadi itself near Kanker, on the south, and from the valley of the Wen-Ganga, on the west to the Hasdo and Jonk rivers on the east.<sup>2</sup>

The Mahānadī is the main river in Dakṣiṇa Kosala and one of the largest rivers in India. It rises in the southern part of Dakṣiṇa Kosala and flows through Orissa, to enter the Bay of Bengal. The *Mahādevī Māhātmya* compares the holiness of the Mahānadī river with that of the famous river Gaṅgā flowing in the north of India:

*mahānadyāṃ naraḥ snātvā dṛṣtvā vai pārvatīharam |  
sarvapāpaviniryukto gaṅgāsnānaphalaṃ labhet ||*

The man who has taken a bath in the Mahānadī, having seen Hara and Pārvatī, he is freed from all sins and shall obtain the fruit of bathing in the Gaṅgā.<sup>3</sup>

According to Stadtner, Dakṣiṇa Kosala was considered a 'backward area' in ancient India, but Nigam writes that it was at the crossroads of two great routs: from the Bay of Bengal [east] to the Arabian Sea [west], and from the Gangetic valley [north] to Orissa, Andhra and beyond [south].<sup>4</sup> A passage in

<sup>1</sup>See: Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup>Dilip Kumar Ganguly, *Historical Geography and Dynastic History of Orissa. Up to the Rise of the Imperial Gaṅgas* [Calcutta 1975] 77.

<sup>3</sup>Ibidem 92.

<sup>4</sup>Donald M. Stadtner, 'Vidarbha and Kosala', in: *The Vākātaka Heritage. Indian Culture at the Crossroads* [Groningen 2004] 157-165, 157 & L. S. Nigam [ed.], *Riddle of Indian Iconography. Zetetic on Rare Icon from Tālā* [Delhi 2000] 6.

the *Āraṇyaka* part of the *Mahābhārata* also implies that Dakṣiṇa Kosala was situated along one of the main roads to southern India. In this passage king Nala shows his wife Damayantī the two main roads leading to the South:

*ete gacchanti bahavaḥ panthāno dakṣiṇāpatham |  
avantīm ṛkṣavantam ca samatikramya parvatam || 20 ||*

*eṣa vindhyo mahāśailaḥ payoṣṇī ca samudrayā |  
āśramās ca maharṣiṇām amī puṣpaphalānvitāḥ || 21 ||*

*eṣa panthā vidarbhānām ayaṃ gacchati kosalān |  
ataḥ paraṃ ca deśo 'yaṃ dakṣiṇe dakṣiṇāpathaḥ || 22 ||*

Here, many roads go to *dakṣiṇāpatha*, passing by Avantī and the mountain Ṛkṣavat. [20]

This here is the great Vindhya mountain and the Payoṣṇī flowing to the sea, and there are the hermitages of the great ṛṣi's with flowers and fruits. [21]

This here is the road to Vidarbha and this one goes to Kosala, and beyond that is this country in the south, *dakṣiṇāpatha*. [22]<sup>5</sup>

The name 'Southern' [*dakṣiṇa*] Kosala implies that there is also a region called Northern Kosala. The traditional account of the origin of Dakṣiṇa Kosala is recorded in an unpublished manuscript, the *Kośala-khaṇḍa*. The story goes that a mighty king named Kośala ruled a country south of the Vindhyas. The capital of this country was Nāgapaṭan. After the reign of king Kośala, the country was named after him. A few generations later, king Bhānumant ruled Kośala. The daughter of Bhānumant was married with Daśaratha, the king of Ayodhya. When Bhānumant died, his son-in-law Daśaratha inherited the kingdom. Eversince, Kośala came to be known as Dakṣiṇa Kośala and Ayodhya as Uttara [northern] Kośala.<sup>6</sup>

The aim of this study is to examine the history of Dakṣiṇa Kosala, in particular the development of early Śaiva sects in this region. During the first

<sup>5</sup>*Mahābhārata* [3.58.20–22].

<sup>6</sup>J. P. Sing Deo, 'The Traditional Account of the Origin of Dakṣiṇa Kośala', in: D. C. Sircar [ed.] *Journal of Ancient Indian History* [Calcutta 1968] 119–120.

centuries AD, early forms of Śaivism developed and spread over India.<sup>7</sup> It is known that Śaivism reached Dakṣiṇa Kosala in the period of the fifth to seventh century AD, therefore the central question that wanders as a red line through this thesis is:

What are the 'roads' along which early forms of Śaivism 'travelled', to arrive at Dakṣiṇa Kosala?

It will take years of research to answer this question, therefore my main goal here is to analyse the material that is available at this moment for a preliminary answer and to identify subjects for further research. The used method of approach consists of reading inscriptions, excavation reports and other literature on the archaeological remains of Dakṣiṇa Kosala. Additional information comes from a three-day visit to Raipur in december 2006.

The first chapter is an overview of the political history of Dakṣiṇa Kosala. It is concerned with the dynasties known to have ruled the country during the period of the fifth to seventh century AD. Inscriptions and excavations are rich sources of informations, therefore Chapters 2 and 3 deal with traces of early Śaivism in respectively the epigraphical records and archaeological remains of 'fifth to seventh century Dakṣiṇa Kosala'. All preceding chapters become integrated in Chapter 4. What is known of the [mythical] origin of the Śaiva sects in Dakṣiṇa Kosala will be discussed in this concluding chapter, and also interesting views for further research are suggested.

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<sup>7</sup>The most common names of early forms of Śaivism are Pāśupata, Kāpālika, Kālamukha and Śaiva Siddhānta. There are also several alternate names, for example Soma or Saumya instead of Kāpālika. See: David N. Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas. Two Lost Śaivite Sects* [New Delhi 1972] 1–12.

## Chapter 1: Dynasties of Dakṣiṇa Kosala

From the fifth century onward, several dynasties have ruled Dakṣiṇa Kosala. It is useful to have information about these dynasties, because their epigraphical records are an important source of information for the reconstruction of history. Based on the genealogies given in these inscriptions, it is possible to create a more or less coherent picture of the dynastic history of Dakṣiṇa Kosala.<sup>8</sup>

### THE ŚŪRAS

The Śūra dynasty is known from one inscription only: the *Āraṅg Copper-Plate of Bhīmasena II*. This copper-plate grant was issued from the Suvarṇanadī, which is probably an old name for the river Son in the north of Mekalā. Six generations of kings are listed in the genealogy of the inscription, beginning with a certain Śūra and ending with Bhīmasena II. The dynasty is named after this Śūra, because Bhīmasena makes no mention of a dynasty-name in his charter. He describes his family as having fame and dignity 'equal to [that of] all the venerable royal ṛṣi's'.<sup>9</sup> According to Hira Lal this phrase refers to the Imperial Guptas, indicating that the Śūras were vassal kings of the Guptas.<sup>10</sup> This interpretation is consolidated because the grant is dated in Gupta era.

The *Āraṅg Copper-Plate of Bhīmasena II* is the only inscription found in the area of Dakṣiṇa Kosala that is dated in years instead of regnal year. Unfortunately, not a single reference is made to members of other dynasties. There is also disagreement about the reading of the year. Hira Lal edited the record and reads the Gupta era as 282, which means 601 CE. Mirashi disagrees with him and revised the reading of the date to 182 GE [501 CE].<sup>11</sup> This would mean that the Śūra kings paid tribute to the Guptas in a period in which the influence of the Guptas was waning.

Bhīmasena's charter is authorized and protected by a seal. The upper part of the seal depicts in relief the figure of a seated lion, the family emblem

<sup>8</sup>See also: Appendix B, Figures 1.1 a & b.

<sup>9</sup>*sarvasadrājaraṣīkulaprabhāvakārtēh*.

<sup>10</sup>R. B. Hira Lal, 'No. 53—Arang Copper-Plate of Bhīmasena II. Gupta-Samvat 282', in: *Epigraphia Indica* IX, 342-346.

<sup>11</sup>V. V. Mirashi, *Epigraphia Indica* XXVI, 227.

of the Śūras. Beneath the lion is inscribed a legend that gives the name of the king who issued the grant: 'belonging to the illustrious king Bhīmasena'.<sup>12</sup> His charter is the first and last thing noticed about the Śūra Dynasty.

### THE ŚARABHAPURĪYAS

A total of seventeen copper-plate grants have been found, that were issued by kings belonging to the Śarabhapurīya Dynasty. In spite of the many inscriptions, we are still in the dark about the real name of this dynasty. Most of the grants are issued from a city named Śarabhapura, probably the capital of the Śarabhapurīyas. It is unclear what the location of this capital was, but it was apparently named after the first known member of the dynasty: Śarabha. There are no inscriptions of Śarabha, but he is mentioned in the charters of his son and successor *mahārāja* Narendra.

Narendra ruled for at least twenty-four years, because his *Kurud Plates* are dated in his twenty-fourth regnal year. The seals that are attached to Narendra's charters, state that he is someone who 'conquered the world with his sword':

*khadgadhārājītabhuvah śarabhāt prāptajanmanah |  
nṛpater śrīnarendrasya śāsanaṃ ripuśāsinaḥ ||*

The charter belongs to the illustrious king Narendra, son of Śarabha, who has conquered the earth with the blade of his sword & who chastises his enemies.

It also appears from his inscriptions, that Narendra was a devotee of Viṣṇu: he is referred to as a '*paramavaiṣṇava*'.<sup>13</sup> It is suggested by Sircar that Śarabha and Narendra were subordinate allies of a Gupta overlord. The *Kurud Plates of Narendra* record the donation of the village Keśavaka. The same village was granted before by the '*Paramabhaṭṭāraka-pāda*' while he was taking a bath in the river Gaṅgā, by means of a charter written on palm leaves.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *śrīmahārājabhīmasenasya*.

<sup>13</sup> Ajay Mitra Shastri, *Inscriptions of the Śarabhapurīyas, Pāṇḍuvaiśins and Somavaiśins* Part II [New Delhi 1995] 5–13.

<sup>14</sup> *tālapatraśāsana*. According to Shastri a charter written on such palm leaves is very rare. See: Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 10.

A fire in the house of the donee destroyed this original grant, therefore Narendra regranted the village to the son of the original donee for the religious merit of the *Paramabhaṭṭāraka-pāda*. Sircar points out that Pāṭaliputra, one of the headquarters of the Imperial Guptas, was near the Gaṅgā. Also 'paramabhaṭṭāraka' was an imperial title used and popularized by the Guptas.<sup>15</sup> According to Bakker, the *Paramabhaṭṭāraka* might have been Gupta king Kumāragupta I [415–454].<sup>16</sup> The same conclusion can be reached by looking at coins found in the area of Dakṣiṇa Kosala.

Three types of coins have been found that resemble each other in every aspect, except for the legend. The coins are manufactured by using repoussé technique.<sup>17</sup> The obverse side of the coins is encircled with dots and is divided into two halves by means of a horizontal line. The upper half shows in the centre the figure of Garuḍa with his wings spread out, standing on the horizontal line. Garuḍa is flanked by a crescent moon and a discus [*cakra*] to his right, and the sun and a conch-shell [*śaṅkha*] to his left. Below the horizontal line are a legend and a cluster of dots or an additional letter [*śa, da, ra, ta*]. The legends of the three types of coins are: Śrī Mahendrāditya, Śrī Kramāditya and Śrī Prasannamātra [Plate 1.1]. Garuḍa was the emblem of the Imperial Guptas. The coins with the legend 'Śrī Mahendrāditya' are ascribed to Gupta king Kumāragupta I, because his *biruda* was Mahendrāditya. The *biruda* of Kumāra's son Skandagupta [455–467] was Kramāditya, and therefore the coins with the legend 'Śrī Kramāditya' are ascribed to him.<sup>18</sup>

Prasannamātra is the first known successor of Narendra. His name is

<sup>15</sup>D. C. Sircar, 'No. 36—Note on Kurud Plates of Narendra, Year 24', in: *Epigraphia Indica XXXI*, 267–268.

<sup>16</sup>Hans T. Bakker, 'Observations on the History of Dakṣiṇa Kosala', in: Nalini Balbir & Joachim K. Bautze [eds.] *Festschrift Klaus Bruhn zur Vollendung des 65. Lebensjahres dargebracht von Schülern, Freunden und Kollegen* [Reinbek 1994] 1–66, 9.

<sup>17</sup>'Repoussé is a technique of working in metals. The dictionary meaning of the word repoussé is "shaped or ornamented with patterns in relief made by hammering or pressing on the reverse side". These coins are made with patterns in relief on one side only while on the other side they bear the negative impression of the same pattern as intaglio.' See: T. P. Verma, 'Note on Repoussé Coins', in: *Purātan* 9 [1994] 45–49, 46.

<sup>18</sup>See also: V. P. Rode, 'Khairtal Hoard of the Coins of Mahendrāditya', in: *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India* X [1948] 137–142; V. V. Mirashi, 'A Note on the Khairtal Hoard of the Coins of Mahendrāditya', in: *JNSI* XI [1949] 108–110; V. P. Rode, 'Gold Coins of Prasannamātra', in: *JNSI* XII [1950] 8–10; B. Jain & M. A. Shastri, 'Some new Repousse Gold Coins from Chanda District', in: *JNSI* XVI [1954] 213–218; Nisar Ahmad, 'The Attribution of the Repoussé Gold Coins of Mahendrāditya and Kramāditya: A Review', in: *Purātan* 9 [1994] 50–55.



mentioned in the copper-plate grants of his son Jayarāja, but there are no inscriptions of Prasannamātra himself. It is possible that he was Narendra's son, but so far there is no certainty about their relation. According to Bakker, Gupta power was on the wane when Narendra was the king of Śarabhapura. The Vākāṭaka kings Hariṣena [460–478] and Narendrasena [461–475] may have taken temporarily advantage of this, since both kings claim to have suzerainty over Kosala and Mekalā.<sup>19</sup> Prasannamātra probably became an independent ruler during this period: he started issuing coins in his own name, imitating the coins issued by the former Gupta overlords.<sup>20</sup>

Jayarāja was the son and successor of Prasannamātra. He was the first Śarabhapuriya king who placed 'mahat' in front of his name: Mahā-Jayarāja. Jayarāja ruled for at least nine years, because his *Malhār Plates* are dated in his ninth regnal year.<sup>21</sup> He probably had no son of his own, because he was succeeded by his brother. The name of this brother caused some discussion among scholars. So far, he is only known from the inscriptions of his two sons: Mahā-Sudevarāja and Mahā-Pravararāja. The legend on the seal attached to the *Nahna Plates of Sudevarāja*, dated in the second year of his reign, describes Sudevarāja as a son of Mānamātra and a grandson of Prasanna:

*prasannārṇavasambhūtamānamātrendujanmanaḥ |*  
*śrīmatsudevarājasya sthiraṃ jagati śāsanam ||*

The charter of the illustrious Sudevarāja – whose birth was from the moon that was Mānamātra, who was born to the sea that was Prasanna – is permanent in the world.

The same legend is found on the seal of Sudeva's *Āraṅg Plates*, dated in his seventh regnal year. However, the *Dhamatari Plates* issued in Sudevarāja's third regnal year, describe the king as: 'the illustrious Mahā-Sudevarāja, the son of the illustrious Mahā-Durgarāja.'<sup>22</sup> The *Thakurdiya Plates of Pravara-rāja* and the *Malhār Plates* of the same king, both issued in his third regnal year, have seals with a legend that describes Pravara-rāja again as son of Mānamātra:

<sup>19</sup>Bakker, 'Observations', 9.

<sup>20</sup>Prasannamātra was probably a contemporary of Bhīmasena II of the Śūra Dynasty: he managed to take control over [parts of] Dakṣiṇa Kosala whereas the Śūras disappeared from the stage.

<sup>21</sup>Shastri, *ISPS* II, 14–27.

<sup>22</sup>*śrīmahādurgarājaputraśrīmahāsudevarājaḥ.*

*mānamātrasutasyedaṃ svabhujopārjītakṣiteḥ |  
śrīmatpravaraarājasya śāsanam śatruśāsanam ||*

This charter that is chastising the enemies [of the king] belongs to the illustrious Pravaraarāja, the son of Mānamātra, who acquired the earth by [the power of] his own arms.

Durgarāja thus seems to have been another name for Mānamātra. He was probably a younger brother of Jayarāja and apparently he used two names.<sup>23</sup>

As mentioned above, Mānamātra/Durgarāja had two sons. The first one who succeeded him was Mahā-Sudevarāja. This king ruled for at least ten years, because his *Raipur Plates* are dated in his tenth regnal year. Sudeva's successor was his younger brother Mahā-Pravaraarāja. During the reign of these two brothers, there was a shift of the Śarabhapurīya capital. Two of Sudevarāja's copper-plate grants are issued from a city named Śrīpura [modern Sirpur] instead of the usual Śarabhapura.<sup>24</sup> Both charters mention a chief minister Indrabala who acted as *dūtaka* of the grant.<sup>25</sup> It seems that Sudevarāja founded Śrīpura as his secondary capital, and that his chief minister Indrabala carried out orders from there on his behalf. His brother Pravaraarāja probably shifted the capital completely to Śrīpura, because his copper-plate grants are both issued from Śrīpura.

So far it has not been established where the capital city of the Śarabhapurīyas was located. In 1978 Bajpai and Pandey suggested for the first time that Malhār [*Mallālapattana*] could be the ancient Śarabhapura. For starters they argue that a capital town should have a palace with proper defensive walls, roads, water facilities and the like. Excavations at Malhār have unearthed sufficient remains to indicate that there once was an extensive town.<sup>26</sup> A large number of copper-plate grants, stone inscriptions, seals and sealings are

<sup>23</sup>Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 28–58. D. C. Sircar, 'King Durgarāja of the Śarabhapurīya Dynasty', in: *Indian Historical Quarterly* 22 [1946] 62–63.

<sup>24</sup>These are respectively his *Dhamatari Plates* dated in the third regnal year and his *Kawatal Plates* dated in the seventh regnal year.

<sup>25</sup>*sarvādhikārādhikṛtāśrīmahāsāmantaḥ indrabalarājaś cātra dūtakaḥ*. A *dūtaka* is 'the technical title of an officer connected with royal charters, whose duty it was to carry the king's orders to the local officials by whom the charter was then drawn up and delivered'. See: D. C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary* [Delhi 1966] 103–104.

<sup>26</sup>The town has a prominent mud-rampart with two ditches, one external and the other internal. Inside the circular internal ditch is a mound covering the main building-complex called *garha* [fort]. This fort represents the ancient citadel. The habitational area of the township was to the northern and eastern sides of the fort. The extent of the township is about 3 kms. in length and 2 kms. in width. A large number of tanks still exist around

discovered in Malhār, among others donations made by the Śarabhapurīya kings. Also a lot of villages donated by the rulers of Śarabhapura are not far from Malhār. Among the twelve kings from the south who were defeated and reinstated by Samudragupta, was a certain Mahendra of Kosala. Bajpai and Pandey consider it probable that this Mahendra was the forerunner of the Śarabhapurīya Dynasty. They think he also ruled from Malhār, because during the excavations a clay sealing was recovered that according to the legend belonged to a king named Mahendra.<sup>27</sup> There is another reason why Malhār could be Śarabhapura. Five coins were discovered in Malhār, belonging to a ruler named Śrī Śarabha. Pandey attributes the coins to the Śarabhapurīya king Śarabha, the father of Narendra. The coins bear a number of symbols, among which a symbol that appears to be the symbol for Malhār ['X']. Based on the arguments described here, it seems to be justified to take Malhār as Śarabhapura.<sup>28</sup>

The new capital of the Śarabhapurīyas, Śrīpura, was probably named after the goddess Śrī-Lakṣmī. She is also depicted on the seals that protected and authorized the charters of the Śarabhapurīya kings [Plate 1.2]. The surface of the seals is divided into two halves by two horizontal lines. The upper part shows in the centre the goddess Lakṣmī. She is standing on a lotus flower, with her right arm bent and raised up and the left arm stretched downward. The goddess is flanked by two elephants. She is sprinkled with water from vessels held in the uplifted trunks of the elephants. This representation is usually called *gajalakṣmī*.<sup>29</sup> There are additional devices in the corners, a conch-shell [*śanikha*] in the left corner and a discus [*cakra*] or water-lily in the right corner. The lower part of the seal contains a two-line legend that describes the issuer of the grant.<sup>30</sup>

Lakṣmī is the goddess of fortune and prosperity, therefore kings used her on their seals as a symbol for their royal success. She is also the spouse of Viṣṇu and together with the *śanikha* and the *cakra* her picture on the seals

the old township. The biggest tank, locally called as Potārāra, submerges about 60 acres of land. The foundations of massive building structures, traces of stone paved roads, small and big wells and the remains of religious monuments at Malhār are remarkable in this respect.' See: K. D. Bajpai & S. K. Pandey, *Malhar 1975-1978* [1978] 27.

<sup>27</sup>Ibidem 21-37.

<sup>28</sup>S. K. Pandey, 'Fresh Light on the History of Chhattisgarh based on Numismatic Evidences', in: *Purātan* 9 [1994] 56-64. See also Chapter 3.

<sup>29</sup>The Sanskrit word for elephant is 'gaja'.

<sup>30</sup>Ajay Mitra Shastri, *Inscriptions of the Śarabhapurīyas, Pāṇḍuvainśins and Somavainśins* Part I [Delhi 1995] 5-7.

of the Śarabhapurīya kings indicates that they were 'paramavaiṣṇavas' or devotees of Viṣṇu.<sup>31</sup> Mahā-Pravararāja is the last known king of Śarabhapura. It was probably during his reign that the Śarabhapurīyas lost control over Dakṣiṇa Kosala.

#### THE PĀṆḌUVAMŚINS OF MEKALĀ

The Pāṇḍuvamśins of Mekalā were contemporaries of the Śūras and Śarabhapurīyas. They are usually assigned to the fifth century. Only two inscriptions are found that can be ascribed to a member of this dynasty: the *Bamhani Plates* and *Malhār Plates* of the last known king Śūrabala.<sup>32</sup> The expression 'meditating on the feet of his father' [*tatpādānudyātāḥ*] is used in both charters. Ahman argues that this expression was used for the first time by Kumāragupta I, to make a legitimate claim on the throne of his father Candragupta II, and that it became a convention in the time of Budhagupta [476–487].<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the records of the Pāṇḍuvamśins of Mekalā using this phrase should be assigned to the close of the fifth century.

Five generations of kings are described in an extensive genealogy. Jayabala was the founder of the Pāṇḍuvamśins of Mekalā. He is said to have been born in the lineage [*anvaya*] of the famous Pāṇḍu, which is obvious already from the name of the dynasty. The next to ascend the throne was his son Vatsarāja, who is compared with the great king of Vatsa country [Udayana]. This comparison seems to be another reference to a descent of Pāṇḍu, because Udayana also belonged to the lineage of the Pāṇḍavas. Vatsarāja's queen was Droṇabhaṭṭārikā, she gave birth to a son named Nāgabala. The first two kings of the Pāṇḍuvamśins of Mekalā, Jayabala and Vatsarāja, were both styled 'king' [respectively *rājan* and *nṛpatī*]. Vatsarāja is also referred to as 'ruler of the earth' [*kṣitīśa*] and both kings are called 'the ornament among the lords of the earth' [*kṣitīpatitilaka*]. Nāgabala was the next king in line and he is the first one who assumes the title '*mahārāja*'.<sup>34</sup> According to Shastri, this could indicate that Nāgabala was more powerful than his predecessors. Perhaps the earlier members of the dynasty were feudatories and was Nāgabala the one

<sup>31</sup>A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India* [London 1961] 316.

<sup>32</sup>Dated respectively in his second and eighth regnal year.

<sup>33</sup>Nisar Ahmad, 'The Records of the Pandavas of Mekala: Some Observations', in: *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India* 18 [1992] 55–61, 56.

<sup>34</sup>Shastri, *ISPS* II, 73–85.

who became a sovereign ruler.<sup>35</sup> Nāgabala begot a son named Bharatabala from his queen Indrabhaṭṭārikā. His birth is compared with the birth of Kārttikeya from 'the daughter of the Lord of the Mountain' [Pārvatī].<sup>36</sup>

King Bharatabala is styled *mahārāja* and 'lord of the earth' [*kṣitinātha*]. He is compared to Indra in prowess and his fame is said to be like the rays of the moon.<sup>37</sup> Apparently he had some important military successes, because he is described as a great warrior.<sup>38</sup> Bharatabala's wife, Lokaprakāśā, was born in the Amarajakula and hailing from Kosala. She is described in glorious terms. According to Nigam, this indicates that she added some importance to the position of her husband and his family.<sup>39</sup> Lokaprakāśā probably reached old age, because there are grand-sons and great-grand-sons mentioned in the inscriptions. A son named Śūrabala was born to her, also known as Udīrṇavaira. This Śūrabala followed his father on the throne and issued the inscriptions mentioned above. He is referred to as 'lord among men' [*narendra*] and 'belonging to the lunar race' [*somasya vaṃśa*]. He is also described as *saumya*, which means that he was 'of gentle nature'.<sup>40</sup> According to Shastri this word '*saumya*' is probably another reference to Śūrabala's descent of the moon [*soma*].<sup>41</sup> Śūrabala/Udīrṇavaira is the last known king of his dynasty.

The family of Śūrabala's mother, the Amarajakula, is said to hail from Kosala. It has been suggested that Amarajakula was the real name of the Śarabhapurīyas, but this is untenable.<sup>42</sup> A charter discovered in Malhār has been issued by a certain Vyāghrarāja of the Amarāryakula. The words Amarajakula and Amarāryakula are very much alike; therefore it is possible that both families are the same. Vyāghrarāja was the younger brother [*anuja*] of

<sup>35</sup>Shastri, *ISPS* I, 120.

<sup>36</sup>*śailendraputryā iva kārttikeyaḥ*.

<sup>37</sup>Respectively *surendrasamavīrya* and *candrāṃśukīrti*.

<sup>38</sup>'...like a gigantic quarter-elephant, he covered all the quarters with a multitude of resounding trees in the form of overbearing enemies who were pulled down and torn asunder by him.' See: Shastri, *ISPS* I, 120-121.

<sup>39</sup>'It seems that power and prestige of Bharatabala was upgraded due to this marriage.' See: Nigam, *Riddle of Indian Iconography*, 31.

<sup>40</sup>Shastri, *ISPS* II, 73-85.

<sup>41</sup>Shastri, *ISPS* I, 118.

<sup>42</sup>For instance, the Śarabhapurīya kings would not keep completely silent about it, if 'Amarajakula' was the real name of their family. See for more reasons: Ajay Mitra Shastri, 'Mallar Plates of Vyāghrarāja: A Reappraisal', in: *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India* IX [1982] 40-47.

the chieftain [*manujapati*] Pravaraḥṭṭāraka, and both were the sons of the illustrious Jayabhaṭṭāraka. According to Sircar, the name Amar-ārya looks like the type of names met with in South Indian records. South Indian rulers sometimes represent themselves in charters as belonging to the family of their mother. Perhaps Jayabhaṭṭāraka's queen, the mother of Pravaraḥṭṭāraka and Vyāghrarāja, was the daughter of a person named Amar-ārya [Amara]. If this is the case, the family would be partly of South Indian origin. Somehow they became local chieftains of a family ruling in Dakṣiṇa Kosala. The charter of Vyāghrarāja was issued from Prasannapura, situated on the bank of the river Niḍilā.<sup>43</sup> This town is obviously named after the Śarabhapurīya king Prasannamātra, because 'no other king named Prasanna is known to have ruled in the age and area in question'.<sup>44</sup> Also the donated village was located in the Pūrvarāṣṭra, an administrative division of the Śarabhapurīyas.<sup>45</sup> It is possible that the members of the Amarārya/Amaraja family were residing in Prasannapura as local governors of the Śarabhapurīyas. Bharatabala's marriage with a girl sprung from this family, gave the Pāṇḍuvamśins of Mekalā more prestige and they became connected to the Śarabhapurīyas.<sup>46</sup>

The Pāṇḍuvamśins of Mekalā were devotees of Śiva: Nāgabala, Bharatabala and Śūrabala are called '*paramamāheśvaras*' in the inscriptions of the latter. Their affiliation to Śaivism also appears from the seal attached to the *Malhār Plates of Śūrabala* [Plate 1.3]. The surface of the seal is divided into two almost equal parts by a horizontal line. The upper part has a figure of a bull [Śiva's mount] couchant to the left. Below the horizontal line is a single-word legend: *Śrī Puruṣa*.<sup>47</sup>

#### THE PĀṆḌUVAMŚINS OF ŚRĪPURA

At the same time the Śarabhapurīya dynasty disappeared from the scene, a new dynasty came to the fore in Dakṣiṇa Kosala: the Pāṇḍuvamśins of

<sup>43</sup>Prasannapura may be Parasvani in the Raipur district. See: Malati Mahajan, *Chhattisgarh. A Study in the Culture and Historical Geography [from Place Names in Inscriptions]* [Delhi 2000] 92.

<sup>44</sup>D. C. Sircar & G. Bhattacharya, 'Mallar Plates of Vyaghraraja', in: *Epigraphia Indica* XXXIV, 45-50, 47.

<sup>45</sup>Mahajan, *Chhattisgarh*, 92.

<sup>46</sup>Bakker, 'Observations', 6-7.

<sup>47</sup>B. Sitaraman & M. J. Sharma, 'Malhar Plates of Pandava King Surabala: Year 8', in: *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India* III [1977] 183-193, 184.

Śrīpura. As the name indicates, this dynasty also traced their origin to the legendary Pāṇḍu. The capital of this dynasty was Śrīpura, the second capital of the Śarabhapurīyas. Most scholars agree that these Pāṇḍuvaṁśins were related to the earlier Pāṇḍuvaṁśins of Mekalā, probably through the person of *sāmanta* Indrabalarāja: the chief minister of Sarabhapurīya king Sudevarāja. As mentioned above, he carried out Sudevarāja's orders from the city of Śrīpura. A record of this Indrabalarāja was found in Malga, in the Bilaspur District. The charter is written in the same characters as the charters of Śūrabala from Mekalā and Vyāghrarāja of the Amarāryakula: 'early Nāgarī characters with hollow triangular marks [nail-heads] on top'.<sup>48</sup> His name ending in *-bala* and his affiliation to Śaivism point to a relation with the Pāṇḍava family from Mekalā. Also his *Malga Plates* were incised by Droṇāka, son of the goldsmith [*suvarṇakara*] Īśvara, and Śūrabala's charters were engraved by Droṇāka's brother Mihiraka.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps Indrabala attained his position as chief minister by exploiting the network that came into being after the marriage of Śūrabala's parents. He soon 'proved to be a cuckoo in the nest', because either Indrabala himself or his successor took over the Śarabhapurīya kingdom.<sup>50</sup>

In his *Malga Plates* Indrabala refers to his father only as '*kṣitipati*'. His successors mention a certain Udayana as their ancestor. It has been suggested that this Udayana was the father of Indrabala and that he should be identified with a king named Udayana of the Pāṇḍava *vaṁśa* who is stated to have founded in former times a temple of Bhadreśvara [Śiva] at Kālāñjara. However, there is not a single record that actually refers to Udayana and Indrabala as father and son. Therefore it seems more likely that the Pāṇḍava kings mentioned Udayana to make their ancestry more impressive.

Indrabalarāja's successor was his eldest son Nannarāja I. A stone inscription found at Āraṅg is ascribed to a fourth son named Bhavadeva, who is described as someone who is a lion in battle [Raṇakesarin], who is not fond of harlotry [Apriyavaiśika] and who was causing anxiety in his adversaries while being himself difficult to assail [Cintādurga]. Besides this glorification of Bhavadeva, the inscription mentions Nannarāja as the ruling king.<sup>51</sup> Another brother, either the second or the third son of Indrabala, was named

<sup>48</sup>Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 86.

<sup>49</sup>Ibidem 86–92.

<sup>50</sup>Bakker, 'Observations', 13.

<sup>51</sup>F. Kielhorn, 'Buddhist Inscription of Bhavadeva Ranakesarin', in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* XXII [1905] 617–633.

Īsānadeva. He is known from an inscription in the Lakhneśvara Temple at Kharod. Apparently he granted a village for the maintenance of the temple.<sup>52</sup>

The next king to ascend the throne after Nannarāja I was Mahāśiva-Tīvaradeva. He is described in his charters as the son of Nannadeva and the grand-son of Indrabala. The seal attached to his charters contains the following legend:

*śrīmattīvaradevasya kosalādhipater idam |  
śāsanaṃ dharmavṛddhayarthaṃ sthiram ā candratāarakam ||*

This charter of the illustrious Tīvaradeva, who is the lord of Kosala, endures as long as the moon and the stars, for the increase of *dharma*.

Tīvaradeva ruled for at least nine years, because his Baloda Plates are dated in the ninth regnal year.<sup>53</sup> In his Bonda Plates he is said to have obtained the sovereignty of the whole of Kosala.<sup>54</sup> There probably have followed more victories, because in the plates of his successor Mahā-Nannarāja II he is said to have obtained the lordship of the whole of Kosala and other regions.<sup>55</sup> In his *Baloda Plates* Tīvaradeva refers to this successor as his beloved son-in-law, the illustrious Nannarāja.<sup>56</sup> However, the *Adḥabhāra Plates* of Nannarāja himself imply that he is a son of Tīvaradeva. So the relationship between Tīvaradeva and his successor Nannarāja II remains unclear.<sup>57</sup>

Nannarāja II probably had no sons to follow him on the throne. The next king of whom we have records is Mahā-Śivagupta Bālārjuna. He was the grandson of Tīvaradeva's brother Candragupta. It is not certain whether Candragupta or his son Harṣagupta have ruled Dakṣiṇa Kosala, but Śivagupta Bālārjuna certainly has for a very long time. His last known inscription is dated in his fifty-seventh regnal year. In the *Sirpur Lakṣmaṇa Temple Stone Inscription* he is compared with the epic Arjuna because of his skill in weapons.<sup>58</sup> In his inscriptions he is also compared with Kārttikeya: '[Śivagupta] is the son of a king, the illustrious *rājadeva* Harṣagupta, like Kārttikeya is of Kṛtivāsas [Śiva].'<sup>59</sup> The reign of Mahā-Śivagupta Bālārjuna

<sup>52</sup>Bakker, 'Observations', 13-14.

<sup>53</sup>*pravardhamānavijayarājye samvatsaru 9.*

<sup>54</sup>*prāptasakalakosalādhipatyah.*

<sup>55</sup>*prāptasakalakosalāmaṇḍalādhipatyah.*

<sup>56</sup>*priyajāmātṛśrīnannarāja.*

<sup>57</sup>Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 102-118.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibidem* 141-147.

<sup>59</sup>*kārttikeya iva kṛttivāsaso rājñah śrīharṣaguptarājadevasya sūnuḥ.* See Appendix C.



was a period of cultural bloom. Apparently he was a great patron of religions: 'He was a great builder and during his long reign a large number of temples and monasteries belonging to the Vaiṣṇavas, the Śaivas, the Buddhists and the Jains were constructed at Śrīpura.'<sup>60</sup>

According to Shastri, after the reign of Nannarāja II 'there occurred a revolutionary change in the religious persuasions of the dynasty and Vaiṣṇavism was replaced by Śaivism'. This change of religious affiliation would be reflected in the devices on the seals. Tivaradeva is styled *paramavaiṣṇava* and his seal bears the seated figure of Garuḍa [Plate 1.4]; the mount of Viṣṇu. Garuḍa is depicted with a human head, the body of a bird and spread out wings. In both his hands he holds a snake with a raised hood. He is flanked by Viṣṇu's attributes, the *cakra* and the *śankha*. Śivagupta Bālārjuna was a devotee of Śiva, in the preamble of his inscriptions he is said to be a *paramamāheśvara*. The seal attached to his charters is adorned with a couchant humped bull; Śiva's mount [Plate 1.5]. The bull is flanked by the trident of Śiva and a jar with flowers.<sup>61</sup> However, this change in religious persuasions might not have been so revolutionary. The founding father of the dynasty, *sāmanta* Indrabalarāja, is called a *paramamāheśvara* in his *Malga Plates*. His son Nannarāja I was probably also a devotee of Śiva, because in the *Sirpur Stone Inscription of Śivagupta Bālārjuna* he is described as someone who is known as 'Nanneśvara' and 'who made the earth filled with temples of Śiva'.<sup>62</sup>

There are no inscriptions of any successors of Śivagupta Bālārjuna. It seems that after his reign, the power of the Pāṇḍuvainśins of Śrīpura declined. Based on an inscription found at Rajim, Nigam suggests that the Nalas filled the power vacuum after the Pāṇḍuvainśins and started ruling the area of Dakṣiṇa Kosala.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup>Sant Lal Katare, 'Excavations at Sirpur', in: *The Indian Historical Quarterly* XXXV, 1 [1959] 1-8, 4.

<sup>61</sup>Shastri, *IŚPS* I, 29.

<sup>62</sup>*pūrṇāṇ nanneśvarākhyo yaś ca kārorvīm śivālayaiḥ* |; Shastri, *Inscriptions* II, 150-151.

<sup>63</sup>Nigam, *Riddle of Indian Iconography*, 26-27.

## Chapter 2: Epigraphical traces of Early Śaivism

As mentioned in Chapter 1, epigraphical records are an important source of information for the reconstruction of [religious] history. A total of forty-eight inscriptions have been found, issued by kings of Dakṣiṇa Kosala. Some of them were engraved in stone, but the majority of these inscriptions are copper-plate charters recording land donations. The text is written on three plates of copper, joined together with a ring. The ends of the ring are usually soldered on a seal that gives authority to the grant and prevents the removing or adding of plates [Plate 2.1]. The donations are made to brahmins, temples or other religious institutions. Names of the donees and their religious affiliation are often mentioned, and sometimes their place of origin.<sup>64</sup>

### ŚAIVISM AMONG VEDIC BRAHMINS

The names of the vedic brahmins who were donees in the copper-plate charters of the kings of Dakṣiṇa Kosala are listed below:<sup>65</sup>

#### *Āraṅg Copper-Plate of Bhāmasena II – 501 AD*

Harisvāmin and Boppasvāmin of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*, student in the Bahvṛca *śākha* [R̥gveda]

#### *Pīparḍulā Plates of Narendra – Year 3*

Brahmin [*brāhmaṇa*] Svāmippa [Svāmyātman] of the Ātreya *gotra*, student in the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda]

#### *Kurud Plates of Narendra – Year 24*

Śaṅkhasvāmin, son of Bhaśrutasvāmin, of the Dhāraṇi *gotra*

#### *Rawan Plate of Narendra*

The temple of Lord Śrīdharasvāmin [Viṣṇu], established in Vaṭapadraka

<sup>64</sup>See also: Richard Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy. A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages* [New York/Oxford 1998] 113–118.

<sup>65</sup>All these inscriptions are collected in Ajay Mitra Shastri's *Inscriptions of the Śarabhapurīyas, Pāṇḍuvaiśins and Somavaiśins*.

*Amgura Plates of Jayarāja – Year 3*

Brahmin Viṣṇusvāmin of the Kauśika *gotra*, student in the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda]

*Malhār Plates of Mahā-Jayarāja – Year 5*

Brahmin Kapardisvāmin of the Kautsa *gotra*

*Āraṅg Plates of Mahā-Jayarāja – Year 5*

Brahmadevasvāmin of the Kauṇḍinya *gotra*, student in the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda]

*Malhār Plates of Jayarāja – Year 9*

Maheśvarasvāmin and śabarabhogika Rudrasvāmin of the Bhārgava *gotra*, student in the Bahvṛca śākha [Ṛgveda]

*Nahna Plates of Sudevarāja – Year 2*

Viṣṇusvāmin of the Kauśika *gotra*, student in the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda]

*Dhamatari Plates of Sudevarāja – Year 3*

Caturvedin Mādhasvāmin of the Kāśyapa *gotra*, student in the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda]

*Sīrpur Plates of Mahā-Sudevarāja – Year 7*

Brahmin and kāraṇika [scribe] Kansippasvāmin of the Pārāśara *gotra*, student in the Taittirīya *saṃhita* [Black Yajurveda]

*Āraṅg Plates of Sudevarāja – Year 7*

Yajñasvāmin of the Kātyāyana *gotra*, student in the Mādhyandina śākha of the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda];

Kumāravatsa of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*;

Yajñasvāmin of the Ātreya *gotra*, student in the Kāṇva śākha of the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda];

Viśākhasvāmin of the Kātyāyana *gotra*;

Golasvāmin, Dāmodarasvāmin and Dāmasvāmin of the Kauśika *gotra*, students in the Madhyandina śākha [White Yajurveda];

Pañcālīsvāmin and dikṣita Āyanika of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*

*Kauvatal Plates of Sudevarāja – Year 7*

*Bhaṭṭa* Purandarāsvāmin of the Pārāśara *gotra*, student in the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda]

*Raipur Plates of Sudevarāja* – Year 10

Nāgavatsasvāmin and Bandhuvatsasvāmin of the Vatsa *gotra*, students in the Aupamanyava *śākha* [White Yajurveda], sons-in-law of Savitr̥svāmin of the Kauṇḍinya *gotra*, student in the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda]

*Sarangarh Plates of Sudevarāja*

Bhāskarāsvāmin, Prabhākarāsvāmin, Barbbarisvāmin, Boṭasvāmin, Dattasvāmin, Viṣṇusvāmin, Phalgusvāmin, Svāmin, Kīrttisvāmin and Śaṅkarāsvāmin of the Kauśika *gotra*

*Thakurdiya Plates of Pravaraarāja* – Year 3

*Bhaṭṭaka* Purandarāsvāmin of the Pārāśara *gotra*, student in the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda]

*Malhār Plates of Pravaraarāja* – Year 3

Śubhacandrasvāmin, son of Dāmodaragaṇa of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*, student in the Bahvṛca *śākha* [R̥gveda]

*Stray Śarabhapurīya Plate*

*Dīkṣita* Anantasvāmin of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*, student in the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda]

*Bamhani Plates of Udīrṇavaira* – Year 2

Lohitasarasvāmin of the Vatsa *gotra*, student in the Mādhyandina *śākha* [White Yajurveda]

*Malhār Plates of Vyāghrarāja*

*Dīkṣita* Agnicandrasvāmin, son of *dīkṣita* Durgasvāmin of the Kāpy-Aṅgira *gotra*, student in the Bahvṛca *śākha* [R̥gveda]

*Malga Plates of Sāmanta Indrarāja*

Bhavasvāmin, son of Nāgasvāmin of the Śāṅḍilya *gotra*, student in the Mādhyandina *śākha* of the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda]

*Bonda Plates of Tīvaradeva* – Year 5

*Bhaṭṭa* Madhusūdanopādhyāya, Trivikramopādhyāya, Devasomopādhyāya, Svāmidattopādhyāya, Viṣṇuhoṣopādhyāya, Sthāvaropādhyāya, *bhaṭṭa* Kamalapakṣasvāmin, *bhaṭṭa* Ravināgasvāmin, Śambhubhavasvāmin, Bandhudeva, Yoraṅgaviṣṇubhavasvāmin, Lāṭaphalihasvāmin, Aśokasvāmin, Śrīdharabhūtiśvāmin, Śīlapakṣasvāmin, Sāppūpakṣasvāmin, Vāmanasvāmin, Nāgaśarmmasvāmin, Golacandraśvāmin and Bhadrāsavāmin, students in the Maitrāyaṇīya *śākha* [Black Yajurveda]; Gopendrasvāmin, Vāmanasvāmin, Somasvāmin, Yajñasvāmin and Unnatameghasvāmin, students in the Chāndoga *carāṇa* [Sāmaveda]<sup>66</sup>

*Rajim Plates of Tīvaradeva – Year 7*

*Bhaṭṭa* Bhavadeva and *bhaṭṭa* Haradatta of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*, students in the Mādhyandina *śākha* of the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda], sons of Gauṛīdatta

*Adḥabhāra Plates of Nannarāja II*

Brahmin and *bhāgavata* Nārāyaṇopādhyāya of the Kauṇḍinya *gotra*, student in the Mādhyandina *śākha* of the Vājasaneyā *saṃhita* [White Yajurveda]

*Bardula Plates of Śivagupta – Year 9*

Avigrahacarita;

Nārāyaṇopādhyāya, Trailokyahaṃsopādhyāya, Vidyādharahaṃsopādhyāya, Paramahaṃsopādhyāya, Nakṣatrarūpa, Saloṇavidyādhara, Vidagdhasura, Pṛthivīrūpa, Durgakalaśa, Podavarāha, Tālarūpa and Madhyāhnarūpa, students in the Chāndoga *carāṇa* [Sāmaveda] from Chātranātāsīman

*Bonda Plates of Śivagupta – Year 22*

Brahmin *bhaṭṭa* Trivikramasvāmin of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*, student in the Chāndoga *carāṇa* [Sāmaveda]

*Sīrpur Lakṣmaṇa Temple Stone Inscription*

Brahmā-Trivikrama, Arka, Viṣṇudeva and Mahiradeva, students in the Bahvṛca *śākha* [Ṛgveda];

Kapardopādhyāya, Bhāskara, Madhusūdāna and Vedagarbha, students in the Yajurveda;

<sup>66</sup>Both groups of brahmins are also referred to as Caraka *adhvaryu*'s of the Yajurveda and the Sāmaveda. However, the earliest references to Yajurveda specialists called Caraka *adhvaryu/ācārya* seem to indicate that they represent a Yajurveda school lost until now. According to Witzel, the Maitrāyaṇīyas have a lesser degree of affinity with the Carakas. See: English Summary of: Michael Witzel, 'Materialien zu den vedischen Schulen: I. Über die Caraka-Schule' in: *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7 [1981] 109–132.

Bhāṣkaradeva, Sthiropādhyāya, Trailokyahansa and Mauḍḍha, students in the Sāmaveda;

Vāsavanandin and *bhāgavatas* Vāmana and Śrīdhara;

Golāryabhaṭṭa

Most of these brahmins belong to the Vājasaneyya *saṃhita* of the White Yajurveda. There are also some grants to brahmins belonging to the Ṛgveda, the Sāmaveda and the Black Yajurveda. Names like Maheśvarasvāmin or Rudrasvāmin suggest some involvement in the worship of Rudra/Śiva, but the listed charters do not contain clear traces of early Śaivism and its origin. Not a single reference is made to brahmins of the Atharvaveda. This is not unusual, because grants of villages or land to Atharvavedic brahmins have always been rare: 'Auffällig ist, auch heute, das weitgehende Fehlen des Atharvaveda, sei es in der Paippalāda-, sei es in der Śaunaka-[= Vulgata]-Schule.'<sup>67</sup> The only reference to the Atharvaveda among the listed donees is an implicate one: the *caturvedin* Mādhavasvāmin from the *Dhamatari Plates of Sudevarāja*. The description '*caturvedin*' means that this brahmin was familiar with all four Veda's.

### ŚAIVA TEMPLES

It is not so surprising that the first clear reference to early Śaivism shows up in an inscription of the Pāṇḍuvaiśins of Mekalā, a family of staunch Śaivas. In 1974 a set of copper-plates issued by Śūrabala Udīrṇavaira was found in Malhār in the Bilaspur District. The plates were chemically cleaned because they were covered with oxide and other impurities. Of the first plate only one side is used, the other two are engraved on both sides. The text of the inscription is edited by Sitaraman and Sharma.<sup>68</sup>

In Śūrabala's eighth regnal year, the king himself and a certain Narasiṅha endowed the illustrious Lord Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka with the village Saṅgama. Narasiṅha was the son of Boṭa and the grandson of the merchant [*vaṇika*] Manoratha.<sup>69</sup> Īśvara [Lord] is one of Śiva's names, therefore the term

<sup>67</sup>M. Witzel, 'Regionale und Überregionale Faktoren in der Entwicklung Vedischer Brahmanengruppen im Mittelalter', in: Hermann Kulke & Dietmar Rothermund [eds.] *Regionale Tradition Südasien* [Stuttgart 1985] 37-76, 46.

<sup>68</sup>Sitaraman & Sharma, 'Malhar Plates of Pāṇḍava King Śūrabala: Year 8', 183-193.

<sup>69</sup>*vaṇikamanorathapautrasya boṭaputrasya narasiṅhasya*.

*īśvara* at the end of Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka denotes that the receiving god was Śiva. This also becomes clear from the description of Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka in the first lines of the charter:

*aparimitaguṇasamudayasya bhagavatas triśūlapāṇer varavṛṣabhavāhanasya sphuradbhujagaparikarasya anāṅgāṅgavidhuvamśinah tridaśapatinutacaraṇābjayugalasya śrījayeśvarabhāṭṭārakasyedaṃ śāsanaṃ . . .*<sup>70</sup>

This charter of the illustrious Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka [Śiva] – the god [*bhagavat*] who is furnished with unlimited qualities, who carries a trident in his hand, who has an excellent bull for his mount and shivering snakes for his retinue, who destroyed the body of Kāma & whose pair of lotus-like feet are praised by the Lord of the gods [Indra] . . .

The small village [*grāmaka*] Saṅgama was situated on a confluence of rivers [*saṅgama*] in the Southern *rāṣṭra* of Mekalā. It has been identified with the modern village Tālā, also known as Saṅgama, near the confluence of the river Maniārī with the river Śivanāthā in the Bilaspur District.<sup>71</sup> There are remains of two brick temples near Tālā, and it has been suggested by Bajpai that one of these temples may have been the temple of Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka.<sup>72</sup>

Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka [Śiva] was ‘the lord [*īśvara*] of Jaya’. Perhaps Jaya is short for Jayabala, the first-known king of the Pāṇḍuvamśins of Mekalā. However, since the area of modern Tālā was part of the Śarabhauriya kingdom it is probably more acceptable to assume that the temple was named after Jayabhāṭṭāraka of the Amaraṅga/Amarārya family. Presumably the temple of Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka was a dedication to Jayabhāṭṭāraka, either constructed by himself or in his memory.

The next clear references to early Śaivism start to show up in the records of Śivagupta Bālārjuna. Several charters issued by him contain useful information. The *Lodhiā Plates of Śivagupta Bālārjuna* were issued in his fifty-seventh regnal year.<sup>73</sup> This charter records the grant of the village Vaidyapadraka situated in the Oṇi *bhoga* to the illustrious [Lord] Īśāneśvara-bhaṭṭāraka [Śiva],

<sup>70</sup>Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 80–85.

<sup>71</sup>Mahajan, *Chhattisgarh*, 36.

<sup>72</sup>Pajpai & Pandey, *Malhar*, 23 & Bajpai, ‘Early History of South Kośala’, in: *Purātan* 9 [1994] 4–5. See Chapter 3.

<sup>73</sup>The copper-plate charter was edited by Pandeya. The first and last plate are used only on one side, the middle plate is engraved on both sides. See: L. P. Pandeya, ‘Lodhiā Plates of Maha-Sivagupta; Year 57’, in: *Epigraphia Indica* XXVII, 319–325.

installed in a temple in the plains [*tala*] of Pattana-Khadirapadra.<sup>74</sup> The term *padra* indicates that Khadirapadra is a small village. It can be identified with Khairapali in the Raigarh District.<sup>75</sup> The temple of Īsāneśvara-bhaṭṭāraka was probably dedicated to Īsānadeva, the uncle of Śivagupta's grandfather Candragupta. The grant was made at the request of the venerable [*bhagavatpāda*] and illustrious Śūlapāṇi, a Śaiva ascetic.

Śūlapāṇi was a pupil of the venerable teacher [*acārya*] Pramatha hailing from the celebrated Pañcayajña-*tapovana* situated in the Dvaitavana. The Dvaitavana is known from the *Mahābhārata*, the Pāṇḍavas dwelt in this forest during their exile:

Thereupon they departed, all the Pāṇḍavas who strode by the Law, accompanied by numerous brahmins, for Lake Dvaitavana. There were brahmins who had kept up the *agnihotra* and others who did not keep the fires, others who studied the *Veda*, or begged for their food, or recited prayers, or lived in the forest. The brahmins who accompanied Yudhiṣṭhira were many, hundreds of ascetic brahmins avowed to truth and strict in their vows. Thus, traveling with these many brahmins, the Pāṇḍavas, bulls of the Bharatas, came to the lovely and holy Lake Dvaitavana.<sup>76</sup>

Apparently the forest was flooded with brahmins: 'The Dvaitavana was considered by all as a free land over which there was no sway of any monarch. It was an abode of 'penance-groves' and the Pañcayajña *tapovana* was one of them.'<sup>77</sup> According to the *Mahābhārata* the Dvaitavana was located near a desert and the river Sarasvatī was flowing through it. The forest was named after the Dvaita Lake that was within the boundaries of the forest. It was not far from the Himālayas, between Taṅgaṇa in the northeast and Kurukṣetra and Hastināpura in the southeast.<sup>78</sup> Based on this description from the *Mahābhārata*, the Dvaitavana can be located in the northwest of Rajasthan and southwest of Hariyana.

<sup>74</sup>*pattanakhadirapadralapratīṣṭhitaśrīmadīśāneśvarabhaṭṭārakāra*.

<sup>75</sup>Mahajan, *Chhattisgarh*, 76-77.

<sup>76</sup>J. A. B. Buitenen, *The Mahābhārata. The Book of the Forest* [Chicago/London 1975] 269.

<sup>77</sup>Pandeya, 'Lodhia Plates of Maha-Sivagupta; Year 57', 322.

<sup>78</sup>Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 128-133, in particular note 63.



## PĀŚUPATA ŚAIVISM & SOMASIDDHĀNTA

The Gandheśvara Temple at Sirpur has been repaired with materials from ruins of other temples. There are six Gandheśvara Temple Inscriptions, some of which do not actually belong to this temple.<sup>79</sup> Four of these inscriptions have a Śaiva character.

An inscription built into the plinth of the Gandheśvara Temple mentions explicitly the name Gandharveśvara. This inscription was edited by Katare.<sup>80</sup> The inscription describes the arrangement made for the offering of a flower-garland for the worship of Gandharveśvara [Śiva] by a subject of Śivagupta Bālārjuna, a certain Jorjjarāka. The garland measured a man's height [*puruṣapramāna*]. The flowers for the garland were to be supplied for as long as the moon, the sun and the stars will last by the garland-makers [*mālākāra*] of the New Market [*navahaṭṭa*], which may have been a quarter of Śrīpura.<sup>81</sup>

Another inscription is engraved on a stone slab built into the floor of the entrance of the Gandheśvara Temple. It is also written in the praise of Śiva and also seems to refer to the offering of flowers, because mention is made of 'the gardeners [*mālākāras*] of Pranavahaṭṭaka'.<sup>82</sup>

Underneath the inscription in the plinth is a similar record, of which the content is more or less the same. Kielhorn edited this inscription from rubbings supplied by Cunningham. According to Cunningham, the inscription was complete when first discovered and when the rubbings were made. Apparently the upper right corner has been broken off later, so today the

<sup>79</sup>Rai Bahadur Hira Lal, *Inscriptions in the Central Provinces and Berar* [2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Nagpur 1932] 97–99.

<sup>80</sup>Sant Lal Katare, 'Sirpur Gandheśvara Temple Inscription [of the time of Somavamśī Mahāśivagupta]', in: *Indian Historical Quarterly* [1957] 229–234. According to Shastri the name Gandharveśvara of the god shows that the original name of the temple was Gandharveśvara. The modern name Gandheśvara was contracted from this. See: Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 153 note 13.

<sup>81</sup>Ibidem & Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 152–153. Garland-makers are known from inscriptions from Dakṣiṇa Kosala only. See: Mahajan, *Chhattisgarh*, 145–146. The name New Market implies the existence of one or more market places that were already in the region. See: Ibidem, 197–198.

<sup>82</sup>Hira Lal, *Inscriptions of the C. P. and Berar*, 98–99. Some scholars think that Pranavahaṭṭaka is the same as the New Market [*navahaṭṭa*]. Mahajan, on the other hand, explains that the word *haṭṭaka* instead of *haṭṭa* suggests that it must have been a small market place separate from the New Market. See: Mahajan, *Chhattisgarh*, 197–198.

beginning of each of the first three lines is missing.<sup>83</sup> The inscription begins with the formula ‘*namaḥ śivāya*’, paying obeisance to Śiva. Two servants of Śivagupta Bālārjuna named Nāgadeva and Keśava, together provided the money to finance four garlands of flowers for the worship of Śrīkaṇṭha. The garlands were measuring a man’s height, and were meant to last until the destruction of the earth. Nāgadeva and Keśava obtained the garlands from the gardeners of Śrīpura.<sup>84</sup> The *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata* describes Śrīkaṇṭha as the one who promulgated Pāśupata Śaivism: ‘the son of Brahmā, the consort of Umā and lord of the *bhūtas* [beings/spirits], the unwavering Śiva’.<sup>85</sup>

The *Gandheśvara Temple Pillar Inscription* is engraved on the southern face of the left pillar of the *maṇḍapa* near the central shrine in the Gandheśvara Temple.<sup>86</sup> The inscription also opens with paying obeisance to Śiva [*namaḥ śivāya*]. It is further stated that during the reign of Śivagupta Bālārjuna a Śaiva ascetic named Udbhavarāśī and styled Rudra resided at Śrīpura, preaching the *svasiddhānta*. The pupil of Udbhavarāśī was named Ambuloka and he offered garlands to Śambhu [Śiva] bearing the name Gandharva. The garlands were to be supplied daily by the garland-makers of Śrīpura for as long as the earth, the sun and the moon will last.<sup>87</sup>

Udbhavarāśī was probably also residing at Śrīpura. Ordination names ending in ‘rāśī’ seem to be typical for ascetics of the line of *gurus* that follows back to Rāśīkara, a *guru* in the lineage of Kauruṣa. The mythical origin of Pāśupata Śaivism describes this Kauruṣa as the fourth pupil of Lakuliśa.<sup>88</sup> According to Bakker this inscription from the Gandheśvara Temple is the earliest known attestation of a ‘Rāśī ascetic’. Udbhavarāśī is described as ‘an ocean for the streams of his own doctrine [*svasiddhānta*]’. Presumably the *sva*-part of this phrase does not refer to Udbhavarāśī, but to the Lord he serves: ‘Possibly the phrase his own doctrine within this lineage was a code word meaning His own doctrine, an implied claim that the doctrine of this

<sup>83</sup>F. Kielhorn, *Indian Antiquary* [1889] 179–181.

<sup>84</sup>Ibidem & Shastri, *IŚPS* I, 150–151.

<sup>85</sup>Hans Bakker, *The Vākātakas. An Essay in Hindu Iconology* [Groningen 1997] 67–68.

<sup>86</sup>The composer of this inscription is a certain Tāra. It seems likely that Tāra is the same as Tāradatta, whose son Sumaṅgala composed the texts of some other stone inscriptions of Śivagupta Bālārjuna [among others the *Senakapāṭ Inscription* below]. See: S. Sankaranarayanan & Balachandra Jain, ‘Four Inscriptions of Sivagupta Balarjuna from Sirpur’, in: *Epigraphia Indica* XXXIX, 149–156, 150.

<sup>87</sup>Ibidem 149–152.

<sup>88</sup>See Chapter 4.

lineage was the only true one, revealed directly by the Lord himself.<sup>89</sup> The *Gandheśvara Temple Pillar Inscription* is a clear trace of Pāśupata Śaivism.

The *Malhār Plates of Mahā-Śivagupta Bālārjuna*, also dating from his fifty-seventh regnal year, record the grant of the villages Pāśipadraka and Kurapadraka to a Śaiva ascetic named Bhīmasoma.<sup>90</sup> Both villages were granted for the maintenance of the *tapovana* attached to the Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple, a temple constructed by Śivagupta at Śrīpura.<sup>91</sup> The illustrious Bhīmasoma was a pupil of the illustrious Tejasoma and a grand-pupil of the illustrious *guru* Rudrasoma.<sup>92</sup> Ordination names ending in ‘soma’ are typical for ascetics of the Somasiddhānta, one branch of Pāśupata Śaivism.<sup>93</sup> The *Malhār Plates of Śivagupta* are important, because this inscription is probably the earliest evidence of the Somasiddhānta.

The charter describes not only its mythical origin, but also elements of its theology. It refers for example to a doctrine described in the *Jayadrathayāmala*. According to this doctrine Śiva ‘roams about’ in sixty-six different embodiments [*mūrti*] or Rudras, in successive *yugas*. His last incarnation in the Kali age is Lakulīśanātha, who became ‘the moon on earth’ [*jagadindus*]. In the *Malhār Plates* is mentioned that the *paramparā* of Rudrasoma can be followed back to Lakulīśanātha or Śiva himself. Reference is also made of Śiva’s *aṣṭamūrti* and according to Bakker it seems that Śiva in this eightfold form of Vighraheśvara [‘Lord of Form’] ‘is considered the fountain-head of our universe in the theology underlying the inscription at issue’.<sup>94</sup> Presumably the Somasiddhānta was one of the major religious groups in Dakṣiṇa Kosala during the reign of Śivagupta Bālārjuna.

<sup>89</sup>Hans T. Bakker & Harunaga Isaacson, *The Skandapurāṇa Volume IIA. The Vārāṇasī Cycle* [Groningen 2004] 30 note 103.

<sup>90</sup>The village Pāśipadraka can be identified with the modern Pasid, in the Raipur District. The modern name of Kurapadraka is Kolapadar, also in the Raipur District. See: Mahajan, *Chhattisgarh*, 78.

<sup>91</sup>*atraivātmakārītaśrībāleśvarabhaṭṭārakatapovanapratipālanārtham.*

<sup>92</sup>*guruśrīrudrasomaprasīṣyaśrītejasomasīṣyebhyaḥ śrīmadbhīmasomapādebhyaḥ.*

<sup>93</sup>See Chapter 4.

<sup>94</sup>Hans Bakker, ‘Somaśarman, Somavaṃśa and Somasiddhānta. A Pāśupata tradition in seventh-century Dakṣiṇa Kosala’, in: Ryutaro Tsuchida & Albrecht Wezler [eds.] *Harānandalahārī. Volume in Honour of Professor Minoru Hara on his Seventieth Birthday* [Reinbek 2000] 1–19, 7–12.

## ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

An inscription incised on a stone slab was found at Malhār. The inscription is extremely fragmentary, but a saint named Aghorajyoti is mentioned.<sup>95</sup> Among members of the Śaiva Siddhānta there are four 'initiation lineages [*gocaras*]'. After their initiation into these *gocaras*, the initiates receive an ordination name. The first part of this name is one of the aspects or subordinates of Śiva. The second, final member of the ordination name is determined by the *gocara* into which they are initiated. The four lineages/*gocaras* are: Śiva/Śambhu, Jyotis/Jyoti, Śikhā and Sāvitra.<sup>96</sup> The Malhār inscription mentioning Aghorajyoti is one of the very few references to teachers of the Jyotis/Jyoti *gocara* of the Śaiva Siddhānta.

A stone slab found in Senkapāt bears an inscription of the time of Śivagupta Bālārjuna. It was broken into two pieces, but only a few characters are missing because the two parts fit together nicely. The inscription begins with the formula '*namaḥ śivāya*', paying obeisance to Śiva. The next two verses invoke the blessings of Bhava [Śiva] and Pārvatī. A brahmin named Śivarakṣita is mentioned, who is styled *rājan* and who ruled the Navyāsī *viṣaya*. His son Devarakṣita was a contemporary of Naunarāja II and obtained several districts from this king. His son again was Durgarakṣita, a servant of Śivagupta Bālārjuna and a devotee of Śambhu [Śiva]. The *Senakapāt Inscription* records that Durgarakṣita constructed a Śaiva temple and that two *halas* of land were granted in favour of Madanārāti [Śiva]. The temple was dedicated to the *ācārya* Sadāśiva, and his spiritual successors. This Śaiva ascetic also received *halas* of land in three different villages.

Sadāśiva was probably a pupil of the *ācārya* Sadyaśśiva, who was hailing from the penance-grove [*tapovana*] called Āmardaka.<sup>97</sup> Both teachers were members of the Śiva *gocara* of the Śaiva Siddhānta. Āmardaka is known as a prominent centre of the Śaiva Siddhānta, but it has not yet been identified with certainty. It was first considered to be somewhere in western Malwa. However, Shastri now favors an identification with the Auṇḍhā Nāga *nātha*

<sup>95</sup>Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 381–382.

<sup>96</sup>Alexis Sanderson, 'The Date of Sadyojyotis and Bṛhaspati', in: *Cracow Indological Studies* VIII [2006] 39–91, 73–75.

<sup>97</sup>The name Āmardaka goes back to the root *ā-mṛd*, meaning 'to crush'. It is also the name of Kālabhairava [Śiva]. See: Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* [New Edition, Oxford 2000] 147.

in the Parbhani District of eastern Mahārāṣṭra.<sup>98</sup> Apparently Sadyaḥśiva came from Āmardaka to Dakṣiṇa Kosala to continue his practice.

In april 1987, a hoard of nine sets of copper-plates was found by accident in the surroundings of Sirpur.<sup>99</sup> All nine sets can be dated to the reign of Śivagupta Bālārjuna. Eight of these nine charters refer to the Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple at Śrīpura mentioned above.

In the thirty-seventh year of Śivagupta's 'increasingly victorious reign', the Bāleśvara Temple was established by Śivagupta himself [*svakarita*] in the plains [*tala*] of Śrīpura. A charter dated in the thirty-eighth regnal year of Śivagupta records the establishment of the *mathikā* of the Bāleśvara Temple. On both occasions a village was granted to the venerable [*bhagavatpāda*] teacher [*ācārya*] Vyāpaśiva. This Śaiva ascetic was a pupil of the venerable *ācārya* Dīrgha and a grand-pupil of the venerable *śaivācārya* Aghoraśiva. In the forty-sixth regnal year of the king, a village was granted in favor of the Dayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple on the occasion of its establishment inside the *mathikā* of the Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple. Another temple was established in this *mathikā* in the forty-eighth regnal year of king Śivagupta: the Amareśvara Temple, which was erected by queen Amaradevī. On this occasion a village was granted to the venerable Astraśiva, a pupil of Vyāpaśiva and a grand-pupil of Dīrgha whose other name is said to be Aghoraśiva. There is also an undated set of copper-plates in which the Amareśvara Temple is mentioned. In this set it is written that the Amareśvara Temple was established in the *tapovana* of the *mathikā* of the Bāleśvara Temple, and that its *devabhāṭṭāraka* was installed by the same Vyāpaśiva. In Śivagupta's fifty-second regnal year, a village is granted to Astraśiva at the request of a certain Jejjāṭa. Astraśiva is described in this charter as 'the teacher in charge' [*sthānaguru*] of the *tapovanasthāna* of the illustrious Bāleśvara Temple. And finally in Śivagupta's fifty-fifth regnal year the Ammeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple was established in the vicinity of the Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple, erected by queen Ammādevī. Again a village was granted to Astraśiva. The Ammeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple also receives the grant of a village in an undated charter of Śivagupta Bālārjuna, to meet the expenses of repairing dilapidations [broken parts], worship with incense, music and *bali* and *caru* oblations, and the cleansing and anointing (of images).<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup>Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 157–158 note 22.

<sup>99</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>100</sup>For the ninth set of copper-plates, see Chapter 4 and Appendix C.

Based on these eight sets of copper-plates, it seems that the original Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple grew out into a Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Complex. In six of the nine charters names of teachers belonging to the same lineage are mentioned:

*Astraśiva*

The teacher of the *tapovana* of the Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple

*Vyāpaśiva*

The teacher of the Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple

*Dīrgha*

Hailing from Nandapura and originally coming from Phuṭṭipāṭi

*Aghoraśiva*

Hailing from Nandapura

The exact relationship between Dīrgha and Aghoraśiva is not clear. In two charters Vyāpaśiva is said to be a pupil of Dīrgha and a grand-pupil of Aghoraśiva. In the charter issued in the forty-eighth regnal year, Astraśiva is said to be a pupil of Vyāpaśiva and a grand-pupil of Dīrgha 'whose other name is Aghoraśiva'. The names Astraśiva, Vyāpaśiva and Aghoraśiva all end in 'śiva', which implies that they were initiated into the Śiva *gocara* of the Śaiva Siddhānta. The fact that Dīrgha's name has no ending on 'śiva', could indicate that Aghoraśiva was his ordination name. However, more information is needed to ascertain whether Dīrgha and Aghoraśiva are the same person or not.

Both Dīrgha and Aghoraśiva were hailing from Nandapura, and Dīrgha is also said to come originally from Phuṭṭipāṭi. The latter place can not be identified, but Nandapura is known from Śivagupta Bālārjuna's *Bardula Plates*. It was an administrative unit of the Pāṇḍuvarṣins of Śrīpura, and perhaps also of the Śarabhapurīyas. The Nandapura *viṣaya* of the Pāṇḍava kings may have been the same as the Nandapura *bhoga* from the *Pīparḍulā Plates of Narendra*. According to Shastri, Nandapura is probably identical with two adjoining villages, Nandapura large and Nandapura small, close to the Sakti tehsil in the Bilaspur District.<sup>101</sup>

The fact that these Śaiva Siddhānta *ācārya*'s are mentioned so often and received several villages, indicates that Śrīpura was an important centre of the Śaiva Siddhānta.

<sup>101</sup>Shastri, *ISPS* II, 121 note 20.

### Chapter 3: Archaeological Traces of Early Śaivism

The art of Dakṣiṇa Kosala is both a continuation and an innovation of themes and motives. It is a continuation, because a number of scholars have recognized the 'flavour' of the art style in the neighbouring Vidarbha and South India in the art of Dakṣiṇa Kosala. It seems that migrating artisans played an important role in the way these areas affected each other. By the end of the fifth century, both the Gupta Empire and the Vatsagulma and Nandivardhana branches of the Vākāṭakas collapsed and lost their power. Dakṣiṇa Kosala is one of the areas in which new dynasties emerged during this period. Presumably artisans moved from these places to Dakṣiṇa Kosala, to find new sponsors of their art. As a result, their skills and traditions influenced the art of Dakṣiṇa Kosala. In a process of re-combining with local traditions and tribal art, it developed [innovated] into a typical regional art style: a Mahā-Kosala style.<sup>102</sup> Stadtner observes that:

An important aesthetic feature of the art of Kosala was an ever-increasing desire to augment the realism of figural sculpture by the thoughtful placement of small animals and figures in ways that interrupted symmetrical sculptural patterns.<sup>103</sup>

An example of this interrupting of patterns is one of the pillars found at Tālā. The pillar is decorated with slanted foliate bands and a mouse protrudes from the surface, sculptured as if running across the foliate bands. Another device characteristic of the Mahā-Kosala style is a snake emerging in and out of the wall in pursuit of a mouse [Plates 3.1–3.3]. This device is first seen in Tālā, sculpted on the horizontal base mouldings of the Devarānī Temple. The same motif also appears on the left doorjamb of the shrine doorway of the Lakṣmaṇa Temple and the entrance of a *vihāra* at Sirpur. According to Stadtner it is a device which is found nowhere else in India. Since the remains at Sirpur are later in time than the remains at Tālā, 'the theme of

<sup>102</sup>L. S. Nigam, 'Impact and Extension of Vākāṭaka Art in Chhattisgarh [Dakṣiṇa Kosala]', in: Hans T. Bakker [ed.], *The Vākāṭaka Heritage. Indian Culture at the Crossroads* [Groningen 2004] 143–156 & Stadtner, 'Vidarbha and Kosala', 157–165.

<sup>103</sup>Stadtner, 'The Siddhesvara Temple at Palāri and the Art of Kosala during the Seventh and Eight Centuries', in: *Arts orientalis: the arts of Islam and the East* 12 [1981] 49–56, 52.

the snake-and-mouse may have been passed down in the local ateliers over generations and even possibly “recorded” in artists’ sketch books.<sup>104</sup>

Dakṣiṇa Kosala also has an interesting architecture. A number of temples have a ground plan determined by a stellate design, which means they are characterized by a star-shaped contour:

Stellate plans are formed by revolving concentric squares around a fixed central point; each exterior point conforms to an oblique division on the face of the temple. A true stellate temple is one in which each projecting, vertical division of the wall presents an angle to the exterior.<sup>105</sup>

Stellate ground plans were adopted infrequently in India, but somehow it was a form widely used in Dakṣiṇa Kosala. It has been suggested before that the earliest extant stellate plan temple occurs at Sirpur; the Rāma Temple dated to the sixth-century.<sup>106</sup> However, recent excavations in Mansar have uncovered a fifth-century stellate plan temple [Plate 3.4]. Not all stellate plan temples in Dakṣiṇa Kosala use the system of rotated squares and there is also no similarity among the stellate ground plans, which seems to indicate that the temple-building activities were in an experimental phase: ‘The picture that emerges is one of intense experimentation with different forms of stellate ground plans.’<sup>107</sup>

Places like Malhār, Kharod, Sirpur and Rajim are well-known because several copper-plate charters issued by dynasties of Dakṣiṇa Kosala have been unearthed there. Among these places are also important centres of art and architecture. This chapter will focus mainly on the Śaivite remains.

## TĀLĀ

Tālā is a village situated in the north of the confluence of the Maniārī and Śivanātha rivers, in the Bilaspur District. The place is known for the earliest monuments of Dakṣiṇa Kosala; two temples dedicated to Śiva. The names of the temples are Jithānī and Devarānī [Plates 3.5 & 3.6]. Both temples were

<sup>104</sup>Stadtner, ‘Vidarbha and Kosala’, 161.

<sup>105</sup>Donald M. Stadtner, ‘Ancient Kosala and the Stellate Plan’, in: J. Williams [ed.] *Kalādarśana* [1981] 137–145, 140.

<sup>106</sup>Stadtner, ‘The Siddhesvara Temple at Palāri’, 49.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibidem* 49.



made out of stone and were built on adjacent hillocks on the left bank of the Maniārī.<sup>108</sup> Clearance work started in the years 1977-1978 and in 1984 the Jithānī and Devarānī were declared State protected monuments by the Government of Madhya Pradesh. The Jithānī Temple is completely ruined, therefore it is difficult to make even an approximate groundplan. A flight of steps leads to the main entrance facing south, there are also entrances at the eastern and western direction.<sup>109</sup> It seems that the temple dilapidated soon after its construction, probably due to the absence of a proper foundation:

The enormous slabs of stone of the Jithānī ruin give the impression that this temple was a not wholly successful experimental construction that finally collapsed under its own load. The brick buttresses that are found at the base along the west, north and east sides and the square brick prop in the centre of the southern stairs could have been meant to prevent the temple from falling down. In the building of the Devarānī temple these constructional errors were evidently remedied.<sup>110</sup>

The Devarānī Temple is much better preserved. It has an entrance facing east, leading to a small vestibule that precedes two rectangular chambers. The chambers become separated from each other by two ornamented pillars. The walls were constructed by putting large slabs of stone on top of each other. The superstructure of the temple is missing, but Stadtner assumes that it was made out of bricks.<sup>111</sup>

The lintel of the Devarānī Temple has on its bottom section a scene interpreted by Stadtner as 'Kaṅkālamūrti'; Śiva in penance for killing a brahmin [Plate 3.7].<sup>112</sup> One of the earliest versions of the story of Śiva as a brahmin-slayer is told in the 'Kapālin Cycle' of the original *Skandapurāṇa*. In response to Brahmā's boast that he is the source, the creator and the controller of the world and all beings, Śiva chops off Brahmā's fifth head with the nail of his left thumb. After he committed this sin, Śiva goes around with Brahmā's skull [*kapāla*] as a begging bowl. In the *Kūrmapurāṇa* the story continues with Śiva going on a pilgrimage to Vārāṇasī. On the way he kills the door-keeper of Viṣṇu named Viṣvaksena. He carries the corpse of Viṣvaksena and

<sup>108</sup>Donald M. Stadtner, 'A Sixth-Century AD Temple from Kosala', in: *Archives of Asian Art* 33 [1966] 38-48, 38.

<sup>109</sup>Nigam, *Riddle of Indian Iconography*, 43-47.

<sup>110</sup>Bakker, 'Observations', 17.

<sup>111</sup>Stadtner, 'A Sixth-Century AD Temple from Kosala', 39.

<sup>112</sup>*Ibidem* 44.

the skull of Brahma with him to Vārāṇasī.<sup>113</sup> The Kaṅkālamūrti-form of Śiva refers to this story of him carrying the corpse [*kaṅkāla*].

The main figure on the lintel is identified by Stadtner as Kaṅkālamūrti, 'clothed in a lower garment' and 'bearing a finely worked sash', and the two figures flanking him as attendants. The underside of the lintel bears a medalion with fifteen small and identical figures [Plate 3.8]. According to Stadtner, these figures may represent ṛṣi's who accompanied Śiva to Vārāṇasī.<sup>114</sup> Kaṅkālamūrti is usually depicted dressed and crowned, with the corpse attached to his staff and sometimes replaced by feathers. So far the earliest examples of the iconographic use of Kaṅkālamūrti occur in Pallava monuments dating to ca. 700 CE and later.<sup>115</sup> If the interpretation of Stadtner is correct, the lintel from Tālā would be 'the earliest extant example of this iconographic form'.<sup>116</sup> However, the figures on the lintel are damaged. It is difficult to recognize anything, in particular a corpse, therefore it seems justified to dismiss Stadtner's identification. Nigam suggest to identify the same scene as 'the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī'.<sup>117</sup>

A great number of sculptures has been found in and around the Jethānī and Devarānī. Panels depicting Umā-Maheśvara, Śiva and Pārvatī playing dice, etc. confirm the Śaiva nature of both temples. There are two torso's of Śiva wearing a tiger-skin. One is situated near the Devarānī Temple, the other is found at the bottom of the eastern steps leading up to the Jithānī Temple.<sup>118</sup> The erected penis and testicles of the latter are pronounced and the face and two claws of the tiger-skin are shown on the inner right thigh [Plates 3.9 & 3.10].<sup>119</sup>

An indication that the mythe of Śiva as a brahmin-slayer was indeed known to artisans in Tālā, is a sculptured head from the Jithānī Temple. It is a head of Śiva, who wears skulls in his headdress [Plate 3.11]. Bisschop speculates that the earliest examples of the use of a skull in the iconography of Śiva come from Mansar. It seems that the skull was absent in early Indian art. He points among others to the beautiful image of the 'Śiva of Mansar' [Plate 3.12]. The single skull in Śiva's hairdo probably refers to the story of

<sup>113</sup> *Kūrmapurāṇa* [II.31].

<sup>114</sup> Stadtner, 'A Sixth-Century Temple from Kosala', 44–46.

<sup>115</sup> Aschwin Lippe, 'Some South Indian Icons', in: *Artibus Asiae* 37, 3 [1975] 169–208, 7.

<sup>116</sup> Stadtner, 'A Sixth-Century Temple from Kosala', 45.

<sup>117</sup> Nigam, *Riddle of Indian Iconography*, 51.

<sup>118</sup> Nigam, *Riddle of Indian Iconography*, 51.

<sup>119</sup> Bakker, *The Vākātakas*, 109.

Śiva as brahmin-slayer.<sup>120</sup> The head found at Tālā has at least two skulls in the headdress: one in the front and one at the right side of the head. Perhaps it has four skulls in total: one in each of the four directions. Since a number of skulls adorn the head, the skulls probably have a different function than a single skull. Perhaps they are used to show Śiva's ferocious character.

A beautiful carved head of Śiva from the Devarānī Temple adorns the frontpage of this thesis. The strands of his matted hair are tied together on top of his head with an ornament in the centre, the third eye is shown on the forehead and he wears a crescent moon in his hair. The facial features of this head of Śiva resemble those of a sculpted head found at Mansar [Plates 3.13 & 3.14].

Clearance work conducted in 1988 under the supervision of K. K. Chakravarty revealed an absurd image near the entrance of the Devarānī Temple [Plate 3.15]. The image measures 2.70 metre in height and weighs approximately five tonnes.<sup>121</sup> Nigam gives the following detailed description of this iconographic puzzle:

A pair of snakes forms the turban. Two snake-hoods are figured above the shoulders. The waistband and fingernails are also designed as snakes. A snake is also shown entwining the left leg. Thus, the serpent seems to be a preferred depiction of the artisans. The head of the icon is very fascinating. A descending lizard forms the eyebrows and nose of the icon. The eyes are bulging and they look like a mouth of a frog or a roaring lion. The moustaches and upper lip are made of twin-fish. A crab forms the lower lip and chin. Ears are represented by peacocks. Shoulders are like crocodiles, from the snout of which the arms of the icon are emerging. Seven human heads form various parts of the body. Of these a pair of small heads may be seen on either side of the chest. A bigger face forms the abdomen. These three faces have moustaches. Each thigh has a pair of heads, of which two smiling faces are carved on the front side in *añjali* [both hands folded] posture, while the other two are carved on the sides. Heads of lions are depicted on each knee. The *urdhvaretas* [penis erectus] is made of head and neck of a tortoise. Two bell-like testicles are designed by the fore-limbs of the same ani-

<sup>120</sup>Presentation held during a seminar at the British Museum, 30 June–1 July 2008.

<sup>121</sup>L. S. Nigam, 'The image of Śiva from Tālā: Issues in Identification and Interpretation of the Symbols Therein', in: *Riddle of Indian Iconography. Zetetic on Rare Icon from Tālā* [Delhi 2000] 61–68, 61.

mal. The icon was holding a [*daṇḍa*] [baton] in his broken right hand.  
The rear side of the icon is flat.<sup>122</sup>

Since various animals function as body parts it has been suggested that the image may represent Paśupati, a form of Śiva central in Pāśupata Śaivism.<sup>123</sup> Other scholars have compared it with an image from Mandhal, identified as 'Sadāśiva' [Plate 3.16]. If the two crocodile [*makara*] heads on the shoulders are counted in, the Tālā image has twelve heads. The Sadāśiva has a similar number of heads: two tiers of four heads each protrude from the neck, the other four heads are situated on the upper arms and the thighs. Another similarity can be found in some of the moustaches and the elongated ear lobes. However, the relationship between the heads of the Tālā image seems to be different from that between the heads of Sadāśiva: 'Rather than a hierarchy of emanations [*vyūha*] these heads seem to represent various aspects of the deity.' Bakker has compared this absurd figure with descriptions in the *Mahābhārata* of Śiva's attendants. He tentatively interprets the image as a Śaiva *gaṇa* 'who may have had an apotropaic function, protecting the Devarānī Temple'.<sup>124</sup>

Since Tālā has been identified with the village Saṅgama from the *Malhār Plates of Śūrabala/Udīrṇavaira*, either the Jīṭhānī or the Devarānī should be the temple that was dedicated to Jayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka. Based on the interpretation of two fragmentary sculptures, Bakker speculates that it was the Jīṭhānī Temple. The two sculptures that were found in the surroundings of this temple have been identified with Skanda/Kumāra and Varuṇa. These two deities play a prominent role in the *māhātmya* of Sthāṇuṭīrtha in the *Mahābhārata*. Sthāṇuṭīrtha is the place where Varuṇa has been consecrated as 'Lord of the Waters' [*jaleśvara*] and where Skanda/Kumāra was consecrated as general [*senāpati*]. The latter was equipped with an army and all those who were present exclaimed the word 'Jaya' [Victory]:

..... the name 'Jayeśvara', referring simultaneously to Lord Śiva as well as to the great victory obtained by Kumāra in his stead, could have been thought to be an appropriate name for the 'Jīṭhānī temple' at Tālā.

<sup>122</sup>Nigam, 'Impact and Extension of Vākāṭaka Art in Chhattisgarh', 147.

<sup>123</sup>Nigam, 'The Image of Śiva from Tālā', 63.

<sup>124</sup>Bakker, *The Vākāṭakas* 101–107 & Plates VII–VIII.

However, further research is needed to consolidate this 'correspondence' between the remains at Tālā and the mythes of the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>125</sup>

#### MALHĀR

Malhār [Mallālapattana] is one of the oldest and richest archaeological sites in Dakṣiṇa Kosala. It may have been the capital of the Śarabhapurīya Dynasty. Excavations conducted by the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture & Archaeology of the University of Sagar took place during three seasons in the period of 1975–1978 under the direction of K. D. Bajpai, who was assisted by S. K. Pandey and V. D. Jha.<sup>126</sup> The excavations have yielded a large number of sculptures and ruins of ancient temples, ranging from the second century BC to the fourteenth century AD.<sup>127</sup> Among these remains are several temples dedicated to Śiva and Śaiva sculptures. One image shows a bust of Śiva's Ardhanārīśvara form, half female and half male [Plate 3.17]. Another sculpture shows the upper part of a figure who is wearing various ornaments. Apparently this figure is identified as Śiva because of a third eye in the centre of the forehead [Plate 3.18]. There is also an image of Pārvatī, holding her child Skanda on her lap. She is holding a lotus-flower in her raised right hand. The images are dated respectively to the third, fourth and sixth century.<sup>128</sup>

Nagarch describes one of Śiva's temples at Malhār and dates it to the sixth century. He compares the archaeological and sculptural style of this temple with the Jitḥānī and Devarānī at Tālā. The temple was clearly dedicated to Śiva, because on its doorway are carved a number of Śaiva reliefs. Clearance work conducted in 1978 by the Archaeological Survey of India revealed even more Śaiva images, among which an image of Ardhanārīśvara.<sup>129</sup> Bajpai and Pandey give no information about the place where they found 'their' Ardhanārīśvara, so if both images are the same then it remains unclear whether the sculpture should be dated to third or the sixth century.

<sup>125</sup>Bakker, 'Observations', 25–29.

<sup>126</sup>'Excavation at Malhar, District Bilaspur', in: *Indian Archaeology—A Review* [1974–1975 & 1975–1976] 21–22 & 23.

<sup>127</sup>Bajpai & Pandey, *Malhar*, 27.

<sup>128</sup>*Ibidem* Plates XI & XIII.

<sup>129</sup>B. L. Nagarch, 'Pataleśvara Mahādeva and other Temples and Sculptures at Malhar, Distt. Bilaspur [M. P.]', in: *Purātan* 9 [1994] 39–44, 39–40.

Among the excavated material are also coins of the illustrious Śarabha, already mentioned in Chapter 1. Besides the symbol for Malhār ['X'], they contain the figure of an elephant and a 'tree-in-railing'. All three symbols are used before by, among others, the Sātavāhanas, the Māghas and the Mitras. Pandey describes the coins of Śarabha as bearing one more symbol, looking like a stylized human figure:

In this symbol two crescents are drawn opposite to each other. A triangular point is placed in the centre of the top crescent representing the head. In one of the coins the human figure holds a stick in his left hand. This symbol can be identified as Śiva.

The coins can not be dated later than the middle of the fourth century AD.<sup>130</sup> If Pandey is right and the figure on Śarabha's coins represents Śiva then it may be Śiva's Lakulīśa-form, because a club [*laguḍa*] is the characteristic attribute of Lakulīśa.<sup>131</sup>

#### SIRPUR

Sirpur [Śrīpura] was the capital of Dakṣiṇa Kosala during the reign of two Śarabhapurīya kings and the Pāṇḍuvainśins of Śrīpura. It is located on the right bank of the Mahānadī river. According to Sharma the city was deliberately created there on a spot where the river is bending in the northward direction [*uttaravāhin*], because 'in Brahmanical religion *Uttara Vāhini* rivers are supposed to be most sacred'.<sup>132</sup> Since the city of Sirpur is strewn with ruins, Katare calls it the 'City of Temples'. Excavations have been conducted by order of the University of Saugar during three seasons in the years 1953–1956, under the direction of M. G. Dikshit. New excavations started in 1999 and up to present-day clearance work is carried out by A. K. Sharma 'under the aegis of Bodhisatva Nagarjun Smarak Sanstha Va Anusandhan

<sup>130</sup>S. K. Pandey, 'Fresh Light on the History of Chhattisgarh', 60–61.

<sup>131</sup>Since these coins are ascribed to the founder of the Śarabhapurīyas, a figure representing Śiva would be surprising. All kings of the Śarabhapurīya dynasty are styled '*paramavaiṣṇavas*'.

<sup>132</sup>A. K. Sharma, 'Sirpur: The Discovery of a Temple Unparalleled', in: *Pañcatantra. Recent Researches in Indian Archaeology [Dr. C. S. Patil Commemoration Volume Volume II [Delhi 2006] 447–451, 447.*

Kendra' from Nagpur.<sup>133</sup> Sharma is also in charge of excavations at Mansar in the Vidarbha region.

The extensive remains of Sirpur include Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Buddhist and Jaina temples and were already described by Beglar, Cunningham and Cousens. The excavated ruins prove that a great number of temples and *vihāras* have been constructed during the reign of Śivagupta Bālārjuna. Presumably there was complete harmony between the various religions.<sup>134</sup> The Gandheśvara Temple at Sirpur is already described as containing six inscriptions. The temple is still in use and is renovated with old materials. Some of the inscriptions are built into the temple and Cousens remarked in 1904 that the condition of an inscription in the pavement deteriorated because people were walking over it daily:

[...] Yet if we attempted to remove it, we should probably be immediately obstructed by ignorant temple parasites, and be accused of sacrilege. The custodians of this temple, if, indeed, they may be called such, have been harrying the old temple sites for stone, which they have been purloining in order to build walls and shanties around the temple. I have asked for this practice to be stopped, but I find district officers as a rule so exceedingly sensitive with regard to such matters that they often do not care to interfere.<sup>135</sup>

The Gandheśvara Temple is not the only temple at Sirpur that has been subject to a gradual destruction. According to Sharma almost eighty percent of the houses in the modern Sirpur have been constructed using robbed bricks and stones. However, he takes the devastating floods in the Mahānadī as the main cause of damage. The floods leave a 'greenish fine silt deposit' on Sirpur's monuments.<sup>136</sup>

In the season 1999-2000, Sharma and his colleague Jagat Pati Joshi cleared a Śiva temple called SRP-2-2000 [Plate 3.19]. It is located on a low mound, with pieces of a fortification wall and a tank in the north of the temple. A drain starting in the shrine [*garbhagriha*] of the temple runs in the direction

<sup>133</sup>A. K. Sharma, 'Sirpur-Loving Couples and Dancing Rats', in: A. K. Sharma, B. R. Mani & G. S. Khwaja [eds.] *Purāmanthana* 2 [2004] 47-52, 47.

<sup>134</sup>Sant Lal Katore, 'Excavations at Sirpur', 1-8.

<sup>135</sup>Henry Cousens, 'Conservation in the Central Provinces', in: *Archaeological Survey of India. AR* [1903-1904] 59-60.

<sup>136</sup>Sharma, 'Sirpur: The Discovery of a Temple Unparalleled', 448.

of this tank. SRP-2 is facing west and stone and bricks together with pieces of slate are used for its construction.<sup>137</sup> The *garbhagriha* is square and contains two *liṅgas*. A black granite *liṅga* measuring 1.20 in height is standing in the centre of the shrine, fixed in a *yonī*. It has three different parts: the bottom part is square, the middle part is octagonal and the upper part is round and concave. The other *liṅga* with *yonī* is lying in the *garbhagriha*. The *liṅga* is made of granite and the *yonī* is made of white schist and has a 'makaramukha'. It seems that a great number of antiquities were recovered at the site, but there are no photographs or detailed descriptions available.<sup>138</sup>

The next report of an excavated structure is about a temple discovered in the season 2004–2005 in the centre of Sirpur [Plate 3.20]. The temple is special because it has not one, but two *garbhagrihas* side by side. The eastern shrine contains an image of Viṣṇu, while the western one is dedicated to Śiva and houses a *liṅga*. They are both facing north. The *liṅga* measures 1.10 in height and is fixed in a sixteen-sided *yonī*. The temple is constructed with bricks and according to Sharma it was built with the aim 'to pacify the passion of followers of Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism'. Śiva and Viṣṇu were installed in a single temple. The structure has another peculiar aspect:

The space between the two shrines is 3.70 wide. The outerwalls of the shrines are uniformly 1.35 m. wide. Starting from north after the 1.35 m. wide wall in between the two shrines a 'T' shaped structure of brick walls having stone flooring if formed.

Sharma claims that the 'T' shaped pattern represents Brahma, and that this temple excavated at Sirpur houses all three gods of the divine triad.<sup>139</sup>

These two temple monuments are only the beginning, because recent excavations have revealed at least seven more temples dedicated to Śiva on various locations at Sirpur. It is a pity that the excavator and his assistants do not publish more and better reports of their activities. No records of the state in which the structures were found or descriptions and photographs of sculptures are available. The most recent excavation is carried out on a mound named Suraṅga Tīla in the centre of Sirpur; a major temple construction has been uncovered [Plate 3.21]. The arched entrance [*torāṇadvāra*] was

<sup>137</sup>Slate is fine-grained rock, which is easily split into smooth flat pieces. It is locally available in quarries.

<sup>138</sup>A. K. Sharma & Jagat Pati Joshi, 'Excavations at Sirpur, District Mahasamund, Chhattisgarh', in: *Purātattva* 30 [1999–2000] 110–116, 110–112.

<sup>139</sup>Sharma, 'Sirpur: The Discovery of a Temple Unparalleled', 447–451.



cleared first on the western side of the mound [Plate 3.22]. From this entrance a 'path' leads to a big flight of stairs going up to a platform. On top of this platform are four small buildings, three of which house a *liṅga* enclosed by a *yoni* [Plate 3.23]. Sharma has a theory of four *liṅga*'s in different colours, one for each direction, to explain the temple construction. The colours of the *liṅga*'s would be black, white, yellow and red. However, three shrines are in the eastern direction and one in the southern direction, so not all four directions are covered [Plate 3.24]. Also the colours of the three *liṅga*'s are black, brown and white, which corresponds not with Sharma's theory.

Within close distance of the Suraṅga Tīla are two other Śiva temples side by side [Plates 3.25–3.28]. They are so-called *yugala* [twin] temples: one established by the king and one by the queen. The entrances of the *yugala* temples are on the southern side. It seems that both temples had a stellate ground plan and a *maṇḍapa* with sixteen pillars [Plate 3.29]. The *garbhagrihas* house a white *liṅga* and *yoni*. Sharma considers these *yugala* temples to be [part of] the Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Complex. The *tapovana* of the Complex should be about five km. from the location of the Suraṅga Tīla. Perhaps the Suraṅga Tīla temple construction, built by Śivagupta Bālārjuna, was also part of the Complex. If so, it must have been the main temple of the Complex: the Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple established by Śivagupta himself. The *yugala* temples could be the Dayeśvara-bhaṭṭāraka and the Ameśvara temples, established by Śivagupta and his queen Ammādevī.<sup>140</sup>

Tālā, Malhār and Sirpur are of course not the only centres of art and architecture in Dakṣiṇa Kosala. In the village Kharod in the Bilaspur District are for example two Śaiva temples: the Lakhneśvara Temple with the inscription of Īśānadeva and the stellate Indal Deul [650–660]. Another temple dedicated to Śiva, also with a stellate ground plan, is the Siddheśvara Temple at Palāri [675–685]. The door lintel of the Siddheśvara Temple shows an image of Lakulīśa surrounded by his four pupils. The Kuleśvara Temple of Rājim is built on a small island in the middle of the Mahānadī. The left jamb of the entrance has a panel with an image of Lakulīśa seated on a double-layered lotus flower. His four pupils are depicted in the four corners of the panel, seated on smaller lotus-seats [Plate 3.30]. These temples at Kharod, Palāri and Rājim can all be dated tentatively to the period of interest here, the

<sup>140</sup>The description of the Suraṅga Tīla and the *yugala* temples are based on observations during a two-day visit to the area in 2006.

fifth to seventh century AD. However, Stadtner thinks that they stem from a period when Dakṣiṇa Kosala was ruled by unknown former feudatories of the dynasties described in Chapter 1.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup>These temples are described in articles written by Donald Stadtner: 'The Siddhesvara Temple at Palari', 49–56 & 'Ancient Kosala and the Stellate Plan', 137–145.

## Chapter 4: Early Śaiva Sects in Dakṣiṇa Kosala

In the preceding chapters, the available information relating to early Śaivism in Dakṣiṇa Kosala has been discussed and reviewed. In the present chapter the information is used to take the first step in answering the central question of this thesis: What are the 'roads' along which early forms of Śaivism 'travelled', to arrive at Dakṣiṇa Kosala? Traces of at least three forms of early Śaivism have been found in the art, the inscriptions and other archaeological remains of Dakṣiṇa Kosala: the Lākula and Somasiddhānta branches of Pāśupata Śaivism and the Śaiva Siddhānta. The question where these early Śaiva sects originally came from, is only tentatively answered. It is a question that needs and deserves more research, therefore some interesting directions for further research are suggested.

### PĀŚUPATA ŚAIVISM & SOMASIDDHĀNTA

The original *Skandapurāṇa* is an important source of information for the reconstruction of the [mythological] origin of Pāśupata Śaivism. In the chapters 110–138 it is told that Śiva incarnates at Kārohaṇa every time a transition of *yuga* takes place. Kārohaṇa is situated on the northern bank of the Narmadā river, and it is a very auspicious place because one who goes there is freed from the burden of rebirth. Śiva already incarnated three times at Kārohaṇa:

As Bhārabhūti He who carries the *pināka* bow caught the burden [bhāra] of the twice-born and threw them in the Narmadā. As Diṇḍi-muṇḍa he cut off the heads in the Tretā *yuga*. As Āṣādhi he granted his favour by dancing in the Dvāpara *yuga*.

In the present Kali *yuga*, Śiva [Lakulīśa] incarnates at Kārohaṇa again. He assumes a 'white-bodied form' and goes to the house of a man named Somaśarman, who was born in the lineage of Atri [*jagāmātriḡṛhaṃ*]. Śiva grants Somaśarman and his family perfection in *yoga* and initiates him in his own teaching [*svasiddhānta*]. From Kārohaṇa he travels to Ujjayanī [Ujjain], where he enters a cremation ground and covers himself with ashes. In Ujjayanī Śiva initiates his first pupil, named Kauśika. Then he goes to Jambumārga and Mathurā where he initiates respectively Gārgya and Mitra. Śiva's fourth

pupil is a *brahmacārin* from the Land of the Kurus and is initiated in Kānyakubja [Kanauj]. Śiva teaches his four pupils the Pañcārtha [*svasiddhānta*], and he instructs them to save other brahmins by initiating them too.<sup>142</sup> This story telling the origin of Pāśupata Śaivism is probably a later invention:

The doctrine of a *guru* Lakuliśa and his four pupils seems to be an example of 'invention of tradition' [Gupta period], in order to account for several *guru* lineages that all claimed to go back to Śiva's incarnation, an *avatāra* who since then received the name Lākulin/Lakuliśa.<sup>143</sup>

According to Bisschop, the only probable historical figure of the earliest stage of Pāśupata Śaivism is Kauśika.<sup>144</sup>

Lakuliśa's fourth pupil from the land of the Kurus [Kauruṣa] established his Pāśupata lineage in Kānyakubja. He was succeeded by Manuṣyaka, Puṣpaka and Rāśīkara. Kānyakubja [Kanauj] was the capital of the Maukharis of Magadha, and it may have been under their rule that the original *Skandapurāṇa* was composed.<sup>145</sup> The *Harāhā Inscription of the reign of Īśānavarman* [554 AD] describes the family history of the Maukharis. Harivarman was the first-known king of this dynasty.<sup>146</sup> He may have been the same Harivarman who issued a copper-plate found at Shankarapur. If this is the case, then he was a feudatory king of Gupta king Budhagupta.<sup>147</sup> Harivarman was succeeded by his son Ādityavarman, who was also succeeded by a son named Īśvaravarman. This last king begot a son named Īśānavarman, who ruled in the middle of the sixth century and consolidated the rule of the Maukharis. He was succeeded by his son Śārvavarman and grand-son Avantivarman. Śārvavarman ruled during the third quarter of the sixth century and Avantivarman in the last quarter of the sixth century.<sup>148</sup> The latter three kings assumed the title '*Mahārājādhirāja*' and made Kānyakubja into the political and cultural centre of North India. They were also *paramamāheśvaras*,

<sup>142</sup> *Skandapurāṇa* 110–138. See: Peter C. Bisschop, *Early Śaivism and the Skandapurāṇa. Sects and Centres* [Groningen 2006] 69–70 & 102–108.

<sup>143</sup> Bakker & Isaacson, *The Skandapurāṇa Volume IIA*, 29–30, note 100.

<sup>144</sup> Bisschop, *Early Śaivism and the Skandapurāṇa*, 44–48.

<sup>145</sup> Bakker & Isaacson, *The Skandapurāṇa Volume IIA*, 29–30.

<sup>146</sup> Hirananda Śāstri, 'No. 5—Haraha Inscription of the Reign of Isanavarman: [Vikrama Samvat] 611', in: *Epigraphia Indica* XIV, 110–120.

<sup>147</sup> Balchandra Jain, Shankarapur Plate of Budhagupta and Harivarman: Gupta Year 166, in: *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India* IV [1977] 6266.

<sup>148</sup> Śāstri, 'Haraha Inscription of the Reign of Isanavarman', 110–120.

who build and restored Śaiva temples.<sup>149</sup> The *Harāhā Inscription* records the renovation of a dilapidated Śiva temple by a Maukhari prince named Sūryavarman. This prince was also a son of Īśānavarman and the brother of Śarvavarman. He was the maternal grand-father of Pāṇḍava king Śivagupta Bālārjuna of Dakṣiṇa Kosala.

In the *Sirpur Lakṣmaṇa Temple Stone Inscription* the mother of king Śivagupta Bālārjuna, the illustrious Vāsaṭā, is described as the daughter of king Sūryavarman who was born in the 'Varman family' that was ruling over Magadha [*magadhādhipatya*].<sup>150</sup> It has been suggested by Bakker, that the Pāśupata ascetic Udbhavarāśi from the *Gandheśvara Temple Pillar Inscription* perhaps came to Dakṣiṇa Kosala with Vāsaṭā:

This Udbhavarāśirudra might have reached Dakṣiṇa Kosala in the train of Bālārjuna's mother Vāsaṭā, who was a Maukhari princess, daughter of Sūryavarman, and who had come from Kānyakubja to Śrīpura as the wife of the Pāṇḍuvarṣi prince Harṣagupta in the last quarter of the sixth century.<sup>151</sup>

This is a viable hypothesis, but Śaivism already arrived at Dakṣiṇa Kosala before Harṣagupta married to Vāsaṭā. The Pāṇḍuvarṣins of Mekalā were devotees of Śiva. *Sāmanta* Indrabalarāja is also styled *paramamāheśvara*, and Nannarāja I is said to have filled the earth with temples of Śiva. The possible influence of a connection between the Maukharis of Kānyakubja and the Pāṇḍuvarṣins of Śrīpura on the arrival of Śaivism at Dakṣiṇa Kosala does not have to be excluded though: the marriage between Harṣagupta and Vāsaṭā was probably not the onset of good connections, but rather the result.

It has been suggested that Tīvaradeva was an ally of Īśānavarman in his military campaign against the Viṣṇukuṇḍins of Āndhra. In the *Harāhā Inscription*, Īśānavarman is praised for his victory over 'the king of Āndhra' who had a powerful army of elephants. This king of Āndhra was the Viṣṇukuṇḍin ruler Indravarmān, also known as Indrabhaṭṭāarakavarman [ca. 526–555 AD].<sup>152</sup> Since Dakṣiṇa Kosala was on the main route from the north [Kauśāmbi] to

<sup>149</sup>Bakker & Isaacson, *The Skandapurāṇa Volume IIA*, 31–33.

<sup>150</sup>Shastri, *IŚPS II*, 141–147.

<sup>151</sup>Bakker & Isaacson, *The Skandapurāṇa Volume IIA*, 30 note 103.

<sup>152</sup>Hans T. Bakker, 'Northern India between the Imperial Guptas and king Harṣa of Kanauj' [*forthcoming*] 1–44, 11–14.

the south-eastern coast of India,<sup>153</sup> Tīvaradeva was in an excellent position to support Īśānavarman in his battle:

Tīvaradeva who was master of the entire Mahākosala region must have facilitated Īśānavarman's march into the interior of Orissa and Āndhra.<sup>154</sup>

Īśānavarman ruled in the middle of the sixth century, so these events do not explain the presence of Śaivas at Tālā during the end of the fifth, beginning of the sixth century. Perhaps the close connections with the Maukharis dated even before the alliance between Tīvaradeva and Īśānavarman. It is also possible that Śaiva ascetics came from another Pāśupata centre in the north, for example Vārāṇasī. An alternative to these suggestions would be that Tālā was no seat of Pāśupata Śaivism, but of a another early Śaiva sect.

Rahul Kumar Singh connects the absurd image found at Tālā and the ruins of the Jithānī and Devarānī with the Somasiddhānta. According to him, the unusual features of Tālā's remains express the 'unorthodox and extreme' character of this early Śaiva sect.<sup>155</sup> The Somasiddhānta is an offshoot of Pāśupata Śaivism. Early references to the sect are rare, but later sources identify it with the Kāpālikas, who worship the ferocious [*ugra, ghora*] form of Śiva. For example in the third act of the *Prabodhacandrodaya* of Kṛṣṇamiśra [ca. 1050–1100 AD], a follower of the Somasiddhānta is introduced 'bearing the form of a Kāpālika'.<sup>156</sup> The Somasiddhāntin in the play wears a garland of human bones, is dwelling in a cremation ground, eats from a human skull and worships Bhairava [Śiva] with oblations of human flesh.<sup>157</sup>

The *Malhār Plates of Śivagupta Bālārjuna* [Year 57] are exceptional for two reasons. First because this charter is one of the earliest epigraphical references to the Somasiddhānta, and second because it tells the [mythical] origin of the sect. At the time of the Kali *yuga*, Śiva incarnated as Lakulīśanātha in the house of a brahmin named Somaśarman. Contrary to the story of the *Skandapurāṇa*, here it is Somaśarman who initiates Lakulīśa in the Great Vow [*mahāvratā*]. After being initiated, Lakulīśa became a moon on earth

<sup>153</sup>Excavation at Malhar, District Bilaspur', 21.

<sup>154</sup>Quote of Sinha in: Bakker, 'Observations', 16.

<sup>155</sup>Rahul Kumar Singh, 'Tālā Icon: A Comprehensive Attempt of Its Identifications', in: *Riddle of Indian Iconography* [Delhi 2000] 135–142, 139–141.

<sup>156</sup>*tataḥ praviśati kāpālikarūpadhārī somasiddhāntaḥ.*

<sup>157</sup>S. K. Nambiar, *Prabodhacandrodaya of Kṛṣṇa Miśra* [Delhi 1971] 62–91.

and initiated a pupil named Mugalisa in the *mahāvratā*. The lineage of the Somasiddhāntins Rudrasoma, Tejasoma and Bhīmasoma from Sirpur is said to stem from Lakulīśanātha through his pupil Mugalisa. According to Bakker, the name Mugalisa is probably derived from Mudgalīśa or Musalīśa, both meaning 'club-bearing Lord'. This pupil of Lakulīśa founded the Mausula division within Pāśupata Śaivism:

In its initial stage this tradition, or one strand of it, may have been named after its putative preceptor 'Mausula'; in the course of time other groups may have been assimilated, and gradually a distinct theology and praxis may have been developed, which became known as the Somasiddhānta, thus preserving a reference to a distant saint who was hallowed as its founder, Somaśarman.<sup>158</sup>

In the *Vāyupurāṇa* and the *Liṅgapurāṇa* Somaśarman and Lakulīśa are described as the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth incarnation of Śiva.<sup>159</sup> Somaśarman is said to be born in Prabhāsaṭīrtha, 'a holy place in Saurashtra near the Arabian Sea' [Gujarat].<sup>160</sup> The Somasiddhāntins/Kāpālikas are also called Mahāvratins, because of the name of their vow: the Great Vow [*mahāvratā*].<sup>161</sup> There are only two inscriptions that record donations to Mahāvratin ascetics. Both inscriptions are from western India. It is known that Kāpālikas continued to exist in Gujarat until at least the twelfth century. Lorenzen also speculates about a possible connection between Kāpālikas and *Atharvaveda* brahmins.<sup>162</sup>

Not much is known about the development of the Somasiddhānta from Gujarat to other parts of India. One could imagine a route similar to the development of Pāśupata Śaivism as described above. The fact that the earliest Śaiva remains are from Mekalā, in between the north of India and Dakṣiṇa Kosala, supports a 'northern route'. A purely hypothetical alternative is a route from Gujarat to Dakṣiṇa Kosala through Vidarbha. In the preceding chapters is already mentioned that the Vākāṭakas claimed power over Dakṣiṇa Kosala and that migrating artisans from Vidarbha influenced the art of Dakṣiṇa Kosala. It is possible that both processes coincided with

<sup>158</sup>Bakker, 'Somaśarman, Somavaṃśa and Somasiddhānta', 5–12.

<sup>159</sup>*Vāyupurāṇa* [23] & *Liṅgapurāṇa* [7] & [24].

<sup>160</sup>Bakker, 'Somaśarman, Somavaṃśa and Somasiddhānta', 13.

<sup>161</sup>Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*, xiii.

<sup>162</sup>*Ibidem* 27–28.

religious influence. There are not many traces to support this hypothesis yet. Vākāṭaka king Rudrasena I [335–360] is characterized as a ‘fervent devotee of Lord Mahā-Bhairava’.<sup>163</sup> A temple dedicated to Bhairava could perhaps be found at Nachna, a city that might have been the capital of Rudrasena I. Nachna is indeed an ancient Śaiva centre with ‘a wealth of Śaivite archaeological remains’. Only these remains seem to date from the last quarter of the fifth century, when Nachna was under the control of a feudatory king of the Vākāṭakas. Earlier Śaiva constructions at Nachna have probably been replaced.<sup>164</sup> A head expressing the ferocious [*ugra*] aspect of Śiva [Bhairava] is found at Mandhal [Plate 4.1]. A third eye is visible on the forehead and the mouth is open, showing teeth and fangs.<sup>165</sup> Also the iconographic use of the skull might have its origin in Mansar. These traces are of course meagre and need further research.

#### ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

The Śaiva Siddhānta portrays itself as a ‘fully completed’ [*siddhānta*] form of Śaivism. According to Davis it is difficult to be precise about the earliest moment of the Śaiva Siddhānta’s ‘self-defenition’. The gradual emergence of this form of Śaivism as a distinct order is probably somewhat later than Pāśupata Śaivism.<sup>166</sup> It is perhaps because of this lack of knowledge about its origins, that many indologists seem to have a distorted image of the Śaiva Siddhānta:

Many indologists, if they have heard of the Śaiva Siddhānta at all, are likely to have been encouraged to suppose it to be a uniquely TAMILIAN, Vedānta-influenced theological school with its origins in the twelfth century—a school that acknowledged as scripture a body of Sanskrit texts called *āgamas* that prescribed the mode of worship in South Indian Śaiva temples, as well as a body of Tamil devotional hymns to Śiva, but that was really based on a group of fourteen Tamil theological

<sup>163</sup> *atyantasvāmimahābhairavabhakta*.

<sup>164</sup> Bakker, *The Vākāṭakas*, 13 note 23.

<sup>165</sup> Ibidem Plate xxva 123–124.

<sup>166</sup> Richard H. Davis, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe. Worshipping Śiva in Medieval India* [Princeton/New Jersey 1991] 14–15.



works, the *Meykaṅṅa-cāttiraṅkaḷ*, almost all of which are supposed to have been written in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>167</sup>

This image is distorted because it only applies to the later development of the Śaiva Siddhānta. Before the twelfth century the Śaiva Siddhānta was a pan-Indian school.

The inscriptions of Śivagupta Bālārjuna are the most valuable source of information for the presence of Śaiva Siddhānta in Dakṣiṇa Kosala. From the *Senkapāṭ Stone Slab Inscription* it is known that a Śaiva Siddhānta *ācārya* hailed from the penance-grove Āmardaka, hypothetically situated in eastern Mahārāṣṭra. Another place that might be important for the reconstruction of the Śaiva Siddhānta is again Kānyakubja, the capital of the Maukharis. The hoard of nine copper-plate inscriptions recovered from Sirpur, sketches the picture of a major Śaiva Siddhānta centre at Śrīpura. Only eight of the nine charters have been discussed in Chapter 2. The ninth charter contains not a single reference to the Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Complex or the *ācāryas* who were related to this complex. However, there is a connection with the other charters. A certain Bhaṭṭa Jejjaṭa is the donee of the grant. Presumably this is the same Jejjaṭa who requested the grant to Astraśiva of the Bāleśvara Temple, issued in Śivagupta's fifty-second regnal year. Jejjaṭa is said to hail from Kānyakubja.

A Śaiva Siddhānta *ācārya* from Tamilnadu named Aghoraśiva, locates himself in a lineage of twelve teachers 'reaching back to the sage Durvāsas'. Among his predecessors are at least two teachers from Gujarat, two from Vārāṇasī, one from Purī near Bombay and two from the Bengal region. In the *Mahotsavavidhi*, Aghoraśiva describes Durvāsas as 'the great teacher of the *śivaḅṅāna*, from whom arose the lineage of *gurus* in that good abode of Āmarda'.<sup>168</sup> Another story of Durvāsas is told by Abhinavagupta:

[Śiva] instructed the sage, Durvāsas, to revive the Śaivāgamic teaching. The sage accordingly divided all the Śaivāgamas into three classes accordingly as they taught monism, dualism, or monism-cum-dualism, imparted their knowledge to his three mind-born sons, Tryambaka, Āmardaka, and Śrīnātha respectively, and charged each one of

<sup>167</sup>Dominic Goodall, *The Parākhyantra. A Scripture of the Śaiva Siddhānta* [Pondichéry/Paris 2004] xiii–xxxiv, xiii.

<sup>168</sup>R. H. Davis, 'Aghoraśiva's Background', in: *The Journal of Oriental Research Madras* LVI–LXII [1986–1992] 367–378.

them separately with the mission of spreading the knowledge of the respective Āgamas. Thus there came into existence three Śaiva Tantric Schools, each known by the name of the first earthly progenitor.<sup>169</sup>

It seems that Aghoraśiva traced his lineage back to Āmardaka, also referred to as Āmarda *āśrama*. Davis also refers to the *Ranod [Raṇipadra] Stone Inscription* dated to the tenth century. According to this record, Śiva once performed a sacrifice in the Devadāru forest. The fruit of this action was a lineage of sages 'with many far-extending branches'. One of the leading sages was called 'the lord of the Āmardaka *tīrtha*'. The pupil of this sage was the *guru* Purandara. A local ruler named Avantivarman heard of the teacher Purandara and wished to be initiated into Śaivism. He traveled to the abode of the sage and brought him back to his capital Mattamayūra [Kadwaha]. There the king underwent initiation.<sup>170</sup>

The modern Kadwaha is a little south from the ancient Kānyakubja. Perhaps the Avantivarman referred to in the *Ranod Inscription* is actually the Maukhari Avantivarman of Magadha. If this is the case, then Āmardaka should be situated somewhere in the area of Kānyakubja instead of eastern Mahārāṣṭra. Possibly the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition of Dakṣiṇa Kosala originated from a tradition at Āmardaka or Kānyakuba, a tradition that developed from earlier forms of Śaivism.

#### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Dakṣiṇa Kosala is an interesting area for further research, especially because it is so rich in ancient remains. The traces of early Śaivism are an invitation to look further into the development of Śaivism in Dakṣiṇa Kosala. One subject that needs more attention is the relation between brahmins of either the Yajurveda or the Atharvaveda and the development of early Śaivism. A focus of research is the early Śaiva tradition in Vidarbha and northern India, and the possible development to Dakṣiṇa Kosala. To conclude, there are probably more inscriptions that contain valuable information and need to be edited and published.

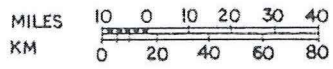
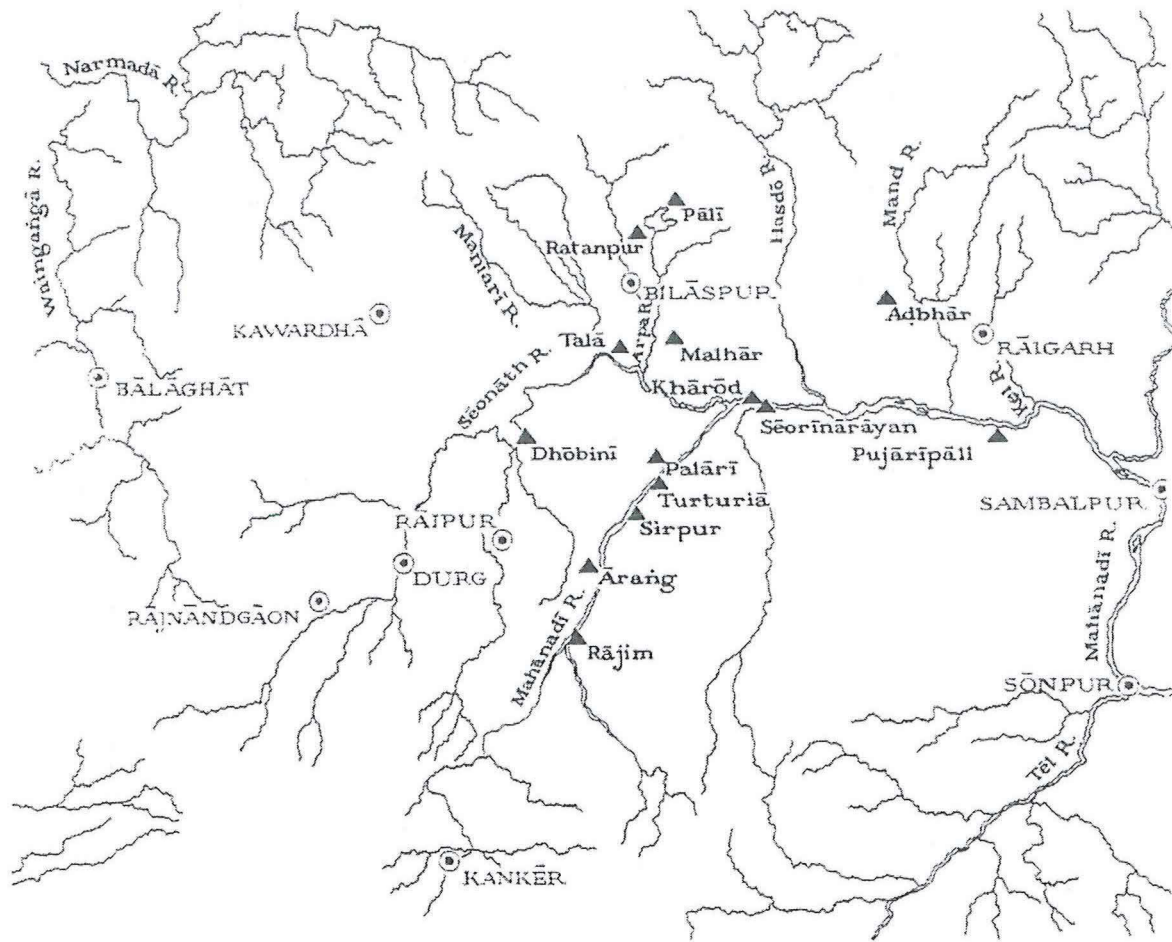
<sup>169</sup>Quote of K. C. Pandey, in: Davis, 'Aghoraśiva's Background', 373.

<sup>170</sup>Davis, 'Aghoraśiva's Background', 374.

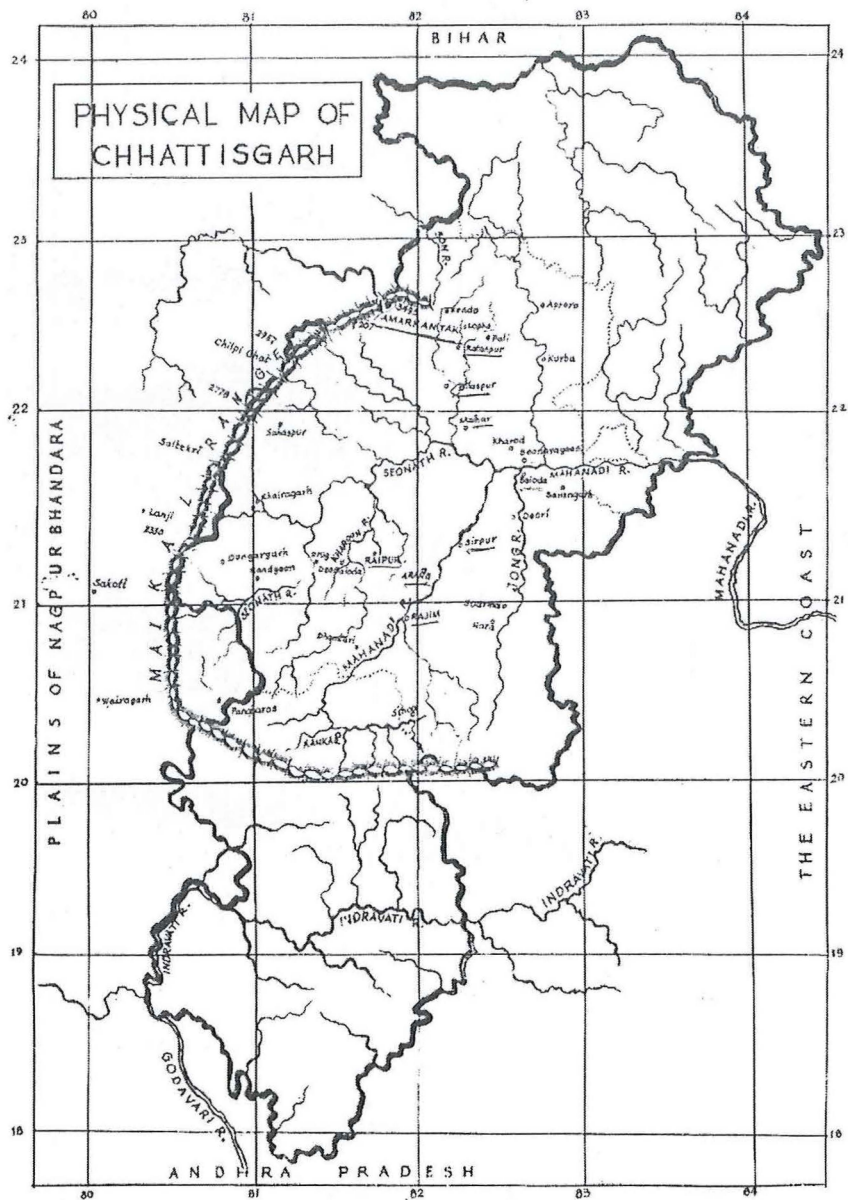
## Appendix A: Maps of Dakṣiṇa Kosala



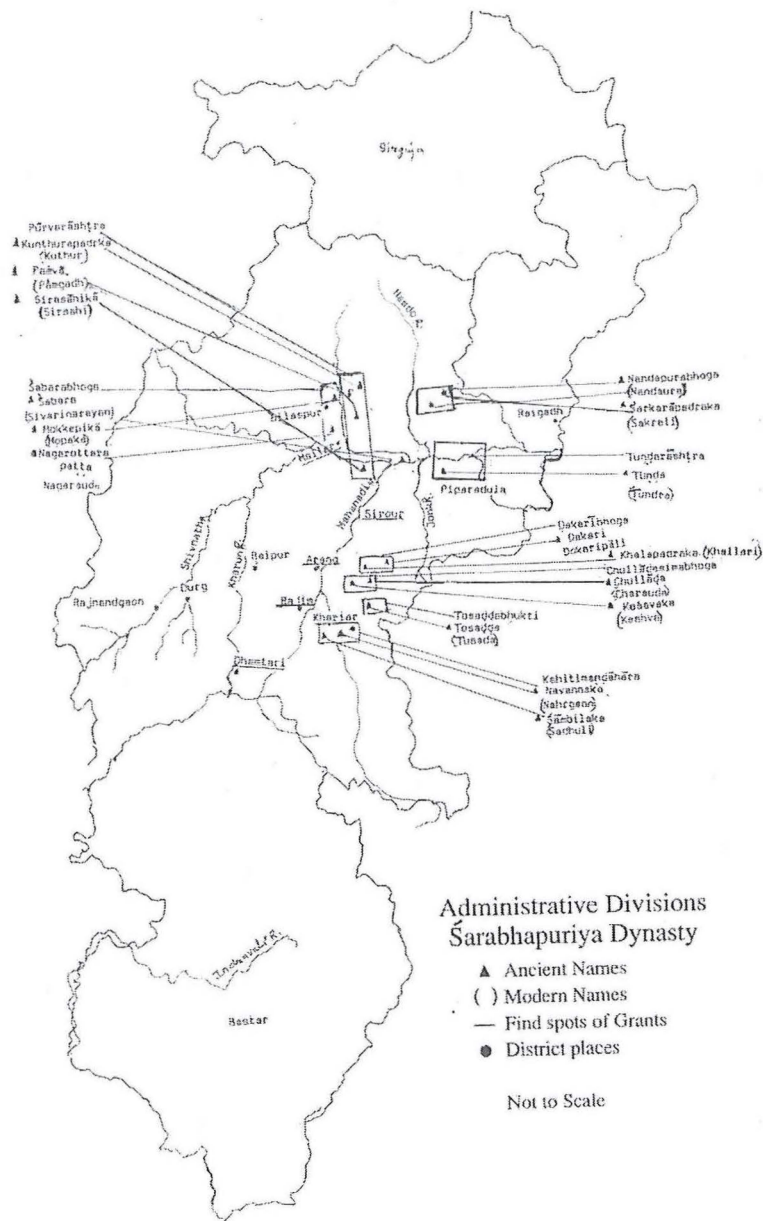
Map 1: Map of North India



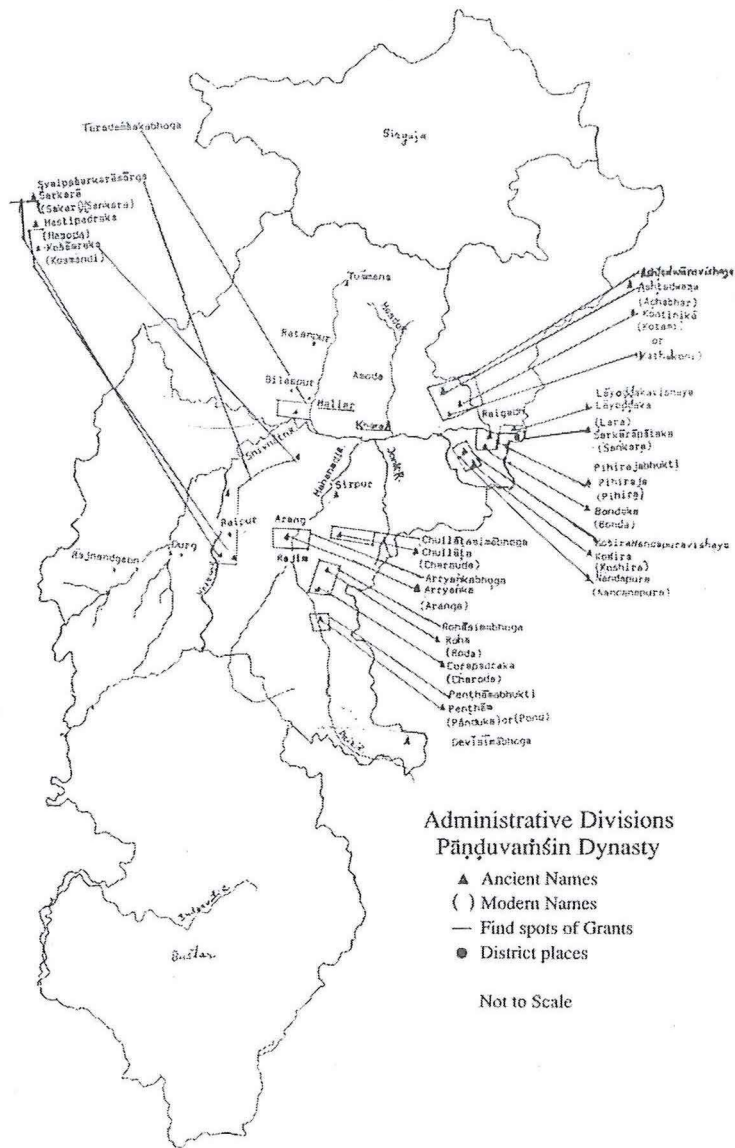
Map 2: *Map of Dakṣiṇa Kosala*



Map 3: Physical Map of Chhattisgarh [Dakṣiṇa Kosala]



Map 4: Administrative Units of the Śarabhapuriyas



Map 5: Administrative Units of the Pāṇḍuvarṃśins of Śrīpura

## Appendix B: Dynasties of Dakṣiṇa Kosala

	Śarabhapur	Śrīpura (Sirpur)	Prasannapur	?	Maṇḍaka
AD 450	Śarabha (founder) Narendra (Mahendrāditya) Prasannamātra ←			Jayabala Vatsarāja Nāgabala	
AD 500			Prasannamātra (founder) Jayabhāṭṭāraka		
AD 550	Jayarāja Sudevarāja ←	Sudevarāja (founder) Indrabala (sāmanta) ← Pravararāja Nannarāja I	Pravarabhāṭṭāraka	Bharatabala Śūrabala →	Udayana Indrabala (sāmanta)
AD 600		Tivaradeva Nannarāja II (Harṣagupta) Mahāśivagupta			

	Amarāvayakula / Maukharis	Pāṇḍavas of Mekalā and Kosala	Śarabhapurīyas of Kosala
AD 450		Jayabala Vatsarāja = Droṇabhāṭṭārakā Nāgabala = Indrabhāṭṭārakā	Śarabha *Narendra (Mahendrāditya) (coins) Prasannamātra (coins)
AD 500	Jayabhāṭṭāraka		
AD 550	*Vyāghrarāja Pravarabhāṭṭāraka *Īśānavarman	'Lokaprakāśā' = (*Bharatabala Udayana) *Śūrabala *Indrabala *Nannarāja I (?) *Īśānadeva (*Bhavadeva)	Durgarāja *Jayarāja *Sudevarāja *Pravararāja
(AD 554)	Sūryavarman	Candragupta *Tivaradeva	
AD 600	Bhāskaravarman (*)Vāsaṭā = Harṣagupta *Mahāśivagupta	*Nannarāja II	

Figures 1.1 a & b: Chart with the dynasties of Dakṣiṇa Kosala



## Appendix C: 9 Copper-Plates from Sirpur

The hoard of nine copper-plate charters was found by accident in the surroundings of Sirpur in april 1978. All nine sets can be traced back to the reign of Pāṇḍava king Śivagupta Bālārjuna. Ajay Mitra Shastri has written a short article on these copper-plates and he included a summery of the text in his book on the inscriptions of the dynasties of Dakṣiṇa Kosala.<sup>1</sup> The text of the nine sets of copper-plates is edited by Rahul Kumar Singh and published in the journal *Utkīrṇa Lekha*.<sup>2</sup> However, since they were forgotten to print the picture of the state-minister in the book, the journal was not allowed to be distributed. In december 2006 I received a copy of the journal from L. S. Nigam in the Raipur Museum. As far as I know, the rest of the journals are still not distributed, therefore I have included here an emended version of Rahul Kumar Singh's edition and a translation.

### FIRST COPPER-PLATE<sup>3</sup>

(*aum*) *svasty*

*aśeṣakṣi(tī)śavidyābhyāsaviśeṣāsāditamahānīyavinaya[1.1](saṃ)pa(tsaṃ)pādītasakalavijigīṣuguno,*

*guṇavatsamāśrayaḥ,*

*prakṛ(ṣṭa)[1.2]tarasau(rya)prajñāprabhāva(saṃ)bhāvitamahā(bhyu)dayaḥ,*

*kārttikeya iva [1.3] kṛ(tti)vāsa(so) rājñāḥ śrīharṣaguptarājadevasya sū(nuḥ),*

*soma(va[1.4]ṃ)śa(saṃ)bha(vaḥ),*

*paramamā(he)śvaro,*

<sup>1</sup>Ajay Mitra Shastri, 'Balesvara—Bhattaraka. A hitherto unknown Saiva establishment at Sripura', in: *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India* 18 [1992] 15–23; Shastri, *ISPS Part II* [New Delhi 1995] 376–379.

<sup>2</sup>Rahul Kumar Singh, 'Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna ke samaya kā Sirapura se prāpta 9 tāmralekha nidhi' in: Bālacandra Jaina [ed.] *Utkīrṇa Lekha* [Raipur 2005] 196–217.

<sup>3</sup>The text of this inscription is written on three separate copper-plates, presumably put together with a ring and a seal. Of the first copper-plate only one side is used, the other two are engraved on both sides. The numbers between square brackets within the text represent the lines on the copper-plates: for example [2a.3] means the third line on the first side of the second copper-plate.

*mātāpitṛpādānudhyātaḥ,*  
*śrīmahāśīva[1.5]guptarājade(vaḥ),*  
*kuśa(tī) ||*  
*kikkidabhu(ktī)yagrāmāṭavituṅge<sup>4</sup> brāhma[1.6]ṇā(n saṃ)pūjya*  
*tatpratinivāsikuṭumbino yathākālādhyāsinah samā[1.7]ha(rtṛsaṃ)nidhātṛpra(bhṛtī)n*  
*asmatpādopajīvinah sa(rva)rājapurū(śān sa)[2a.1]mājñāpayati: |*  
*viditam astu bhavatāṃ yathāsmābhiḥ (saṃ)praty ayaṃ grāmah*  
*sani[2a.2]dhānah sopanidhānah (sasarva)karādānasame(taḥ) sa(rva)pīḍāviva(rji)-*  
*taḥ sada[2a.3]śāparādhaḥ pratiśiddhacāṭabhaṭaprave(śaḥ) |*  
*asyām a(tī)takārttikapau[2a.4](rṇa)māsyām*  
*atraiva śrīpuratalapratīṣṭhitaśrī(madbāle)śvara<sup>5</sup>tapovana[2a.5]sthānagu(rubhyaḥ)*  
*phuṭṭipāṭi<sup>6</sup>vini(rga)tanandapu(rī)yabhagava(cchrīma)ddī[2a.6]rghācā(rya)praśīṣya-*  
*śrī(madbā)leśvarīyabhagavadvyāpaśivācā(rya)śīṣyaśrī[2a.7]madbhagavadastraśivācā-*  
*(rye)bhyaḥ*  
*śrījejjataviñāptikayā*  
*śīṣyapra[2a.8]śīṣyāṇāṃ yāgadikṣāvvyākhyānātrasa(ttra)prava(rta)nāya<sup>7</sup>*  
*mātāpitror ā(tma)na[2b.1]ś ca puṇyābhi(vṛ)ddhaye*  
*samakālopabhogārtham ācandratārakārkaṃ*  
*uda[2b.2]kapū(rva)kaṃ tā(mra)śāsanena pratipādita ity*  
*avagatya samucitabhoga[2b.3]bhāgādikasamupanayanto bhavantah sukhaṃ prati-*  
*vasa(ntu) iti |*  
*bhāvina[2b.4]ś ca bhūpālān u(ddiśye)dam abhidhiyate:*

<sup>4</sup>Shastri 'reads' here Ravituṅga instead of Aṭavituṅga. See: Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 376.

<sup>5</sup>This inscription is part of a set of nine copper-plate inscriptions, and seven of these inscriptions mention a temple-complex named Bāleśvara-Bhaṭṭāraka. Therefore it seems to be a valid suggestion that the name of this temple-complex is meant to be engraved here. Shastri: *Muktataleśvara*. See: *Ibidem* 376.

<sup>6</sup>Shastri: Phuṭṭapāiṅṭi instead of Phuṭṭipāṭi. See: *Ibidem* 376.

<sup>7</sup>It is not quite clear how to interpret the 'nātra' part in this phrase. The text of the eighth copper-plate has a similar phrase: *vyākhyānā(tra)sa(ttra)prava(rta)nāya*, see page 69. The fifth copper-plate also has a phrase that is more or less the same: *sata-tayāgādīdikṣāvvyā(khyā)bhaktasa(ttra)prava(rta)nārtham* ('to meet the expenses of housing for devotees, teaching, initiations and continual offering ceremonies etc.'). see page 65. The word *nātra* (*nāntra*) means 'eulogy' or 'praise', therefore a translation of *nātrasattra* would be 'house of praise'. Two other options are the emendations of *nātrasattra* into *bhaktasattra* ('housing for devotees') or *nāṭyasattra* ('housing and dancing').

*bhūmipradā divi lalanti [2b.5] patanti hanta,  
hṛtvā ma(hīm) nṛpatayo narake nṛśaṃ(se) |  
eta(d dvayaṃ) parika[2b.6] (layya) calāṃ ca lakṣmīm  
āyus tathā ku(rutha) yad bhavatām a(bhūṣṭam) ||<sup>8</sup>*

*api ca:*

*rakṣā[2b.7] pālanayos tāvat phalaṃ sugatidu(rgatī) |  
ko nāma sva(rga)m (utsṛjya) nara[2b.8] (kaṃ) pratipadyate ||<sup>9</sup>*

*vyāsagī(tāṃ)ś cā(tra) ślokān udāharanti:*

*agner apat(yaṃ) [3a.1] prathamam suva(rṇam),  
bhū(r vai)ṣṇavī sū(rya)sutās ca gāvah |  
dattā(s tra)yas tena bha[3a.2]vanti lokā,  
yah kāñca(naṃ) gāṃ ca mahīm ca (dadyāt) ||<sup>10</sup>*

*(śaṣṭīm) varṣasaha[3a.3] (srā)ṇi sva(rge) modati bhūmidah |  
(ā)cchettā cānumantā ca tāny eva na[3a.4] rake va(se)t ||<sup>11</sup>*

*bahubhi(r va)sudhā dattā rājabhiḥ sagarādibhiḥ |  
yasya ya[3a.5]sya yadā bhūmis tasya tasya tadā phalaṃ ||<sup>12</sup>*

*svada(ttām) parada(ttām vā) yatnād ra[3a.6]kṣa yudhiṣṭhi(ra) |  
ma(hīm) mahībhṛ(tām) śre(ṣṭha) dānā(c chre)yo 'nupālana(m) ||<sup>13</sup>*

*prava[3a.7] (rāha)mānavijayarā(jyasaṃva)tsare (dvā)pañcāśe mā(rga)prathamaca-  
turdaśyā[3a.8]m*

*añkenāpi sa(ṇvat) 50 2 mā(rga) dina 14*

*utkī(rṇam) tā(mra)pa(tṭakam)<sup>14</sup> golā[3b.1]yyasūnunā nāgadeveneti || [3b.2]*

<sup>8</sup>D. C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy* [Delhi 1965] 176–201, no. 30.

<sup>9</sup>Ibidem 176–201, no. 40 + note.

<sup>10</sup>Ibidem 176–201, no. 5.

<sup>11</sup>Ibidem 176–201, no. 123.

<sup>12</sup>Ibidem 176–201, no. 23 + note.

<sup>13</sup>Ibidem 176–201, no. 131 + note.

<sup>14</sup>The *tāmrapaṭṭika* in the edition of Singh (emended here to *tāmrapaṭṭikam*) could also meant to be an epithet of *golāyya* here. Shastri mentions a stray plate that was found near Malhār, probably the last plate of a record engraved on three plates. The record is dated in the fifty-seventh regnal year of a king whose name is not given. Shastri ascribes the stray plate to the reign of Śivagupta Balārjuna. The closing lines give the name of the engraver: 'tāmbra(mra)paṭṭhi(tṭi)kagolāyya(ryya) su(sū)nunā nāgadevena', and Shastri

*mudrā*

*rājñāḥ śrīharṣaguptasya sūnoḥ sadgūṇaśāliṇaḥ |  
śāsanaṃ śivaguptasya sthītam ā bhuvanasthi(teḥ) ||*

TRANSLATION

Om! Hail!

The illustrious Rājadeva Mahā-Śivagupta – who is devoted to the feet of his father and mother, who is the foremost of the Māheśvaras<sup>15</sup>, who has been born in the Lunar Dynasty and who is the son of a king, the illustrious Rājadeva Harṣagupta, like Kārttikeya is of Kṛtivāsas<sup>16</sup> – is in good health (prosperous): he has acquired all the qualities of a conqueror through the perfection of praiseworthy discipline, effected in particular by implementing all the ‘political sciences’, he is a refuge for the virtuous and his great prosperity has been brought about by his superior valour, intelligence and strength.

After having paid respect to the Brahmins in the village Aṭavituṅga (Forest Mountain), belonging to the Kikkīḍa *bhukti*, (the king) issues (the following command) to all royal officers who are dedicated to our service<sup>17</sup>, headed by the collector<sup>18</sup> and the chancellor<sup>19</sup>, to those who are temporarily posted and to the householders being inhabitants of that (village):

‘Let it be known to you that, for the increase of religious merit of father, mother and ourselves,

after an offering of water<sup>20</sup> by means of (this) copper-plate charter, meant to be enjoyed as long as moon, stars and sun will last,

translates this with: ‘(. . . by) Nāgadeva, son of Golāryya who is an engraver of copper-plate charters’. See: Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 162–164. The same construction is used in an inscription of Mahāśīva Tivaraarāja, a predecessor of Śivagupta Bālārjuna: ‘*ārkkasālikasotranāgasūnūnā boppanāgena*’, translated with: ‘(. . . by) Boppanāga, son of Sotranāga who is a goldsmith (*akṣasālika*). See: Ibidem 112–115.

<sup>15</sup>Worshippers of Śīva.

<sup>16</sup>Name of Śīva.

<sup>17</sup>The literal translation of *asmatpādopajīvināḥ* is: ‘who are living on our feet’.

<sup>18</sup>According to Sircar a *samāhartṛ* is an officer in charge of the collection of revenue. See: Sircar, *IEG*, 288.

<sup>19</sup>According to Sircar a *samnidhātṛ* is an officer in charge of the receipt of royal treasury. See: Ibidem 298.

<sup>20</sup>The pouring out of water into the extended palms of a recipient’s right hand as preparatory to or confirmatory of a gift or promise.

this village has been granted by us, along with (the right to) hidden treasures (*nidhāna*) and deposits (*upanidhāna*) together with (the right to) the collection of all taxes, immunity from all impositions, (the right to) impose fines for the ten offences<sup>21</sup> and the exemption from being entered by officials and soldiers,

here (*atraiva*)<sup>22</sup> and now (*saṃprati*), at the end of this full moon day of the month Kārttika,

to the venerable *ācārya* Astraśiva, who is the pupil of the venerable *ācārya* Vyāpaśiva of the illustrious Bāleśvara Temple (?), and the grand-pupil of the venerable *ācārya* Dīrgha of Nandapura, coming originally from Phuṭṭipāṭi, (Astraśiva) who is the teacher of the *tapovanasthāna* of the illustrious Bāleśvara Temple (?), which is established in the plains (*tala*) of Śrīpura.

(The donation has been made) at the request of the illustrious Jejjaṭa<sup>23</sup>, (to meet the expenses of) offering ceremonies, initiations, teaching and housing (?) of pupils and grand-pupils.'

'After having taken note of this, you should live happily (in this village), while providing the appropriate catering and (grain) shares, etc.' And this is said for the instruction of the future kings:

'(Kings) who donate land sport in heaven, (but) look, kings who have taken the land fall into the cruel hell. After having taken to heart these two rules and taken hold of Lakṣmī, you should live you life as you wish!'

And also:

'Fortune and misfortune are truly the fruit of protecting and not protecting (the land); who then, resorts to hell after having abandoned heaven?'

<sup>21</sup>The ten offences are: disobedience of the king's order, murder of a woman, confusion of *varṇas*, adultery, theft, pregnancy from one other than the husband, abuse & defamation, obscenity, assault & abortion. See: Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 122.

<sup>22</sup>The 'here' perhaps refers to the place where the king has issued the command that is described in this copper-plate charter.

<sup>23</sup>This Jejjaṭa must have been an important person, because in the text of the second inscription (of the set on nine copper-plate inscriptions), a certain Jejjaṭa is mentioned as donee of a land grant.

And one quotes in this respect *śloka*'s<sup>24</sup> belonging to the songs of Vyāsa:

‘Gold is the first child of Agni; Land is (descended) from Viṣṇu and cows are the offspring of Sūrya; (therefore) the three worlds are given by him, who would give gold, a cow and land!’

‘A giver of land enjoys heaven for sixty thousand years, (but) he who takes (the land) away or allows (to take the land away) will stay just as long in hell!’

‘The earth has been granted by many kings from Sagara onward; whoever possesses the land at any time, to him belong the fruits at that time!’

‘O king, zealously protect the land given by yourself or by others! O best of the protectors of the earth, protection is (even) more excellent than giving!’

In the fifty-second year of the increasingly victorious reign, on the fourteenth day of the first fortnight of the month Mārga – in figures, Year 52, (Month) Mārga, Day 14 – the copper-plate charter has been engraved by Nāgadeva, son of Golāyya.

#### Seal

The charter of Śivagupta, son of the illustrious king Harṣagupta, who is possessed of good qualities, endures as long as the existence of the world.

#### SECOND COPPER-PLATE<sup>25</sup>

... *rohāsīmābhogīyacorapadrake brāhma*[1.6]*ṇā(n) saṃ(pū)jya*  
*sapradhānā(n pra)tivāsino ('nyāṃś ca) yathākālādhyāsi(na*[1.7]*ḥ) samāhartṛ(saṃ)-*  
*nīdhātṛprabhṛti(naḥ sarva)rājapurūṣā(n) samājñā*[2a.1]*payati* [2a.2]

<sup>24</sup>Salomon refers to these verses as an illustration of the ‘exhortation portion’ of copper-plate inscriptions. See: Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy*, 117.

<sup>25</sup>The text of this inscription is written on three copper-plates. The first and last plate are used only on one side, the middle plate is engraved on both sides. See also note 3. The introduction of this copper-plate is more or less the same as the introduction of the first copper-plate. The only difference is in the description of the father of Śivagupta: ‘the illustrious Harṣadeva’ (*śrīharṣadeva*) instead of ‘the illustrious Rājadeva Harṣagupta’ (*śrīharṣaguptarājadeva*).

...<sup>26</sup> *kanyakubjavini(rga)tāya (kau)śi[2a.4]kasagotrāya (chā)ndoga(kau)thu(ma)-  
bhaṭṭajejjaṭāya [2a.5]<sup>27</sup>*

...<sup>28</sup> *avagamyāsya vi(dhe)yair bhūtva [2a.7] samucitabhogabhāgādīkam upanaya-  
(dbhiḥ bha)va(dbhiḥ) su(khaṃ) prativasta[2b.1]vyam iti [2b.2] ...<sup>29</sup>*

#### TRANSLATION

... After having paid respect to the Brahmins in the village Corapadraka, belonging to the Rohāsīnā *bhoga*, (the king) issues (the following command) to all royal officers headed by the collector and the chancellor, to those who are temporarily posted and to the other inhabitants (of that village) with their headman:

..., to Bhaṭṭa Jejjaṭa<sup>30</sup> of the Kauthuma (branch) of the Chāndoga (Sāmaveda)<sup>31</sup>, of the lineage of Kauśika, coming originally from Kanyakubja.

... 'After having taken note of this, you should live happily (in this village), while providing dutiful the appropriate catering and (grain) shares, etc.'

#### THIRD COPPER-PLATE<sup>32</sup>

... *svalpaśa(rka)rāmā(rgī)yakośa(mbra)ke*<sup>33</sup> *brāhmaṇā(n) sampū[1.6]jya [1.7]*

<sup>26</sup>The description of the rights that come with the grant is more or less the same as the description of these rights in the first copper-plate. The only difference is the use of *nidhi* and *upanidhi* instead of *nidhāna* and *upanidhāna*.

<sup>27</sup>These emendations are based on Shastri, see: Shastri, *ISPS* II, 379.

<sup>28</sup>The circumstances under which the grant was made are the same as these circumstances in the first copper-plate: 'for the increase of religious merit of father, mother and ourselves' (*mātāpitror ātmanāś puṇyābhivṛddhaye*), 'after an offering of water' (*udakapūrva*), 'by means of (this) copper-plate charter' (*tāmraśāsanena*), 'meant to be enjoyed as long as moon, stars and sun will last' (*samakālopabhogārtham ācandratārakārkam*).

<sup>29</sup>The same 'exhortation' with six exhortatory verses is given as in the first copper-plate, but this is not followed by a final sentence with the regnal year in which the grant was made and a name of the engraver.

<sup>30</sup>The donee of this grant, Jejjaṭa, could very well be the same person as the one who requested the grant that is described in the first copper-plate. See also note 22.

<sup>31</sup>Based on the translation of Shastri, see: *Ibidem* 379.

<sup>32</sup>See note 3 & 25.

<sup>33</sup>The emendation of *svalpaśakkarā* into *svalpaśarkarā* is based on the text of the fourth copper-plate, in which the same *mārga* is mentioned. Shastri 'reads' here Kośambraka instead of Kośamvraka, which makes sense because in this set of nine copper-plates the *va* is often used when the *ba* should have been used. See: *Ibidem* 379.

...<sup>34</sup> *śrīpuratala*[2a.4]*pratiṣṭhitaśrībāleśvarasamīpa(sthā)ya śrī(mad)ammāde(vī)-*  
*kāritāya a*[2a.5]*mmeśvarāyatanaḥṭṭārakāya*  
*asyām e(va atī)tamāghamāsottarāya(ṇa)vi(ṣu)*[2a.6]*va(saṃkrā)ntyā(mā)syā(m)*  
*evaṃ paramatprayaśyā dha(rma)patnyā śrīmadammāde(vyā)* [2a.7] *viñāptyā*  
*khaṇḍasphuṭita(saṃ)skārā(rthaṃ ba)licaru(saṃgi)taka(dhū)papūjā*[2b.1]*prava(rta)-*  
*nāya sa(mmārja)nopalepanā(rthaṃ) ca* [2b.2] ...<sup>35</sup>

#### TRANSLATION

... After having paid respect to the Brahmins in the village Kośambra, belonging to the Svalpaśarkarā mārga ... :

... , at the end of this *saṃkrānti* day of Viṣuva and *uttarāyaṇa* of the month Māgha<sup>36</sup>,

to the Ammeśvara-Bhaṭṭāraka temple, erected (*kārita*) by the illustrious Ammādevī, standing in the vicinity of the Bāleśvara Temple which is established in the plains (*tala*) of Śrīpura.

(The donation has been made) at the request of the illustrious Ammādevī, the lawful wife (of Śivagupta?), (to meet the expenses of) repairing dilapidations (broken parts), worship with incense, music and *bali* and *caru* oblations, and the cleansing and anointing (of images?) ...

<sup>34</sup>The description of the groups of officials and other people that were informed of the grant, is more or less the same as the description of these groups in the first copper-plate. The only difference is in the formulation of the last group: '... (and) also to the householders being inhabitants of that (village) with their headman' (*tatpratinivāsikuṭumbinaḥ sapradhānān a(nyā)n apī*), instead of: '... and to the householders being inhabitants of that (village)' (*tatpratinivāsikuṭumbino*). The description of the rights that come with the grant is the same as the description of these rights in the first copper-plate.

<sup>35</sup>The sentence which promises happiness when following the instructions of the charter is more or less the same as these sentences in the first and second copper-plate: 'After having taken note of this, you should live happily (in this village), while providing the appropriate catering and (grain) shares, etc.' (*avagamyaśya samucitabhoga(bhā)gādīkam upanayanto bhavantaḥ sukhaṃ prativasta(vya)m iti*). See also note 28 and note 29.

<sup>36</sup>The Viṣuva(t) *saṃkrānti* is an entry of the sun into an equinoctial sign and the *uttarāyaṇa saṃkrānti* is an entry of the sun into an solstitial sign. These are both special astronomical circumstances. See: Salamon, *Indian Epigraphy*, 175.



FOURTH COPPER-PLATE<sup>37</sup>

... svalpaśarkarāmā(rgīya)hastipadrake brāhmaṇā(n saṃ)pūjya [1.6]

...<sup>38</sup> adya vaiśākḥaprathamapañca(myām)

śrībāleśva[2a.4]rapratīṣṭhākā(le)

nanda(purī)yabhagavatpāda(dī)rgḥācā(rya)śiṣyavyāpaśivā[2a.5]cā(rya)bhagavatpā-  
dā(nā)m [2a.6]

...<sup>39</sup> prava(ṛdha)mānavijayarā(jyasaṃ)vatsare sapta(trimśe) vaiśā[3.6]kḥapratha-  
mapañcamyā(m)

(a)ñikenāpi (saṃ)va(t) 30 7 rla gra vaiśākḥa dina [3.7]

TRANSLATION

... After having paid respect to the Brahmins in the village Hastipadraka, belong-  
ing to the Svalpaśarkarā mārga ...:

..., today (*adya*), on the fifth day of the first fortnight of the month  
Vaiśākḥa,

to the venerable (*bhagavatpāda*) *ācārya* Vyāpaśiva, who is the pupil  
of the venerable *ācārya* Dīrgha of Nandapura.

(The donation has been made) on the occasion (*kāla*) of the establis-  
hment of the Bāleśvara Temple.

... In the thirty-seventh year of the increasingly victorious reign, on the fifth day of  
the first fortnight of the month Vaiśākḥa – in figures, Year 37, (Month) Vaiśākḥa,  
Day ...

<sup>37</sup>See note 25.

<sup>38</sup>The description of the groups of officials and other people that were informed of  
the grant, is more or less the same as the description of these groups in the first and se-  
cond copper-plate: 'to the inhabitants (of that village) with their headman' (*sapradhānā(n*  
*pra)tivāsīno*), 'to those who are temporarily posted' (*yathākālādhyāsinaḥ*), 'and to all other  
royal officers who are dedicated to our service, headed by the collector and the chan-  
cellor, and with their lower governors (?)' (*samāharṭṛ(saṃ)nīdhātṛprabhṛ(tī)n an(yām)ś*  
*cāsmatpādopajīvi(naḥ) sa(rva)rājapurūṣā(n) sakaṇān adhikāraṇas ca*). See note 34.

<sup>39</sup>See note 28. The sentence which promises happiness when following the instructions  
of the charter is more or less the same as these sentences in the first and second copper-  
plate: 'After having taken note of this, you should live happily (in this village), while  
providing the appropriate catering and (grain) shares, etc.' (*avagatyā(mīśām) samucitaṃ*  
*(bho)ga(bhā)gādīkam upanayadbhīḥ (bha)vadbhīḥ sukhaṃ pratīvastavyam iti*). See note 29.

FIFTH COPPER-PLATE<sup>40</sup>

*a(rya)ṅgābhogīyabhā(ṅdā)gāracattāke brāhma[1.6]ṅā(n sampū)jya [1.7]*

...<sup>41</sup> *ihaiva śrīpuratalasvakāritaśrībāleśvarabha[2a.5]tṭārakamaṭhikāpratiṣṭhāyām a-*  
*s(yāṃ)*

*nandapurīyaśrīmadbhagavacchāvā[2a.6]cā(ryā)ghoraśivaprasīṣyebho dīrghācā(rya)-*  
*śīṣyebhyo bhagava(tpā)daśrī[2a.7]ma(dvyā)paśivācā(rye)bhyaḥ*

*śīṣyaprasīṣyādi(saṃtā)nasya satatayāgā[2b.1]didīkṣāvvyā(khyā)bhaktasa(ttra)prava-*  
*(rta)nārtham<sup>42</sup> [2b.2]*

...<sup>43</sup> *prava(rdha)mānavijayarā(jyasaṃ)vatsa(re) aṣṭa(trim)śe śrāvaṇapau(rṇa)mā-*  
*[3b.3](syām)*

*(a)ṅkenāpi saṃvat 30 8 śrāvaṇa dina 30 [3b.4]*

TRANSLATION

... After having paid respect to the Brahmins in the village Bhāṅḍāgāracattāka,  
belonging to the Aryaṅgā bhoga ...:

..., here (*ihaiva*) (and now),

to the venerable *ācārya* Vyāpaśiva, who is the pupil of the *ācārya*  
Dīrgha, and the grand-pupil of the venerable *śaivācārya* Aghoraśiva  
from Nandapura.

(The donation has been made) on the occasion of the establishment  
of the *maṭhikā* of the Bāleśvara-Bhaṭṭāraka Temple, that was erected

<sup>40</sup>See note 3 & 25.

<sup>41</sup>The description of the groups of officials and other people that were informed of  
the grant, is more or less the same as the description of these groups in the first and  
second copper-plate: 'to all royal officials, who are dedicated to our service, headed by  
the collector and the chancellor' (*samāhartṛsamnidhātṛprabhṛtīn asmatpādopajīvināḥ sar-*  
*varājapurūṣān*), 'to those who are temporarily posted' (*yathākālābhāvināḥ*), 'and to the  
other inhabitants of that (village), with their headman' (*tatpratīnivāsīnāś ca sapradhānān*  
*anyāṅś ca*). See note 34.

<sup>42</sup>See note 7.

<sup>43</sup>See note 28. The sentence which promises happiness when following the instructions of  
the charter is more or less the same as these sentences in the first and second copper-plate:  
'After having taken note of this, you should live happily (in this village), while providing the  
appropriate catering and (grain) shares, etc.' (*avagamyāmiṣāṃ samucitabhogabhāgādīkam*  
*upanayanto bhavan(taḥ sukhaṃ vasantu)*). See note 29.

by (Śivagupta) himself in the plains of Śrīpura, to meet the expenses of housing for devotees, teaching, initiations and continual offering ceremonies etc. of the line of pupils and grand-pupils etc.

... In the thirty-eight year of the increasingly victorious reign, on the full-moon day of the month Śrāvaṇa – in figures, Year 38, (Month) Śrāvaṇa, Day 30 – ...

#### SIXTH COPPER-PLATE<sup>44</sup>

... *de(vī)bhogīyabhāṇḍāgāratakkaḍaṅgake*<sup>45</sup> *brāhma*[1.6]*ṇā(n saṃpū)jya* [1.7]

...<sup>46</sup> *śrīpuratalakārītaśrībāleśvarabhaṭṭarakamathīkāntasvakārito*[2a.5]*dayeśvarabha-*  
*ṭṭarakāya*

*pratiṣṭhāyām*

*eva khaṇḍasphuṭita(saṃskā)rā*[2a.6]*(rtham) tadupayogiparikarapratipālanā(rtham)*  
*hara(pū)jā*[2a.7]*saṃgitakapravartanārthamś ca* [2b.1] ...<sup>47</sup>

... *sa(ttrā)ya gorasapatraśākakalpayitvā* [2b.3]

...<sup>48</sup> *prava(rdha)mānavijayarā(jyasaṃva)tsare ṣa(ṭca)tvā(riṃ)śe śrāvaṇapau*[3b.3]-  
*(rṇa)mā(syā)m añkenāpi (saṃva)t pū 40 6 śrāvaṇa di(na)* [3b.4]

#### TRANSLATION

... After having paid respect to the Brahmins in the village Bhāṇḍāgāratakkaḍa-  
ṅgaka, belonging to the Devī *bhoga* ...:

... , to the Dayeśvara-Bhaṭṭāraka temple, that was erected by (Śivagupta)  
himself inside (*anta*) the *mathīkā* of the Bāleśvara-Bhaṭṭāraka Temple,  
erected in the plains of Śrīpura.

<sup>44</sup>See note 3 & 25.

<sup>45</sup>Shastri 'reads' here Bhāṇḍāgāra-takkaḍaṅgaka instead of Bhāṇḍāgāra-Takkaḍaṅgaka.  
See: Shastri, *IŚPS* II, 377.

<sup>46</sup>See note 41 & 34.

<sup>47</sup>See note 28.

<sup>48</sup>The sentence which promises happiness when following the instructions of the charter is more or less the same as this sentence in the second copper-plate: 'After having taken note of this, you should live happily (in this village), while providing the appropriate catering and (grain) shares, etc.' (*avaḡamyā samucitabhogabhāḡādikam upanaya(dbhīh) bhava(dbhīh) su(khaṃ prativastavyam iti)*). See note 29.

(The donation has been made) on the occasion of the establishment (of the Dayeśvara-Bhaṭṭāraka shrine), (to meet the expenses of) repairing dilapidations (broken parts), sustenance of the staff of that (shrine) and of music and worship to Hara,

after having furnished the *sattra* (housing) with milk (*gorasa*) and vegetables (*patraśāka*).

... In the forty-sixth year of the increasingly victorious reign, on the full-moon day of the month Śrāvaṇa – in figures, Year 46, (Month) Śrāvaṇa, Day ...

SEVENTH COPPER-PLATE<sup>49</sup>

*callāṭasīmābhogīya(bhā)ṇḍāgārāśvatthakapratibaddhadevapadrūllake* [1.6] *brāhma-(ṇān saṃ)pūjya* [1.7]

...<sup>50</sup> *śrīpuratalapratīṣṭhitaśrībāle*[2a.4] *śvarabhaṭṭārakamaṭhi(kāśrī)madamarade(vī)-kāritāma*[2a.5] *reśvarāyatanadevabhaṭṭārakapratīṣṭhāyāṃ*

*nandapurīyaśrīmadaghoraśivā*[2a.6] *paranāmadīrghācā(rya)praśiṣyebhyaḥ*

*śrī(vyā)paśivācā(rya)śiṣyebhyo*

*(astra)śi*[2a.7] *vabhagavatpādebhyo*

*guru(pū)jyāyāṃ*

*śiṣyapraśiṣyāṇāṃ*

*yāga(dīkṣāsattra)*[2b.1] *prava(rta)nāya*<sup>51</sup>

*asyā eva vijñaptayāmarade(vyā)* [2b.2]

...<sup>52</sup> *pravardhamānavija*[3b.2] *yarā(jyasaṃ)vatsare a(ṣṭa)ca(tvāriṃ)śe phalguṇadi-(ne) 25*

<sup>49</sup>See note 3 & 25.

<sup>50</sup>There are only two groups of officials and other people that were informed of the grant: 'to all royal officers who are dedicated to our service, headed by the collector and the chancellor' (*samāhartṛ(saṃ)nīdhātṛprabhṛ(tīn asma)tpādopajīvīnaḥ sa(rva)rājapu(rū)ṣān*), 'and also to the other inhabitants of that (village) with their headman' (*tatpratīnīvāsīnaś ca sapradhānān anyān api*). See note 26.

<sup>51</sup>The emendation of *yāgadaśattra catuṣṭava pravarttanāya* into *yāga(dīkṣāsattra)-prava(rta)nāya* is based on similar phrases in the text of the first and fifth set of copper-plates.

<sup>52</sup>See note 28. The sentence which promises happiness when following the instructions of the charter is more or less the same as these sentences in the first and second copper-plate: 'After having taken note of this, you should live happily (in this village), while providing the appropriate catering and (grain) shares, etc.' (*ity avagamyāsya yathocitabhogabhāgādīkam upanayanto bhavantaḥ sukhaṃ prativasantu*). See note 29.

*añkenāpi (saṃ)va[3b.3]t 40 88*

*utkī(rṇaṃ) tā(mra)pa(tṭakaṃ)<sup>53</sup> golāyyasya (sū)nunā nāgadeveneti || [3b.4]*

TRANSLATION

... After having paid respect to the Brahmīns in the village Devapadrūllaka, attached to (*pratībaddha*) Bhāṇḍāgārāśvatthaka, belonging to the Callāṭasīmā *bhoga* ...:

... , to the venerable (*bhagavatpāda*) Astraśiva, who is the pupil of the venerable *ācārya* Vyāpaśiva, and the grand-pupil of the *ācārya* Dīrgha, whose other name is the venerable Aghoraśiva from Nandapura, in honour of the *guru*.

(The donation has been made) on the occasion of the installation of the *devabhāṭṭāraka* in the Amareśvara temple, that was erected by the illustrious Amaradevī, in the *mathikā* of the Bāleśvara-Bhāṭṭāraka Temple, established in the plains of Śrīpura,

at the request of this Amaradevī,

(to meet the expenses of) housing, initiations and offering ceremonies.

... In the forty-eight year of the increasingly victorious reign, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Phalguṇa – in figures, Year 48 – the copper-plate charter has been engraved by Nāgadeva, son of Golāyya.

EIGHTH COPPER-PLATE<sup>54</sup>

... *uṇibho(gī)yagrāmavārttodake<sup>55</sup> brāhmaṇā(n saṃ)pūjya [1,6]*

... <sup>56</sup>*śrībāle[2a.4]śvarabhāṭṭārakapṛati(baddhāṃme)śvarabhāṭṭāraka<sup>57</sup>pṛati(ṣṭhā)kāle*

<sup>53</sup>See note 14.

<sup>54</sup>See note 3. The introduction of this copper-plate is the same as the introduction of the first copper-plate.

<sup>55</sup>Shastri 'reads' here Virttodaka instead of Vārttodaka. See: Shastri, *ISPS* II, 378.

<sup>56</sup>The description of the groups of officials and other people that were informed of the grant is the same as this description in the first copper-plate. See note 34.

<sup>57</sup>The emendation of *abbaśvara* into *ammeśvara* is based on the text of the third set of copper-plates, in which the grant is donated to the Ammeśvara-Bhāṭṭāraka standing in the vicinity of the Bāleśvara-Bhāṭṭāraka Temple. This Ammeśvara-Bhāṭṭāraka temple was erected by Ammādevī, *dharmapatnī* of the king.

*devakula*[2a.5]*khaṇḍasphuṭitasamskāraṇapūjādiprava(rta)nārtham a(rdhe)na |*  
*apa*[2a.6]*rā(rdhe)nāpi gurudakṣiṇāyāṇ*  
*śrībhagava(dvyā)paśivācā(rya)pādaśi*[2a.7]*śyaśrīmadastraśivācā(rya)sthānagurubhyaḥ*  
*śiṣyapraśiṣyāṇāṇ vyākhyānā(tra)*[2b.1]*sa(ttra)prava(rta)nāya*<sup>58</sup>  
*(bhaṭṭinīrājñī)vijñaptikayā* [2b.2]  
 ...<sup>59</sup> *gorasapa(ttra)śā(kau) devasya varjayi*[2b.4]*tvā* [2b.5]  
 ...<sup>60</sup> *prava(rdha)*[3b.1]*mānavijayarājye sa(mva)tsare pa(nca)pañcāsattame* [3b.2]  
*śrāvaṇaprathamacaturthyām*  
*aṅkena sa(mvat) ru 50 5* [3b.3]

#### TRANSLATION

... After having paid respect to the Brahmins in the village Vārttoḍaka, belonging to the Uṇi *bhoga* ...:

..., to the 'teacher in charge' (*sthānaguru*), the venerable *ācārya* Astraśiva, who is a pupil of the venerable *ācārya* Vyāpaśiva.

(The donation has been made) on the occasion of the establishment of the Ammeśvara-Bhaṭṭāraka temple, that is attached to the Bāleśvara-Bhaṭṭāraka Temple,

at the request the noble (*bhaṭṭinī*) queen (Ammādevī),

half (*ardha*) (to meet the expenses of) worship and repairing dilapidations (broken parts) of the temple, and the other half (*aparārdha*) (to meet the expenses of) a *gurudakṣiṇā*, teaching and housing (?) of the pupils and grand-pupils,

after having excluded milk and vegetables for the god (?).

... In the fifty-fifth year of the increasingly victorious reign, on the fourth day of the first fortnight of the month Śrāvaṇa – in figures, Year 55 ...

<sup>58</sup>See note 7.

<sup>59</sup>See note 28.

<sup>60</sup>The sentence which promises happiness when following the instructions of the charter is the same as this sentence in the first copper-plate. See note 29.

NINTH COPPER-PLATE<sup>61</sup>

... *calāṭasīmābhogīyakatambapa(drū)llake*<sup>62</sup> *brāhma*[1.6]*ṇā(n saṃ)pūjya* [1.7]

...<sup>63</sup> *śrīpuratale* [2a.4]

(*'sma*)*tprakāritaśrīmadbāleśvaramathikātapova(nāntaḥ)pātine* |

*asmadrā(jñī)*[2a.5]*śrī(mada)maradevikāritāya* |

*nandapurīyabhagavadāghoraśivācā(rya)praśiṣya*[2a.6]*dīrghācā(rya)śiṣyaśrīmadvyā-*  
*paśivābhagavatpādapratisthāpitadevabha*[2a.7]*tṭārakāya* |

*amareśvarāyatanāya* |

*asyā evāmaradevyā vijñāptyā* [2b.1]

...<sup>64</sup> *sattrārthagrāmotpa*[2b.3]*(nna)gavāṅgarasapattraśākavārikataṇḍulāṣṭabhā(gaṃ)*  
*va(rja)yi(tvā)* |

*bha*[2b.4]*gnasphuṭitasamskārā(rthaṃ)* ...<sup>65</sup>

*sa(mmārja)nopalepanapūjāsaṃ(gi)takapravartta*[2b.5]*nā(rthaṃ) ca* [2b.6]

<sup>61</sup>The text of this inscription is written on three copper-plates. The first plate is used only on one side and the middle plate is engraved on both sides. Presumably the last plate is also engraved on both sides, but the text of the backside of this plate is missing. See note 25.

<sup>62</sup>The text of the seventh copper-plate mentions the same *bhoga* and the name-ending of the village is *-padrūllaka*, therefore I assume that the name of the village mentioned in this plate is *Katambapadrūllaka*.

<sup>63</sup>The description of the groups of officials and other people that were informed of the grant, is more or less the same as the description of these groups in the first and second copper-plate: 'to all royal officials, who are dedicated to our service, headed by the collector and the chancellor' (*samāhartṛ(saṃ)nīdhātṛprabhṛtīn asmatpādopajīvināḥ sa(rva)rājapu(rū)ṣān*), 'to those who are temporarily posted' (*yathākālabhāvināḥ*) and 'also to the other inhabitants of that (village)' (*tatpratīnivāsīno ('nyā)n api*). See note 26.

<sup>64</sup>See note 28.

<sup>65</sup>The sentence which promises happiness when following the instructions of the charter is more or less the same as this sentence in the first copper-plate. The only difference is the use of *avagamya* instead of *avagatya*. The 'exhortation' starts with the same exhortatory verses given in the rest of the copper-plates, but we only have the fourth verse half and the fifth and sixth verses are missing. This is because the backside of the third copper-plate is missing.

TRANSLATION

... After having paid respect to the Brahmins in the village Katambapadrüllaka, belonging to the Calāṭasīmā *bhoga* ... :

... , to the Amareśvara temple, included in the *tapovana* of the *mathikā* of the Bāleśvara Temple, that was erected by ourselves in the plains of Śrīpura,

(the Amareśvara temple) that was erected by our queen the illustrious Amaradevī, (and in which) the *devabhṭṭāraka* was installed by the venerable Vyāpaśiva, who is the pupil of the *ācārya* Dīrgha, and the grand-pupil of the venerable *ācārya* Aghoraśiva from Nandapura.

(The donation has been made) at the request of this Amaradevī, (to meet the expenses of) repairing dilapidations (broken parts), and of music, worship, bathing and anointing (of images),

after having set aside eight parts of grain, water, vegetables and milk from the produce of the village (to meet the expenses of) housing (?)

...



## List of Maps

Map 1: *Map of North India*—Source: Joanna Williams, *The Art of Gupta India. Empire and Province* [Princeton/New Jersey 1982] Fig. 1.

Map 2: *Map of Dakṣiṇa Kosala*—Courtesy, American Institute of Indian Studies: Bakker, 'Observations', 33.

Map 3: *Physical Map of Chhattisgarh [Dakṣiṇa Kosala]*—Source: H. L. Shukla, *Chhattisgarh Rediscovered. Vedāntic Approaches to Folklore* [New Delhi 1995] first map.

Map 4: *Administrative Units of the Śarabhapurīyas*—Source: Mahajan, *Chhattisgarh*, 100.

Map 5: *Administrative Units of the Pāṇḍuvamśins of Śrīpura*—Ibidem 103.

## List of Figures

Figures 1.1 a & b: *Chart with the dynasties of Dakṣiṇa Kosala*—Source: Bakker, 'Observations', 34–35.

## List of Plates

- Plate 1.1: *Coin of Prasannamātra*—Source: Nigam, 'Impact and Extension of Vākāṭaka Art in Chhattisgarh', 155.
- Plate 1.2: *Seal of the Śarabhapurīyas*—Source: L. P. Pandeya, 'No. 3—Arang Plates of Mahasudevaraja', in: *Epigraphia Indica* XXIII, 16–22, 20.
- Plate 1.3: *Seal of Śūrabala-Udīrṇavaira*—Source: Shastri, *ISPS* II, PLATE LI.
- Plate 1.4: *Seal of Tīvaradeva*—Ibidem PLATE LX.
- Plate 1.5: *Seal of Śivagupta Bālārjuna*—Ibidem PLATE LXXXI.
- Plate 2.1: *Set of copper-plates*—Source: Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy*, 113.
- Plate 3.1: *Sirpur: Snake chasing Mouse.*
- Plate 3.2: *Detail: Snake catching the Mouse.*
- Plate 3.3: *Tālā: Mouse on Pillar*—Source: Bakker, 'Observations', 49.
- Plate 3.4: *Mansar: Stellate Temple.*
- Plate 3.5: *Tālā: Jīṭhānī Temple*—Source: Bakker, 'Observations', 41.
- Plate 3.6: *Tālā: Devarānī Temple*—Source: Nigam, 'Impact and Extension of Vākāṭaka Art in Chhattisgarh', 145.
- Plate 3.7: *Tālā: Lintel of the Devarānī Temple*—Source: Williams, *The Art of Gupta India*, PLATE 195.
- Plate 3.8: *Medallion with fifteen ṛṣi's*—Source: Nigam, *Riddle of Indian Iconography*, PLATE 43.
- Plate 3.9: *Tālā: Image of Rudra*—Source: Bakker, *The Vākāṭakas*, PLATE XLIII.
- Plate 3.10: *Detail of Rudra's leg*—Idem.

- Plate 3.11: *Tālā: Head of Śiva with skulls*—Ibidem PLATE 16.
- Plate 3.12: *Mansar: Śiva Image*—Courtesy of Hans T. Bakker.
- Plate 3.13: *Tālā: Head of Śiva*—Source: Nigam, *Riddle of Indian Iconography*, PLATE 17.
- Plate 3.14: *Mansar Image*—Courtesy of Sasai.
- Plate 3.15: *Tālā: Absurd Image*—Nigam, 'Impact and Extension of Vākāṭaka Art in Chhattisgarh', 147.
- Plate 3.16: *Mandhal: Sadāśiva*—Source: Bakker, *The Vākāṭakas*, PLATE VII.
- Plate 3.17: *Malhār: Ardhanārīśvara*—Source: Bajpai & Pandey, *Malhar*, PLATE XI B.
- Plate 3.18: *Malhār: Śiva*—Ibidem PLATE XI A.
- Plate 3.19: *Sirpur: SRP-2-2000*—Courtesy of Sasai.
- Plate 3.20: *Sirpur: Temple of Śiva & Viṣṇa*.
- Plate 3.21: *Sirpur: Surāṅga Tīla*.
- Plate 3.22: *Western Entrance*.
- Plate 3.23: *Liṅga on the Platform*.
- Plate 3.24: *Backside of the Temple Construction*.
- Plate 3.25: *Sirpur: Yugala Temples*.
- Plate 3.26: *First stage of Excavation*—Courtesy of Sasai.
- Plate 3.27: *Excavations at the Backside*—Idem.
- Plate 3.28: *Backside of the Yugala Temples*.
- Plate 3.29: *Shrine with Liṅga*.
- Plate 3.30: *Rājim: Lakulīśa with four Pupils*.
- Plate 4.1: *Mandhal: Head of Bhairava*—Source: Bakker, *The Vākāṭakas*, PLATE XXV A.

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Plates



Plate 1.1: *Coin of Prasannamātra*



Plate 1.2: *Seal of the Śarabhapurīyas*



Plate 1.3: *Seal of Śūrabala-Udīrṇavaira*



Plate 1.4: *Seal of Tīvaradeva*

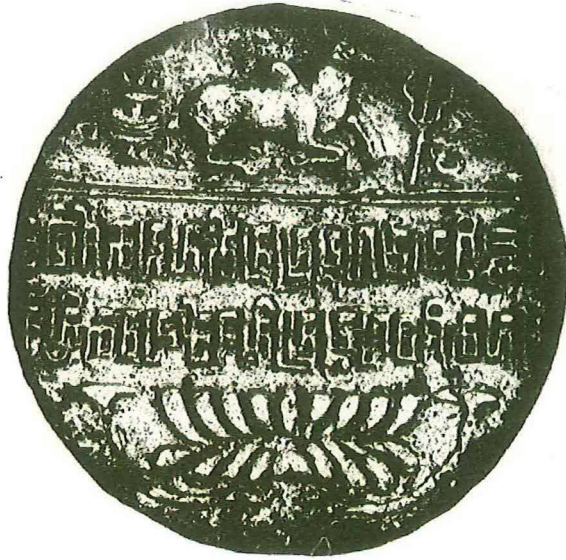


Plate 1.5: *Seal of Śivagupta Bālārjuna*

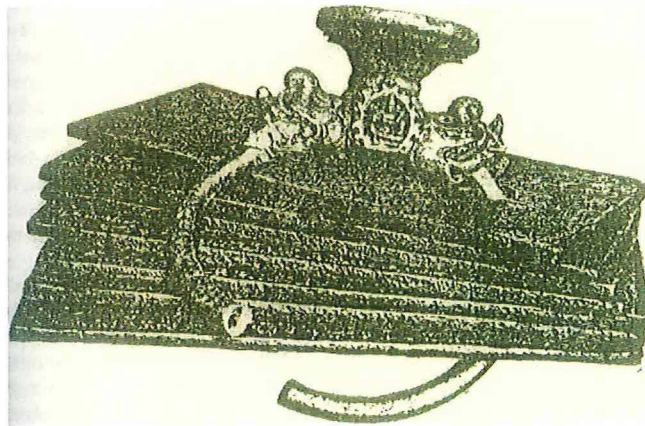


Plate 2.1: *Set of copper-plates*



Plate 3.1: *Sirpur: Snake chasing Mouse*



Plate 3.2: *Detail: Snake catching the Mouse*

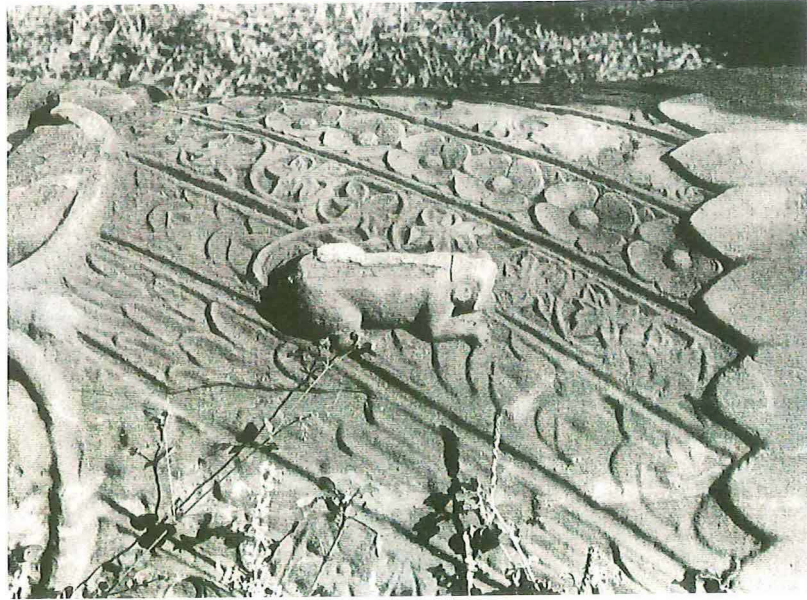


Plate 3.3: *Tālā: Mouse on Pillar*



Plate 3.4: *Mansar: Stellate Temple*



Plate 3.5: *Tālā: Jithānī*



Plate 3.6: *Tālā: Devarānī Temple*



Plate 3.7: *Tālā*: Lintel of the Devarānī Temple



Plate 3.8: *Medallion with fifteen ṛṣi's*



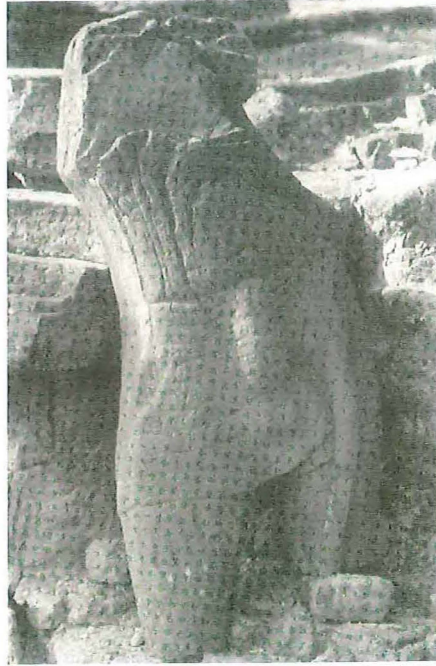


Plate 3.9: *Tālā: Image of Rudra*



Plate 3.10: *Detail of Rudra's leg*



Plate 3.11: *Tālā*: Head of Śiva with skulls



Plate 3.12: *Mansar: Śiva Image*



Plate 3.13: *Tālā: Head of Śiva*



Plate 3.14: *Mansar Image*



Plate 3.15: *Tālā: Absurd Image*



Plate 3.16: *Mandhal: Sadāśiva*

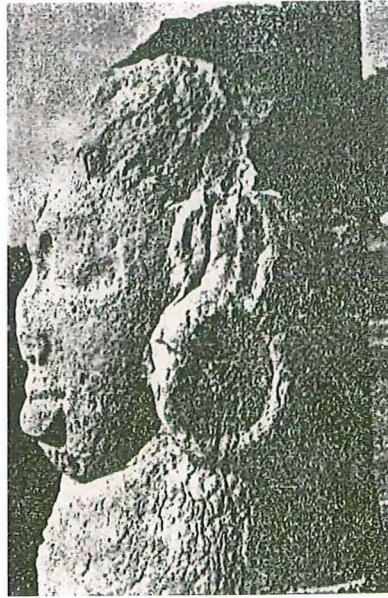


Plate 3.17: *Malhār: Ardhanārīśvara*



Plate 3.18: *Malhār: Śiva*



Plate 3.19: *Sirpur: SRP-2-2000*



Plate 3.20: *Sirpur: Temple of Śiva & Viṣṇu*





Plate 3.21: *Sirpur: Suranga Tila*

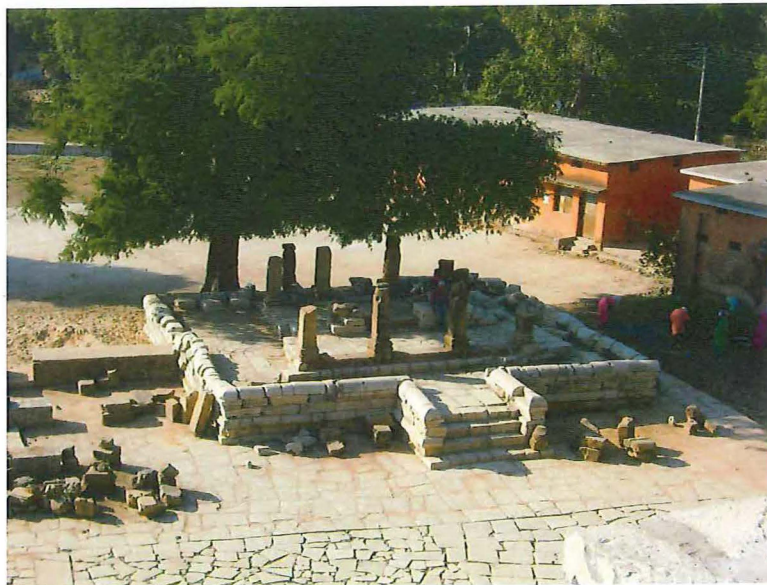


Plate 3.22: *Western Entrance*



Plate 3.23: *Linga on the Platform*



Plate 3.24: *Backside of the Temple Construction*

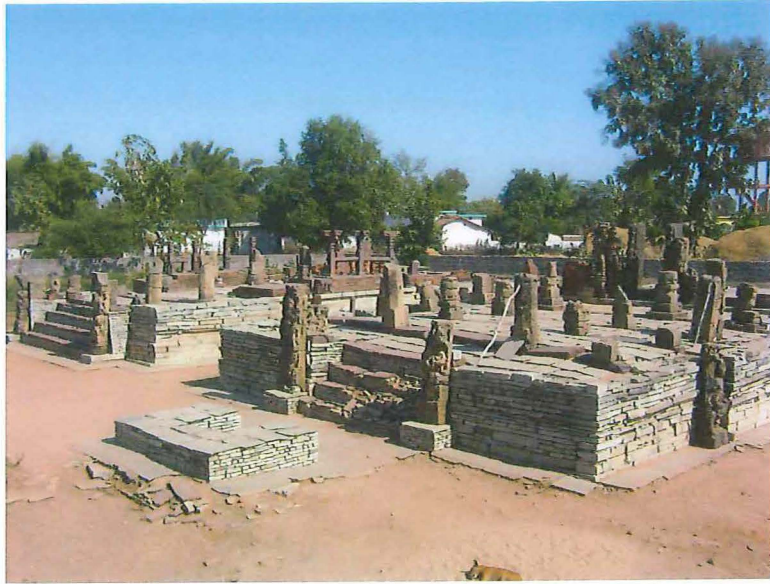


Plate 3.25: *Sirpur: Yugala Temples*

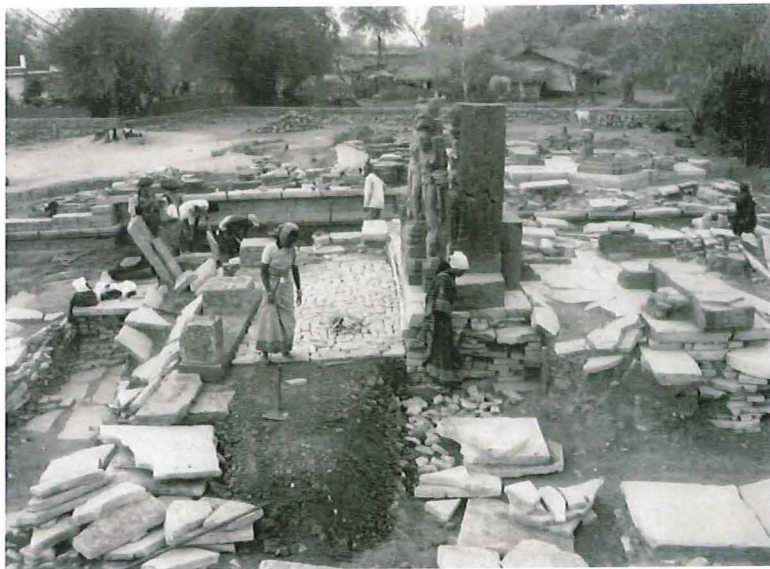


Plate 3.26: *First Stage of Excavation*



Plate 3.27: *Excavations at the Backside*



Plate 3.28: *Backside of the Yugala Temples*

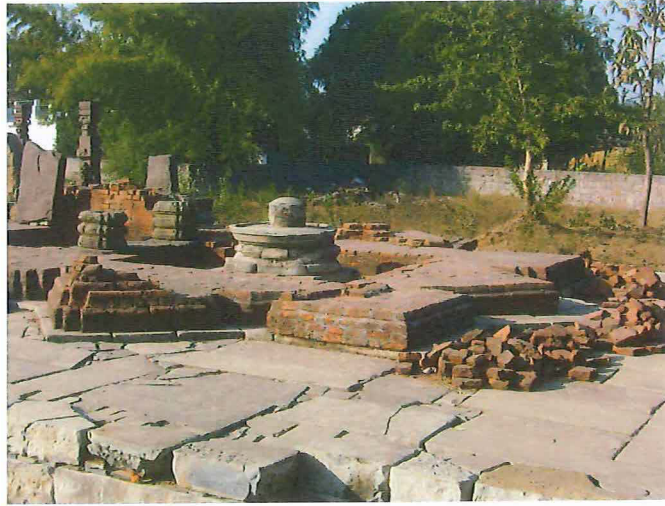


Plate 3.29: *Shrine with Linga*



Plate 3.30: *Rājim: Lakulīśa with four Pupils*



Plate 4.1: *Mandhal: Head of Bhairava*