



REVIEW ARTICLE

THE GIFT OF UJJAIN: DECODING AN EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE FROM KANAGANAHALLI

*Jappen Oberoi

Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 19th October, 2016
Received in revised form
26th November, 2016
Accepted 25th December, 2016
Published online 31st January, 2017

Key words:

Kanaganahalli, Ujjain, Pudumāvi,
Western Kshatrapas, Sātavāhanas.

Copyright©2017, Jappen Oberoi. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Jappen Oberoi, 2017. "The gift of Ujjain: Decoding an Epigraphical evidence from Kanaganahalli", *International Journal of Current Research*, 9, (01), 45239-45240.

ABSTRACT

A one line inscription from a panel of the Mahā Stūpa in Kanaganahalli reveals the giving away of the city of Ujjain by a King Pudumāvi. The information gleaned after a careful scrutiny of the contents of this peculiar epigraph when corroborated with the data we already possess regarding the Western Kshatrapas and the Sātavāhanas provides for a better comprehension of the political history of both the aforementioned dynasties.

INTRODUCTION

The reconnaissance survey at Kanaganahalli between 1991-93 leading to a trial excavation was followed by large scale horizontal excavation for two field seasons of 1996-97 and 1997-98 with further excavations being carried out in 2001-02 and 2002-03.^[1] This aforementioned research work undertaken by Archaeological Survey of India has unveiled an unfathomable wealth of evidence published as a ASI Memoir (No.106). Among the plethora of sculptural illustrations on the Mahā Stūpa, one panel shows a rather peculiar scene. The upper register of the slab depicts two kings with their retinues, one of whom is pouring holy water from the water pitcher into the outstretched right hand of the other, symbolising that he is giving something to the other.^[2] This is the common way to indicate the change of ownership when a donation is made.^[3] Royal mounts can be seen on the lower register.^[4] The label epigraph accompanying the sculptural ensemble reads : *Rāya Pudumāvi Ajayata Ujeni deti* (King Pudumāvi is handing over Ujjayini to Ajayata).^[5] King Pudumāvi, according to the Memoir, appears to have arrived at Ujjain and bequeathed the territory of Ujjain to Ajayata (undefeatable) who assertively receives the gift from Pudumāvi.^[6] While King Pudumāvi is correctly identified with Vāsishthīputra Puḷumāvi who was the son and successor of the illustrious Gautamīputra Sātarkarṇi,^[7]

Sātarkarṇi, (*Ibid*) the interpretation of the sculptural ensemble the interpretation of the sculptural ensemble and the inscription is seemingly unsatisfactory. If Ajayata is taken as the name of the king then, as stated in the Memoir,^[8] the problem that presents itself is apropos the identity of this ruler for no king of this name existed contemporaneous to Vāsishthīputra Puḷumāvi. Furthermore, the depiction of 'assertiveness' or 'supremacy' of any other king while simultaneously showing King Pudumāvi 'in all humility and expression of submission'^[9] wouldn't find place in the Satavahana dominion. Ajayata in this case cannot also be taken to mean undefeatable or unconquered for the glorification by the Satavahanas of any monarch other than their own is impossible. OV Hinüber^[10] stating that the second king's name is not mentioned, translates the word Ajayata as 'non-victorious'. The omission of the king's name is equally untenable for then the inscription loses some of its relevance for while the subject's name is mentioned along with the object, the recipient's (indirect object) name would also have been stated. We must find a 'middle path' here. At the risk of hazarding a conjecture we may propose that the inscription uses 'word-play' here. Ajayata here means the recipient Jayadāman as well as the adjective to describe the recipient 'non-victorious'. Gautamīputra Sātarkarṇi was the King of Ākarāvanti (Mālwā) among other territories as in discernible from the epigraph of his mother belonging to his son's reign.^[11] It is safe to presume that Gautamīputra Sātarkarṇi held these territories at the time of his death and his son inherited all the provinces from his father. The contemporaneity of Puḷumāvi and Chashtana is a well

*Corresponding author: Jappen Oberoi,

Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology,
Panjab University, Chandigarh, India.

established fact and so is Chashtana's control over Ujjain.^[12] The Kārdamakās after conquering the Sātavāhana territories in Gujarat and Rajasthan must have targeted Ākarāvanti next.^[13] It is possible that Chashtana snatched away Ākarāvanti from Puḷumāvi and placed his son Jayadāman in charge of the region. There was probably a prolonged struggle between Puḷumāvi and Chashtana. During the last years of Chashtana's reign when he must have been extremely old after a lengthy rule he would have been just a nominal monarch. The crown prince of the Kārdamakās, Jayadāman, must have held the reins of the administration and led the attack on the Sātavāhanas. It is possible that Puḷumāvi succeeded in gaining an upper hand but opted for a more practical decision. Knowing that Ākarāvanti was difficult to hold and for years was the bone of contention between the two powers he agreed for a treaty where he 'gifted' Ujjain to Jayadāman and got married his younger brother, the Sātavāhana Crown prince, to Kārdamaka's crown prince's granddaughter. This gesture by Puḷumāvi must have established harmony between the two powers and secured the northern border allowing Puḷumāvi to conquer and consolidate territories in the south of his dominion.^[14] This must have happened during the last few years of Chashtana's reign and when Jayadāman was the Kshatrapa as opposed to his son Rudradāman and his granddaughter was eligible for marriage. We place the matrimonial alliance and the bequeathing of Ujjain in c. 125-129 AD.^[15]

REFERENCES

1. K.P. Poonacha, *Excavations at Kanaganahalli (ASI Memoir No.106)*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 2011, p. vii
2. *Ibid.*, Plate CXII A, p. 418
3. O.V. Hinüber, 'Buddhist Texts and Buddhist Images: New Evidence from Kanaganahalli (Karnataka/India)' in Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Vol XIX, Soka University, Tokyo, 2016, p. 14
4. K.P. Poonacha, *op.cit.*, p. Plate CXII B, p. 418
5. *Ibid.*, Ins. No. A. 99, p. 463
6. *Ibid.*, p. 303
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 304
10. O.V. Hinüber, *op.cit.*, p. 15. The inferences he draws (*Ibid.*, pp. 15-17) are, however, categorically wrong. Taking Puḷumāvi as an almost defeated king offering part of his territory to his opponent to preserve his independence and the integrity of his remaining territory is incorrect. Had he lost to the Kārdamakās, as supposed by Hinüber, he would have had no control over Ujjain and a person can't gift something he has no right over. Moreover, Sātavāhanas losing some of their territories in the north must have been common knowledge throughout the Sātavāhana Kingdom and turning defeat into his 'act of generosity' wouldn't have had any significance for the people would have been aware of Puḷumāvi's vanquishment and would have just considered their king to make an empty boast. Puḷumāvi must have regained control over Ujjain during the latter part of Chashtana's reign.
11. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VIII, p. 61
12. A.M. Shastri, *The Sātavāhanas and the Western Kshatrapas: A Historical Framework*, Dattsons, Nagpur, 1998, p. 71
13. The conquests of territories like Surāshṭra, Kukura and Anūpa would have preceded that of Ākarāvanti. These territories are mentioned in the Nasik Cave Inscription of Queen Balasirī as being part of Gautamīputra Sātarkarṇi's empire (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VIII, p. 61). They find mention again in the Junagarh inscription of Rudradāman as being under the Kārdamaka king (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VIII, p. 47). These territories must have been annexed while Chashtana was ruling.
14. A.M. Shastri, *op.cit.*, p. 72
15. The Andhau Inscription of year 52 (130 AD) mentions Chashtana and, associated with him, his grandson Rudradāman. (V.V. Mirashi, *The History and Inscriptions of the Sātavāhanas and the Western Kshatrapas*, Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture, Bombay, 1981, Part II, pp. 116-119) Jayadāman must have died before 130 AD.
