



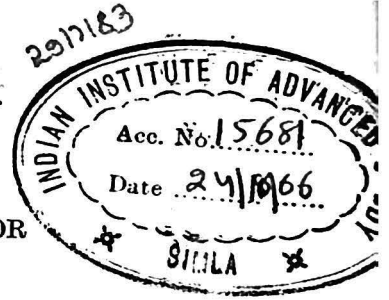
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MADANAPĀLA AND HIS SUCCESSOR

By D. C. SIRCAR

(Paper received on 28th July, 1953)

Dr. R. C. Majumdar has recently published a note in this *Journal* (Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 1952, pp. 117ff.) in which he has examined some of the statements occurring in my article on Later Pāla chronology appearing in a previous issue (Vol. XVII, No. 1, 1951, pp. 27ff.) and tried to show some of these to be 'either unconvincing or altogether wrong.' I propose to discuss the points raised by Dr. Majumdar one by one.

1. As regards the Nepalese manuscript of the *Rāmāyana* copied in Śamvat 1076 during the reign of *Garuḍadhvaja* Gāṅgeyadeva, Dr. Majumdar says, 'The confident manner in which this statement is made seems to indicate that the reading *Garuḍadhvaja* admits of no doubt and the reading *Gauḍadhvaja* is palpably wrong. Being one of those who adopted the reading *Gauḍadhvaja* and drew important conclusions from it, I was upset by the *ipse dixit* of Dr. Sircar and naturally tried to find out the basis of his views . . . . I accordingly studied all the available literature on the subject, but could not find anywhere any revised reading of the colophon. I learnt, on enquiry at the Society's Library, that the manuscript in question was still in Nepal and it is not likely that Dr. Sircar had the benefit of a personal inspection of it. In view of all these I think the reading *Gauḍadhvaja* should be accepted as the correct one, until at least Dr. Sircar shows any cogent reason for changing it to *Garuḍadhvaja*.'

Those of us who attended the fourth session of the Indian History Congress, held at Lahore in December, 1940, had an opportunity of examining a photostat copy of the colophon of the said manuscript of the *Rāmāyana* exhibited in the Historical Exhibition arranged on that occasion. The photographic copy of the manuscript was presented by the Nepal Government to Dr. Raghuvira's International Academy of Indian Culture, then at Lahore. On an examination of the colophon it was found that the expression in question quite clearly reads *Garuḍadhvaja* and that Bendall, who did not publish any facsimile of the colophon, must have inadvertently dropped the letter *r* while copying it. Both the facsimile and revised reading of the colophon were published a little over ten years ago by Prof. V. V. Mirashi in his article entitled 'Gāṅgeyadeva of Tirabhukti' appearing in the *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. XXIII, Poona, 1942, pp. 291ff. I have no doubt that a look at the published facsimile of the colophon, if not at Prof. Mirashi's revised transcript of it (*op. cit.*, p. 293), will be enough for Dr. Majumdar to forego his claim that 'the reading *Gauḍadhvaja* should be accepted as the correct one'.

2. The new inscription of Madanapāla, discovered by me at the village of Valgudar in the Monghyr district of Bihar, bears the date: the 11th day of Jyaiṣṭha in Śaka 1083 (May 4, 1161 A.D.) falling in the eighteenth regnal year of the Pāla king. In my article I took Madanapāla's regnal year 18 to be corresponding to Śaka 1083 (1161-62 A.D.) and suggested that his first regnal year corresponded to Śaka 1066 (1144-45 A.D.). Dr. Majumdar does not believe that the regnal years of the Pāla king coincided with the corresponding Śaka years and points out that

Madanapāla's accession took place some day between the 5th May, 1143 A.D., and the 4th May, 1144 A.D. He takes '1143-44 A.D. as the date of Madanapāla's accession.' As this has little bearing on the other points raised by Dr. Majumdar, let us provisionally follow his way of calculation (leaving the point to be discussed on a future occasion) and think that the first year of Madanapāla's reign began sometime between May, 1143 A.D., and May, 1144 A.D., and ended sometime between May, 1144 A.D., and May, 1145 A.D.

3. I have little doubt myself that the Gaya inscription mentioning Govindapāla bears a date counted from the year of his accession.

We know that the start of an era in ancient India was usually due to the successors of a dead monarch merely continuing the regnal reckoning of the latter. Govindapāla's reckoning looks exactly like an era in its infancy and it is natural to think that it was created in the usual process. That in Bihar, where only the use of the *atīta-rājya* reckoning of Govindapāla as well as a similar era of Lakṣmaṇasena is noticed, the people regarded the *atīta-rājya* era as an ordinary era (i.e. one created by the continuation of the regnal reckoning of a ruler) is suggested by the fact that in that area sometimes even a year of the Vikrama Saṁvat was attributed to the *atīta-rājya* of Vikramāditya, although there is no tradition tracing the origin of the V.S. from the end of Vikramāditya's rule. See the colophon of the *Śrī-Kālacakratāntra* manuscript, preserved in the Cambridge University Library, which reads as follows: *Paramabhaṭṭārak-etyādi-rājavalipūrvavat-śrīmad-Vikramādityadevapādānām = atīta-rājye Saṁ 1503 Bhādra-vādī 13 Budhe likhāpit = eyaṁ śrīmat-Bhikṣu-śrī-Jñānasrikaiḥ | likhit = eyaṁ Magadhadeśīya-Kansāragrāmaśāsanika-Karaṇakāyastha-śrī-Jayarāmadatten = eti* || (J.A.S.L., Vol. XVIII, 1952, p. 71). The same view is also suggested by the fact that some dates are associated with Govindapāla without mentioning his *rājya* as past exactly as in the regnal or era reckoning. Compare, e.g., the date *Govindapāladevapādānām Saṁ 37 Śrāvaṇa-dīne 14*, found in one manuscript, with (1) *Śrīmat-Lakṣmaṇasenadevasya Saṁ 3* (Bhandarkar's List, No. 1689), (2) *Mahārājasya śrī-Bhīma-varmaṇaḥ-Saṁvat 139* (ibid., No. 1277), etc. The people who dated their records in Govindapāla's years in the above way (i.e., without mentioning his present or past *rājya*) apparently did so without any fear of confusion between the king's present and past *rājya* reckonings. This suggests that they knew only one reckoning of Govindapāla, i.e., his regnal reckoning which the Buddhists of Bihar were inclined to continue in preference to referring to the reign of the Brahmanical Gāhaḍavālas that ensued in West Bihar immediately after the Pāla king's rule.

4. As we have seen, according to Dr. Majumdar's way of calculation, the latest known year of Madanapāla's reign began sometime between May, 1160 A.D., and May, 1161 A.D., and ended sometime between May, 1161 A.D., and May, 1162 A.D. The Gaya inscription of Govindapāla bears the date: September 22, 1175 A.D., falling, in the opinion which I am inclined to accept as the natural interpretation of the language of the record, in the fourteenth year counted from that king's accession. According to Dr. Majumdar's way of calculation, the first regnal year of Govindapāla thus began sometime between September, 1161 A.D., and September, 1162 A.D. The latest known date of Madanapāla's reign supplied by the Valgudar inscription and the date of Govindapāla's accession (according to the interpretation of the dates associated with this ruler followed by myself) are so close to each other that I felt little doubt that 'Govindapāla was the immediate successor, if not actually the son, of Madanapāla'. It will be seen that, in this case, I was merely supporting,

with the help of the new evidence at my disposal, the following statement of Dr. Majumdar himself in the *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, pp. 171-72: ' . . . Govindapāla must have ascended the throne shortly, if not immediately, after Madanapāla'. It may also be noted that Dr. Majumdar expresses a similar view on this point elsewhere in the same work. Thus at pp. 175 and 177, the latest date of Madanapāla's reign is taken to be the fourteenth regnal year while at p. 177 the beginning of the reigns of Madanapāla and Govindapāla is assigned to 1140 A.D. and 1155 A.D. respectively. Similarly, some other writers on the history of Bengal (cf. H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. I, pp. 369, 385) have represented Govindapāla as the successor of Madanapāla. But Dr. Majumdar believed that Govindapāla's rule did not begin but ended about 1162 A.D. so that the king ascended the throne a few years earlier about 1155 A.D. Now as the Valgudar inscription proves that Madanapāla ruled up to about 1161-62 A.D. and not up to 1154-55 A.D. as suggested in the *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Dr. Majumdar offers the new suggestion that Govindapāla was ruling contemporaneously with Madanapāla. It will be seen that out of his two old suggestions, viz. (1) that Govindapāla ascended the throne shortly or immediately after Madanapāla, and (2) that Govindapāla's rule began about 1155 A.D. and not about 1162 A.D., at least one of which has to be shelved after the discovery of the Valgudar inscription, Dr. Majumdar now discards the former in favour of the latter. But in my opinion the view that Govindapāla's rule ended and not began about 1162 A.D. is based on an unnatural and improbable interpretation of the language in which the dates associated with Govindapāla are expressed. I am, therefore, in favour of the first of the two suggestions which were offered on this point by Dr. Majumdar in the *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, and have been quoted above. Of course, nobody can rule out the possibility of more than one king of the Pāla dynasty ruling over small areas in different parts of central and south Bihar about the middle of the twelfth century. Whether Palapāla's rule over parts of the Monghyr district sometime probably in the second half of the twelfth century has to be explained on the basis of such a supposition is, of course, a matter of conjecture and cannot be settled in the present state of our knowledge.<sup>1</sup> But the evidence at our disposal, as I understand it (cf. also Majumdar's own views in the *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, and Ray's in the *Dynastic History*, Vol. I, referred to above), suggests plainly that Govindapāla was the successor of Madanapāla. It has to be remembered that a manuscript is known to have been copied at Nalanda (Patna district) during the fourth year of Govindapāla's reign (cf. Banerji, *Vāṅgālār Itihāsa*, 2nd ed., pp. 347-48; *The Pālas of Bengal*, p. 112). This manuscript and the Gaya inscription suggest that the Patna and Gaya districts formed parts of the dominions of Govindapāla. The

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Majumdar refers to the independent rule of Yakṣapāla in the Gaya region during the reign of Vīgrahapāla III. But, if Yakṣapāla does not mention the name of his Pāla overlord in his inscription, that is clearly explained by the fact that for a time the hold of the Pāla king on parts of Bihar was loosened by the success of the Kalacuris. The image inscription, in which the reference to the 35th regnal year of Palapāla occurs, is said to have been found at Jaynagar in the western part of the Monghyr district. It is not impossible that he was the successor of Govindapāla and that he fell back on East Bihar when Govindapāla lost his life and West Bihar was occupied by the Gāhaḍavālas. Before 1200 A.D., West Bihar was conquered by the Turkish Musalmans who subdued West Bengal about 1202 A.D. East Bihar may have been conquered by the Turks from Palapāla not long after the 35th year of his reign. The end of Govindapāla and Palapāla may thus be tentatively assigned to circa 1165 and 1200 A.D. respectively. But we have to wait for further light on the subject.

inscriptions of Madanapāla have been discovered at Biharsharif in the Patna and at Jaynagar and Valgudar in the Monghyr district (cf. *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, p. 175). Dr. Majumdar now exclusively associates Madanapāla with the Monghyr district and Govindapāla with the Gaya district without taking notice of the fact that both the kings are known to have held sway over the Patna district. This fact ignored by him may be regarded as an evidence against the theory that the two kings ruled contemporaneously over different regions.

The Maner inscription (Bhandarkar's List, No. 214) of 1124 A.D. recording the grant of a piece of land near Patna by Gāhaḍavāla Govindacandra (circa 1114-55 A.D.) and the Lar inscription (*ibid.*, No. 269) stating that the same monarch was stationed at Mudgagiri (Monghyr) on April 15, 1146 A.D. (V.S. 1202, Vaiśākha sudi 3, Monday), show that the Gāhaḍavālas were in occupation of the Patna-Monghyr region. The Biharsharif inscription (*ibid.*, No. 1638) of Madanapāla's 3rd regnal year (Vaiśākha-di 24), corresponding to 1146-47 A.D. suggests that, shortly after the date of the Lar inscription, Madanapāla recovered the said region from the Gāhaḍavālas. The Manahali inscription (*Gauḍalekhamālā*, pp. 147ff.) of Madanapāla's 8th regnal year (1151-52 A.D.) records his grant of land in the Koṭivaraṣa *viṣaya* of the Puṇḍravardhana *bhukti* showing that at least wide areas of North Bengal still continued to form a part of his empire. This further shows that Vijaya-sena, who died about 1158 A.D. (*Hist. Beng.*, p. 210), could not have conquered the whole of North Bengal long before the end of his reign. The Jaynagar inscription (*ibid.*, p. 175) of Madanapāla's 14th regnal year (1157-58 A.D.) points to his hold over the Patna-Monghyr region while the Valgudar inscription suggests the same state of affairs for 1161-62 A.D. The Sihvar inscription (Bhandarkar's List, No. 369) of 1175 A.D. recording the grant of a piece of land in the Patna district by Gāhaḍavāla Jayaccandra (circa 1170-93 A.D.) and the same king's Bodhgaya inscription (*ibid.*, No. 401) bearing a date about 1183-84 A.D. suggest reoccupation of the Patna-Gaya tract by the Gāhaḍavālas during his rule. But the Gaya inscription (*ibid.*, No. 370) referring to the *gata-rājya* of Govindapāla points to the Gāhaḍavāla occupation of that area by 1175 A.D. The association of Govindapāla's reign, present or past, with localities both in the Gaya and Patna districts suggests that Gāhaḍavāla Jayaccandra conquered that area from Govindapāla. Under the circumstances, it is quite natural to think that Govindapāla succeeded Madanapāla about 1162-63 A.D. but was ousted by Jayaccandra sometime before 1175 A.D. Dr. Majumdar is thinking of an unlikely possibility of a struggle between Madanapāla and Govindapāla only because his mind is preoccupied by a conjecture that was offered on this point at a time when our knowledge of the subject was more limited. The evidence at our disposal, I am afraid, does not support his new suggestion even in the least.

5. To prove that the expressions *gata-rājya*, *atīta-rājya* and *vinaṣṭa-rājya*, used in connection with some dates of Govindapāla's reckoning, actually indicate the process of counting the years from the end of that king's reign (and not from its beginning as I think is the natural interpretation), Dr. Majumdar now draws our attention to the similarly expressed dates of the Lakṣmaṇasena-saṁvat although no satisfactory interpretation of the latter has as yet been possible. He then quotes the following date from the colophon of a manuscript stated to be preserved in the Kālābhavana belonging to the Hindu University, Banaras:

*atīte Lakṣmaṇasena-gata-saṁvat 4 catvūro 3(?) dīne.*

Commenting on this he says, 'Now *Lakṣmaṇasena-gata-saṁvat 4* cannot be interpreted to mean year 4 counted from the accession of Lakṣmaṇasena, but when his kingdom was lost; for we know definitely that Lakṣmaṇasena certainly ruled for more than four years.' I agree neither with Dr. Majumdar's reading of the passage in question nor with the conclusion drawn from it. Of course, the reading *catvāro 3 dine* is meaningless and obviously doubtful as normally in such cases the word *dine* is expected to be preceded in the date by the name of the month and followed by the number of the day in the month. But what is considerably more important in the present case is the number of the year written after the word *saṁvat*. From the published facsimile it can be plainly seen that, although Dr. Majumdar reads *ca* immediately after 4, there is a figure between the two, which has been ignored by him but looks like the *aṅkuṣa* type of 9. Whatever, therefore, may be the correct reading of the portion read by Dr. Majumdar as *catvāro 3*, the number of years written before it and after the word *saṁvat* appears to be 49 and not 4 as read by him. There is no difficulty with a date in the *gata* year 49 of king Lakṣmaṇasena of the Sena dynasty of Bengal as he ruled for about twenty-one or twenty-seven years only. It should, however, be pointed out that the association of the Lakṣmaṇasena-Saṁvat or *La-Saṁ* with the Sena king is extremely doubtful as the initial year of the era falls in the first quarter of the twelfth century (between 1107 and 1119 A.D.) long before Lakṣmaṇasena's reign falling in *circa* 1179-1206 A.D. Moreover there is as yet no clear evidence to show that Lakṣmaṇasena's dominions included any part of Bihar where only the use of the *La-Saṁ* has been traced. On the other hand, Minhāj-uddīn's *Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* seems to suggest that Bihar lay outside the Sena kingdom. Even a date in *La-Saṁ 4* is, therefore, not likely to prove the correctness of Dr. Majumdar's views.

#### POSTSCRIPT

When it was found, on an examination of the published facsimile of a portion of the manuscript lying in the Kalābhavana of the Hindu University, Banaras, that the preservation of the writing is unsatisfactory, I was eager to examine the original. Although I failed in securing the manuscript on loan from the authorities of the University, it was a matter of satisfaction to me to receive in November, 1953, through the kindness of Dr. R. B. Pandey of the College of Indology (Hindu University), a photograph and an eye-copy of the date portion of the manuscript in question. The eye-copy is stated to have been prepared by the draftsman of the Kalābhavana under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Pandey himself and of Mr. P. L. Gupta of the Kalābhavana. I am grateful to both Dr. Pandey and Mr. Gupta for their kindness. My thanks are also due to the draftsman who has drawn the signs as best as he could make them out on the original. Comparing the eye-copy with the photograph, I can detect only one case where the eye-copyist may have erred. It is in regard to the second sign in the name of Lakṣmaṇasena. The eye-copy shows the sign as *kva* while in the photograph I can read *kṣa* (for *kṣma*). There are one or two unsatisfactorily preserved signs in the photograph, about the tracing of which in the eye-copy I cannot be quite sure.

The photograph received by me shows some signs in the date portion slightly different from those in Dr. Majumdar's facsimile while the eye-copy clearly demonstrates the many errors in his reading of the date.

The three signs before *dine*, which have been read by Dr. Majumdar as *tvāro 3* (although, as pointed out above, the name of a month is expected

here), are quite clearly *Ākhāḍa*. *Kh* of the type employed here occurs in Bühler's Table VI, column XIV, line 16. There is absolutely no doubt that *Ākhāḍa* stands for Sanskrit *Āṣāḍha*. The manuscript was apparently copied in Mithilā as the pronunciation of *Āṣāḍha* as *Ākhāḍ* = *Ākhār* (cf. also Wilson's Glossary, s.v. *Āshārḥ*) and the use of the *La-Sam* are both popular in that region. The use of *ḍ* for *ḍh* in *Āshāḍha* is not only a familiar error in the documents of different parts of India, but is also in full accord with East Indian pronunciation. The number following *dīne* is 8 of the type of Bühler's Table IX, section at the right lower corner, line V. Thus the reading of the passage in question is clearly *Ākhā(ṣā)ḍa(ḍha)-dīne 8* and certainly not *tvāro 3 dīne* as read by Dr. Majumdar.

Between *Samvat* and *Ākhāḍa-dīne 8*, there are three signs, the first of them being a clear 4. The value of the second and third signs are doubtful. Dr. Majumdar has ignored the second sign and read the third as *ca*. I have said above that the sign following 4 may be a form of 9; but it seems to have more resemblance with 7 as found in lines 45, 46, 54 and 56 of the Sāhitya Pariṣad Plate of Viśvarūpasena (N. G. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, pp. 140ff. and Plates). The third sign looks unlike *ca* in my photograph. The eye-copy makes it a clear *śa* of the Devanāgarī type, although a Gaudīya *śa*, differing considerably from the Devanāgarī form of the letter, is expected in the manuscript in question.

It is not possible to be definite as to the reading of the number after *Samvat* with the help of the material at our disposal. But it is tempting to suggest that the number has been written in three figures, i.e., 4 followed by two other figures. This would, however, place the date of the manuscript in the fifth century of the *La-Sam*. But palaeography seems to suggest an earlier date. Under the circumstances, we may think of other possibilities. If the third sign is really *śa* as suggested by the eye-copy, the intended reading may be *Samvat 47 śe* which may be regarded as a contraction of *Samvatsare saptacatvāriṃśe*. It may also be supposed that the *śa* of the eye-copy had been written by the scribe wrongly for *ā* of the following *Ākhāḍa* but was later rubbed out by him.

It will be seen that I am not sure about the reading of the year of the *La-Sam* when the manuscript in question was copied. But there can be little doubt that Dr. Majumdar's reading of the passage as *Samvat 4 catvāro 3 dīne* is out of question and that his interpretation of the date as *La-Sam 4* is unjustifiable.



Photograph of the colophon of the Kalābhavana manuscript.

अतीतलक्षणमनगतममूर ऽवशआश्वाडदिना

Eye-copy of the date portion of the Kalābhavana manuscript.

