Kumudavillikā grant of the time of Śasāṅka, year 8

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Palaeographic description

The script, hardly anywhere nicely preserved in this inscription, is the form of Late Northeastern Brāhmī typical for inscriptions issued in Bengal during the reign of Śaśāṅka. However, one exceptional aspect of the script observed on this plate is its repeated use of the *upadhmānīya* and *jihvāmūlīya* signs, that we have not found so far in other inscriptions of early Bengal.

Edition

Seal

〈1〉 ku(mā)rāmātyādhikaraṇasya

Plate

〈Page 1r〉

〈1〉 (sva)st[i] [1×] va [10×] ra [1×] kra [1×] vi [2×] (bhāvibhi)〈ḥ〉 śaṅkha-cintāmaṇi-muktakā¿g?〈bh〉ara(ṇai)〈2〉(ś ca)turbhir mmahodadhibhi〈ḥ〉 mekhalayā Ivāvṛtāyā(ṁ) himavad-vindhya-kailās(ai)〈ḥ〉 t¡ṛ!〈ri〉bhir mmahā-śikharai〈ḥ〉 śobhi〈tāyāṁ〉 janma-jarā〈3〉maraṇa-bhaya-śoka-saṁsārārtt(i)-harāyā bhāgīra¿thīyā?〈thyā〉ḥ prāk-paścānusarppi〈ṇī〉bhi〈ḥ〉 sarvvato nimn¡(e)!-gābhiś copaśobhi〈4〉tāyāṁ vasundharāyā(ṁ) sāgra-varṣa-śata-pravarddhamāna-kalyāṇa-maṅgalāyuṣmatas samara-śata-sahasra-vija〈5〉y(i)no brāhmaṇa-kṣatra-viṭ-śūdrādīnāṁ pañcānāṁ varṇṇāśramāṇā{ṁ}n niyamana-hetor amara-patir iva svayaṁ-pratiṣṭhi〈6〉tasya mahārājādhirāja-śrī-śaśāṅka-deva-rājasyāṣṭam¡ai!〈e〉 'bde jyaiṣṭhe pūrṇṇamāsyāṁ puṇye tithau muhūrtte cāsmi〈7〉 n divasa-¿p?〈m〉āsa-s¡ā!〈a〉m¡b!〈v〉atsare rādhāputrāntaraṅga-nāgabhaṭagominā sād-hikaraṇopetā me(ḍḍa)khātādhivāsina〈8〉ḥ kuṭumbino mahāpradhāna-rāmaprabh(u)-mahāmahattara-virahadeva-kaḫkuka-yaj(ñ)uka-vappuka-vicittra-Udaya〈9〉da(mbha)-guṇadāsa-varggapālo(ṣṭh)itādy¿ā?〈ā A〉bhihitā bhavatāṁ prītyā kiñ cic chrey¿am a?〈o '〉nuṣṭhātum icchāmīty ebhir abhihita〈10〉 Evaṁ kriyatām iti

tato 'nena nau-mahattara-bhogapatika-vidagdhānumodanāya Eṣā{ṁ}m ādhivāsināṁ sa-karaṇo〈11〉petānā(ṁ) sakāśāt khilāvadhāra¿ṇy?〈ṇīy〉aḫ kum¿a?〈u〉davillikā nāma grāmo 'śītibhi〈ḥ〉 kārṣāpaṇai〈ḥ〉 krītvā yathār{a}hena vastrānna〈12〉pānaiś cāpyāyitvā yogeśvara-pramukha-kāṇvika-śākha-nānā-gotra-tapa-svādhyāyopetebhyo vrāhmaṇāryyebhya〈ḥ〉 yattra śrī〈13〉(yo)geśvara-bharadvāja-sagotras surabhisvāmi-kātyāyana-sagottro dāmayaśasvāmi-gottrayaśasvāmi-rājña〈14〉[ya]śasvāmi〈na〉ś ca maudgalya-sagotr¿o?〈ā〉 mmādhavasvāmi-dhana(ñja)ya-sagotro līlasvāmi-bharadvāja-sagotro rudrasvāmi〈15〉[2+][1×]nasagotro bhogayaśasvāmi-vidagdhasvāmi-budhasvāmi〈na〉ś cety ebh(y)as tāmraśāsanīkṛ(tya) datt(o)

sīmā tas(y)a〈Page 1v〉 〈16〉 [pūrvve](ṇa suktra)varddhārṣaka dakṣiṇena [7×] paścimena (gomayakha)ṇḍaḥ Uttareṇa (śākrārṣā)vakratāyā〈17〉 [tāś] (ca) pāñca¡varṣ¿aI?〈ayi〉kā!〈varṣikā〉 Ity ābhis sīmābhir viṅśatik(ā)rṣāpaṇyabh(o)gādā(na)m upa(lavdha)n tattra na kena ¡(cc)!〈c〉it svalp(āpy ā)vādhā〈18〉 (bhāvyā)

kāraṇaṁ

1. Anuṣṭubh

vahubhir vasudhā dattā
rāj¿ā?〈a〉bhis sagarādibhi〈ḥ〉
yasya yasya yadā bhūm(i)s
tasya tasya tadā phalaṁ

2. Anuṣṭubh

〈19〉 ṣaṣṭ(i)-varṣa-sahasrāṇi
svargge modati bhūmi-da〈ḥ〉
Ākṣeptā cānumantā ca
tāny eva narake vaseT

3. Anuṣṭubh

sva-dattāṁ para〈20〉dattām ¡vāpi!
yo hareta vasundharāṁ
sva-¿p?〈v〉iṣṭhāyā〈ṁ〉 kṛmir bhūtvā
pitṛbhiḥ saha pacyate

Apparatus

Seal

〈1〉 ku(mā)rāmātyādhikaraṇasya • Our restitution of the almost entirely illegible akṣara *mā* implies that this akṣara would have occupied an unusual amount of space. If our reading is correct, then it may be noteworthy that precisely the same combination of device and legend is also observed in the clay sealing from Basarh at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (AC1993.239.7), referenced in Griffiths 2015, p. 35, n. 24 and on the seal of the Tipperah plate of Lokanātha.

Plate

〈2〉 °bhi〈ḥ〉 mekhalayā • Absence of doubling of the *m* in *me* (as opposed to the doubling of *m* in *mma*) leads us to supply *ḥ* rather than *r*.

〈3〉 bhāgīra¿thīyā?〈thyā〉ḫ prāk- • The assumption of an akṣara *ḫprā*, with the *upadhmānīya* sign which is not otherwise attested in the epigraphy of Bengal, admittedly lends a tentative character to our choice of reading and interpretation. However, there are two cases of *ḫpā* in the Ganjam plates dated to the reign of Śaśāṅka, from Southern Orissa, lines 5 and 17. — 〈3〉 nimn¡(e)!-gābhiś • The unexpected *e-mātrā* is faint but apparently undeniable. One must either accept *nimne-ga* as an otherwise unattested *aluk-samāsa*, or treat the locative case ending as a mere error and emend *nimna-gābhiś*.

〈8〉 -yaj(ñ)uka- • Compared, on the one hand, with the *jña* at the end of line 13 (as well as with cases of *jña* in other inscriptions of this period) and, on the other hand, with the *rṇṇā* in line 5, the subscript consonant here can easily be read as *ṇ*, although the

shape of the right loop is more compatible with *ñ*. Since *ñ* must have been intended, we assume that we are merely dealing with a *ñ* of slightly imperfect execution.

〈9〉 -pālo(ṣṭh)itādy¿ā?〈ā A〉bhihitā • The reading *ṣṭh* is quite uncertain, and Uṣṭhita does not seem to be a plausible name, but we are unable to propose any more satisfactory reading.

〈10〉 sa-karaṇo〈11〉petānā(ṁ) • The redundant compound *sa-karaṇa-upeta* is synonymous with *sa-adhikaraṇa-upeta* seen above. The use of *karaṇa* for *adhikaraṇa* is also found in the Antla plate of the time of Śaśāṅka, year 8 (seal and line 7) and the Antla plate of the time of Śaśāṅka, year 19 (seal and line 9).

〈17〉 pāñca¡varṣ¿aI?〈ayi〉kā!〈varṣikā〉 • The scribed intended to write the word *pāñcavarṣayikā*, but *pāñcavarṣikā* is the correct form.

〈18〉 na kena ¡(cc)!〈c〉it svalp(āpy ā)vādhā〈18〉 (bhāvyā) • It seems the engraver has written *ccit* rather than expected *cit*. For similar phraseology, from the Licchavi corpus, closely related to Śaśāṅka in time and place, we may cite the Ādi-Nārāyaṇa Temple Inscription of Thankot (lines 20–21, 25–27): *na kena cid asmat-pādopajīvinā svalpāpy ābādhā kartavyā … ye 'py āgāmino rājāno 'smad-vaṁśyā bhaviṣyanti te 'py enām asmad-dattām bhūmim anumoditum arhanti yatkāraṇaṁ bahubhir vvasudhā …*; and the Luñjhya (Patan Palace) Inscription lines 12–13): *alpāpi bādhā na kāryā*. Cf. also *na kena cid vādhā kāraṇīyā* in the Soro plate of Bhānu, year 5 (line 12). In view of these and numerous other parallels, the gerundive *bhāvyā* is surprising in our context. But it is impossible to read either *kāry(y)ā* or *kart(t)avyā*, whereas *bhāvyā* seems a permissible reading.

〈20〉 ¡vāpi! • The syllable *pi* is not grammatically incorrect but needs to be deleted to obtain regular meter.

Translation

〈1–6〉 Hail! On the full-moon-day in the month of Jyaiṣṭha, during an auspicious *tithi* and *muhūrta*, in the eight year of the king Śrī Śaśāṅkadeva, overlord of great kings (*mahārājādhirāja*), victor in a hundred thousand battles, endowed with beauty (*kalyāṇa*), auspiciousness (*maṅgala*) and longevity (*āyus*) that prosper during a full hundred years, who was, like the king of the gods (i.e., Indra), self-installed as cause of the taming of the five classes and life-stages of the Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras, and so on, on the earth that is surrounded, as it were, by a girdle 〈formed〉 by the four great oceans, whose decorations are conches, wish-jewels and pearls, that are […]; 〈on the earth〉 that is beautified by the three great peaks, 〈namely〉 the Himavant, the Vindhya and Kailāsa, and additionally beautified by the rivers spreading out everywhere to

the East and West of the Bhāgīrathī (i.e., the Ganges), which removes the suffering of reincarnation ⟨that consists in⟩ birth, aging, death, fear and sorrow.

⟨6–10⟩ On this day, in this month and year, the *antaraṅga* ⟨called⟩ Nāgabhaṭagomin, son of Rādhā, addressed the *kuṭumbin*s residing in Meḍḍakhāta, together with the office (of the princely advisor), ⟨namely⟩ the *mahāpradhāna* Rāmaprabhu, the *mahāmahattara*s Virahadeva, Kaṣkuka, Yajñuka, Vappuka, Vicitra, Udayadagdha, Guṇadāsa, Vargapāla, Uṣṭhita, etc.: "By your kindness, I wish to carry out some meritorious work (*śreyas*)". He was addressed by them: "Please do as said!"

⟨10–15⟩ Therefore, with a view to the assent from the *nau-mahattara* ⟨and⟩ *bhogapatika* ⟨named⟩ Vidagdha, he purchased from these residents, together with the office, the village, which needed to be ascertained as waste ⟨land⟩, called Kumudavillikā, for eighty *kārṣāpaṇa*s, and, after duly gratifying them with garments, food and beverages, gave it to the noble Brahmins of the Kāṇva School, of various *gotra*s, steeped in ascetic practice and study, led by Yogeśvara, that is: Śrī Yogeśvara, of the Bharadvājagotra; Surabhisvāmin, of the Kātyāyanagotra; Dāmayaśasvāmin, Gotrayaśasvāmin, and Rājñayaśyasvāmin of the Maudgalyagotra; Mādhavasvāmin of the Dhanañjayagotra; Līlasvāmin of the Bharadvājagotra; Rudrasvāmin of the [...] *gotra*; Bhogayaśasvāmin, Vidagdhasvāmin and Budhasvāmin — ⟨he gave it⟩ to them by way of edict in copper.

⟨15–18⟩ It boundary to the east is Suktravarddhārṣaka, to the south [...], to the west Gomayakhaṇḍa, to the north Śākrārṣāvakratāyā. And ⟨based on the finding⟩ that they are quinquennial, with these boundaries a revenue entitlement worth twenty *kārṣāpaṇa*s was obtained. No one should make even a small encroachment upon it.

⟨18⟩ The reason is:

1.

By numerous ⟨kings⟩, land has been given; and by many it has been protected. Whoever holds land at a given moment, to him does the fruit then belong.

2.

The giver of land resides sixty thousand years in heaven; the one who challenges ⟨a donation⟩ as well as the one who approves ⟨of the challenge⟩ will reside as many ⟨years⟩ in hell.

3.

The one who would steal land given by himself or another becomes a worm in his own excrement and is cooked with his ancestors.

Commentary

The use of the word *kāraṇaṁ* in line 18 to introduce the traditional admonitory stanzas is also found in the Asiatic Society grant of Bhavadeva, year 2 (line 61).

Bibliography

Edited here from photographs and RTIs by Ryosuke Furui & Arlo Griffiths. Then published by both (2020).

Primary

[RFAG] Furui, Ryosuke & Arlo Griffiths. 2020. “A new copperplate inscription: Grant of the village Kumudavillikā during the reign of Śaśāṅka, Year 8.” PSJA New Series 11, pp. 99–113. [URL].