

No 28 — BETUL PLATES OF SAMKSHOBHA,  
THE GUPTA YEAR 199.

By HIRA LAL, B A, EXTRA ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, NAGPUR

These plates were found by me in the possession of Sahib Lal Singh, Malguzar of Betul in the district of the same name in the Central Provinces, in March 1905. Sahib Lal Singh, though belonging to an old respectable family, is a Kumi—a prominent cultivating caste of Northern India, who of course are not entitled to accept any charitable gifts. The plates clearly do not belong to his family, and Sahib Lal Singh is unable to explain how it came by them. His forefathers belonged to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh and came to Betul five generations ago. They left their native place in the Unao district in Oudh about 180 years ago and are believed to have lived in the Hoshangâbâd, Narsinghpur and Nâgpur districts. Apparently they brought the plates with them, having obtained them somewhere in Narsinghpur which adjoins Jabalpur.

These are two copper-plates, with a hole ( $\frac{5}{8}$ " in diameter) in each for the ring or seal, which is lost. The first plate measures  $7\frac{3}{4}$ " by  $5\frac{1}{8}$ " and the second  $7\frac{3}{4}$ " by  $6\frac{1}{4}$ ", the weight of each being 12 ozs 6 dis and 13 ozs 17 grs respectively. Both the plates are quite smooth, sufficiently thick, and in an excellent state of preservation. They are inscribed on one side only, and some of the letters show through on the backs of them, and but for a fault in the second plate, which has caused a hole  $\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter in the last line, obliterating portions of the numerical symbols of the year (which has been fortunately stated in words in the beginning), the inscription throughout is very legible. I have deciphered the text from the original plates, an impression of which was very kindly made for me by Mr H Cousens. At Prof Hultzsch's instance Mr H. Krishna Sastri prepared fresh impressions, which are reproduced on the accompanying Plate.

The average size of the letters is about  $\frac{1}{8}$ ". The letters are smaller—about  $\frac{1}{16}$ "—at the beginning of each plate. They gradually grow bigger, attaining the highest size—about  $\frac{1}{2}$ "—at the end.

The characters belong to the northern class of alphabets. Final forms of *m* occur in ll 13, 17, 25, and of *t* in ll 21 and 25. Orthographical peculiarities are the use of *n* before *sa* in ll 12 and 14, and of *b* for *v* in *sambatsara* (ll 2, 3 (twice), 29) and *paribrâjaka* (l 5). The letter *t* is doubled in *gôttra* (l 5, but not in l 15), *puttra* (ll 6, 16, 28), *pauttra* (l 16) and *°pittô* = (l 12). The last line contains the numerical symbols for 100, 10, 90 and 9, the two last of which, as stated before, are partially obliterated. The language is Sanskrit prose, excepting four benedictive and imprecatory verses quoted in ll 21-27.

The inscription is one of the *Paribrâjaka Mahârâja Samkshôbha* and is dated in the year 199 of the Gupta era (A D 518-19), in the *Mahâmârgasirsha-samvatsara*, on the tenth tithi of the month *Kârttika*, without specifying the fortnight and the week day. Another grant of the same king, which was found near Khôh by General Cunningham in 1879 and is dated in the Gupta year 209 (A D 528-29), was republished by Dr Fleet in his *Gupta Inscriptions*, p 112 ff. The text of both inscriptions is very similar, and both were written by the same *Îśvaradâsa*.

The object of the inscription is to record the grant of half of the village *Prastaravâtaka* and a quarter of *Dvaravatikâ* in the province of *Tripuri* by the *Mahârâja Samkshobha* to the Brahman *Bhânusvâmin* of the *Bharadvâja gotra*. The value of the inscription chiefly lies in the mention of geographical names, as, with regard to the history of the donor himself, it adds nothing new to what is given in the Khoh plates. The genealogy of the *Mahârâja Samkshôbha* in Loth

is the same, and in both he is stated to be ruling the Dabhālá-rājya, which had come to him by inheritance together with all the country included in the eighteen forest kingdoms. The present inscription goes to show that Tripurī was a province of the Dabhālá kingdom. We know Tripurī well<sup>1</sup>. It was the name of the capital of the Haihayas or Kalachuri kings,— the present Tewar, six miles from Jabalpur,— and it apparently also gave its name to the surrounding province. If this be correct, as is very probable, the Kalachuri domination in the country about Jabalpur disappears at least between A D 475 and 528, when the Parivrajaka *Mahārājas* ruled the country, as proved by their inscriptions actually found. The Kalachuris of Ratanpurī may have been dominant at that time in Mahākōśala, but not in the northern country about Tripurī. Dr Fleet says that “in Dabhāla we have undoubtedly the older form of Dahala, Dahāla, Dahala or Dīhalā, which was in later times a province of the Haihayas or Kalachuris or Tripurīa near Jabalpur, whose original capital was Kalijai”<sup>2</sup>. This gives a clue to the identification of Prastaravataka and Dvāravatikā, which I take to be the present Patparā and Dwārā near Bilahri, 9 miles from Muwara town and about 60 miles from Tewar— the old Tripurī Prastaravataka probably was corrupted into Pattharvatak or Pattharwārā, which finally became Patparā, conveying the same meaning in the local patois as its Sanskrit equivalent, viz. ‘a stony tableland,’ and Patparā is a stony tableland up to this day. On the site of this Patparā, which had the palace of Kamkandalā, there appears to have been formerly a village, as foundations of numerous buildings are still found. Patparā is only a mile off from Bilahri, and the ruins of temples and buildings commence at a distance of a quarter of a mile from the present Bilahri village. That names of villages ending in *vāta* or *pāta*, which may have been corrupted into *vārā* or *vārō*, were common on the Bilahri side, may be inferred from the Bilahri inscription,<sup>3</sup> which mentions Khulapataka, Dhangatapataka, Ambipataka, etc. One of these, Khulapataka, General Cunningham identified with the present Khailwāra or Kailwara, 6 miles from Bilahri, and I think Dhangatapataka is perhaps represented by the present village Thanaurā, about 4 miles from Bilahri, the name having been corrupted into Dhanwāra, Thanwāra, and finally Thanaurā. Within a radius of 20 miles from Bilahri, one may find such villages as Gulwara, Muwāra, Kailwara, Nanhwara, Kanhwara, Bhanwara, etc., the *wara* of which is apparently a corruption of the old *vāta*. The village Dwara stands on the same tableland as Patparā, being 5 miles east from the Kamkandalā buildings and between 3 and 4 miles from the Bilahri village. The Malguzar of this village is still a Brahman and has held it for several generations. He does not however belong to the Bhāradvaja *gotra*. He is a Gaiga and may have been engrafted when the male line of Bhanusvamin became extinct, the village going to a female heir and consequently by her marriage to a different *gotra*, or it may have changed hands since. Dwara atika may therefore be confidently identified with this Dwara. The six inscriptions of the Parivrajaka *Mahārājas* were found either at Khoh, Majhgawim or Bhumari, which places are all quite close to Uchchakalpa or the present Uchahia, the capital of the Nagole State, where another family, that of the *Mahārājas* of Uchchakalpa, closely connected with the Parivrajaka *Mahārājas* both chronologically and territorially, ruled. Uchahia is about 60 miles from Bilahri, and we know from the Bhumari pillar inscription, edited by Dr Fleet<sup>4</sup>, that that village formed the boundary between the two territories. This would show that the Dabhāla country was almost co-extensive with the boundaries of the present Jabalpur district to the north and extended to about 120 miles from Tripurī town, the villages granted in the present inscription being situated midway between Tripurī town and the boundary of the Dabhāla kingdom in the north. This will clearly show that the present inscription does not really belong to Betul. As Dr Fleet remarks (*loc cit*), “copper-plates, being small and portable, are

<sup>1</sup> See General Cunningham's *Reports*, Vol. IX p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Gupta Inscr.* p. 113 f. In the *Uttarāraṇyakāshikā* (XVIII 93 and 95) Dahala and Dahala occur almost interchangeably, and it is indicated that the two terms were differently used.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Ind.* Vol. I p. 251 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Gupta Inscr.* p. 111.

always liable to be carried to a considerable distance from the places to which they properly belong, and can only be applied territorially when the places mentioned in them can be identified."

One knotty problem however remains yet to be solved. What were the eighteen forest kingdoms included in the *Pañcāyaka Mahārājas'* dominions? These must have been contiguous to Dabhāla, and as such the choice seems to lie between the ancient Gauṇ country, latterly known as Gondwānā, on the one hand and the Baghelkhand and Chutiā Nāgpur country together with Chhattisgarh on the other. All this country formed part of the Gupta empire. "The dominion under the direct government of Samudragupta in the middle of the fourth century comprised all the most populous and fertile countries of Northern India. It extended from the Hooghly on the east to the Jumna and Chambal on the west, and from the foot of the Himālayas on the north to the Narmadā on the south. Beyond these wide limits, the frontier kingdoms of Assam and the Gangetic delta, as well as those on the southern slopes of the Himālayas, and the free tribes of Rājputāna and Mālwa, were attached to the empire by bonds of subordinate alliance, while almost all the kingdoms of the south had been overrun by the emperor's armies and compelled to acknowledge his irresistible might."<sup>1</sup> With regard to the conquest of South Kosala or Chhattisgarh and the forest tribes Mr. Smith (*op cit* p 248) narrates the details thus: "The invader (Samudragupta), marching due south through Chutiā Nāgpur, directed his first attack against the kingdom of South Kosala in the valley of the Mahanadī, and overthrew its king, Mahēndra. Passing on, he subdued all the chiefs of the forest countries, which still retain their ancient wildness, and constitute the tributary states of Orissa and the more backward parts of the Central Provinces." Now these backward parts originally constituted what were known as Atharāgarh, i.e. the eighteen forts or forest kingdoms, to wit Sakti, Sūringarū Raigarh, Bāmū, Raṅkhol, Sonpur, Patna, Baigarh, Phuljhā, Bora Sūmbhar, Khūmā Būndiā Nīwāgarh, Sūmbalpur, Obhandrapur, Baud, Athmalik, Gāngpur and Bonai. Of these the first eight are still feudatory states, the next four *zamīndaris* and the next two Government *khālsā*, all attached to the Central Provinces.<sup>2</sup> On the abolition of the south frontier agency in 1837 Baud and Athmalik were transferred to the control of the Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals of Orissa. Gāngpur and Bonai were attached to Chutiā Nāgpur. Baigarh, being confiscated for rebellion, was given over to the Raja of Raigarh. Again, among the Orissa tributary states there are eighteen *garhmāls*, though they are somewhat too far away from the Dīhal country. Chhattisgarh, i.e. the thirty-six forts, included twice eighteen forts, viz. eighteen *garhs* in one group subordinate to the senior branch of the Haihaya ruling at Ratanpur, and the same number in the second group held by the junior branch living at Raipur. So the grouping of states or estates into eighteen would appear to be customary and traditional towards Chhattisgarh. As regards the western Gauṇ country, which included the present districts of Betul, Chhindwā, Seoni and Mandlā,<sup>3</sup> there is no record or tradition of its ever having been divided into eighteen forest kingdoms. It therefore seems very probable that the eighteen forest kingdoms of the inscription lay somewhere in the direction of Chhattisgarh, which was subdued by Samudragupta as mentioned before. As the *Pañcāyaka Mahārājas* owed allegiance to the Gupta kings, it seems within the range of probability that those kingdoms were handed over to them, unless they formed part of the *Pañcāyakas'* dominions before Samudragupta's conquest. It is with the greatest diffidence that I hazard this conjecture, and I am not at present prepared to localise exactly the eighteen forest kingdoms. I however hope that the information, which I have partly acquired from my personal acquaintance with the country, may perhaps prove of some use to an antiquarian willing to solve the question.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. V. A. Smith's *Early History of India*, p. 250 f.

<sup>2</sup> Since I wrote the above, Bāmā, Raṅkhol, Sonpur, Patna, Bora Sūmbhar and Sambalpur have been transferred to Bengal.

<sup>3</sup> General Cunningham's *Reports*, Vol. IX p. 150.





TEXT<sup>1</sup>

## First Plate

- 1 Ōm<sup>2</sup> namō [bha]gavatē Nārāyanāya [I\*] Svasti [I\*] Śrīmati pravarddhamāna-  
vijaya-  
2 rājya(jyê) sambatsara-<sup>3</sup>śatē navanavaty-uttarē Gupta-na(nri)pa-iājya bhuktau  
Mahā-  
3 mārggaśirsha-sambatsarē<sup>4</sup> Kārttika-māsa-daśamyām<sup>5</sup> asyām sambatsara-<sup>6</sup>māsa-  
4 divasa-pūrvvāyā[m\*] chaturdaśa-vidyāsthāna-vidita-paramārthasya Kapilasy=ēva  
5 maharshêh sarvva-tatva(ttva)-jñasya Bhāradvāja-sagotrasya nripatiparibhā(vrā)jaka-  
6 Suśarmmanah kul-ōtpannēna mahārāja-śrī-Dēvādhyā-putra-pranaptiā mahā-  
7 rāja-śrī-Prabhāñjana-pranaptrā mahārāja śrī-Dāmōdara-naptrā go sahasra-  
8 hasty-aśva-hirany-ānēka-bhūma(mi)-pradasya guru-pitri-matri-pūja(jā)-tatparasy=ānēka-  
9 samara-śata-vijayinah s-āshtādaś-ātavi-rājy-ābhyantaram [Da]bhālā-iājyam sama-  
10 nupalayi[shnō]r-anēka-guna-vikhyāta-yaśasah śrī-mahārāja-Hastinah sutēna  
11 varna-āśrama-dharmma-sthāpan-ābhuratēna parama-bhāgavatēn=ātyanta-pitri-bhaktēna  
12 sva-vanśa-mōda-<sup>7</sup>karēna mahārāja-śrī-Samkshōbhēna(na) mātapittrōi=ātmanāś=cha  
puny-a-  
13 bhuvridhy-artham Tripuri-vishayē Prastaravātaka-grāmasya<sup>8</sup> arddham Dvāravati-  
14 kāyāś=cha chaturthō=nsah<sup>9</sup> ēvam=ētau pūrvv-āghāta-parichchhēda-maryyā-

## Second Plate

- 15 dayā Bhāradvāja-sagotriāya Mādhyandina-Vāṇi(ja)sanēya-sabra[hma]-  
16 chārinē brāhmana-Bhānusvāmīnē putra-pautti-ānvay-ōpabhogyau<sup>10</sup> ētau  
17 s-ōdrangau s-ōparikarau<sup>11</sup> a-chāta-bhata-prāvaśyau<sup>12</sup> chōra-diōhaka-varjjam<sup>13</sup> tāmīa-  
18 śāsanena<sup>14</sup> āgrāhāran atisrishtau [I\*] Tad=asmat kul ōtthair=mmat-pādapind-ōpa  
19 jivibhur=vvā kālāntarēshv=api na vyāghātah karaniyah [I\*] ēvam=ājñā(jñā)pt[ē] yo=  
20 nyathā kuryāt=tam=aham dēhānta-a-gato=pi mahat=āvadhyānēna nuddahēyam [I\*]  
Uktañ=cha  
21 bhagavatā paramarshinā vēda-vyāsēna Vyāsēna [I\*] Pūrvva-dattām dvijātibhyō  
yatnāt<sup>15</sup>  
22 raksha Yudhishtira [I\*] mahi(hi)m=mahimatām siēshtā dānach=chhiēyō=  
nupālanam [I\*] Bahubhih<sup>16</sup>  
23 vasudhā bhuktā rājabhīh Sagar-ādibhih [I\*] yasya yasya yadā bhūmih<sup>17</sup> tasya  
24 tasya tadā phalam [I\*] Shashtim varsha-sahasrām svargga(rggē) mōdati bhūmī  
dah [I\*] āchchhētā  
25 ch=ānumantā cha tāny=ēva narakē vasēt [I\*] Bhūmī-pradānan=na paīam  
pradānam<sup>18</sup>  
26 dānād=visishtam paripālanam=tu [I\*] saivvê=tisrishtām paripālya bhūmim nripā  
27 Nrig-ādya<sup>19</sup> tridivam prapannā iti [I\*] Likha(khi)tañ=cha Jivita-naptiā Bhujanga-  
28 dāsa-puttrēna vyāpāranaya<sup>20</sup> Īśvaradāsēna [I\*] Dūtakah Puna-  
29 rvasuh [I\*] Sambatsara<sup>21</sup> 100 [90 9] Mahāmargga-varshē<sup>22</sup> Kārttika di  
10 [I\*]

<sup>1</sup> From the original copper plates<sup>4</sup> Read -samratsarē<sup>7</sup> Read sta-ras amōda-<sup>10</sup> Read °bhōgyāt=<sup>13</sup> Read =varjjam<sup>16</sup> Read Bahubhir=<sup>19</sup> Read -adyās=<sup>22</sup> Read Mahāmargga[śirsha\*]-varshē<sup>2</sup> Expressed by a symbol<sup>5</sup> Read -daśamyam=<sup>8</sup> Read grāmasy=ārdham<sup>11</sup> Read °karāv=<sup>14</sup> Read śāsanēn=ōgrahārat=<sup>17</sup> Read bhūmīs=<sup>20</sup> Read °nay=Īśvara°<sup>3</sup> Read samratsara<sup>6</sup> Read samratsara<sup>9</sup> Read =mā<sup>12</sup> Read -pracesyau<sup>15</sup> Read yatnāt=<sup>18</sup> Read pradānam<sup>21</sup> Read Samratsara

sun  $51^{\circ} 2' 52''$ .<sup>1</sup> And his heliacal rising after the conjunction took place before sunrise of either the 25th May,<sup>2</sup> when his true longitude was  $54^{\circ} 21'$  (while that of the sun was  $64^{\circ} 23' 35''$ ), or the 26th May, when his true longitude was  $54^{\circ} 35'$  (while that of the sun was  $65^{\circ} 20' 31''$ ). Whichever of the two days may be absolutely correct, it is clear that before sunrise of the 25th or the 26th May A. D. 518 Jupiter—since his true longitude in either case was more than  $53^{\circ} 20'$ —by all three systems of the *nakshatras* rose heliacally in the *nakshatra* Mr̥gāśīras, and that therefore the year which then commenced was a Mahā-Mārgāśīrsha year. That year of course included both the 15th September and the 15th October A. D. 518; for Jupiter's next conjunction with the sun only took place some time before sunrise of the 17th June A. D. 519,<sup>3</sup> and his next heliacal rising about the 1st July A. D. 519,<sup>4</sup> when a Mahā-Pausha year commenced. I may add that, according to Mr. Dikshut's calculations, a Mahā-Māgha year commenced on the 3rd August A. D. 520, and a Mahā-Phālguna year on the 4th September A. D. 521.

The result is that the month Kārttika of the Gupta year 199 which is quoted in the date must have fallen in A. D. 518, and that the date probably corresponds to Monday, the 15th October A. D. 518, but may possibly correspond to Saturday, the 15th September A. D. 518.

### No 29.—TRIPLICANE INSCRIPTION OF DANTIVARMAN.

By V VENKAYYA, M A

Madras was "a mere fishing village up to the year 1639 A. D., when the English<sup>5</sup> became possessed of it by a grant from the puppet sovereign Śrīranga of Vijayanagara, then at Chandragiri."<sup>6</sup> Some of the suburbs of Madras are, however, very ancient. Leaving aside St. Thomé connected with the St. Thomas legends,<sup>6</sup> Mailapur (or Mayilāppūr) and Tiruvāmūr (Tiruvāṅṅmīyūr) are mentioned in the Tamil poem *Dīvāram* composed in the 7th century A. D.<sup>7</sup> The former is also believed to have been the residence of the immortal Tiruvalluvar,<sup>8</sup> a couplet of whose is quoted in the ancient Tamil work *Manimēgalai*.<sup>9</sup> Tiruvallikkēni (the modern Triplicane) is referred to in the Tamil scriptures of the Vaishnavas known as *Nālāyiraprabandham* by the saints Pēyālvār,<sup>10</sup> Tuumaḥśai-Ālvār<sup>11</sup> and Tirumangai-Ālvār, the last of whom informs us that the (Pārthasārathisvāmin) temple was founded by an unnamed king of the Tondaiyar, i. e. by a Pallava king.<sup>12</sup> Egmore (Eḷumbūr in Tamil) is mentioned in records of the Chōla king Kulōttunga I and was apparently the headquarters of a subdivision (*nāḍu*)

<sup>1</sup> The calculations which have yielded the above results have all been made according to the Sūrya siddhānta. By the Ārya-siddhānta, at mean sunrise of the 11th May A. D. 518 the true longitude of Jupiter was  $51^{\circ} 13'$ , and that of the sun  $51^{\circ} 4' 18''$ , and at mean sunrise of the 12th May A. D. 518 the true longitude of Jupiter was  $51^{\circ} 57'$ , and that of the sun  $52^{\circ} 1' 36''$ . This shows that, according to the Ārya-siddhānta, the conjunction would have taken place between one and two hours before mean sunrise of the 12th May A. D. 518.

<sup>2</sup> At mean sunrise of the preceding day, the 24th May A. D. 518, the true longitude of Jupiter was  $51^{\circ} 3'$ , and that of the sun  $63^{\circ} 26' 38''$ .

<sup>3</sup> At mean sunrise of this day the true longitude of Jupiter was  $85^{\circ} 33'$ , and that of the sun  $85^{\circ} 58' 33''$ .

<sup>4</sup> At mean sunrise of this day the true longitude of Jupiter was  $88^{\circ} 45'$ , and that of the sun  $99^{\circ} 18' 3''$ .

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Sewell's *Lists of Antiquities*, Vol I p 175.

<sup>6</sup> The Roman Catholic Church at St. Thomé is believed to be built over the grave of St. Thomas, *ibid* p 176. Rāmarāya of Vijayanagara is said to have led an expedition against the place in A. D. 1558; Mr. Sewell's *Forgotten Empire*, p 193.

<sup>7</sup> The saint Tiruvānasambandar is reported to have revived at Mayilāppūr a dead girl, whose bones had been preserved by her father in a pot. The temple is called Kapāḥchcharam (i. e. Kapālēśvara) in the hymn composed by the saint. Jainas and Buddhists seem to have lived at that time in the vicinity of Mayilāppūr.

<sup>8</sup> *Ind Ant* Vol VII p 221.

<sup>9</sup> *Essay on Tamil literature* by the late Professor M. Seshagiri Sastru of Madras, No I p 33 f.

<sup>10</sup> *Iyarpā*, III. 16.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid* IV 35.

<sup>12</sup> *Periyatirumoli*, verse 130.