Chapter III:

Analytical Study of Inscribed Images: Based on Epigraphy and Iconography
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Analytical Study of Inscribed Images: Based on Epigraphy and Iconography

D.C. Sircar has classified the epigraphic records in two groups (i) those engraved by or on behalf of the ruling authority (ii) those incised on behalf of private individuals or organizations.¹ The analytical study of inscribed images from Bengal and Bihar (c. 7th century-13th century A.D.) which is the subject of my dissertation includes a study of both the groups. For the proper analysis of each inscribed images, I have divided the chapters in various sections and subsections taking note of all the dated and undated Brāhmaṇical, Buddhist, Jaina images discussed in Section I, II and III respectively. Section IV of the chapter will include the inscribed images of religious Preceptors of Brahmanical creed for example Śaivaite and Buddhist faith. The art materials to be included in this chapter is mainly figurative stone stelae and metal images of Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jaina faith.

A survey of eastern Indian donative epigraphs of the period focuses on two broad types; (i) dated images (ii) undated images. The dated images are entirely of votive nature containing the name of the king, the dates are mentioned in regnal and historical era, the name of the donor, his / her place of residence, and so on. The dates are often recorded in association to a meritorious titihi which was considered auspicious for performing the religious duty. In most inscriptions scribe, engraver, architect and their genealogical relations are recorded and their social status highlighted. The votive inscriptions which are of undated nature records the name of the donor, in many cases the place of his / her residence and the social status of the donor. In maximum number of Buddhist images, the Buddhist religious creed i.e. Buddhist dhāraṇī ve dharmā hetu prabhavaḥ is recorded. This type forms the majority of Pāla-Sena image inscriptions and a separate section has been devoted to bring such inscribed examples into focus.

The aim of this chapter is to study the dated and undated records on images from the epigraphic point of view, followed by an iconographical analysis of each art specimens. I have maintained a

chronological approach in the study of dated images only to have a clear idea of the numbers of inscribed images in the category of figurative stelae ascribed to each particular monarch of the Pāla-Sena period. The task of fixing the approximate date of an undated art specimen is mainly based on published literature and iconographic parameters.\(^2\) The methodology I have adopted for studying each inscribed instances is by giving the detail of images on the basis of identification of the inscribed image, material, find-spot; present whereabouts, the script and the language of the epigraphic record, approximate date of the inscribed specimen. In the second place, I have made an attempt to bring together all the published readings of the epigraphic records (text and translations) of each inscribed image under the head ‘Variant Readings’ and tried to point out the variations noted by me in terms of words, expression, orthography recorded in the readings given by the epigraphist. Besides this, I have given a list of references labeled as ‘Additional References’ which includes the names of books and articles that refer to that particular inscribed image. It should be mentioned in this connection, that I have tried to give a possible transliteration of all the texts given in Devanāgari and Bengali script.

An important area of my investigation is to study the iconographical features of each inscribed specimen included in this study. Therefore a section on ‘Iconographic Study’ forms a part of analysis of the art specimens as a whole. The iconographical approach given by authors in case of published image inscriptions has been given due consideration. Majority of the inscribed images have been discussed by scholars only from the epigraphic point of view, and the iconographical aspect is completely missing or briefly given in few lines. In such cases, the iconographic peculiarities of the sculpture has been discussed in detail. In case of many unpublished examples, that I have included in my work, it has not been possible for me to give a tentative reading of the inscriptions as my investigation as stated earlier is based on translations of the published inscriptive evidence, but due emphasis have been given on the iconographical aspect of that particular image. Finally, my understanding of each image inscriptions from the artistic point of view (study of iconography), and the information related to the polity and political structures, social structure, economic condition, religion and religious condition of the period as gleaned from the translations of the inscriptions is put together under the caption labeled ‘Observations’.

\(^2\) It has been mentioned earlier that the present work do not intend to take up a study on the stylistic features of the images or to date the undated examples on the basis of palaeographical peculiarities of the script used for writing.
Section I (a):
Brāhmaṇical Dated Images
Sl. No.1: Balarāma image inscription of Devapāladeva, year 9

Balarāma, Kurkihar
Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar, Eastern Indian Bronzes, fig. 93]

Identification: Balarāma
Material: Bronze, H:36.2 cm
Provenance: Kurkihar, Gaya district, Bihar.
Language: Sanskrit (Pāṇinian)
Script: Nāgarī

Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of the Pālā ruler Devapāla is ascribed between c.810-847 A.D. The votive inscription on the Balarāma image is dated to the 9th regnal year. The inscription is dated in c.810 + 9 = 819 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription, back of the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar, EIB, fig. 314]

Text:

L.1. Svasti\(^3\) śrī- Devapāla- deva- rājye Sarinat 9 Vāhiravaṇe Saddhu-ğra
L.2. ma - v (ā) stavya - Grāmalaaka-p (r) adhānaśidhma (? ) kapatni - Asukena mallaka-
L.3. Chhandakarṇ Mallaporasya pratipāditaḥ.

Translation:
The meaning of the inscription is not quite clear; it is evident that it records the gift of the image to Mallapore (possibly a monastery) by the wife of Śidhmaka, who was a resident of the Saddhu village in Vāhiravaṇa and seems to have been the village chief.


Text:

L.1. Siddham\(^4\) śrī Devapāla da (e)va- rājye samvat 9 Vāhiravaṇe (ne) Maddhā-ğra.
L.2. ma- vāstavya - gā ( grā) malaka - pradhana Śīṅgeka-patni Ajhukena mallaka-
L.3. Chehhandakarṇ Mallaporasya pratipāditaḥ.

Translation:

Though the meaning of the inscription is not fully clear, it is evident that it records the gift of the image in favour of Mallapora (possibly a monastery) by the wife of Śīṅgeka, who was a resident of Maddhu-gramā in Vāhiravaṇa and seems to have been the village chief.

Reading 3: Choudhary, R. K. Select Inscriptions of Bihar, p.35.

Text:

L.1. Svasti śrī Devapāla deva rājye Sarinat 9 Vāhirhane Saddhā-ğra
L.2. ma- vāstavya - Grāmalaaka - pradhana Śidhma kapatni Asukena mallaka-
L.3. Chhandakarṇ Mallaporasya pratipāditaḥ.

Translation:
The meaning of the inscription is not quite clear; it is evident that it records the gift of the image to Mallapore (possibly a monastery) by the wife of Śidhmaka, who was a resident of the Saddhu village in Vāhiravaṇa and seems to have been the village chief.

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\(^3\) Expressed by symbol.

\(^4\) Expressed by symbol.

\(^5\) No translation is given by the author. Since the reading given by R. K. Choudhary is identical to the other readings recorded above, the translation remains the same.
Additional References:

Jayaswal, K. P. "Metal images of Kurkihar Monastery, *JISOA*, 1934, Vol.II, pl. XXVIII, fig.1

Sahai, B. *The Inscriptions of Bihar*, Ramanand Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi, 1983, p.73, No.81.

Huntington, S. L. *PSSS*, 1984, Appendix No.10, p.42, Fig.31.


Iconographic Study:

The Brahmanical deity Balarama, is one of the incarnatory manifestations in human form of the *Vibhavas* (*Avatāras*) concept of Viṣṇuism. The sculptural representation from Kurkihar, dated to the regnal year 9 of the Pāla ruler Devapāla is carved in bronze. The central deity stands on a single lotus petal which is almost heart-shaped\(^6\) placed on a *triratha* pedestal. The stance of Balarama is not exactly *samapāda* (straight, frontal and static) but is posed as if the weight of his body is evenly distributed between his two legs. The seven-hooded snake canopy over his head is further encircled by a beaded oval aureole. He is ornamented with a two unmatching ear-rings, a beaded *upavīṭa*, *vanamīla*, armlets, bracelets, necklaces and anklets. Of his four hands, the lower left which is broken off, probably held a wine cup. The upper left holds a pestle (*musala*) and the corresponding right a ploughshare (*hāla* / *lāṅgala*). The lower right hand holds an elongated object, most probably some sweetmeat offered by the female attendant to his right, who holds a plate of sweetmeat in her left hand. The female attendant on the left bears a wine flask and a cup in her hands. Both the attendants, are shown standing with a slight flexion, and provided with a separate ovoid aureole.

The elaborate and ornamented architectural construct with *vyūlakas* atop elephants, strings of pearls, *hātiśas*, *vidyādharas*, the pinion of the umbrella is delineated in sharp contrast to the plain *triratha* pedestal.

\(^6\) The deity is not standing on a double lotus pedestal as pointed by Saraswati and Sarkar, *op.cit*. 1936, p. 20.
The iconographic composition of Balarama as depicted in this specimen corroborates to the textual description. He is a bucolic deity connected with agriculture and harvests. He is also an incarnation of the mythical serpent, Ananta-nāga as evidenced by the canopy of snakehoods. The presence of ploughshare and canopy of snakehoods describe the image as a representation of Vibhava Saṃkarṣaṇa. However, the textual description of Balarama referring to him as a hard drinker do not show him in inebriate condition with round and rolling eyes caused by excessive intoxication ('madavibhramalocanaḥ'). From the stylistic and iconographic point of view this example contains many features which become standard forms for Pala sculpture. The gomukha treatment of the torso, architectural construct with vyālakas atop elephants, strings of pearls, hatūsas, vidyātharas, the pinion of the umbrella and the decoration of the figure with elaborate jewelry.

Observations:

The inscribed Balarama image dated to the 9th regnal year of Devapāladeva was discovered from a mound at Kurkihar (ancient Kukkutapāda-giri-vihāra), Gaya district, Bihar. The three line inscription engraved at the back of the pedestal records the gift of an image to Mallapore (monastery) by Ajuhkena or Asukena, the wife of the village chief Sidhmaka or Śiṅgeka. The donor and her husband were inhabitants of a village named Saddhu / Maddhu grāma in Vāhirvāya / Vāhikhanē.

Several variations are noted in the expression recorded in this inscription. Reading 1 (hereafter R 1, R.2 and so on) A. Banerji Sastri and R. 3 (R. K. Choudhary) are identical except the name of the place as Vāhirvāya and Vāhikhanē. R.2 (P. L. Gupta) is different from the other two readings. Variations may be noted in the following; Sastri begins the transcription of the text with svasti, in case of P. L. Gupta it is Siddham. The name of the donor as Asukena and Ajuhkena, her husband’s name as Śidhmaka and Śiṅgeka as well the name of the village as Saddhu / Maddhū grāma are invariably different. It may also be noted in this connection, that Banerji-Sastri and P. L. Gupta do not mention the date of the reigning king Devapāla in their

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7 This textual description is supported by the presence of ploughshare in his hands.
9 Om, Siddham and svasti are auspicious symbols used by scribes at the beginning of votive record.
translation or summary, the name of lady donor as Ajhukena or Asukena is also missing in their translations.

The inscriptional evidence of the Balarama image is important for more than one reasons. The donor, Ajhukena is the wife of a respectable chief of the village. The gift of bronze image was a costlier affair and suggest the wealthier position of the donor and her husband. Moreover, the donor who performed this religious act and her husband who is a village chief or pradhana alludes to their respectable social status. The name of the places like Saddhu or Madhugrama and Vahirvana were significant enough to be recorded in the inscription as the donor’s husband and the donor identify themselves with this places. The gift of the Brahmanical image was made to a Buddhist religious institution, Mallapore, which was located at Kurkihar. Further the gift of the Brahmanical image, i.e. Balarama, is a pointer to the religious faith of the donor who was a follower of Vaisnavism. It appears that the Buddhist monastic centre Kurkihar, had a considerable non-Buddhist population, who offered the images of Hindu deities, in this case, to a Buddhist shrine within or close to a dominant Buddhist complex.

Sl. No. 2: Mahisantosh Image Inscription of Mahendrapāla, Year 15

![Image of Mahisantosh Image](https://example.com/inscription.jpg)

Sūrya, Mahisantosh

Photo Courtesy: [Sanyal Rajat, Prajñādhara, pl. 31. 9a]

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The name of the female donor Ajhukena is also mentioned in the Vālgūḍār pedestal inscription of Dharmapāladeva, for the reference see, Chapter IV of this dissertation, “Analytical Study of Fragmentary Images /Pedestals and Architectural Members: Based on Epigraphy and Iconography”.

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Identification: Sūrya
Material: Black stone.
Provenance: Mahisantosh, Naogaon District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Gallery No.3 of the State Archaeological Museum, Government of West Bengal, Kolkata. Accession No.05.213
Language: Corrupt Sanskrit
Script: East Indian alphabet of c.9th-10th c.A.D.
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Mahendrapāla, the Pāla king is assigned between c.847-862 A.D. The epigraphic record is dated to the regnal year 15. Thus the inscription is dated to c.847+15 = c.862 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription, pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Sanyal Rajat, Prajñadhara, pl. 31. 9b]

Close up view of the inscriptions on the lotus petal
Photo Courtesy: [Sanyal, Rajat Prajñadhara, pl.31. 9c]


Text:
L.1: Oṁ (I) Samvat 15 Mārgga-Sūkla-Saptamīyāḥ Śrī Mahendrapāḷadeva vijayarījye Vishtū na-
L.2 ndi napṭā Gaṇijja nandi Sunī Lokanandinā Ādityabhāṭṭārkaḥ Kāṛitaḥ (I) Iti Khanaka Vidu (dyu) ta (II)
Translation:
Hail (Ye Lord). On the seventh day of the bright half of the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, i.e. Agrahāyana (appertaining to) the fifteenth victorious regnal year of (king) Śri Mahendrapāladeva, (an) image of Lord Āditya (Sūrya) was carved or done by one Loka Nandi, grandson of Vishnu Nandi and son of Gaṇīja Nandi. Thus, (says) the engraver Vidyuta.

Reading 2: Sircar, D. C. “Mahisantosh Image Inscription of Mahendrapāla”, Year 15. Epigraphia Indica (hereafter EI), 37 / 5 pp. 204-208 & plate.

Text:
L.1: [Siddham |] Sasvat 15 Mārgga-śukla-sapta-maṇiḥ śrī-Mahendhra (ndra)-pāladeva- vi (vi) jaya-rājye Viṣṇu
L.2 [na] ndi-naptā (prā) Gaṇīganandi sunī Lokanandhi (ndi)nā Āditya-bhattacharāḥ Kāraṇa Iti [ ||*] Gana (na)ka-VI [sa]jara
Translation 11:
Not given


Text of Surface 1
L.1 Siddh[am] Sas(m)vat 15 Mārgga-śukla-sapta-maṇiḥ śrī-Mahendhra (drā)-pāladeva-vi (vi) jaya-rājye Viṣṇu
L.2 [na] ndi- naptā (prā) Gaṇīganandi sunī (ṣīm) Lokanandhi (ndinā) Āditya-bhattacharāḥ Kāraṇa Iti [ ||*] Gaṇa (na)ka- VI [sa]jara
Translation:
May there be success ! (In the) year 15 (on the) seventh day of the bright half of the (month of) Mārgaśīrṣa, during the victorious reign of the illustrious Mahendrapāladeva, (this image of) the sun-god has been made (i.e.gifted) by Lokanandin, son of Gaṇīganandin and grandson of Viṣṇunandin. (Thus says the ) accountant Viṣajara.

Text of Surface 2
L 1. (Clockwise from top, based on the left lotus) aśva āpa-briyāmp-śa (ga) ma [ḥ*]
Translation:
Not given

11 No separate translation of the published text is given by D. C. Sircar. But the meaning of the epigraphic record has been clearly stated by the author. See, Sircar, D.C. “Mahisantosh Image Inscription of Mahendrapāla”, Year 15. EI (Delhi), ed. G.S.Gai, 1968, 37/5, pp. 204-208.
Text of Surface 3

Some letters of the text of surface 3 are discernible, viz. the conjunct śrī (on the extreme left Kopīkapaga, from the viewer), the dental ṭa, palatal ja and the ligature śrī (on the left amūrāḥā), and the cerebral nasal ṇa or śa (on the rāḥā in front of the kneeling figure), are clearly legible.

Translation:
Translation not given.12

Additional References:
Huntington, S. L. *op. cit.*, p.50. Appendix, No.65, fig.42.


Iconographic Study:

Close up view of Śani, Sūrya, Mahisantosh

The Mahisantosh Sūrya image is extremely interesting because of its unique iconographic composition.13 The image of the Sun-god belongs to the second type as pointed by Gouriswar

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12 R. Sanyal, writes “It is not possible to bring out the text meaningfully”. See, Sanyal, *op. cit.* 2009.

13 For a detail iconographic discussion see, G. Mevissen, *op. cit.* pp.121-140.
The upper portion of the back-plate is broken. The central figure has been hollowed out on both sides below the elbows. The god is shown standing in a *pañca-ratha* type of chariot consisting of two superimposed mouldings. The god’s head is adorned with a *kiritamukuta* and a *diadem*. An ornamental element hangs down from the diadem on the forehead of the deity and remains so far unnoticed in any of the image of the Sun-god from Bihar/Bengal. The ears are shown with two different kind of earrings, again a sign of earliness in Pala sculptures. He wears a broad necklace and a sacred thread made of pearls (*muktahāra-yajnopavita*). Most probably he wears a skirt and not a dhoti. The mode in which the two full-blown lotuses are held by the central figure is also unique. The lotuses are depicted at the level of the shoulders and not in their usual position i.e above the shoulders. Interestingly enough, the lotuses are eight in number (*aṣṭa-dala*) and engraved with letters, which is a part of the dedicatory inscription.

The *pañca-ratha* pedestal bears the iconographic representation of seven galloping horse depicted with full vigour. Above the horses, a small kneeling figure with *ājñali-hasta* is visible. This figure may be identified with the donor, Lokanandin as mentioned in the inscription. Aruna, the charioteer, sits on the top of the *makara* at the head of the chariot projecting from the upper recess moulding. On top of the chariot, to the right and the left in front of the standing figures of Daṇḍin and Piṅgala, are depicted two female archers squatting on the ground. Both are shown seated and holding bow and arrow in their hands instead of standing in *āśīḍha* or *pratyāśīḍha* and being engaged in the act of shooting. To the proper right of the sun-god and behind the female archer stands the pot-bellied Piṅgala with ink-pot and pen and to the proper left behind another female archer stands Daṇḍa or Daṇḍin holding a club. All the attendant figures along with the donor have halo around them.

Most interesting in this iconographic composition is the depiction of two figures on top of the fragmented stèle, occupying a position to the left and right of the god’s head. The figure on the proper left is completely missing; only the *vāhana*, apparently a tortoise survives. Mevissen have

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14 Bhattacharya classifies the images of Sun-God in two types, (1) in most of the cases the full figure of the deity is shown, but (2) in several cases he is shown only upto his knees. Thus the Mahisantsosh image which is shown upto knees belong to the second category. See Gouriswar Bhattacharya, *op.cit.* 2000, p.418.
identified the female figure with Yami or Yamuna, whose vihāna is a tortoise and who is a
daughter of Sūrya by his wife Saranyā. The image to the proper right of the god’s head is a pot­
bellied male figure, standing in a peculiar pose with an abnormal twist of the right foot. The
vihana of this figure seems to be a tortoise. His right hand is shown in front of his breast,
holding some indistinct object. This figure has been identified by Mevissen as Śani, regarded as a
son of Sūrya by his wife Chāyā. Thus the Mahisantosh Sūrya image contains the earliest
representation of Śani on a tortoise. It is also an isolatory iconographic representation depicting
Sūrya with Śani, his son and Yamunā, his daughter.

Observations:
The inscribed image of Sūrya from Mahisantosh is of unprecedented epigraphic and
iconographic importance. The record is dated to the regnal year 15 i.e. the last reigning year of
Mahendrapāla who ruled between c. 847-862 A. D. The three readings as discussed above
deserve mention for several variations. The dedicatory record begins with the auspicious symbol
saṃvat, technically indicating the year is recorded as Samvat, and Sasvat. S.C. Mukherjee’s
reading of Gaṅja Nandi, Khanaka and Vidyuta in the second line of the text is not only variant
in terms of expression but in meaning, too. Gaṅja Nandi is read as Gaṅganandin in two other
readings. The expression Khanaka (engraver) is read as Gaṇaka (accountant / astrologer) by
Sircar. The name Vidyuta as mentioned by S.C. Mukherjee is invariably different from the
name Viśajara mentioned by D. C. Sircar and R. Sanyal.

The above variations have raised few questions in my mind. The reading of the word Khanaka
(engraver) stated by Mukherjee seems to be more acceptable in this context than Gaṇaka17 (accountant / astrologer) as read by Sircar and Sanyal. The word khanaka is more
justified in connection to this image inscription. Khanaka Viśajara or Vidyuta performed the task
of an engraver.

15 G.Mevissen, op.cit. p.124.
16 D.C. Sircar, op.cit. 1968, p. 205.
17 D.C. Sircar, Indian Epigraphical Glossary, 1966, p.110. According to Sircar, Gaṇaka is an official designation, a
village accountant.
The inscription records the pious act of image consecration by Lokanandin, son of Gaṅganandin and grandson of Viṣṇunandin. The consecration was made on the auspicious seventh day of the bright half of the (month of) Mārgaṣīrṣa, year 15 of the Pāla ruler Mahendrapāladeva. The astronomical information embodied in this record is to be discussed in Chapter VI. The question of social identification and economic profile of the donor and his father and grandfather is not at all clear in this inscriptional record. Lokanandin, the donor is a scribe has been mentioned by Sanyal. The ascription to this professional group is not mentioned in the reading and translation of the author. However, I have also not found any reference to the terminology Kāvasthas or Kāraṇas in the inscriptional record who were professional scribes in the early medieval society of Bengal. The donor Lokanandin however did not belong to the literate scribal group (the akṣaraśāstras or those subsisting on letters or alphabets). The religious leaning of the donor for the prime deity Sūrya of the Saura cult belonging to one of the major Brāhmaṇical religion is evident from this epigraphic evidence that records the name of the deity as ‘adityabhāṭṭāraka’.

Sl. No. 3: Kurkihar Metal Image Inscription of year 12 of Śurapāladeva

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Metal

Metal image of Viṣṇu, year 12 of Śurapāladeva
Photo Courtesy: [Journal of Ancient Indian History, Vol. XV]

18See, Chapter VI of this dissertation, “Cultural Study as Gleaned from Inscribed Images. Section II: A note on meritorious tithis in dated images for a discussion on the astronomical data gleaned from dated and undated inscribed images.

Provenance: Kurkihar, Gaya District, Bihar
Present Whereabouts: Gaya Museum No.76.1, Bihar
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Šurapaladeva, the Pāla king is assigned between c. 862 - 875 A.D. The inscribed image is dated to the regnal year 12 of the ruling king. Therefore, the inscription is dated to c. 862 + 12 = 874 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:


Text:

Inscription on the left side of the back- Deyadharmmo'yat śrī Šūrapāla-riṯye
Inscription on the lower portion of the back- L.1 sa [mva] t 12 pīsadāpaṭaka-
Lower portion of the left- mahāvihāre thī
Lower portion of the front side- savvāya carṃmakāra- Tiyāṣacasa
Lower portion of the right side- L.1 Kapilākata

L.2 sya p[utra]- man[ u]

Inscription on the lower portion of the back- L.2 kena kī [i] catāti

Corrected text:
Deyadharmmo'yat śrī Šūrapāla-riṯye satīvat 12 śrīmadāpaṭaka-mahāvihaṇre Ṭhīsavyṭh carṃmakāra - Tiyāṣacasa | Kapilākatasya putreṇa Manukaṇa Kārītam |

Translation:
This is the religious gift of the cobbler Tiyāṣaca of Ṭhīsavi, at the illustrious Apañaka - mahāvihāra, during the year 12 in the reign of the fortunate Šūrapāla. [It is] made by Manuka, son of Kapilākata.

Reading 2: Huntington, S. L. “A metal image of Viṣṇu dated in the reign of Šūrapāla I” Dineśa-vandana D. C. Sircar Commemoration Volume. Huntington mentions that the inscription, which runs across the front, sides, and back of the image, has been transliterated and translated by Dr. D. C. Sircar as follows, pp.112-113.

Text:
Deyadharmmo'yat śrī Šūrapālarīṭye - sa [mva] t 12

20 Roman transliteration for the text, corrected text and the translation is given by me, on the basis of the Bengali script given by the author, see, Sircar, D. C. 1982, p.175.
Deyadharmma'yatī śrī Śūrapāḷa- rāja satīvat 12 śrīmad Āpanakamahāvihāra Ṭhisavyāḥ carmaṃkāra Tiyāśacasya (* ) Kapilākatasya putra Manukena Kārvitaṃ (* *)

Translation:
This is the religious gift of the cobbler Tiyāśaca of Ṭhisavi, at the illustrious Āpanaka - mahāvihāra, during the year 12 in the reign of the fortunate Śūrapāḷa. [It is] made by Manuka, son of Kapilākata.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The image is a representation of Viṣṇu executed in metal, is approximately 16 centimeters in height. The deity stands in samapāda on a single-petalled lotus pedestal which rests upon a plain rectangular platform to which is attached a throne like back. He is four armed. The lower right hand holds the gadā, his lower left the cakra; the upper left hand holds the śankha and the upper right is empty. A halo surrounds the head of the god, while a post behind the halo may have once held a chhatra above Viṣṇu’s head. The god is adorned with his characteristic crown, jewellery, and vanamāla.

Observations:
The inscribed metal image of Viṣṇu from Kurkihar is an extremely important epigraphic document. I have discussed the two published readings of this epigraphic text. The meaning of the text remains the same as evident from the translation. The purport of this record is to dedicate an image of Viṣṇu by a cobbler named Tiyāśaca of Ṭhisavi, at the illustrious Āpanaka monastery in the 12th regnal year of the Pāla king Śūrapāḷadeva I. The image was made or carved by Manuka, son of Kapilākata.
Historically, the image is important because it is the only dated metal image so far known from the reign of Śūrapāla I (c. 862-874/875 A. D.) of the Pāla dynasty. Secondly, being dated to the regnal year 12, it has given seven extended years of rule to the reigning king, until the last known discovery i.e. the Dvādaśāsīditya stone slab inscription dated to year 5 of Śūrapāladeva I.

Interestingly enough, the image was dedicated by a man of mere means, a cobbler, at the illustrious Āpanaka monastery which was the most important monastic establishment at Kurkihar. The donor Tiyāśaca being a cobbler by profession must have held a status in the then society to make such a lavish donation. The question that comes to our mind, was the donor an ordinary cobbler and belonged to the lower social order? Secondly, why did he dedicate a Vaiṣṇava image at a Buddhist religious establishment.

It is interesting to note the position of a local donor in context to this inscribed image. The donor named Tiyāśaca of Thisavi was apparently a carmmakara and, judging by the size and quality of his dedication, a man of some means. On the basis of D. C. Sircar translation, carmmakāra is referred as a cobbler by profession. But Pratapaditya Pal²¹ gives a opinion different to Sircar. According to Pal the word carmmakāra may also imply a tanner, or an artist who works in leather. While shoes were mostly manufactured by individuals, the owner of the tannery would have employed several workers who would collect and prepare the hide. Tiyāśaca was very likely a prosperous tanner, and his un-Sanskritic name may imply that he was of indigenous origin. The inscriptions also throws light on some interesting information about the Āpanaka monastery. The Āpanaka monastery was a Buddhist religious establishment which attracted donors not only at the local level but was also an important centre of instruction that had a particular appeal for the southern Buddhists.²² The image in metal was cast by Manuka, who was the son of Kapilākāta or Kapitākāta. The inscription thus records the name of both the carver and his father suggesting that the occupation of image making or carving might have been their hereditary profession.


²² Several inscribed images records the dedication made at this illustrious monastic establishment by donors hailing from different parts of the country, particularly from the Kanchipuram region.
Sl. No. 4: Mandhuk Gaṇeśa Image Inscription of the year 1 of Gopāla II

Gāṇeśa, Mandhuk

Photo Courtesy: [Mevissen, G. J. R.]

Identification: Gaṇeśa
Material: Black basalt
Provenance: Mandhuk, Comilla District, Bangladesh.
Present Whereabouts: Mainamati Site Museum, Bangladesh
Language: Corrupt Sanskrit
Script: According to D.C. Sircar the characters of the inscription may palaeographically be assigned to tenth century.

Approximate date: Dated. The present inscription is dated in the first regnal year of the Pāla sovereign, Gopāla II. According to the new evidence Gopāla II, is the son and successor of Sūrapāla I (c.862-875 A.D). From the discovery of dated copper plates and manuscripts we have come to know that Gopāla ruled for a period of 17 years. Therefore, his rule may be assigned tentatively between c.875-892 A.D. The inscription is dated to the first regnal year i.e c.875 + 1 = c.876 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal, Gaṇeśa, Mandhuk

23 Gouriswar Bhattacharya’s, op.cit. 1998, “The New Pāla Ruler, Gopāla (II), son of Sūrapāla (I)”.

Text: I have taken the transcripts of this inscription from S. L. Huntington, Appendix No. 26

L.1 *Om* (by symbol) Śrī-Gopāladeva- prathama- rāje mātā- pitī-pūrvai = gamaṁ kṛitvā

L.2 sakala-satva-rāse (rāseḥ) anuttara-jñāna lābhau (lābhāya) deva-dharmo = yā(ṁ) vriddha

L.3 sārtha- Jambhalamitrena (qua) kṛiyatam (Kāritam) = iti | om

**Translation:**
This pious work was caused to be made in the first year of the reign of the illustrious Gopāladeva by an old man of means, Jambhalamitra, with this in view that all, created beings with his parents on the first rank, may attain the supreme enlightenment.

**Reading 2**: Sircar, D. C. “Pāla rule in the Tippera District” *Indian Historical Quarterly* (hereafter IHQ) No. 28, p.57.

Text:

L.1 Siddham (by symbol) Śrī-Gopāladeva-prathama- rāje (rājya) mātā- pitī-pūrvai =

Gama [ṁ] kṛitv [ ā]

L.2 sakala- satva-rāse (śeḥ) [anuttara]- jñān-lābhau (lābhāya) deva-dharmo = yā(ṁ) νṛ [addha]-

L.3 sārtha- Jambhalamitrena (qua) kṣyat [ ā] m (kārita) = iti Siddham (by symbol)

**Translation:**
Let there be success! This meritorious offering is caused to be made by the old merchant Jambhalamitra for the attainment of supreme knowledge by all creatures, headed by his parents, during the first year of the reign of Śrī-Gopāladeva. Let there be success!

**Additional References:**
Huntington, S. L. *op.cit.* p.54 Appendix, No. 26, fig. 50.
Iconographic Study:

The image of Ganeśa is a four-armed representation of the god executed in full relief on an asymmetrical slab. The pot bellied deity is seated on a well expanded lotus seat with the left leg drawn up and the right knee raised. In the lower right hand, he holds an elephant tusk (daṇṭa). The emblem in the upper right hand is broken; this is evidently a rosary (akṣa-māla) of which traces yet survive. The attribute in the lower left hand is missing. Apparently it carried a tray of sweets (modaka-pātra) to which the deity applied his trunk. This is now mutilated. The remaining attribute in the other hand is broken too, this missing attribute was in all probability a sapling, perhaps representing a sugar cane (iṅgu-daṇḍa). The figure is modestly decorated. His coiffure is composed of matted locks. Only a snake-form sacred cord (nāga-yajnopavita) and little jewellery embellish his body. Over his head to the right and left are flying Viśvakarmanas in clouds carrying garlands. Below the lotus seat on the pedestal are seen his vehicle (vāhana), the rat, and effigies of donor and three lines inscription in between. Decoration of the back slab is simple and refined.

The image was donated by the elderly merchant Jambhalamitra. Bhattacharya24 is of the view that the entire iconographic depiction on the pedestal of this Brahmanical image illustrates the donor along with his family members. The elderly Jambhalamitra is shown on the right side of the pedestal. He is corpulent, bearded and holds a garland in his hands. His wife sits close to him with folded hands. Quite interesting is the veil around her head. There are two other figures shown behind this couple. The male figure (damaged) holds some object in his right hand. He may be the son of Jambhalamitra. Behind him sits a young lady without any veil around her head. She may be the unmarried daughter of Jambhalamitra.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Gaṇeśa from Mandhuk is dated to the year 1 of the ruling king Gopāladeva. This Gopāladeva is identified with Gopāla II, son of Surapala (I). Two published readings of this epigraphic record with translations have come to my notice. The published transcriptions are identical with variation noticed in the auspicious symbol ōṃ and siddham used at the beginning and end of the donative record. The purport of this epigraphic record is to install the image of Gaṇeśa by the old (vrddha) merchant (sārtha) Jambhalamitra for the attainment of supreme knowledge by all sentient beings headed by his parents. The term sārtha can be taken as sārthavahās suggesting the donor to be a caravan merchant or the leader of the caravan traders. The donor is therefore not an ordinary vaṇīk but a well off sārthavāhā who could afford to make a dedication of such a massive stone image. It is also known that Gaṇapati is revered mainly by the members of the business community, and the dedication of a Gaṇeśa image by a merchant, Jambhalamitra is quite befitting in this regard. This epigraphic record thus throws light on the social identity of the donor revealing his economic status. Jambhalamitra was a Buddhist merchant as suggested by scholars but he installed a Brahmanical image. Does it indicate that the social base of such religious activity was far from being sectarian? Or a shift in nature of royal patronage from Buddhism to Brahmanism.

The discovery of Gaṇeśa image from Mandhuk suggest the inclusion of south-eastern part of Bengal within the territorial domain of the Pālas, during the rule of Gopāla II. The discovery of copper-plates, inscribed and uninscribed images found from the geo-historical unit of Samatata (i.e. present day Bangladesh formed the trans-Meghna territories of the Comilla-Noakhali plain) underlines the historical and geographical importance of the region. The flourishing economy of the region largely contributed to the development of Buddhism.


26 For a detailed understanding on this issue see Suchandra Ghosh ‘Nature of Royal Patronage in South-Eastern Bengal: 507 AD-1250AD’ JBA, Vols.13-14, 2008-09, pp.109-118.
Sl. No. 5: Bihar Sharif Metal Parvati image of the 54th year of Narayanapala

Parvati, Bihar Sharif

Courtesly: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar, *EIB*, fig.129]

**Identification:** Parvati

**Material:** Metal, brass

**Provenance:** Bihar Sharif, Bihar.

**Present Whereabouts:** Bahgiya Sahitya Parishad, Acc. No. O (d) 1 / 408.Kolkata

**Language:** Sanskrit

**Script:** Siddhamātrkā characters

**Approximate date:** Dated. The reigning period of Narayanapala, the Pāla king is assigned between c.876-930 A. D. The metal sculpture is dated in the 54th regnal year of the ruling king. The epigraphic record may be dated to c.876 + 54= c.930 A. D. tentatively.

**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings**


**Text:**


**Translation:**

“The pious gift of Thāruka son of Rāṇaka Ucha (Utsa), (dedicated) in the year 54 of the reign illustrious Nārāyaṇapāladēva”.

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**Text**: 27
L.1. Oṁ de (yadharman) yaṁ Śrī nārāyaṇa (left side)
L.2. na pāla deva rājye (on top)
L.3. svamvat 54 (right side)
L.4. Śrī Uḍañḍapura (lower side)
L.5. ra budhiya | pālaka u ca
L.6. putra ṭhārakasya

**Translation**:
Translation not given by the author

**Reading 3**: Choudhary, R. K. op.cit. p.65.

**Text**: 28
Śrī-Nārāyaṇapāḷeṇaṛa rājye svamvat 54,
Śrī Uḍañḍapura -Vāstavyarāṇaka Uchaṇputra Ṭhārakasya |

**Translation**:
Translation not given

**Reading 4**: Bhandarkar, D. R. A List of Inscriptions of Northern India in Brahmī and Its Derivative Scripts, from about 200 A.C. Appendix to Epigraphia Indica and Record of the Archaeological Survey of India 1927-36, [Vols.19-23], (reprint) List No.1619.

**Text**: Samvat 54

**Translation**:
Records a benefaction of Rāṇaka Ṭhāraka, son of Ucha and resident of Uḍañḍapura.

**Additional References**:
Sircar, D.C. op.cit., pp.74-75.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. p.51 Appendix No.19, fig.43.

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27 Transliteration of the text is given by me based on the Bengali reading given by R. D. Banerji.

28 Transliteration is given by me, based on the reading in Devanāgarī script given by R. K. Choudhary, op.cit. p.65.
Iconographic Study:

An inscribed brass image of Durga (Parvati) seated in lalitakshepa mudrā on a lotus resting on a rectangular pedestal provided with legs one of which is broken. The right foot of the goddess rests on a lotus, on the right leg of the pedestal sits the female figure of a devotee in a kneeling posture. The image is four handed, the upper right hand holds a sword, the upper left hand a shield, the lower left hand passes round the waist of a figure (probably Karttikeya) seated on the lap of the deity; the lower right hand holds a weapon resembling an aikusa. In the background is the torana representation of the medieval period, below the makara terminals of the architrave are found the representation of leogryphs standing upon couchant elephants. Thread-like decorative device hangs from the mouth of the leogryphs, over the architraves rests the circular halo with flame-like edges and consisting of concentric rings and surmounted by the reversed lotus with its pointed stalk. The nimbus is connected artistically by a leafy device with the snout of the makara terminals. The crown of the goddess is noteworthy. The entire composition is supported on a simple pedestal.

Observations:

The metal image of Pārvati from Bihar Sharif (Uddanḍapura) is an iconographic composition of Devī in her saumya aspect, representing the Gauri-Pārvatī tradition. 29 Four published readings of the text has been discussed above. The reading of the epigraphic record published by R. D. Banerji and R. C. Majumdar begins with om deyadharmma which is missing in the transcription given by R. K. Choudhary and D. R. Bhandarkar. A remarkable variation is noticed in the expression vāstavya Rāpaka (R. D. Banerji) and budhīya pālaka (R. C. Majumdar) after the name of the ancient site Uddanḍapura. It appears befitting from the reading of R. D. Banerji, that the donor Ṭhāruka is the son of Rāpaka Ucha. Further it may also be surmised that the donor and his father were inhabitants (vāstavya) of śrī Uddanḍapura.

The votive inscription records the dedication of the Pārvati image by Ṭhāruka, son of rāpaka Ucha, a resident of Uddanḍapura. The image was consecrated in the 54th ruling year of the Pāla

29 Ancient literary works refer to two distinct traditions of Devī coming from the remote past. The devi is looked upon as parvata-kanya and parvata-vārīmi. The former envisaged the Devī in her saumya aspects as the daughter, wife and mother, thus embodying all that is associated with love, devotion and tenderness. See, Enamul Haque, op.cit. 1992, p. 206 for this explanation.
ruler, Narayanapāla, the son and successor of Vigrahapāla I of the collateral branch. The votive record engraved at the back of the deity is of immense historical and social value. The discovery of the Parvati image dated to the 54th regnal year of Nārāyaṇapāla is indicative of the Pāla reoccupation of the region and also the re-establishment of Pāla authority over the lost dominion. The Pāla rulers mainly professed the religion of Buddhism, but made donation of Brahmanical images. The same is the case with the ruling monarch, Nārāyaṇapāla, who showed enthusiasm in patronizing Brahmanical deity, Pārvatī. The Buddhist ruler felt the need to keep the bulk of the population (believer in Brahmanical faith) contented and this attitude speaks of his political prudence.

The social position or the professional affiliation of the donor, Thāruka is not clearly evident in this epigraphic record. But the donor’s father Ucha / Utsa held a prestigious administrative post i.e. Rāṇaka is mentioned in this record. The donor and his father were local patrons who resided at Bihar Sharif and dedicated the image at Uddanḍapura which was an important fort and monastic site during the early medieval period.

Sl. No. 6: Umā-Maheśvara Image Inscription of the year 31 or 32 of Rājyapāla

Identification: Umā-Maheśvara
Material: Metal, bronze

For instance the installation of Ganeśa image at Mandhuk during the sovereign rule of Gopāla II, the Buddhist Pāla ruler. See for reference, Mandhuk Gaṇeśa image inscription of the year 1 of Gopāla II discussed above.
Provenance: Kurkihar, Gaya District, Bihar.
Present Whereabouts: Patna Museum, Patna, Accession No. 9772
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Nāgarī alphabet of 9th-11th centuries A.D.
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Rājayapāla, the Pāla king is assigned to c.930-967 A.D. The metal image is dated in the 31st or 32nd regnal year of the ruling king. Therefore, the date of the epigraphic record may be placed in c.930 + 31 = c. 961 A.D. / 930 + 32 = c. 962 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription, back of the image
Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar EIB, fig. 319]

Reading 1: Banerji-Sastri A., op.cit, p. 250.
Text:

Translation:
Records the gift of the image by Mūlaka, the wife of Mahiaru, a resident of the Āpaṇaka monastery in the 31st year of king Rājayapāla. The word Gopāla appearing at the end may represent the name of the sculptor.

Text:
Siddham (symbol) śrī- Rājayapāladeva-rāj [ y* ] e samvacchare (samvatsare) 32 śrīmad = Āpra (Āpa)ṇaka mahāvihare vāstavya- Gopāla-Mahiaru bha (bhā) rya (ryā) Mūlakāyā devadharma Kṛtāp.
Translation:
Records the gift of the image by Mulūka, the wife of Gopāla-Mahiāru, a resident of the Āpanaka monastery in the 32nd year of king Rājayapāla.

Reading 3: Choudhary, R. K. op.cit, p.66.
Text:
śrī-Rājayapāladeva-ṛṣi [y*]e samvacchare 31 śrī-madiśprapāka mahāvihāre vastavya-Mahiārubhārya Mulakāyā devadharma kṛtaṁ. Gopāla.

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Jayaswal, K. P. op.cit, 1934, p.72, pl. XXXII, fig. 2.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. p.53 Appendix No. 23, fig.47.

Iconographic Study:
The images of Uma-Maheśvara is most commonly found in Bengal, sharing the iconographic peculiarity with its Bihar proto-type. The inscribed metal image of Uma-Maheśvara from Kurkihar, dated to the 31 or 32 regnal year of Rājayapāla is one such example in this regard. The god is shown seated with his right leg pendant, the foot resting on his vāhana, the bull. Uma sits in mahārajallā pose on her left thigh with her left leg pendant, the right foot resting on her vāhana, the lion. Śiva and Uma are seen embracing each other and Śiva is seen in the chin touching attitude. This particular trait of the god is found in an invocation of the Āliṅgana-mūrti. In the present image Śiva is four-armed. Of the four-hands, Śiva embraces Uma or bring her closer with one of the left hand while the normal right hand in the front touches the chin. Of the two additional hands the right hand holds a trident or triṣūla. Uma’s left hand is placed on the shoulder of Śiva and the right hand holds a (lotus / snake ?). Both the deities are

31 I have given the transliteration, based on the reading in Devanāgari script given by R. K. Choudhary, op.cit. p.66.
32 N. K. Bhattasali, op.cit, 1972 ( reprint ) p.125. See also Enamul Haque, op.cit, p.153 for various names ascribed to this group of Śiva images.
33 Iconographic text namely Rāpamaṇḍana describes Śiva with four hands. Matsyapurīṇa describes Śiva with four or two hands. See, Bhattasali, ibid.
34 I am unable to trace the additional left hand and the object in it.
bejwelled with *hīra, keyura, mani-kūṇḍāla*, etc. The deities are seated on a single lotus seat placed on a simple pedestal. A fragmented oval aureole is seen behind the god and goddess.

**Observations:**

Rājayapāla (c. 930-967 A.D.) the son and successor of Nārāyaṇapāla is credited with five dated inscribed images. Of the several Buddhist sculptures ascribed to this ruling king, the image of Umā-Maheśvara and the Balarāma from the Victoria and Albert Museum are the two specimens from Brahmanical pantheon. The record is engraved at the back of the Umā-Maheśvara image. Three published readings of the text with its translation has been discussed above. I have noticed few variations in the transcription of the record as given by P. L. Gupta and Banerji-Sastri. The auspicious symbol *siddham* is noted by P. L. Gupta with which the votive record begins and is missing in Sastri's transcription. Secondly, the inscription is dated to two different regnal years. Banerji-Sastri reads the year as 31, whereas P. L. Gupta as 32. Thirdly, the name of the donor Mūlaka (Banerji-Sastri) and Muliṅka (P. L. Gupta) are variant expressions. Besides these variations noted, the meaning of the votive record is identical.

The votive image is the gift of a Brahmanical deity, Umā-Maheśvara, by a lady donor Mūlaka / Mulīka, wife of Mahiaru or Gopāla Mahiaru.35 Interestingly, the donor and her husband were lay devotees and presumably resident of the famous Āparaṇaka monastery at Kurkihar. The social and the economic status of the donor and her husband is not clear from this record. But the importance of the Āparaṇaka monastery as a centre of Buddhist religious studies and art is once again understood. The nature of patronage was certainly local as the female donor Mūlaka happens to be a resident of the Āparaṇaka monastery.

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35 The name Gopāla mentioned in this inscription can be considered either as the first name of the donor's husband as Gopāla Mahiaru or it may be referred as the name of the sculptor who carved the image of the deity. However, this position is not clear from the translation as given above. See, both the readings.
Sl. No. 7: Balarâma Image Inscription of the year 37 of Râjyapâla

Balarama, Rajgir
Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar EIB, fig. 133]

Identification: Balarâma / Balabhadra
Material: Bronze, ht. 28 cm
Provenance: Rajgir, Patna District, Bihar
Present Whereabouts: Victoria and Albert Museum.
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Gaudîya script
Approximate date: Dated to 10th century. The reigning period of Râjyapâla, the Pâla king is assigned to c. 930-967 A.D. The metal sculpture is dated in the 37th regnal year of the ruling king. Therefore, the epigraphic record is dated in c. 930 + 37 = c. 967 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription engraved at the back
Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar EIB, fig. 320]
Reading 1: Gorakshkar, S. “Some Inscribed Balarama Images from Eastern India” Lalit kalā 19, p.29.36

Text:
sri rajyapala deva rajye samvat 37 sri rajagrha
visaye bhata jivala grama vastavya ta (ma...maksa)
suta devadharmmaya balabhadra (murti) pratipaditasyah

Translation:
"Records the gift of an image of Balabhadra by a donor (name not clear) who was a resident of bhata Jivala Grama, in the Rajagriha vishaya, in the 37th regnal year of Rajyapala


Text:
siddham (symbol) śrī-rājyapāla-deva-rājye saṃvat 37 śrī-rājagrha-visaye bhata-jivala-grama-vāstavya-[tāmravāya]-somosthi-suta-devadharmmaya va37 labhadra-suti patipaditasyah

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The Balarama image dated to the year 37 of the Pāla king Rajyapāla is an artistic product of South Bihar. It is presently housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum and is in a good state of preservation. The Brahmanical deity Balarama, is one of the incarnatory manifestations in human

36 Mr Gerd Mevissen has shared the published reading of the text by S.Gorakshar and the invaluable unpublished reading of the text by Gouriswar Bhattacharya through e-mail. Bhattacharya’s reading of the inscription is kept in the Accession file of the image in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

37 G. Bhattacharya writes ( unpublished) “It has to be pointed out here that in eastern India at this period ba was replaced always by va”.

38 G. Bhattacharya, ibid. Visarga is wrong after sya. D.C. Sircar has suggested that the visarga sign in these cases may be a part of the punctuation mark.
form of the *Vibhavas* (*Avatāras*) aspect of Viṣṇu. The four-armed deity stands on a single inverted lotus pedestal with right leg stiffly planted and the left leg, slightly forward, is bent at the knee in an expression of ease. His lower garment is tied with a girdle at the waist and pleated at the centre. There is a five-hooded snake-canopy behind the head of the deity signifying his association with the primordial snake Śeṣa or Ananta. He wears various ornaments, such as a crown (*kirtīṭa*), necklaces, bangles, armlets, anklets, a sacred thread (*upavītā*) and a long garland of flowers (*vanamāla*) like that of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu. In his two front hands he holds a *sānkh* (right) and a *cakra* (left). This is an earlier stage of the sculptural development, that is why his back hands are still lowered down and shown holding a pestle (*musala*) and a ploughshare (*hala*), no doubt showing his connection with agriculture. The pedestal is a plain rectangle with two vertical columns over which is placed cross-bar. Behind his head is given a halo (*śrāścakra*) with a design of flame and having a jewel (*manī*) at the apex. Below at the right corner of the pedestal a tiny seated figure is shown, perhaps the donor of the image holding a garland.

**Observations:**
The inscription records an important date of the Pāla ruler Rājyapāla. So far it was known that Rājyapāla ruled for 32 years, but this image inscription informs us that he ruled at least for 37 years. I have discussed two published readings of the inscription. Variation is noticed in the reading of the text and expressions given. Bhattacharya reading opens with an auspicious symbol, *siddham*. The reading -[tāmravīya]-somosthi-suta given by Bhattacharya is not recorded by Gorakshar.

The purport of this epigraphic record like many other votive inscriptions is to record the dedication of the image of Balabhadrā by a donor whose name is not clear from the donatory record. The inscription further informs that the donor and his father (?) were inhabitant of the village named *bhata Jivala* located in the Rājagṛha viṣaya. It is certainly a local level donation, patronized by the ruling king and obviously by the donor and his family members who were followers of Vaiṣṇavite faith.
Sl. No. 8: Bāghāura Nārāyaṇa Image Inscription of year 3 of Mahipāla I

Viṣṇu, Bāghāura

Photo Courtesy: [Huntington, S. L. *The “Pāla-Sena” Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 52]

**Identification:** Viṣṇu

**Material:** Stone.

**Provenance:** Bāghāura, Comilla District, Bangladesh.

**Present Whereabouts:** The exact provenance is not known. 39

**Language:** Sanskrit

**Script:** Siddhamātrkā characters

**Approximate date:** Dated. Mahipāla I was the son and successor of Vigrapāla II (c. 984 - 989 A.D). Mahipāla I ruled from the period c. 989 A.D-1037 A.D. The Bāghāura Nārāyaṇa inscribed sculpture dated to year 3 may be placed between c. 989 + 3 = 992 A.D. approximately.

**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings:**

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Text:40

L 1. Om Sambat 3 Maughadine 27 Sri Mahipaladeva riyje
L 2. Kirttiriyam Nariyaapabhatta [a] rakikhyā Samatape Bilakinda
L 3. Kiya paramavaisnavasya Vaapika Lokadattasya Vasudattasūta
L 4. sya mātīī pitroritmanasa puṇyayaśo abhibhāddhye

Translation:
Om! The year three, the 27th day of Magha. In Samatata, in the Kingdom of Sri Mahipala Deva, this meritorious deed namely ( the installation of ) the Lord Nārāyaṇa is by the merchant Lokadatta belonging to (the village of ) Bilakinda, - a great worshipper of Viṣṇu, --son of Vasudatta,— for the special furtherance of the spiritual merit and fame of himself and parents.


Text:

L 1. [Siddhirastu] (Symbol) Sambat 3 Maughadine 27 Sri Mahipaladeva riyje
L 2. Kirttiriyam Nariyaapabhatta [a] rakikhyā Samatape Vi (bi) lakīnda-
L 3. Kiya paramavaisnavasya Vaapika Lokadattasya Vasudatta sūta
L 4. sya mātīī pitroritmanasa puṇyayaśo abhibhāddhye (puṇyayaśo ’bhibhāddhye)

Translation:
May success attend. The year three, the 27th day of Mauga. In Samataṭa, in the Kingdom of Sri Mahipala Deva, this meritorious work, namely ( the image of ) the Lord Nārāyaṇa is of the merchant Lokadatta, belonging to (the village of ) Bilakinda, - a great devotee of Viṣṇu, ---son of Vasudatta,— for the furtherance of the spiritual merit and fame of himself and parents.

Reading 3: Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS, pp.84-85.

Text:

L 1. Om 41 Sambat 3 Maughadine 27 Sri Mahipaladevariyje
L 2. Kirttiriyam Nariyaapabhatta [a] rakikhyā Samatape bilakinda-
L 3. Kiya paramavaisnavasya vaapika Lokadattasya Vasudatta sūta

40 Transliteration of the three texts given in R. 1, R. 2 and R. 3 is given by me based on Devnagari and Bengali script of the author.

41 Om or Siddhirastu is expressed by symbol
L.4  

syamata pitroratmanascapunyayaso abhibddhye (punyayaso' bhibdhye)

Translation:

The year three, the 27th day of Magha. In Samatata, in the Kingdom of the illustrious Mahipala Deva, this meritorious work, namely (the image of) the Lord Narayana is of the merchant Lokadatta, a great devotee of Visnu, son of Vasudatta, belonging to (the village of) Vilakinda, - for the furtherance of the spiritual merit and fame of himself and parents.

Reading 41: Bhandarkar, D. R. op.cit. List No.1624.

Text:

L 1. Samvat 3 Māgha-dīne 27

Translation:

Records the construction of an image of Nārāyaṇa in Samatata in the kingdom of Mahipāla.

Additional References:

Sircar, D.C. op.cit, pp.81-84.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit, pp.55-57 Appendix, No.29, fig. 52.

Iconographic Study:

A typical four-armed Viṣṇu image from Bengal is a product of the developed phase of Pāla - Sena art tradition. The sculpture under discussion is an example in this regard constituting the iconographic peculiarities of a developed phase. The sculpture depicts four-armed Viṣṇu, standing in samapāda posture on a double petalled lotus pedestal. The āyudhas in the four hands are padma or a small flower engraved on the palm (varada mudra)⁴², śaṅkha, cakra and gada, in clockwise order from the lower right hand. The distribution of attributes qualifies the image to be of a keśava variety of caturvimsatimūrti and not a form of Nārāyaṇa. The deity is adorned with kiriṭamukuta, hūra, kuṭḍalas, keyūras, valayās, mekhala etc. He wears a beaded yajñapavita and a vanamāla, the latter hanging down to his knees. A diaphanous uttarīya and dhūti constitute his upper and lower garment. The deity is standing against an architectural construct. The back-plate is flanked by a pair of garland-bearing vidyālharas. Besides the

⁴² G. Bhattacharya is of the opinion that “most of the Viṣṇu images of the Pāla period do not carry a lotus (padma) at all.” According to him a small flower engraved on the palm, is erroneously taken to be a lotus attribute. See, G. Bhattacharya, op.cit. 2000, p.496.
elongated stele, a separate beaded halo encircles the head of the main figure. Viṣṇu is accompanied by two consorts, one on either side, both standing in tribhanga. Lākṣmī stands on the proper right holding a fly-whisk in her right hand and the left hand simply hangs down. Saraswati, invariably occupies the position in the left, holding a one-stringed vīṇā with both hands. Two separate back-plate against which the attendant figure stands are depicted separately.

The pedestal is of trirātha type. Six human figures are delineated on the pedestal. Two figures in aijalī - mudrā are shown on the central portion of the inscribed panel (may be the donor). A pair of devotee is shown at the right side of the pedestal. The left portion of the pedestal is occupied by a winged Gāruḍa, vīhāra of the deity followed by a devotee. Icongraphically, the position of Gāruḍa who is depicted not in the centre but on the left paga of the pedestal is a rare feature noticed in East Bengal sculptures. This sculpture may be considered to be a typical of the Pāla period, consisting of the following elements: the entire format depicting a large central figure, attended by usually two or four smaller figures, lotus pedestal for the central figure, figures of donors or lay worshippers and perhaps offerings depicted on the lower portion of the pedestal, halo behind the head of the main figure, garland bearing vidhyadharas above, type of architectural construct generally a throne back, with vijñākas, harīnas.

Observations:
The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Baghaura (Comilla district) Bangladesh dated to the regnal year 3 of Mahipāladeva (c.989-1037 A.D.) is the earliest epigraphic record ascribed to the ruling king. This inscribed art specimen is important for more than one reasons. I have discussed four published readings of the text, three given by the same author. Since the readings are similar, no remarkable variation in expression of the term and meaning is noticeable. The votive inscription records the dedication of a Viṣṇu image by a merchant named Lokadatta, son of Vasudatta for the spiritual benefit of himself and his parents. One interesting observation is to be made here. The expression Nārīṣya-pāṭhārakā is found in L. 2 of the record taken to be as one of the name

43 The position of Gāruḍa in the centre of the pedestal is a common feature noticed in sculptures mainly from North ern or western part of Bengal.
of Viśṇu. It is to be noted in this connection that Nārāyaṇa is also one of the iconographic form of the god with the attributes sarikha, padma, gadā and cakra in clockwise order from the lower right hand.

The discovery of the inscribed image of Viśṇu from Comilla district (South eastern part of Bangladesh) is an indication of the political control of the Pāla ruler, Mahipāla over the region in the early years of his rule. The importance of Samatāṭa as a region of flourishing economy, particularly, trade and being the stronghold of two important religions, Buddhism and Vaiṣṇavism has been discussed in the foregoing pages. The donor Lokadatta, son of Vasudatta inhabitant of the village, Bilakindaka appears to be a vanik (merchant). He is a paramavaistava, justifying his dedication of a Viṣṇu image on the auspicious day 27th of the month of Māgha (the significance of this astronomical date is discussed in Chapter VI ). The religious leaning of the family towards Vaiṣṇavism and the occurrence of the expression Nārāyaṇabhattāraka and paramavaistava in the epigraphic record suggest the donation made towards the vaisnavite community by a follower of Vaiṣṇavism thus throwing light on the popularity of this cult in Bengal.

Sl. No. 9: Nārāyanpur Vinayaka image of year 4 of Mahipāla I

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45 According to the iconographic text Rupamantakama, the distribution of attributes in the Nārāyaṇa form, from the lower right hand are sarikha, padma, gadā and cakra. See, Enamul Haque, op.cit. Table-B, p.51.
Identification: Ganesa
Material: Black basalt
Provenance: Narayanpur, Comilla District, Bangladesh.
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Accession No.67. 231
Language: Sanskrit
Script: proto-Bengali of about 11th century.
Approximate date: Dated. Mahipala I ruled from the period c. 989 A.D-1037 A. D.
The Narayanpur Vinayaka inscribed sculpture is dated to year 4.
The epigraphic record is dated to c. 989 + 4 = 993 A. D. approximately.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close view of the inscribed pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Sircar, D. C. PSYV, pl.12]

Reading 1: Sircar, D.C. “Narayanpur Vinayaka Image Inscription of King Mahipala-Regnal year 4” Indian Culture (hereafter Ind.Cult.) Vol. 9, pp.121-125.

Text: 48

L 1. Oṁ (symbol) Sambat 4 āṣāḍhadine 25 Mahārājaḥ vijayarājye Śrīma-
L 2. nmaḥipāladeva pravardhamāna vijayarājye Samataṭa Vi-
L.3. likandhakavāstāvyavatika (vatip) māhāśā na (mahāśāla) - Jambhalami-
L.4 tra-jāṭta (jāṭta) vajika (vajī) Buddhmiśreṇa mārāpītra rājanāsca pū-
L.5 nyayaśotivalkhdhaya bhaśākge (?) paramahūṣoṣeka (paramājighaṇsaka) vi-
L.6 nāyakabhattārakaḥ (vīṇāyaka) sthāpitaḥ ayanasva- viśtha (viśṭṛṇā)
L.7 reṣa labheta bhāṣāgo? nāhi nā (bhogānu ahinānu) kāla- ante (?) (Kālānte) vāśi-
L.8 [Vi] putyeṣa (putyeṣaḥ)

46 Enamul Haque, op. cit., L. No.1403, p. 381.
48 I have given the transliteration of the text based on the Devnāgari script given by the scholar.
Translation:
(This image of) of Lord Vinayaka who is perfectly unmalicious (?) is established, on the seat that is the property of Ayana, at Bhāsākāga (?) by the merchant Buddhāmitra, son of the illustrious merchant and great householder (?) Jambhalamitra, an inhabitant of Bilikandhakā in Samatā, for the increase of the merit and fame of himself and his parents, on the twenty-fifth day of Āśāādha in the fourth year of the increasingly victorious reign of the illustrious Mahādhirājā Mahātpaladeva. (The god) should receive offerings that should be always of the same value. (The sculptor?) is [ Vi ? ] puṇyesa who is the disciple of kāla.

Additional References:

49 The script is given by Sircar in Bengali, the transliteration is given by me on the basis of Sircar’s reading. D. C.
Iconographic Study:

Close up view of the pedestal showing donors

The colossal and magnificent image of Vinayaka from Nārāyaṇapur carved in black basalt is in an excellent state of preservation. Iconographic texts like Rūpamandana, Agni Purāṇa, Matsya Purāṇa, etc invariably describe the general form of Gaṇeśa with four-arms. The four-armed god is shown seated in lalitāsana on a visvapadma placed on a triratha pedestal. The clock-wise distribution of attributes in the four hands are aksamālā, mulaka, parasu and laddha. The god is ornamented with various jewelleries, the jaṭāmkuṭa crowns the head, and a vīḷāyaṇāyopavita (sacred thread made of serpent ) is seen across the body. The prabhāvalī depicts a bunch of mangoes at the usual place of kīrtimukuṭa. The bunch of mangoes are symbolical of the fruit of success in any enterprise as the god is named as ‘the bestower of success’ (siddhidātā). Two flying vidyadharas are depicted on the stele. The rat is shown at the centre of the pedestal decorated with floral volutes.

The lower recess of the pedestal which bears eight line inscription is iconographically significant. The sculpture is an another iconographic representation depicting the entire family of the donor. The image was donated by the merchant Buddhamitra, the son of merchant Jambhalamitra. The merchant Jambhalamitra along with his family members were iconographically represented on the pedestal of the Gaṇeśa image from Mandhuk. The donor Buddhamitra is shown at the right of the pedestal holding a garland. He is not bearded. Behind him sits his wife with folded hands and with a veil above her head. At the left of the pedestal

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50 See, Enamul Haque, op.cit. p. 315.
51 Ibid, p. 316.
52 See for a similar iconographic depiction, the Gaṇeśa image from Mandhuk.
another pair is shown. The male figure sitting in front holds a garland in his hands. He should probably be the son of Buddhamitra and the female figure behind him is the daughter of Buddhamitra. She has no veil above her head.

Observations:

The epigraphic record was edited by D.C. Sircar and two readings of the same has been published by the author. The record on the pedestal consist of eight lines. Both the readings are similar in text and translations, except minor variations noted in the reading of the *maṅgaḷa* symbol.

The votive inscription records the dedication of a *Viśṇyaka bhattarakah* by a merchant named Buddhamitra, son of the illustrious merchant and great householder (*mahāśāla*) Jambhalamitra. The pious act of image consecration was performed on 25th day of the month of Āśādha at a placed name Bhāśakaga. It appears that the donor Buddhamitra is a resident of the village of Bilikandhaka in Samatāṭa. Few interesting observations need to be emphasized here. Firstly, the donor of the Mandhuk Gaṇeśa image inscription referred above was none other than the elderly Jambhalamitra, recorded in the inscription not as an ordinary merchant but as a *sūrthavahā*. The same person Jambhalamitra finds mention in this inscription as the father of the donor Buddhamitra. Jambhalamitra has been glorified in this inscription as an ‘illustrious merchant and great householder’. It thus appears that the tradition of *dīna* was a ritualistic practice in the merchant family of the Mitra’s through centuries. The consecration of the Gaṇeśa image at Mandhuk (Comilla District, Bangladesh) by Jambhalamitra during the regime of Gopāla II (c.875-892 A.D.) and later by his son Buddhamitra who installed the image of the same Brāhmanical deity patronised under the regime of the Pāla sovereign Mahipāla I (c.989 A.D-1037 A.D). is noteworthy in this context. In the second place, the donors of this particular family both Jambhalamitra and later Buddhamitra were not just ordinary merchants (*vaṇīk*) but the former was a reputed *sūrthavahā* as recorded in the inscription. The high social status and the economic position of the family through generations have been significantly recorded in the

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53 Lokadatta, the donor of the Viṣṇu image at Baghaura was an inhabitant of the same village.
epigraphic records. Further the discovery of the three image inscriptions\textsuperscript{54} from the geo-political unit of Samataṭa throws light on the trading and mercantile activity of the region as the donors recorded in these inscriptions were illustrious merchant.

A third observation in context to the socio-religious condition prevailing during the period of Mahipāla I needs to be understood here. The epigraph records the establishment of an image of Vināyaka by a merchant named Buddhamitra who was the son of Jambhalamitra and an inhabitant of Samataṭa. The names of both Buddhamitra and his father Jambhalamitra are Buddhistic and suggest that the said persons were Buddhists. But an interesting point to be noticed in this connection is that the god Vināyaka installed by Buddhamitra, is not the Mahāyānist (Buddhist) deity of that name, but the Brāhmanical god Vināyaka made according to the directions of the Brāhmanical Śīlpaśāstras.\textsuperscript{55} According to D.C.Sircar, Buddhamitra and Jambhalamitra were Buddhists, but were Hinduised enough to pay homage to the Brāhmanical deity or that their family had been Buddhist at an earlier date although they were themselves followers of the Brāhmanical faith. Thus it may be said that there was hardly any difference between the Brāhmanist and Buddhists householders in the early medieval society of Bengal.

The information embodied in the Nārāyanpur Vināyaka image is certainly an important socio-religio document that focuses on the merging of the Buddhists in the Hindu community.

\textbf{Sl. No.10: A metal Viṣṇu from Nimdighi year 23 of Mahipāla I}

![Viṣṇu, Nimdighi](Photo Courtesy: [ Bhattacharya, G. \textit{EBHIJIE}, pl. 54.1])

\textsuperscript{54} Mandhuk Gaṇeśa dated to Gopāla II, Baghaura Viṣṇu dated in the regnal year 3 of Mahipāla and the Narayanpur Viṣṇu dated to the year 4 of Mahipāla.

\textsuperscript{55} D.C. Sircar. \textit{Studies In The Religious Life Of Ancient And Medieval India}, 1971, p.188.
Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Metal.
Provenance: Nimdighi, (Rajshahi Dt), Bangladesh.
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Accession No.72.841
Language: Sanskrit (Incorrect)
Script: Gaudīya script, according to Gouriswar Bhattacharya 56

Approximate date: Dated. The reign of Mahipāla I can be placed tentatively between c.989 A.D.-1037 A.D. The Nimdighi Viṣṇu is dated in the regnal year 23 of the ruling king. Therefore, the inscription is dated to c. 989 + 23 = c.1012 A. D. approximately.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription, back of the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [ Bhattacharya, G. EBHIJIE, pl. 54.2]


Text:
L.2 dhavasyaḥ ||
Correct reading:
Translation:
Success! (This is the image of) Mādhava ( donated by ) the illustrious Jāṭīla, a Brahmin from Pāṭuka, son of Gaṅga in the victorious ruling year 23 of the illustrious Mahipāla - Deva, on the second day of the month of Āṣādha (June).

56 G. Bhattacharya, op.cit, 2000, p. 496.
Additional References:
Huntington, S. L. *op. cit.* pp. 59-60, Appendix No.36, fig.60.

Iconographic Study:

A metal Viṣṇu from Nimdighi stands in *samapāda* on a lotus seat which is placed on a *pañcarātha* pedestal. The four-armed deity holds in his hands in a clock-wise order from the lower right, *varada-mudra* in the lower right, *ṣaṅkha* in the lower left, *cakra* in the upper left and *gada* in the upper right. He is bejewelled with a *karapāda-mukūṭa* and a *vanamāla* which falls below the knees. The central deity is accompanied by Saraswati in the left and Lakṣmī on the right. Both stands on a lotus pedestal with slight flexion. Saraswati holds *vīṇā* with both the hands. The attributes in the hand of Lakṣmī is indistinct.

An elongated, oval shaped *prabhamaṇḍala* at the background is decorated with thick flame motif. There is a circular *śrāsa-cakra* behind the head of the deity with the *kirtimukha* above it. Below in the hollow of the pedestal, perhaps Garuḍa is shown with outstretched arms and also two lions.

Observations:

The Viṣṇu image from Nimdighi dated to the regnal year 23 of the Pāla ruler Mahipala (c.989 - 1037 A. D.) is an important historical document. The discovery of the inscription from Rajshahi district, Bangladesh is indicative of the establishment of Mahipala I political sovereignty over the region. The image was first referred by Huntington in her work, *The “Pāla-Sena” Schools of Sculpture*, 1984. The epigraphic record on the image was later published by Gouriswar Bhattacharya, 2000. We learn from the translation of the record that the image of Lord Viṣṇu was installed by one Jatila, son of Gangā a Brahmin from Pāṭuka, on the second day of the month of Āṣāḍha (June). The astronomical importance of this date will be discussed in chapter VI. The votive record is clear in two aspects, it records the name of the donor and his father, and their place of residence. However, the geographical identification of the place named Pāṭuka is not clearly mentioned. Secondly the social affiliation of the donor belonging to the *brahma-pa* caste is clearly justified from the word *bhatta* used as a title by the Brāhmīns.57 The inscription is

rather silent about his economic position. Significantly enough, the epigraphic record embodies one of the name of Lord Viṣṇu i.e. Mādhava. According to Gouriswar Bahttacharya the image is called *Jatila-Mādhava* after the name of the donor.58

Sl. No.11: Balārāma, Ekānaṁśā and Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva Image Inscription of year 48 of Mahipāla from Imadpur

![Image of Balārāma, Ekānaṁśā and Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva](photo)

**Balarāma, Ekānaṁśā and Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva, Imadpur**

*Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar EIB, fig.188]*

**Identification:** Balārāma, Ekānaṁśā and Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva  
**Material:** Bronze  
**Provenance:** Imadpur, Muzaffarpur District, Bihar.  
**Present Whereabouts:** British Museum, Edward VII Gallery, London.  
**Language:** Sanskrit (Incorrect)  
**Script:** Maithili script  
**Approximate date:** Dated. The inscription engraved on the bronze image dates to 48 year of Mahipāla I. Therefore, the inscription may be tentatively dated to c. 989 + 48 = c. 1037 A.D.

**Epigraphic Study:**  
**Variant Readings:**

![Close up view of the inscription, back of the pedestal](close-up-photo)

*Photo Courtesy: [Majumdar, R. C. and Banerjea, J. N. pl. XII]*

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58 See, G. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.* pp.496 - 497.
Reading 1: Cunningham, A & Garrick, H.B.W., Report of Tours in North and South Bihar
In Archaeological Survey of India. Reports. (hereafter ASR)
[“Cunningham” series.] vol. XVI, The reading of the text is noticed in the fn.1.p.88.

Text:
Śrī- man Mahīpāḷa-Deva-Rājye Samvat 48 Jveshta dine, Suklapaksha 2 and ended with the
words ...Deva- dharma

Translation:
[The images were] made during the reign of the fortunate Mahīpāḷa Deva , in Samvat 48, on the
2\textsuperscript{nd} day of the waxing moon of Jyeshta.

Reading 2: Hoernle, R. ‘Pālas of Bengal’ Indian Antiquary, (hereafter IA) Vol. XIV.
The reading of the text is noticed in the fn.17, p.165.

Text:
Śrīman Mahīpāḷadevarājasa samatt 48 Jeshṭa dina sukala-paksha 2.

Translation:
Not given

Reading 3: C.C. Dasgupta.“Two Unpublished Dated Pala Bronzes in the British Museum”
PIHC, p.247.

Text: (Mus 1881/ 10-10 / 1)
Śrīman Mahīpāḷa deva rāja samaṭṭa 48 Jeṣṭha dine, sukala paksa 2 laoo... oo........
deyadharma.

Translation:
Not given

Reading 4: Majumdar, R. C. and Banerjea, J. N.“Two Inscribed Images of Imadpur”
Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters (JRASBL) Vol.XVI,
No.1, pl. XII, p. 249.

Text:
Oṭa Śrīman Mahīpāḷadeva-ṛṣṭa sam 148 Jeṣṭha dine, Sukala pakṣa 2 īlaicakoiri Māhava-sīṭa
śaṭhī devadharmma.(Two letters kāra are written at the right end, above the line, and in a position
which seems to indicate that they are to be inserted after sāṭhī).

Translation:
Not given

69

Text:
Srīman Mahīpāladevarajasa Samatt 48 Jēṣṭa dina sukala-paksha 2.

Translation:
Not given

Reading 6: Choudhary, R. K. op.cit. p.70.

Text:
Srīmān Mahīpāla devarajasa samatt 48 Jyēṣṭa dina sukala-paksha 2.

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Majumdar, R.C. 1941. “Some Dates in the Pāla and Sena Records” JRASBL VII. Yearbook of the Asiatic Society of Bengal VIII, 1942, p.218
Sircar, D.C. op.cit., pp.15-16, pl.6.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. pp.60-61, Appendix No.38, fig.62.

Iconographic Study:

The composition illustrated above is the iconographical representation of Balarāma, Ekānāṁśa or Subhadrā and Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva. C. C. Dasguptā identified the composition with Balarāma, Lākṣmī and Vāsudeva. The textual reference to such images (the other bronze sculpture to be discussed below) well corroborates with the iconographical peculiarities as shown in this group of image. To the right of the composition stands four-armed Balarāma in slight tribhāṅga posture. The deity stands under the canopy of the seven hooded snake, wears the usual ornaments, sacred thread and vanaṁālā, his back right and left hands are respectively placed on a muṣala (a pestle) and a hāla (ploughshare), while the front left holds a pāṇapūrṇa (a drinking...
vessel), the front right holding a scythe-like object. Balarama or Sarñkarṣana, in one aspect of his conception, is a harvest god, and the attributes in his hand emphasize this character. The female deity Ekānaṁśa stands in between Balarama and Vāsudeva. The goddess holds a (darpana) mirror in the left hand and the right holds an indistinct object (? a lotus). Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa on the left of the deity is bejeweled with his usual ornaments. His back right and the corresponding left hands rest on a gadā (mace) and a cakra (discus), the front ones holds a lotus bud and a conch-shell respectively. According to J. N. Banerjea, the decorative design or the architectural construct supporting the back of the image depicts a peacock on either side which lifts with a string the snout of a makara from whose mouth issues a row of pearls ending on the head of a horse-like animal from whose back rises upwards, a long, lean, stylized lion which touches the pearls with its paws. Banerjea assumes such decoration to be a novel version of the Gaja-sārdūla motif found in the medieval eastern art. Below the pedestal on the extreme left is the figure of a kneeling man with folded hands.

Observations:
Huntington in her 'Appendix of Inscribed Dated Sculptures' have considered the two inscribed images (the second specimen dated to year 48 of Mahipāla I to be discussed below) together, she writes "there is a confusion between them in the published literature". I have closely examined the published readings of both the inscriptions, and found the readings to be identical with variations in terms. The reading given by R. C. Majumdar and J.N.Banerjea is an exception. Bhandarkar (1983:226) gives the same reading of Hoernle and refers to the reading given by Hoernle in the pages of Indian Antiquary. Cunningham reads the word deyadrāma. Majumdar reading is different. He gives the name of the donor (?) and his father (?). The reading of the date given by Majumdar is 148. Later, Majumdar himself seems to have abandoned his view. The variant expressions used in different readings are Jveshta, Samatt, sukāla, etc. Since the

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62 R. C. Majumdar and J. N. Banerjea, ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 S. L. Huntington, op.cit. p. 227.
65 R.C. Majumdar, op.cit. 1971. p.184, fn.156.
iconographic composition of the two groups of bronzes are different, I have treated them separately.

The inscriptive evidence records the dedication of the (I) Balarāma, Ekānaṃśa and Kṛṣṇa-Vasudeva in the 48th regnal year of Mahipāla I, on the auspicious 2nd day of the month of Jyeṣṭha (May-June).\(^{66}\) According to Majumdar, the image is a religious gift of the donor Sāhi, son of Māhava. The epigraphic record is historically significant. It alludes to the long reign of Mahipāla I. The discovery of the Imadpur image from North Bihar towards the closing year of the reigning King indicates that Mahipāla I succeeded in spreading the Pāla authority in the northern Bihar region.

Sl.No.12: The Second Image Inscription of Mahipāla I of year 48

Ganēśa, Kaumari, Brahmani, Vaiṣṇavi and Virabhadra, Imadpur
Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar, EIB, fig.63]

**Identification:** Ganēśa, Kaumari, Brahmani, Vaiṣṇavi and Virabhadra
**Material:** Bronze
**Provenance:** Imadpur, Muzaffarpur District, Bihar.
**Present Whereabouts:** British Museum, Edward VII Gallery, London.
**Language:** Sanskrit (Incorrect)
**Script:** Maithili script

**Approximate date:** Dated. The inscription engraved on the bronze image dates to 48 year of Mahipāla I. Therefore, the inscription may be tentatively dated to c. 989 + 48 = c.1037 A. D.

\(^{66}\) The importance of the astronomical data is to be discussed in Chp-VI.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription at the back of the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Majumdar, R. C. and Banerjea, J. N. pl. XIII]

Reading 1: Cunningham, A. ASR, XVI, p. 88. Cunningham read the inscriptions on the
two pieces as being identical. The reading of the text is noticed in the fn. 1.

Text:
Śrīman Mahīpāla-Deva-Rājye Samvat 48 Jyeshta dine, Suklapaksha 2 and ended with the
words ...Deva-dharma

Translation:
[The images were] made during the reign of the fortunate Mahipāla Deva, in Samvat 48, on the
2nd day of the waxing moon of Jyeshta.

Reading 2: Hoernle, 'Pālas of Bengal' p. 165. Hoernle read the inscriptions on the two pieces
as being identical. The reading of the text is noticed in the fn. 17.

Text:
Śrīman Mahīpāladevarājasa Samatt 48 Jeshta dina sukala- paksha 2.

Translation:
Not given

Reading 3: C. C. Dasgupta, op. cit. p. 248.

Text: (Mus 1881/ 10-10/ 2)
Śrīman Mahīpāladevarājja samaṭṭa 48 Jēṣṭha dina, suklā pakṣa 2 laoo... oo........ deya.

Translation:
Not given

Reading 4: Majumdar, R. C. and Banerjea, J. N. op. cit. p. 249, No. 2, pl. XIII.

Text:
Oṃ Śrīman Mahīpāladeva-rāja sam 148 Jēṣṭha dina, suklā pakṣa 2 ēlaicakoiri sāhi vahupa
(vahupu) ṣṭhaukara deva (dharma)
Translation: Not given


Text:
Sriman Mahipiladevarijasa Samatt 48 Jeshṭa dina sukala-paksha 2.

Translation: Not given

Reading 6: Choudhary, R. K. *op.cit.* p.70.

Text:
Sriman Mahipala devarijasamasatt 48 Jyeshta dina sukala-paksha 2.

Translation: Not given

Additional References:
Majumdar, R. C. *op.cit.* 1941, p. 218.
Sircar, D. C. *op.cit.* 1982, pp.15-16
Huntington, S. L. *op.cit.* pp. 60 - 61 Appendix No. 39, fig.63.

Iconographic Study:

The above illustration represents the second group of bronze images discovered from the ruins of Imadpur. A row of five seated figures of which the one in the extreme right is Gaṇeśa and that in the extreme left is Virabhadrā (the ugra form of Śiva). The middle figures are those of the three mātṛkās, who can be named from right to left as Kaumārī, Brāhmaṇī and Vaiṣṇavī. The heads of all the deities are surrounded each by a halo. Gaṇeśa is four-armed, his back right and left hands holds a raddish and a hatchet, his front right hand holds a citron, while the front left, a potful of sweets to which his trunk is applied; he is seated in ardhaparyaśāka pose, his right foot resting on his mount, a mouse. The next figure is that of two armed Kaumārī seated in the same pose, her right foot placed on the cognizance of her consort, a peacock or a cock; she carries an indistinct.

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67 Transliteration of the inscription is given by me, on the basis of the Devanāgarī script given by R. K. Choudhary.

68 C. C. Dasgupta, *op.cit.*, have identified the image as Kuvera, p.248. See, Majumdar, R.C. and Banerjea, J. N. for correct identification.
object in her right hand, while the left hand supports the child placed on her lap. Two-armed Brahmāṇī, is shown next. Her left foot resting on the back of the swan, right hand holding a citron (?) and the left one a lotus-stalk (?). The four-armed Vaiśṇavī who follows next is shown seated in the same position, Garuḍa beneath her right foot, holding in her four hands a lotus bud, a gadā, a cakra, and a śaśśākha from the lower right onwards; she is bejeweled with a vanamālā and the usual ornaments. The last figure in the panel is identified as Virabhadra by Banerjea. The identification of Virabhadra is justified as the figure neither possesses any purse of wealth nor he is pot-bellied. The objects in the two hands of Virabhadra is not clearly depicted. According to Banerjea, “it was the iconographic convention among the medieval artists of Eastern India, to place the mātrikā figures between those of Gaṇeśa and Virabhadra who were regarded as their guardians”.

Near the left corner of the pedestal are shown three pitchers which undoubtedly stands for the ritual ghātus of the three mother-goddesses. The worship of these Trī-Mātrikā images as cult-objects throws some light on one aspect of Śāktism in eastern India. Flames rising upwards are shown in the middle of the pedestal. Below the pedestal on the extreme right is the figure of a kneeling man with folded hands.

Observations:

The second bronze image dated to the regnal year 48 of Mahipāla I is interesting from the iconographic point of view. The epigraphic content of the second bronze image is similar to the first one. The donor’s name mentioned by R.C.Majumdar and J.N. Banerjea in (Reading 4) is confusing. The two epigraphic records dated to the year 48 of Mahipāla I is historically significant. It alludes to the long reign of Mahipāla I. Mahipāla’s long journey of political expansion which started in the 3rd and 4th regnal year as known from the Baghaura and Narayanpur image inscriptions in south-eastern part of Bengal came to an end by establishing his political domain in north Bihar as evident from the Imadpur inscriptions dated to regnal year 48.

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69 See, Majumdar, R. C. and Banerjea, J. N. op.cit. p. 251.
Identification: Nārttēśvara Śiva  
Material: Black stone  
Provenance: Bharella, Comilla District of Bangladesh.  
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Acc. No. 66.36  
Language: Sanskrit prose  
Script: North eastern character, latter half of the 10th century.  
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Laḍāhachandra is assigned between (c.1000-20 A. D.). The Nārttēśvara Image inscription is dedicated in the 18th regnal year of the Chandra ruler, Laḍāhachandra. Therefore, the inscription may be dated to c.1000 + 18 = c.1018 A. D.

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70 A. M. Chowdhury, op. cit. p. 278.

**Text:**

(1) Srimallayaha Chandra Devapadi | ya Bijaye Rajye Asta | .... shna Chaturdasyam Tithau 
Bhaspati Bare | Asta Pushya Nakashatre | karmmantapala Sri |

(2) Kushumadeva Suta Sri Bharudeva | Karita Sri Nartteswara Bhatta | ...... ........
Ashadhha Dine 14 | Khanitancha Ratokena Sarbbaksharah | kashanitancha 
Madhusudaneneti.

**Translation:**

(1) In the eighteenth year of the victorious reign of his glorious majesty Layahachandradeva, on Thursday, in the dark Chaturdasi Tithi and in the star Pushya.

(2) Bharudeva son of Kushumadeva Lord of Karmmanta made the Lord Nartteswara .......... On the fourteenth day of Ashadha All the letters engraved by Ratoka. Sculptured by Madhusudana.
Reading 2: Bhattasali, N. K. “A Note on the Badkamta Narttēśvara Image Inscription” 

Text:
(1) Śrīmallayahacandra devapaḍī | ya vijaya rīṣye Astā | .... śna Caturdaśīyāṃ Tithau Bṛhaspati vare Puṣya Nakāṣatre | karmmānta pāḷa Śrī|

(2) Kusumadeva suta Śrī Bhābudeva | Karita Śrī Narttēśvara Bhaṭṭā | ........ Chandra gatyāś Āśūḍha dine 14 || Khanitaṭṭa Ratokēna sarvakṣaraḥ|

(3) Khanitaṭṭa madhūṣadananetī ||.

Translation:
Not given


Text: 71

(1)[Sūḍhīr- astu] (Expressed by a symbol) Śrīmallayahacandra devapadīya- vijayarīṣye Asṭā [daśa * * * * * kṛ] śpacaturdaśīyāṁ Tithau Bṛhaspati vare Puṣya Nakāṣatre | karmmāntapāḷa Śrī|

(2) Kusumadevasutaśrībhābudevakāritasārīnarttēśvarabhaṭṭā [ * * * * * ] Chandra gatyāś Āśūḍhadine 14 || Khanitaṭṭa Ratokēna sarvakṣaraḥ |

Part II

1. Khanitaṭṭa Śrimadhū

2. Sudanametē ||

Translation:

Part I

May success attend! In the eighteenth year of the victorious reign of His glorious Majesty Layahachandra-deva, on Thursday, in the dark Fourteenth Tithi, and under the star Puṣhya. Bhābudeva, son of Kushumā-deva, Lord of Karmānta, caused to be made the Lord Narttēśwara ….. on the fourteenth day of Āśūḍha (calculated) by the movement of the moon. And all the letters engraved by Ratoka.

Part II

Also engraved by the illustrious Madhūṣadana. .

71 The transliteration is given by me on the basis of Devnāgarī script given by N. K. Bhattasali.
Additional References:
Bhattashali, N. K. op.cit. pp114-115, pl.XLIV.
Sircar, D. C. op.cit. p.25.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. p.62-63 Appendix No.66 , fig.64-65.

Iconographic Study:

The dancing images of Śiva known as Śiva Naṭarāja is well known to the students of Indian art and iconography. The inscribed image of dancing Śiva under observation bears an inscription in which the deity has been called Narattesvara Śiva. On the basis of this epithet G. Bhattacharya suggest that it is wrong to call all dancing images of Śiva from Bangladesh as Śiva Naṭarāja.72 The sculpture carved in black stone is now preserved in the Bangladesh National Museum. The image in question is sadly mutilated and what remains is the two fragmented portion.73 Since the sculpture is in a bad state, it is difficult to discuss on its iconographic features. However, an attempt is made in this regard.

The image from Bharella belongs to Bhattasali’s B class of dancing images i.e.twelve-armed.74 This is an image of vipāḍhara dancing Śiva. The vipā is broken, but a scratch across the breast shows where the lyre/ vipā was75 (Part A). Śiva is twelve armed. All the right arms are broken, except the uppermost right hand (partially intact) joined together with the uppermost left hand placed on the top of the jatamukuta, their palms meeting and marking kartāla.76 The hand gesture

72 For detail see, G. Bhattacharya, op.cit, 2000, p.281.
73 S. L. Huntington, fig.65 and 64. The complete photograph of the sculpture has been published by Huntington, op.cit, 1984.
74 N. K. Bhattachari, op.cit, 1972. Naṭarāja Śiva images from the Dhaka region has been categorized into two classes. One class has ten arms and the other class have twelve arms. See, pp.111-112.
75 N. K. Bhattachari, ibid. p.114.
76 Enamul Haque, op.cit, p.151.
as depicted in Bharella Narattesvara is unique. Of the left hands, two are broken. The stump of the front / normal hand that held one end of the vīṇā is preserved, the fifth one has triśūla and the fourth seems to hold kapāla. The third hand holds a snake canopy over the head. Śiva wears a beautiful jatamukuta, the third eye on the forehead is perhaps damaged. He wears a snake as his sacred thread (nāg-yajnopavita). He is ārdhvalīṅga. The image under study is unique in respect of the garland of the severed human heads which the god is wearing. In this relief the said garland, obviously a small one, is seen as encircling the matted crown of Śiva, and not as bedecking him along with other body ornaments.

The lower part (Part B) of the fragmented portion depicts a bull (vṛṣa or Vṛśabha). The bull in this case is turned to right (the head is fragmented). A pair of feet is placed on the body of the viṭhana. Śiva is accompanied by two gracefully standing female attendants. To his proper right stands Gaṅgā on makara (?). To the proper left of the central deity stand Gaurī / Umā on a lion (?). She has a darpana in the right hand. These are two wives of Śiva named Gaṅgā and Gaurī who generally accompany Śiva from Dacca-Faridpur region of Bangladesh.

On the pañcaratha pedestal below, eight figures are depicted in different attitude. In the central projection of the pedestal is shown the pot-bellied, corpulent figure of Mahākāla, with musicians and devotees. According to Bhattasali, the upper portion of the Bharella relief which is now missing might have carried the figures of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Sūrya and others. Bhattasali notices a figure of Karttikeya carved in the left upper corner. According to Huntington, the Narattesvara image is a reminiscent of the precision seen in the Viṣṇu from Baghaura from the 3rd year of Mahipāla reign and to the Narayanpur Gaṇeśa image dated to year 4 of Mahipāla. These features undoubtedly reinforce the historical evidence that Laḍahachandra and Mahipāla I were contemporaries, perhaps ruling separate portions of Bengal (West Bengal & Bangladesh).

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77 In several Śiva Narattesvara image from Bengal, viz; the Maniari image, the sculptures from Outshahi (Dacca) and the other one from Uttar Raikal (Dacca) disposers different gestures known as Karkaphasta. Haque, ibid. pp.151-152.

78 See, Kalyan Kumar Dasgupta, op.cit. p. 3.

79 G. Bhattacharya, op.cit, 2000, “Nandin and Vṛṣabha” pp.149-172.

80 S. L. Huntington, op.cit, p.63.
Observations:

The Bharella Śiva image is dated to the year 18 of Ladahachandra (c. 1000-1020 A.D.), the son and successor of Kalyanachandra (c. 975-1000 A.D.). The discovery of the Nārttesvara Śiva image inscription from Bharella, Comilla district (south-eastern Bengal) suggest that the territorial region of Samatata and Harikela were strongholds of the Chandras the ruling family of Devas. Besides the historical importance of this epigraphic document, the votive inscriptions sheds light on the socio-religious condition of the region concerned.

The inscriptional evidence was first edited by N. K. Bhattasali and three readings were published. Bhattasali reading of the inscription over the years have undergone changes. The variant reading in terms of expression and meaning of the votive record is discussed below. The inscription begins with the auspicious symbol siddhirastu, not found in his earlier readings. Expressions like bijaya (R.1, L.1) changes to vijaya (R.2, L.1 and R.3, L.1) and bare (R.1, L.1) to dare (R.2, L.1 and R.3, L.1). The incomplete word shna (R.1, L.1 and R.2, L.1) gets it complete form in the third reading as kṛṣṇa, indicating kṛṣṇacaturdaśam. Moreover, the reading of the term Chandra gatyā (R.2, L.2 and R.3, L.2) is absent in (R.1, L.2). Significantly, both the expressions kṛṣṇacaturdaśyang and Chandra gatyā are related to astronomical data recorded in this particular inscription. The name of the donor, Bharudeva (R.1, L.2) changes into Bhabudeva (R.2, L.2) and Bhavudeva (R.3, L.2).

The inscriptional evidence is purely votive in nature. It records the dedication of the Śiva image by a donor named Bhavudeva son of Kusumadeva in the 18th regnal year of Ladahacandradeva. The consecration of the image was made on the auspicious day Thursday, under the star Pushya, on the 14th day of the dark half of the month i.e the day being 14th of Aśādha (the significance of this astronomical data is to be dealt in Chapter VI). On the basis of the translation of the inscriptional evidence it can be stated that Ratoka and Madhusudana were both responsible for engraving the script on the image or Ratoka was the engraver and Madhusudana a sculptor as the word Khanitaśca is noticed before both the names. The names of the artisanal class being recorded suggest that they wanted to be rembered by posterity. The social identity, economic

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status and religious affiliation of the donor, the engraver and sculptor is to be noted in this regard. The personal religion of the Candra rulers was Buddhism and Laďahacandra was conventionally known as paramasaugata.\textsuperscript{82} But the consecration of a Šiva image in his reign evidently proves his adoption of Pauranic Brahmanism. Suchandra Ghosh\textsuperscript{83} very rightly points to a shift in nature of royal patronage in the region (South eastern Bengal) which was predominantly a stronghold of Buddhism. Buddhism gradually waned with the coming of the political entities like the Candras. Further the donor in this regard was not an ordinary lay devotee. The use of the expression karmanantapāla Śrī as a prefix to the donor’s father’s name suggest their lineage from a royal ancestry. The donor in this instance may have been a vassal prince appointed as the ruler of the region and ruled on behalf of Laďahacandra.

**Sl.No.14: Kulkudi Image Inscription of Govindacandra, year 12**

![Sūrya, Kulkudi](Photo Courtesy: [Huntington, S. L. *PSSS*, fig.66])

**Identification:** Sūrya

**Material:** Black stone, ht. 99 cm

**Provenance:** Hatiya, Sandwip Island, Faridpur District of Bangladesh.

**Present Whereabouts:** Bangladesh National Museum, L.No.60\textsuperscript{84}

**Language:** Incorrect Sanskrit

**Script:** According to N.K.Bhattasali,\textsuperscript{85} the script is proto-Bengali type of the early part of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century

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\textsuperscript{84} Enamul Haque, *op.cit.* p. 363.

Approximate date: Dated. The Chandra ruler, Ladahacandradeva, (c.1000-20 A. D.) was succeeded by his son Govindracandra. The kulkud Sun god image is dated to the regnal year 12 of Govindracandra who ruled between c.1020-1045 A. D. The inscription under study is dated to c.1020 + 12 = c.1032 A. D.

Epigraphic record:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Bhattasali, N. K. EI, Vol. XXVII, pl.A]


Text:86
Śrī- takmi (1) dinakārīn (2) Bhaṭṭāraka [ h ]
Śrī- Govindachandradeva -pā-
dīya samvat 12 Phālguna
dine 19
Translation:87
The (image of) the maker of the day, the God of the persons afflicted with the (skin disease) takmi. The year 12 is of the exalted Govindracandra. The 19th day of Phalgun.


Text:
Sec.1 Śrī- takmi dinakārīn (dinakārī) Bhaṭṭāraka [ h *]
Sec 2 Śrī- Govindachandradeva -pā-
Sec 3 dīya samvat 12 Phālguna

86 Transliteration is given by me on the basis of Bengali script given by the author.

87 N. K. Bhattasali gives no translation of the reading. But in the note (p.271) he mentions about the disease takmi and the sun-god as the healer of the disease. Keeping Bhattasali’s opinion in view the translation remain the same.
Sec 4 dine 19

Translation:
The (image of) the maker of the day, the God of the persons afflicted with the (skin disease) takman. The year 12 is of the exalted Govindachandra deva. The 19th day of Phalguna.


Text:
\[ \text{Lakshmi (shmi) dina- kārī (rī) ta- Bhattāraka [ b *]} \]

Translation:
‘the Sun- god caused to be made by lakshmīdīna.’ ..............

Reading 4: Sircar, D. C. Bhāratavarsha, p. 397.

Text:
\[ \text{Śrī lakshmīdīna - kārīta-Bhattāraka} \]

Correct reading:
\[ \text{Śrī Lakshmīdīna - kārīta- Bhattārakaḥ} \]

Translation:
The Lord who is stated to have been made or installed by one Lakshmīdīna.

Additional References:
Sircar, D. C. op.cit, pp.104-10.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit, pp.63-64 Appendix No.67, fig. 66.
Alam, A. K. M. Shamsul. op.cit. fig.73.
Haque, Enamul. op.cit, p.190, pl.165.
Mevissen, G. J. R. Ādityas, Grahas, and other Deities of Time and Space on Sūrya Sculptures predominantly from Bengal, on Archaeology, Sūrya Sculptures and Art, 2006.

Iconographic Study:
The worship of the Sun-god was an important practice in the religious life of ancient Bengal, as more than 250 Sūrya images from Bengal is known so far.88 The Sūrya image from Kulkudi

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88 This data is taken from Gerd J. R. Mevissen, Ādityas, Grahas, and other Deities of Time and Space on Sūrya Sculptures predominantly from Bengal, on Archaeology, Sūrya Sculptures and Art, 2006.
executed in black chlorite is in an excellent state of preservation. The deity stands in samapāda on a small viśva-padma placed on the saptaratha pedestal. The deity holds two full blown lotuses which rise just above the shoulder. His body is covered with normal ornaments like a breast-plate, the daggers, the top-boots along with necklace, earrings, etc. The high conical headdress is quite conspicuous. The lower portion of the body is attired in paridhana which is held fast round the waist by a bejewelled girdle. The Sun-god is accompanied by the standard accessory figures: his two principal male attendants Dandin (on his right) and Pingala (on his left). Both of them are shown with their respective attributes and are bejewelled like the central deity. The stele is replete with five female figures representing his consorts, of which the one standing between his feet is generally identified as the earth goddess Mahāsveta; two female archers shown in the act of shooting arrows; while the two wives of the Śūrya, Sureṣu and Chāyā stand on either side of the central figure as inconspicuous attendants. Aruṇa, the charioteer, is depicted in directing the seven horses that draw Śūrya’s one-wheeled chariot. The pointed top of the prabhāvali has a prominent Kittimukha and on the two corners are shown flying vidyadhāras.

Śūrya is not only an independent god, he is also closely related to a number of deities that symbolize certain phenomena of time and space. The Kulkūṭi sun-god image is one such beautiful creation of art where the central deity is flanked by Ādityas on the back-slab. The twelve small standing āditya figures are shown within circular creepers. One of the most common mode of arranging the Ādityas on the back-slab, in which ten Ādityas are shown in two vertical rows on either side of the principal image, while the eleventh is depicted in the apex. The arrangement of ādityas in this specimen is different from other examples found in south eastern Bengal. In this sculpture the twelve ādityas are shown in two vertical rows on either side of the principal image. Three each (instead of four as commonly found) are shown on both sides of the head, and the remaining are carved on the throne back near Śūrya’s hands.

The sculpture is rendered in detail. The central figure of the stele, are much smaller in proportion to the rest of the slab. The background now occupies much more space in which to accommodate

89 Gerd Mevissen, ibid. Śūrya is considered as one of the Twelve Ādityas (dvādasāditya), the ancient solar deities symbolizing the twelve months of the solar year.
the necessary iconographic elements of Vidyadharas, attendants, etc. These characteristics generally ascribes the image to the 11th century and later.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Śūrya from Kulkūḍi (Faridpur district, Bangladesh) is dated to the regnal year 12 of the Candra ruler Govindaacandra (c.1020 - 1045A.D.) the son and successor of Laḍāhachandra (c.1000-1020 A.D.). The epigraphic record was first edited by N. K. Bhattacharji in the Bengali journal Bhatavarsha and later in the pages of Epigraphia Indica. The reading of the inscription with the translation remains the same in both the published textual sources. Later, the inscription was edited by D.C. Sircar which brought about a radical change in the understanding of this votive record. Bhattacharji reads line 1 as Śrī- takmi dinakārīn Bhaṭṭāraka [h *] meaning The (image of) the maker of the day, the God of the persons afflicted with the (skin disease) takman. Bhattacharji comments in the note (1947-48:n.1) “This image meant to be the special object of worship of the sufferers from takman, i.e of the takmis and is therefore called the sun-god of the takmis”. This opinion of Bhattacharji is different from Sircar. Sircar reads line 1 as Śrī- Lakshmīdīna-kārītā-Bhaṭṭārakaḥ which simply means that the image of the sun-god was installed by a person named Lakshmīdīna or in other words the donor of the image is a person named Lakshmīdīna. The second reading of the inscription is more acceptable as the expression kārītā written before bhaṭṭāraka suggest that the image of the Bhaṭṭāraka (Sun-god) was installed by a person named Lakshmīdīna.

The inscription is important from the historical, social and religious point of view. The discovery of the inscription from South-eastern part of Bengal that comprises the ancient territorial unit of Vaṅga and Vaṅgāladesa is a pointer to the fact that the region was under the political domain of the Candra ruler, Govindaacandra. The discovery of the Śūrya image from the geographical region further alludes to the prevalence of Śūrya worship and Saura cult in this region. The purport of this inscription is to dedicate the Śūrya image on the auspicious 19th day of the month of Phalguna (the signifiance of this auspicious date is to be dealt in Chapter VI). The prefix śrī before the name of the donor suggest him to be an illustrious devotee. However, nothing is known from the record about the social and economic status of the donor. The
consecration of a Brahmanical deity by a Buddhist king gives an insight of the political prudence of the ruling king.

Sl. No.15: Betka Vāsudeva Image Inscription of Govindacandra, year 23

Vasudeva, Betka

Photo Courtesy: [ Huntington, S. L. PSSS, fig.67]

Identification: Visnu
Material: Black stone
Provenance: Betka (Paikpara) Dhaka District, Bangladesh.
Language: corrupt Sanskrit
Script: Gaudīya of the 11th-12th century
Approximate date: Dated. The Betka Vāsudeva image is dated to the regnal year 23 of Govindacandra who ruled between c.1020-1045 A. D. The inscription under study is dated to c.1020 + 23 = c.1043 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [ Sircar, D.C. STP, pl.17]

**Text**:90

Line 1 (A) Śrīmadgo (B) Vindaca- (C) ndrasya samvat 23
Line 2 (A) Rālajika-O ( B ) parata- pā ( C ) radāśa- śūtaḥ
Line 3 (A) Gaṅgadiś- (B) sa- kārita- vā- (C) sūdeva-
Line 4 (A) Bhāttārakaḥ91

**Corrected Text**92

Śrīmadgovindacandrasya Satīvat 23 || Rālajikoparata-Pāradāśasūta-Gaṅgādēśa-Kārita Vastādeva- Bhāttārakaḥ ||

**Translation:**
The year 23 of (the reign of) the illustrious Govindacandra. (This image of) Lord Vāsudeva (is) caused to be made by Gaṅgādēsa, son of the late Pāradāsā (and) an inhabitant of Ralaja (?)

**Reading 2**: Sircar, D. C. “Paikpara vāsudeb mūrtīte Gobindrachandrer lekha” Bhāratavarsha, p.775.

**Text**:93

Line 1 (A) Śrīmadgo (B) Vindaca- (C) ndrasya samvat 23
Line 2 (A) Rālajika-O ( B ) parata- pā ( C ) radāśa- śūtaḥ
Line 3 (A) Gaṅgadiś- (B) sa- kārita- vā- (C) sūdeva-
Line 4 (A) Bhāttārakaḥ

**Corrected Text**

Śrīmadgovindacandrasya Satīvat 23 || Rālajikoparata-Pāradāśasūta-Gaṅgādēśa-Kārita Vastādeva-Bhāttārakaḥ ||

**Translation:**
The year 23 of (the reign of) the illustrious Govindacandra. (This image of) Lord Vāsudeva (is) caused to be made by Gaṅgādēsa, son of the late Pāradāsā (and) an inhabitant of Ralaja (?)

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90 D. C. Sircar's reading is in Devanāgārī script. The transliteration is given by me.

91 D.C.Sircar, Ibid. 1940-41, n.56.

92 Originally in Nāgarī script. The transliteration is given by me.

93 Originally in Bengali script. The transliteration is given by me.

Text:
1. Śrīmad- *Go* || *vindacha* || *ndrasya samvat* 23
2. *Balajika*-u || *parata*- *Pa* || *radīśa* - *sūtaḥ* (suta)
3. *Gangada* || *sa*- *kārita* - *Vā* || *sudeva-
4. *Bhattāraḥ* [ h *]

Translation:
The 23rd year of the illustrious Govindachandra. (This image of) the Lord Vasudeva was caused to be made by Gaṅgadāsa, the Bālajī, son of the deceased Pārādāsa


Text: 94
1. (A) Śrīmadgo (B) Bindaca- (C) *ndrasya samvat* 23
2. (A) Rālajikā- O (B) *parata*- *pā* (C) *radīśa*- *sūtaḥ*
3. (A) *Gangada*- (B) *sa*- *kārita*- *Bā*- (C) *sudeva-
4. (A) *Bhattāraḥ*

Corrected Text 95
Śrīmadgovindacandrasya Saṭīvat 23 || Rālajikoparata-Pāradāsasūta-Gaṅgādāsa-Kārita Vasudeva- Bhattāraḥ ||

Translation:
In the year 23 of (the reign of) the illustrious Govindacandra. (This image of) Lord Vasudeva (is) caused to be made by Gaṅgādāsa, son of the late Pārādāsa (and) an inhabitant of Ralaja (?)

Additional References:
Sircar, D. C. *op.cit.* pp.104-10.
Huntington, S. L. *op.cit.* Appendix No.68, p.63-64., fig.67.
Alam, A.K.M.Shamsul *op.cit.* fig.74.
Haque, Enamul *op.cit.* p.66, pl.20.

94 Originally in Bengali script. The transliteration of the text is given by me. The same text in *Devanāgarī* script has been discussed by D.C. Sircar, *op.cit.* 1940-41, p.416.
95 Originally in Bengali script. The transliteration of the text is given by me.
Iconographic Study:

The Vāsudeva image from Betka (Paikpara) executed in black stone is in an excellent state of preservation. The iconographic features of this image have not received due attention. I therefore take an opportunity to discuss the iconographic features of this inscribed specimen. It is a four-armed image of Vāsudeva bearing some remarkable east Bengal iconographic peculiarities. The disposition of attributes placed in hands from lower right order are *padma* or the lotus bud embedded in the palm which can be simultaneously be taken as the gesture of *varada*, *śaikha*, *cakra* and *gādā*. The central deity stands in *samapādasthānaka* pose on a plain *pādapīṭha* from which emerges a lotus stalk with a full blossomed lotus. The lotus seat is placed on a two-tiered pedestal. In extremely rare cases one of the hands is in *abhaya* or *varada* instead of holding one of the usual attributes. Vāsudeva is bejeweled with *kiritamukṭa, hāra, kuḍālas, keyura, valayas* and *mekhala*. He also wears a *yajnopavita* which reaches up to the navel and *vanamāla*, hanging down to his knees. A diaphanous *paridhāna* constitute his lower garment. The *prabhavali* is distinguished by a carved *śiraścakra* behind the head and a *kirttimukha* at the pointed top. A little below this device are a pair of garland bearings *vidvadharas*.

The main deity is accompanied by two consorts, one on either side, both standing in *tribhatīga*. The attendants accompanying Vāsudeva bears *śiraścakra* carved behind their head and a *kiritamukṭa* bedecking their heads similar to the central figure. Ārī stands on the proper right holding a long lotus stalk in her left hand. Her right hand bears a *cauri*. Puṣṭī or Sarasvatī stands on the left holding an one stringed *vīṇā* with both the hands. Besides the consorts, two *Āyudhapuruṣas* are placed on the outer sides of the latter. The pedestal shows the winged Garuḍa, kneeling in *aṭṭali* and placed at the centre of the pedestal. The above discussion reveals some regional iconographic features noted in this sculpture from Bangladesh. For instance, the depiction of short *upavita* reaching upto the navel, long *vanamāla* hanging below the knee and the central position of the *vāhana* of Vāsudeva are principal distinguishing iconographic features

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96 See in this context the opinion of Mlle de Mallmann as referred by Enamul Haque, *op.cit*, 1992, p.65.

97 Due to the slight damage in the lower portion of the pedestal it is difficult to discuss its detail.

98 Enamul Haque, ibid. p.62.

99 From the present photograph it is difficult to identify the position of the *Āyudhapuruṣas*. 
of East Bengal sculptures in contrast to the North or West Bengal Viṣṇu images. The sculpture on the whole represents a developed state of iconography in Bengal sculptures.

**Observations:**

The Betka Vāsudeva image inscription is the second dated epigraphic record assigned to the ruling King Govindacandra. The inscription is dated in the 25th regnal year of the ruling king which justify to his long reigning period (c.1020-1043 A.D.) I have based my observations on the basis of four published readings of this inscriptional evidence. Sircar readings (R. 1, R. 2, R. 4) have remained the same. Bhattasali’s reading of the inscription (R. 3) is apparently the same as Sircar, except the expression which is given in Line 2. The problem lies with the expression Rālajika/ Bālajika. Rālajika as explained by Sircar indicating an inhabitant of a locality called Ralaja. Bhattasali, on the other hand equates the term Bālajika with Bārājika to be the original of the name of the modern Bārai (betel-leaf grower). It can be surmised from the reading of Bhattasali that the donor Gaṅgādāsa and his deceased father belonged to the class of Barai. According to Sircar, the donor and his father were inhabitant of the place named Ralaja.

The votive inscription records the installation of a Vāsudeva image by Gaṅgādāsa, son of deceased Paradāsa in the 23rd regnal year of Govindacandra. Significantly, the deity is named Vāsudeva in this record. The religious leaning of the ruler who was traditionally a *paramasangata* have patronized the consecration of a Brahmanical deity, Vāsudeva. The religious affiliation of the donor as a devout believer of Viṣṇavism is evident from this record. Further, the social and economic identity of the donor is clearly defined if we accept Bhattasali’s explanation. The occupation of cultivating and selling betel-leaf must have been lucrative enough to support the donor financially for such pious act of image consecration.

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Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Bronze, 29.9 x 14 cm
Provenance: Mandoil, Godagari, Rajshahi, Bangladesh.
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum Accession No. 3035
Language: Incorrect Sanskrit
Script: Gaudhya character of the 10th - 11th centuries.
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Vigrahapāla (III), the Pāla king is assigned to c. 1052-1078 A.D. The metal sculpture is dated in the 4th regnal year of the ruling king. Therefore, the date of the epigraphic record is c. 1052 + 4 = c. 1056 A.D. approximately.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription, back of the image
Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar, EIB, fig. 326]


Text:
Svasti Śrīma-Vigrahapāla devasya rājya satībat 4 Śrī Gayidanusya dharmmoyati

Translation:
Svasti. In the 4th regnal year of Vigrahapāladeva / In the interest of Gayidanu’s piety.


Text:
L.1 Oṁ (by sign) Śrī māvīgrahapāla devasya rājya satībat 4
L.2 Śrīgayidanusya dharmmāyaḥ //

Translation:
In the 4th year of the reign of Śrī Vigrahapāladeva (the image was made) for the religious (benefit) of Śrī Gayidanu.

Reading 3: Rahman, M. Sculpture in the Varendra Research Museum: A Descriptive Catalogue (hereafter SVRM, Cat.) p.98, pl.106.

Text:
L.1 Oṁ Śrī māvīgrahapāla devasya rājya satībat 4
L.2 Śrīgayidanusya dharmmāyaḥ

Translation:
In the 4th year of Śrī Vigrahapāla (The image was made) for the religious (merit) of Śrī Gayidanu.

Additional References:
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. p.65 Appendix No 42, fig.68.
Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar, op.cit. fig.259 & fig.326.

Iconographic Study:
The sculpture is a remarkable example of Pāla art, it represents four-armed Viṣṇu standing in samapādakasthūnaka on a full blown double petalled lotus-pedestal (viśvapadma), placed upon a many tiered, eight legged throne supporting a pañcaratha pedestal. In his four hands the deity holds, gadā in his upper right and a cakra in the opposite left. He holds a padma in his main right hand and a śatikha in the corresponding left. Noticeable is the profusion of ornaments of exquisite
designs on the image of Viṣṇu. He wears a tall crown and three necklaces, the kaustabha being attached to the one in the middle. His short paridhāma is held at the waist by an elaborately worked and many-tasselled kaṇḍilāma. There is a prominent tilaka mark on his forehead. The eyes, tilaka and other ornaments are coated with silver. To the right and left of Viṣṇu stand respectively Lākṣmī and Sarasvatī. Both are two-armed and shown in the graceful tribhanga pose on viṣvapadma. On the lowest tier of the pedestal is a male worshipper, sitting with a garland in two hands, but the vāhana Gariḍa is conspicuously absent.

The stele is cut at the edges in flame motif. It also contains lozenge-shaped perforations. Tree with flowers and foliage is shown behind the head and the same motif decorates the stele.

Observations:

The bronze Viṣṇu from Mandoil (Godagari, Rajshahi District) is dated to the regnal year 4 of the ruling King Vīgrahapāla III (c.1052 A.D.-1078 A. D.). Three published readings of this inscription has been discussed. The text and translation of the epigraphic record is same with minor variations. The votive inscription opens with the auspicious maṅgala symbol svasti (R.1) and Om (R.2 and R.3). The last expression of line 2 is variantly read as dharmmoyam, dharmmīyah and dharmīyah.

The purpose of this votive inscription is simply to record the consecration of Viṣṇu image by the donor Gayidanu in the 4th regnal year of Vīgrahapāla III. The donor must have been a devout follower of Vaiṣṇavism who made such a dāna. However, no information about the social background of the donor or about his economic status is revealed from this epigraphic record.
Sl. No. 17: Rajibpur Sadāśiva Image Inscription of regnal year 14th of Gopāla IV

Identification: Sadāśiva
Material: Black Stone, 105 x 57 cms.
Provenance: Rajibpur, Dinajpur District, West Bengal.
Present Whereabouts: Indian Museum, Calcutta (hereafter IM) Acc.No.10998/ A 25198
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Gaudīya characters of 11-12th centuries.
Approximate date: Dated. The inscription is dated to the 14th regnal year of Gopāladeva i.e. Gopāla (IV) the son and successor of Kumarapāla. Gopāladeva tentatively ruled between 1122-1136 A.D. Therefore the inscription is dated to c.1122 + 14 = c.1136 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
[Variant Readings]:

Reading 1: Majumdar, N.G. Indian Museum, Calcutta. Annual Report, Archaeological Survey of India (hereafter AR-ASI) p.131, pl. XXXV, C.

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103 See, Gouriswar Bhattacharya, op.cit. 1998.
Text:
L.1 Oṁ (symbol) Paramēśvara-ety-a (di)- śrīmad-Gopāladeva- pāḍāṁś-vaṁjaya (vaṁjaya) -rājye śrī-
L.2 māt- Sadāśivapādāḥ san (di) i-[sa]- śrī-Purushottamena pratishṭitāḥ saṁ 14
L.3 .... dā - i ....

Translation:
It thus records the erection of the image of Sadasiva in the 14th regnal year of Gopāladeva by one Purushottama, who is described as Sandhi-sa.


Text
L.1 Siddhirastu (symbol) | Paramēśvara-tyā [di] śrīmad Gopāladeva- pāḍāmn- vijaya rājye śrī-
L.2 matsadāśivapādaḥ sanibha (saciva) - śrī Purushottamena pratishṭitāḥ saṁ 14
L.3 [mā] gha [dine 1] 5

Translation:
May success attend. In the victorious reign of the illustrious Gopāla Deva, the Paramēśvara etc., (the image of) the beautiful god Sadasiva was consecrated by the minister (?) Purusottama. The year 14. The 15th (25 th) day of Magha.

Reading 3: Picron, Claudine, “Gopāla II ou Gopāla III, Xe ou XIIe siecle Datation d’ une Image de Siva,” Arts Asiatiques, XXXIV p.110. This reading of Picron is taken from Huntington, p. 235.

Text
L.1 aumparamēśvara-tyā (di) śrīmadgopāladevapāḍānm-vijayarājyeśrī-
L.2 matsadāśivapādaḥsa (ndhisa) śrīpurushottamana-pratishṭitāḥsaṁ 14
L.3 .... dā ....

Translation:
Not given

Reading 4: Sircar, D.C. quoted from S. L. Huntington, op.cit. p. 235. This reading is on the basis of a Personal letter dated 16th February 1981 to Huntington from D. C. Sircar.

104The transliteration is given by me on the basis of Devanāgarī script given by N. K. Bhattasali.
105Bhattasali mentions in the f.n 5, p.218 that the numeral before 5 may be 1 or 2.
Text:
L.1 Siddham (symbol). Paramesvar-ety- [di] -śrī-mād-Gopāladeva pādāṅmavīti (nāṁ vi) jaya - rūjya (jye) śrī-
L.2 mat- Sadāśivapādāḥ san [t] i ( t = t) [ ha ] śrī- Pu ( Pu) - ruṣottamena pratishṭhitāḥ satī 14
L.3 [M] āgha - [ d ] i [na 15]

Translation:
Let it be well. Installed by the illustrious Puruṣottama during the victorious reign of the glorious Gopāladeva, endorsed with [the titles] Parameśvara, etc., the holy Sadāśiva stands here year 14, the 15th day of Māgha.

Additional References:
Sircar, D. C. op. cit. pp.92-94.
Huntington, S. L. op. cit. pp.69 -70, No.52, fig.77.

106 The transliteration is given by me on the basis of Bengali script given by D.C. Sircar.
Iconographic Study:
This is the most beautiful Sadāśiva image from Bengal. The sculpture is almost intact. The deity is shown ūrdhvalinga. Of the three faces of the deity the Aghora or Bhairava face is at the proper right and the Vāmādeva or Uma face is at the proper left. The central Mahādeva or Sadyojāta face has the third eye on the forehead. Besides the three heads, this sculpture shows an extra head which is added behind, giving a round treatment to the back of the image. All the four heads have jata- mukta bedecked by a diadem. The deity is seated cross-legged in meditation on a well expanded viśvapadma placed on a paīca-ratha pedestal. The attributes pertain to the ten hands needs proper identification. The natural hands are held close to the chest in the teaching (vyākhyāna) mudrā in meditation. The attributes in the following five right hands are varada, abhaya (damaged), the śila (or śakti), trīśūla, and hold the club (khatvaīga); the attributes in the left hands are nilotpala or padma, a drum (damaru), a snake (sarpa), kapāla (damaged) citron (bijapūra) damaged. The deity is bejwelled with various ornaments. The two attendants of Sadāśiva sits on a lotus each in the recess of the pedestal, on both sides of the lotus stem. The corpulent one at the proper right is Mahākīla. He wears a jata- mukta and has a fearful face. He holds perhaps an aksamārī in the right hand and a trīśūla (damaged) in the left hand. The figure at the proper left also wears a jata- mukta and holds in the right hand perhaps an aksamālā and in the left hand a trīśūla. At the extreme left of the recess the crouching bull (Vṛṣa) is shown on a lotus looking intently at the master. To the extreme right are two kneeling figures who are suggestively devotees. There is perhaps another unidentified figure seated behind the devotees.

The prabhāvali is fully covered by foliated patterns and scroll motifs. The stele is pointed at the top where it is decorated with kṣirīmukha ornament. Below it on the two sides are two garlands bearing vidyadharas. The border of the stele is decorated with flame motif. An interesting feature of this sculpture is the fact that on the rear of the back-slab another face and the back of the body have been carved through.

107G. Bhattacharya, op.cit. p.178 and N.G.Majumdar , 1936-37, p.131 suggests that the hand display abhaya pose. But on a closer examination of the image I have noticed that the hands are in teaching attitude.
Observations:
The Sadāśiva image inscription from Rajibpur is dated to the regnal year 14 of the ruling king, Gopāla IV. The three line inscription is beautifully engraved on the pedestal of this image. I have discussed the five published readings and tried to focus on the variant expressions which have changed the meaning of this inscriptive evidence. The marigala symbol which marks the beginning of the record is variantly read. *Om* (R. 1 & R. 3) is read as Siddhirastu (R. 2) and Siddham (R. 4 & R. 5). D.C.Sircar’s (R. 4 & R. 5) reads the last line as Māgha-dīna 15 i.e the auspicious day 15th of the month of māgha (December-January). Bhattacharjya, reads the date as 15th (25th) day of māgha. Three different reading is noted for the expression Sandhi-sa (R. 1, N.G. Majumdar), Sanibha saciva (R. 2, N. K. Bhattacharjya, ) and Santīha (R. 3 & R. 4, D.C.Sircar). If the reading of N.G.Majumdar as Sandhisa which stands for Sandhivigrahāṇācāvita i.e The ‘Minister of Peace and War’ is accepted, then it may be surmised that the donor Purushottamena was a ‘Minister of Peace and War’. Bhattacharjya reading of the term as sanibha (sachiva) means Sandhisachiva. Sircar’s reading of the term Santīha meaning ‘stands here’ or the holy Sadāśiva stands here is more convincing.

The votive inscription records the installation of a Saiva image by Purushottamena, the donor, in the auspicious day 15th of the month of māgha (Dec-Jan). The astronomical importance of this date is discussed in Chapter VI. On the basis of above discussion two points are evident; that the donor Purushottamena is a lay devotee of Śaivism and secondly the pious act of image installation by the donor under the hegemony of the Pāla ruler Gopāla (IV) points to the patronage of a Śaiva deity or Śaiva religion by a Buddhist king Gopāla (IV). Moreover the discovery of a Sadasiva image from Rajibpur (Bangadh) throws welcome light on the history of Śaivism in eastern India in the early medieval period. The popularity of Śaiva cult in the region is once again attested by the discovery of this image inscription.

108 The astronomical significance of the date will be discussed in Chapter VI of this work.
Sl. No.18 : Biharsharif Pārvatī Image Inscription of Madanapāla, dated regnal year 3.

Parvati, Biharsharif
Photo Courtesy: [JAS Bengal], vol. XIX

Identification: Parvati with Kārttikeya
Material: Black Stone, H: 58 cm.
Provenance: Bihar Hill, Patna District, Bihar.
Language: Incorrect Sanskrit
Script: North eastern script of c.12th century, A.D.111
Approximate date: Dated. The inscription on the pedestal is dated in the year 3 of the Pāla king Madanapāla, who is known to have ruled between c.1143-1175 A.D.112 The epigraphic record is dated to c. 1143 + 3 = c.1146 A. D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [JAS Bengal], vol. XIX pl.III

Reading 1: Cunningham, A. Archaeological Report, p.124.


Text:
L.1 - * * * Sri man Madana Pā( la ) Deva.
L.2. ----- (vi) jayaraje * * Sam3, Vaisākha dine 24.

Translation:
"In the year 3, the 24\textsuperscript{th} day of Vaisākh, of the victorious reign of the fortunate Madana Pāla Deva".

Reading 2: Broadley, A. M. The Buddhistic Remains of Bihar, p.79.

Text:\textsuperscript{113}
1\textsuperscript{st} line. Maharāja * * bhaṭṭāraka srīman Madan ** Deva pravardhamāna
2\textsuperscript{nd} line. Jainarāja - samva * vaisākhadine 24.
3\textsuperscript{rd} line. * * * * dharmēyā daṁna pavacike (yati )
4\textsuperscript{th} line. marapa khika sāmayikasyah

Translation:
"On the 24\textsuperscript{th} of Vaiśakha in the samvat --- (?) of the Jaina king, the great king, the worshipful Śrī Madana ( Pāla ) Deva reigning. This deed of religious gift of - Sāmayika".

Reading 3: Banerjee, Priyatosh, “Two Medieval Inscriptions”, vol. XIX, No.1, pp.105-7, pl.II & pl III.

Text:
L.1 . . . kṣā-dī- rāja- mati (ity = īdī - rāj- īvalī ) pūrvavat srīmanto (n) - Madanapā[la- deva - pravardhamāna-]
L.2 . . . [vi] jaya- rāj [y]e sam ( in ) [va] t 3 Vais ( ś ) Śrīka-dine 24
L.3 . . . datri (ttā ?) // Deva (ya) - dharmayātī dīnapati - ga (na) u-
L.4. . . . sama-ratha - sa ( śa ) kī-Māmayikasyаḥ

Translation:
The rājāvali is as before. On the 24\textsuperscript{th} day of the month of Vaiśakha in the year 3 of the prosperous and victorious reign of Madanapāla this pious gift was made by Māmayika whose power lay in having possessed naval boats and chariots in equal number.

\textsuperscript{113}The transliteration is given by me on the basis of Devanāgarī script given by Broadley.
Reading 4: Choudhary, R. K. *op.cit*, p.63.

Text:
L.1 ..................ktēdirījamati pūrvavat śrīmato Madana Pāla-(deva) - pravardhamīna
L.2 ..................vijaya- rājye samīvat 3 Vaiśākha dine 24
L.3 ..................datrīti devadharmayati dānapati - nānau-
L.4 ..................samaratha śakti - Māmayikasyaḥ ||

Translation:
Not given

Reading 5: Bhandarkar, D. R. *op.cit*, Inscription No.1638.

Text:
L.2 Sam 3 Vaiśākha-dine 24.

Translation:
Not given


Text:
L.1 ... Madanapāladeva - pravardhamīna -
L.2 ... vijaya- rājye samīvat 3 ...
L.3 ... devadharmo =yati dānapati- ...
L.4 ... Māmayikasya

Translation:
"... in the year 3 of the prosperous and victorious reign of Madanapāla this pious gift was made by Māmayika ..."

Additional References:
Patil, D. R. *op.cit.* p. 54.
Huntington, S. L. *op.cit.*, p.70-71 Appendix No.53 fig.78.

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The transliteration is given by me on the basis of the Devanāgarī script given by R.K. Choudhary.
Iconographic Study:

The four-armed image of Pārvatī executed in stone is now preserved in the Patna Museum, Patna. The upper part of the image including the head and the upper left arm are broken and lost. The deity is shown seated in lalitāsana with a child in her left lap on a well expanded lotus. The deity is sparsely ornamented. The couchant lion supports the high pedestal. A small jar is shown just behind the lion, placed on the pedestal. It appears that a mātulūṣa or biḷāḷarā (damaged) is placed on the lower right hand and the trident in upper right hand. The presence of the attributes and the lion as vāhana of Pārvatī justify the identification of the female deity with Pārvatī.

Observations:

The Biharsharif Parvati image inscription of Madanapāla is dated in the 3rd regnal year corresponding to c.1146 / 1147 A. D. The four line epigraphic record is engraved in the middle ratha of the three or paṇcaratha pedestal. My analysis is based on six published readings discussed above. The transcription given by Cunningham and D. R. Bhandarkar (R.1 & R.5) is incomplete as they give the reading of first two lines which mentions the name and the regnal year of the ruling king and the astronomical data. Several variations are noted in the expression of the terms recorded. For instance, A.M.Broadley (R. 2) reads the donor’s name as Sāmayika. The transcription of P. Banerjee (R. 3 ) is not only complete but interesting. The use of two technical expressions devadhammoyam (deyadharma, refers to the object of donation) and dānapati (which refers to the donor of the object in question) by the scribe in context of the installation of the Brahmanical image is worth mentioning here. The donor in Banerjee’s reading is mentioned as Māmayika. The expression pau sama ratha sakti preceding the donor’s name in Banerjee’s reading is not recorded in other transcription.

Besides the variations noted, the inscription is significant from the historical, socio-economic and religious point of view. The Maner plate of 1124 A. D. and the Lar plate of 1146 A. D. points to the presence of Gahāḍavālas Govindachandra in the Patna-Monghyr region (South

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115 The detail of the pedestal is not clear from the available photograph.

116 According to G. Bhattacharya, op.cit. 2000, the two technical expressions are quite important with regard to the Buddhist object of donation and are conspicuous in Pāla dedicatory records, pp. 54-56.
Bihar). The discovery of the Parvati image inscription from this region alludes to the political success of Madanapāla against his adversary the Gāhādvālas Govindachandra in the early part of his reign. This votive inscription once again points to the patronization of a Brahmanical deity by a Buddhist king. The donor too was a believer in Brahmanical faith. What is significant in this record is the socio-economic status of the donor Māmāyika who enjoys the status of pañu sama ratha sakti, evidently a military functionary. The expression pañu sama ratha sakti denotes probably that the donor was one whose power lay in having possessed naval boats and chariots in good numbers. It should be noted in this connection that the Pālas had regular naval fleet for the purposes of conducting war. We may therefore assume that Māmāyika was perhaps an important personage in the king’s service holding command of the royal navy and chariots.

Another interesting observation is to be made in regard to A. M. Broadley’s iconographic description of the image. Broadley, describes the sculpture in great detail as a Buddha image surrounded by other smaller Buddhas, and not an image of Parvati. Apparently Broadley matched the wrong inscription with the wrong sculptural piece.

Sl. No. 19 : Dacca Caṇḍī Image Inscription of Laksmanasena, year 3

Caṇḍī, Rampal

Identification: Caṇḍī
Material: Black Stone
Provenance: Rampal, Dhaka District, Bangladesh.
Present Whereabouts: Private Collection in America.

118 A. M. Broadley, op.cit.1979, p.79.
Language: Incorrect Sanskrit
Script: Gaudīya characters, in Sanskrit prose.
Approximate date: Dated. Laksmanasena the son and successor of Vallalasena ruled between c.1178-1206¹¹⁹ and c.1179-1206 A.D¹²⁰. The Dhaka Caṇḍi image inscription is dated to year 3 of the ruling king. The record is dated to c.1178+3 = c.1181 A. D. / c.1179 + 3 = c.1182 A.D. tentatively.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription, Part -A
Photo Courtesy: [Majumdar, N. G. 1929]

Close up view of the inscription Part-B
Photo Courtesy: [Majumdar, N. G. 1929]

Close up view of the inscription Part-C
Photo Courtesy: [Majumdar, N. G. 1929]

¹¹⁹ See, the Sena chronology according to A.M.Chowdhury, *op.cit.* 1967 p.220.

Reading 1: Banerji, R. D. “Laksmana-sena” JPASB vol. IX, p. 290. The same transcription is published in Bengali.\(^{121}\)

Text:

A \{(1) Sri- mal = Lakṣṭhaṇa- \\
    (2) sena- devasya sāthi 3

B \{(1) Maladei suta adhikśta Damodre \\
    (2) -ṇa Śri- Cāṇḍidevi samāraṇdhi tabrādkāna

C \{(1) Śri- Nārāyaṇa-pa \\
    (2) Pratīṣṭhit = etiḥ

Translation:

“[In] the year 3 of [the reign of] the illustrious Laksmana- senadeva [ this image of ] the goddess Cāṇḍi was begun by the Judge Damodra (Damodara) ………………… [ and ] was dedicated by the illustrious Nārāyaṇa.”


Text:\(^{122}\)

L.1 Sri mallaksiṇa- mālade(da \) ṭasuta adhikśta śrīdāmodre -Śrī-nārāyaṇa-pa 
L.2 senadevasya sāthi 3-ṇa Śrīchāṇḍidevi samāraṇdhi tabrādkāna- pratīṣṭhīteti 4 //

Translation:

“The year 3 of the era of the illustrious Lakṣmana- senadeva. The (image of the) goddess Cāṇḍi was begun by the Superintendent (Adhikṛta) Dānādara, son of Mālādatta and was installed by his younger brother Nārāyaṇa (in the year) 4.”


Text:\(^{123}\)

L.1 Sri mallaksiṇa- 
    senadevasya sāthi 3 –
L.2. māladeba sūta adhikśta * śrīdāmodre

\(^{121}\) See R. D. Banerji. “Lakşmanasena” Pratibha, 1318 B.S. Bhadra, pp. 261-264 for the same reading.

\(^{122}\) Originally in Devanāgari script. The transliteration is given by me.

\(^{123}\) Originally in Bengali script. The transliteration is given by me.
Translation:
Translation not given

Reading 4: Majumdar, N. G. “Dacca Image Inscription of The Reign of Lakshmanasena”

Text:
A 1 śrīmallalakshmaṇa-
2 senadevasya satī 3
B 1 māla ( īla ? ) deisuteadhikṣitaśrīdōmodra-
2 ṭa ( Dāmodareṇa ) śrīchaṇḍidevi samārabdhā tadbrādakaṇṭā ( tad- bhrāṭīkena )
C 1 śrīnārāyaṇa
2. pratishṭhiteti || ( eti )

Translation:
A---- In the year 3 of the illustrious Lakṣmanasena.
B-C- (The image of) Chaṇḍidevi, begun by the officer Dāmodara, son of Maladevi ( Malladevi ),
is installed by his (younger) brother Narāyaṇa.

Reading 5: Bhandarkar, D. R. Inscription No.1689.

Text:
(L.1-2) Śrīnāl Lakṣmanasena devasya satī 3

Translation:
Not given.

Additional References:
Bhattasali, N. K. op.cit, pl. LXIX, pp. 202-203.
Sircar, D.C. op.cit, p.28.
Banerji, R. D. op.cit, 1933, p.121, pl.VI( d )
Huntington, S. L op.cit, p.77, Appendix No.70, Fig.82.
Haque, Enamul op.cit, pp.211-212.

Iconographic Study:

The beautiful image of Caṇḍī carved in black stone is labeled as Caṇḍīdevī in the pedestal inscription dated in year 3 of Lakṣmaṇa-deva, the Sena ruler. The image is now in a Private Collection of America. Gouriswar Bhattacharya have very recently discussed the iconographic problems related to this inscribed image. Before discussing the issues of iconographic identification of the sculptural specimen a proper iconographic study is a desideratum.

The goddess is four-armed; three eyed and stands in abhanga pose on a two-tiered navaratha pedestal. Of the four hands the lower left holds a flower basket, the upper left holds a nilotpala, the upper right is shown with anikaśa and the lower right disposes varada-mudrā. She is richly bejeweled and a long garland, like Viṣṇu’s vanamāla hangs up to the level of her knees. The Devī stands against an architectural construct supported by a trefoil arch at the top. She is attended on either side, by a female with a cāmara in her right hand and her left hand akimbo. An important feature of this composition is the presence of two elephants on lotuses appearing at the top, with their trunks wrapped around what appears to be water vessels. The iconographic depiction on the top section of the prabhāvali is unique in this type of Caṇḍī image.

It is well known to art historians that several sculptures of goddess Lakṣmī from Bengal bear this iconographic feature. These types of images of goddess Lakṣmī are wrongly identified by scholars as ‘Gaja Lakṣmī’.

The central projected recess of the pedestal depicts a lion in crouching posture with head upturned. The pedestal is occupied with seven devotees, four at the proper right and three at the proper left.

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125 Enamul Haque identifies the standing pose as tribhariṣa op.cit.1992, p.211. G. Bhattacharya suggest the pose to be abhaṭīga op.cit. 2007-08, fn.14.

126 See for a detail discussion, G. Bhattacharya, op.cit. p.90, fn.18.
There is a difference of opinion among scholars regarding the identification of the image of our discussion. N. K. Bhattasali’s description is based on Sanskrit text. Enamul Haque made some observations on the basis of the extant iconography of the image and its related epigraphic studies. Haque surmises that the presence of lion as a vāhana, the elephants with pitchers and the saumya character of the deity suggest her to be correctly labeled as Candadevi and belongs to the pantheon of a Vaiṣṇavites. Gouriswar Bhattacharya draws a conclusion by calling the goddess as Caṇḍī abhiseka mūrti as apparent from the iconographic description.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Caṇḍī from Rampal, Dhaka District, Bangladesh is dated in the third regnal year of the Sena king of Bengal, Lakṣmanaśena (c.1178-1206 A.D. / C.1179-1206 A.D.). Besides its unique iconographic features, the epigraphic record is important from historical and socio-religious point of view. My observations on this particular inscribed specimen is based on five published readings as discussed above. The translation and the meaning of this votive record remains the same, except for few variations of expressions noticed in the published transcriptions. The term which records the name of the mother of the donor is variantly found in the inscription as Maladei (R.1 & R.4), Māladatta (R.2), Māladeba (R.3). Similar variation is noticed in the name of the donor as Dāmodreṇa (R.1), Dāmodarena (R.3), and Dāmodraṇa (R.4). The next difficult expression is tad-bhrādakana meaning “by his younger brother”. Banerji, reads the word as tabrādakana (R.1), Bhattasali as tadbrādakana (R.2 & R.3) and Majumdar as tadbrādakana / tad-bhrātikena (R.4). G. Bhattacharyya considers the translation given by N.G. Majumdar as authentic.

The purport of this dedicatory inscription is to record the installation of a Caṇḍī image by two brothers named Damodara and Narayana, in the third regnal year of Lakṣmanaśena, the Sena King. On the basis of the translation as given by N.G. Majumdar it appears that Damodara was

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129 G. Bhattacharyya, *op.cit.*, 2007-08, p.89.
responsible for creating the image which was installed a year later by his younger brother Narayana. The installation of an image after a year of its creation is quite unusual.

The votive inscription is a pointer to the prevailing socio-religious condition during the days of Sena rule. The donor Damodara is known as an adhikrita (officer) in this epigraphic record. Thus the high social status assigned to the donor Damodara as an important administrative functionary is well documented in this record. However, the social status of the donor Narayana is not vivid from the inscriptive evidence. Secondly, the inscriptive evidence throws an important light on the social relationship of the family members. Interestingly enough, the mentioning of the name of a mother Maldei in this particular record suggests that motherhood has been used as criteria for kinship identification for the donor brothers.

Thirdly, the inscription also throws light on the prevailing religious condition in the 11th-12th Bengal. The names Damodara and Narayana are the names of god Viṣṇu. In this context both the names of god are used as personal names. Further N. K. Bhattasali writes that Māla of the expression Māladevī is an appellation of Viṣṇu. These names suggestively point to the religious leaning of the donor and their family members as follower of Vaiṣṇavism. It is evident from several records that Lakṣmaṇasaṇa, the ruling king was a devout Vaiṣṇava as in all his records Lakṣmaṇasaṇa assumes the title of Parama Viṣṇavā. The consecration of a Brāhmaṇical deity by a Vaiṣṇava family have further supported our understanding of the religious ethos of 11th-12th century Bengal and the religious leaning of the Sena king towards Vaiṣṇavism.

Sl. No. 20: Khojpur Durga Image Inscription of 147 of the Laksmanasena era

Identification: Durga
Material: Stone
Provenance: Khojpur, Darbhanga District, Bihar.
Present Whereabouts: Unknown
Language: Incorrect Sanskrit
Script: Gaudīya characters

130 N. K. Bhattasali is the only scholar who reads the year 4 as given in reading 2 & 3.
**Approximate date:** Dated. The epigraphic record is dated to 147 of the Lakṣmansena era. According to D.C. Sircar, this era commenced in c.1108 A.D. and not in c.1106 A.D. or c.1119 A.D. as suggested by scholars. If c.1108 A.D. is to be taken as the date of the Laksmananasena era, then the Khojpur image inscription may be tentatively dated to $147 + 1108 = c.1255-56$ A.D.

**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings:**

![Close up view of the inscribed portion of the image](Photo Courtesy: Sircar, D.C. JBRS, pl.III]

**Reading 1:** Sircar, D. C. "Some Inscriptions From Bihar" *JBRS* Vol. XXXVII, pl.III, No.5, p.11.

**Text:**

*La- saṭh 147 Āśāḍha- sudi 12 Śukre.*

**Translation:**

“The image in question was then installed on Friday, the twelfth of the bright fortnight of the month of Āśāḍha in the year 147 of the Lakṣmanasena Sārivat.”

**Reading 2:** Sircar, D. C. *Some Epigraphical Records of the Medieval Period from Eastern India*, pp.42-43.

**Text:**

Left half:

1. [Symbol] *Rakaperi-grāmo Mārgavika-śrī-Bhonesvaraḥ*

2. *La- saṭh 147 Āśāḍha- sudi 12 Śukre.*

Right half:

1. ... *racala (?) śrī- Madana - sū-

2. *muna śrī-Sūryakareṇa pratimā ghaṭanā ||*

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Translation:
There is a name of a village. The image in question was then installed on Friday, the twelfth of the bright fortnight of the month of Ashāḍha in the year 147 of the Lakṣmanasena Saṁvat by Sūryakara, the son of Madana.

Additional References:
Choudhary, R. K. *op. cit.*, p.125.
Sahai, B. *op. cit.*, pp.142-143. No.167.
Huntington, S. L *op. cit.* p.79, No.75.

Iconographic Study:
I have not seen any published photograph of the image. It is therefore not possible to discuss the iconographic details of the inscribed specimen.

Observations:
The Khojpur Durga image inscription from Darbhanga District (Northern Bihar) is dated to 147 of the Lakṣmanasena era. The inscription was edited by D. C. Sircar and I have based my observation on Sircar’s published transcription. The epigraphic record is of considerable interest as the date given, is in La-Saṁ or the Lakṣmanasena Saṁvat prevalent in Mithila (North Bihar). It is one of the earliest recorded dates of the Lakṣmanasena era.

The dedicatory inscription records the consecration of an image of Durga by Sūryakara, the son of Madana. They were local donors and an inhabitant of the village named Rakaperi? Nothing is known about the social and economic status of the donor and his father. The donation of a Brahmanical goddess reveal the personal religious confession of the donor as a believer of Brahmanical faith. The religious leaning of the donor can be juxtaposed with the individual religious leaning of the king Lakṣmanasena who happens to be a follower of Vaiṣṇavism. The importance of the astronomical data recorded in this epigraphic record will find its place in the Chapter VI of this dissertation.
Section I(b):

Brāhmaṇical Undated Images
Sl. No. 1: Deulbādi Sarvāṇi Image Inscription of Mahādevī Prabhāvatī, Queen of Deva-Khadga

Sarvāṇi, Deulbadi

Identification: Sarvāṇi
Material: Metal.
Provenance: Deulbadi, Comilla District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Unknown
Language: Sanskrit (Pāñinian)
Script: Eastern variety of the Gupta script
Approximate date: Undated. Late 7th or early 8th century A.D.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription

Photo Courtesy: [EI, vol. XVII, pl. No.4]


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135 This photograph is taken from The Huntington Archive, The Ohio State University, www.osu.edu.
137 Ibid.
Text: 138
1. [Siddhirastu] svasti Khadgodyamo nama nrpadhirajastatsumrasldhbhuvi jätakhadgah [*] 
tadatmajo dānapa
2. tih pratapo Śrīdevakhadgō vijitārikhadgah [[*] rājñastasya mahādevi mahiśī Śrī prabhāvatī [ 
[*] sa ( sa) rvāṇiprātimāṇī
3. bhaktyā hemaliptāmakārayat | **

Translation:
May success attends! May welfare accrue! There was an overlord of Kings, Khadgodyama by 
name. His son (became known) on earth (as) Jata-Khadga. His powerful and benevolent son 
Dēva-Khadga was (like) a sword, a conqueror of all foes. Prabhāvatī, the queen-consort of this 
king, out of reverence for Sarvvāṇi covered her image with gold.

[Reading 2]: Sengupta, Gautam. “Art of South-Eastern Bengal: An Overview” JAIH,Vol. XIX, 
p.123.

Text:
1. Siddhi Svasti Khadgodyamo nama nrpadhirajastat- sunu asid bhui jatakhadgah/tadamajo 
danapa
2. tih pratapo Sri Devakhadgo vijitari khadgah Rajnastasya Mahadevi mahisi Sri Prabhavati Sa \\ \sāi rvāṇi prātimam
3. bhaktya hemaliptam karayat .

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Bhattashali, N. K. op.cit,1972, pp. 203-205, pl. LXX.
Huntington, S. L. . op.cit, 1984 , pp. 28-29, Appendix No.4, Fig.26.
Haque, Enamul, op.cit, 1992, pp. 213-214, L.No.1108

Iconographic Study:
The image described as Sarvvāṇi (a form of Durgā), is carved in Octo-alloy. A portion of the rim 
of the top towards the proper left is broken away and lost. The image is cast in low relief. The 
goddess has eight arms, holding on the proper left, from the bottom upwards, the thunderbolt, the 
bell, the bow and the shield; and on the proper right, from the bottom upwards, the conch-shell,

138The transliteration is given by me on the basis of Devanāgarī script given by N. K. Bhattasali, op.cit. p. 359.
the goad, the sword and the wheel. The disposition of *ayudhas* in the hands of the goddess bear a striking resemblance to the Mahishamarddini group of images, the only difference being that Mahishamarddini images holds *tarjani-mudrā* in one of the left hands, while this goddess has a bell instead.\(^{139}\) Devi stands in a rigid *samapadasthanaka* stance on a small lotus seat placed on a two-tiered *triratha* pedestal on the back of a couchant lion, with a chowrie bearing female attendant on either side. The image of the goddess is a prototype for the earliest Pāla period metal sculptures as revealed from the style and technique.

**Observations:**

The undated inscribed image of the Brahmanical goddess Sarvvasī was installed during the reigning period of the Khaḍgas who ruled over the Samatata region (present day Bangladesh formed the trans-Meghna territories of the Comilla-Noakhali plain) in the late 7th century or early 8th century A.D. The record begins by referring to Khaḍgodyama, an overlord of Kings, his son Jāta-Khaḍga and the latter’s son Devakhaḍga. This record gives the genealogy of the Khaḍga dynasty, thus confirming to the only other evidence available from the Ashrafpur plates of Devakhaḍga. The find spot of this image and the identification of the administrative centre, which was called Karmānta, as the modern village of Badkamta, suggests that Devakhaḍga ruled over the Comilla area and at least the southern part of the Dacca district.\(^{140}\) The votive inscription records the consecration of a Brahmanical goddess Sarvvasī. It further alludes to a specific event, a religious act of some significance? Prabhavati, the queen-consort of the king Devakhaḍga out of reverence coated (arranged for the coating of) the Sarvvasī image with gold leaf. Decidedly the operative part in the record is *hemaliptāmakārayat*. G. Sengupta suggest that probably Sarvvasī enjoyed a special position in the local traditions. The Queen’s gift might be a demonstration of faith to an already existing powerful local goddess.\(^{141}\) This particular image gilt in gold is the earliest historic instance of gilding.

The Khaḍgas were Buddhist by faith. The consecration of a Brahmanical deity by Devakhaḍga or his queen consort once again is an indication of the ambivalent relationship between the

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\(^{139}\) See Bhattachari, N. K. *op.cit.* 1972, for the *Dhyāna* as given in Ch. XI of *Śrāvāṇa-tilakā-tantra*, pp. 204-205.

\(^{140}\) B. C. Sen, *op.cit.*, p. 278.

personal beliefs of the King and his donative practices. We may assume that Devakhadga who is a dānapati patronized the religious activity of his queen. The inscription also highlights on the prosperous economic condition of the Khadga rulers. The use of sufficient quantity of gold to cover the image of the deity is a convincing proof. The epigraphic, numismatic evidence and the available archaeological remains from the Samatāta region give a picture of a flourishing economy in the early medieval period.\textsuperscript{142}

Sl. No. 2: The undated image of Balarama from Nalanda of Devapāladeva

![Balarama, Nalanda](image)

\textbf{Balarama, Nalanda}

\textbf{Photo Courtesy:} [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar, \textit{EIB}, fig. 92]

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Identification:} Balarama
  \item \textbf{Material:} Bronze, 33.5 cm.
  \item \textbf{Provenance:} Monastery site No.1 at Nalanda, Patna district, Bihar.
  \item \textbf{Present Whereabouts:} Archaeological Museum, Nalanda S.1.442
  \item \textbf{Language:} Sanskrit (Pāñjīnian)
  \item \textbf{Script:} Eastern variety, 9\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.\textsuperscript{143}
  \item \textbf{Approximate date:} Undated. We may tentatively assign this particular piece of art and its epigraphic record in the second quarter of the 9\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. during the period of Devapāladeva (c.810 - 847 A.D.)
\end{itemize}


\textsuperscript{143} A. Ghosh. “A Bronze Image Inscription from Nalanda” \textit{EI}, Vol.XXXV, 1940 p.334.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal (back)
Photo courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkhar EIB, fig. 315]


**Text:**
1. Siddham [symbol] śrī-Nālandāya-śrī-Devapāladeva-hatte
2. Malaporasya Śoujjeṣasya vadū (dhū?)-Nisīṅgha (?)-
3. Kāya deva-dharmmaya pratīpiṇītaḥ ||

**Corrected text:**
A. Ghosh suggest the reading of the last line of this record as

*Nisīṅgha (?)-Kāya deya-dharmm = yati pratīpiṇītaḥ ||

**Translation:**
Not given


**Text:**
L. 1 [Om] śrī-Nālandāya (ārī) śrī-Devapāladeva- bha [āre]
L. 2 ma [ha]- therasya śrī- Da (or U) jijakasya Padu (d) madānasirīha-
L. 3 kāya devadhamma (o) = ya (yāti) pratīti pādi (i) t (t) aḥ

**Translation:**
‘In Nālandā when the blessed and illustrious Devapāladeva (was ruling). Of the great Sthavira Da (or U) Ājaka. For Padmadanasirīha this pious gift has been made’.

**Corrected text:**
H. P. Sastri gives this reading in the fn. 1, p. 89.
Devapaladeva-hatte [ma]latherasya śe Ujjakasya padū [ni]-Stukṣya deya-dharmmo yath pratyapādehāṁ ||

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Sahai, B. op.cit. p.72 No.79.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit, pp.41-42, Appendix, No.9, Fig.30.

Iconographic Study:

The Brahmanical deity Balarama, is one of the incarnatory manifestations in human form of the Vibhavas (Avatāras) aspect of Viṣṇu. The Balarama image from Nalanda is the second sculptural representation of the deity ascribed to the Pāla ruler Devapāla and shares the same iconographical peculiarity to its Kurkihar prototype. It is carved in bronze. The central deity stands on a single lotus petal which is almost heart-shaped placed on a triratha pedestal. The stance of Balarama is not exactly samapāda but is posed as if the weight of his body is evenly distributed between his two legs. The seven-hooded snake canopy over his head represents the deity as an incarnation of the mythical serpent, Ananta-nāga. He is ornamented with a beaded upāvīta, vanamāla, armlets, bracelets, necklaces and anklets. His four hands are intact. The lower left holds a miniature padmā? The upper left holds a ploughshare (kīlā / lāṅgalal) and the corresponding right a pestle (musala) identifying the deity as a bucolic god. The lower right hand holds an elongated object, most probably some sweetmeat offered by the female attendant to his left. The female attendant to the right may hold a wine flask and a cup in her hands (?). Both the attendants are shown standing with a slight flexion and provided with a separate ovoid aureole. The female devotee, the donor is shown seated on the right corner of the pedestal.

Observations:

The undated inscribed image of Balarāma was discovered from Monastery site No.1 at Nālandā, Patna district, Bihar. The three line inscription is incised at the back of the pedestal of the image concerned. Two published literature of this epigraphic record have come to my notice. The translation in H.P.Sastri’s reading is full of ambiguity. H.P.Sastri’s (R.2) differs considerably
from that of A.Ghosh (R.1) and several variations in expressions are noticed. Huntington writes that the word hatte in (R.1 L.1) as given by A.Ghosh is not read by Sastri. The word hatte in (R.2, L.1) as given in the corrected text (Footnote 1, p.89) of Sastri have somehow escaped Huntington’s notice. A.Ghosh reading (R.1,L.2) begins with the expression malaporasya whereas in Sastri (R.2, L.2) the word is read as malatherasya. In the same line the name of the donor and her husband is variantly read. A.Ghosh (R.1, L.2) reads the donor’s name as Nisingha, wife of Šoujjeka. Sastri’s transcription and translation is confusing on the whole.

Taking note of the ambiguity in the published literature an attempt is made to draw an analysis on the basis of Reading 1. The purport of this dedicatory inscription is to record the installation of a Balarāma image by a lady named Nisingha, wife of Šoujjeka. The record do not give any information on the socio-economic position of the donor. They were perhaps local patrons hailing from the environ of Nalanda. But the significant word hatte as recorded in this inscription throws light on the prevailing urban economy of the region. The hatta (hatte) may usually denote a small rural trade centre. Our record bearing the expression Devapāladeva-hatte at Nalanda, undoubtedly named after the Pāla king Devapāladeva was probably larger than a ordinary rural level market centre. Secondly, if the word malaporasya as mentioned in (R.1,L.2) refers to the Buddhist religious institution, Mallapore, located at Kurkihar, then we can surmise that the gift of the Brahmanical god was made at this Buddhist establishment. It is likely that the donor who was a local patron from Nalanda may have travelled to the adjacent district (Kurkihar, Gaya District), to perform her meritorious religious duty.

144 The reading and translation of the inscription appears quite confusing to me and I have based my observations on the reading given by A.Ghosh.

145 Huntington, op.cit.1984, see remarks p.208.

146 The meaning of malatherasya is not clear in this record.


148 The reference to the monastic establishment Mallapore (Kurkihar) have been mentioned earlier in connection to the dated Balarāma image inscription of the time of Devapāladeva.

149 This opinion is solely mine. However several image inscriptions refer to monks and devotees travelling from Kañci and other parts of South India to the monastic site of Ancient Bihar for performing their religious duty and to acquire punya. See, P. Pal, op.cit.,1988, pp.83- 88 and Gouriswar Bhattacharya, “Kañci Monks at KukutapādaGiri-Vihāra”, 2000, pp. 91-95 for such references.
Sl. No. 3: Inscribed Viṣṇu from Bengal of the time of Devapāladeva

Viṣṇu, Bengal

Photo Courtesy: [ Huntington, S. L. PSSS, fig. 32]

Identification: Viṣṇu.

Material: Metal

Provenance: Bengal


Language: Sanskrit

Script: 

Approximate date: Undated. Scholars on the basis of style and iconography of the image have ascribed the image to the ruling period of Devapāladeva. (c.810-847 A.D.).

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Text:

Not published

Translation:

Not given

Additional References:

Huntington, S. L. op. cit, p.43, Appendix, No.11, Fig.32.
Haque, Enamul. op. cit, p. 58, pl.5.

Iconographic Study:

This is a small metal image of Viṣṇu from Bengal presently housed in the Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka. The four-armed deity is shown standing in sama-bhātāga posture on a two-tiered pedestal. Of the four hands, the main pair of hands hold śatikha in the left and bijapūraka (lotus
bud in the corresponding right. The back left hand holds the rim of the cakra which is placed on the raised platform. The back right hand holds the knob of the gadā the other end of which touches the pedestal. The deity is adorned, the upavita and vanamālā are conspicuous. A circular halo shown with flame motif encircles the head. The lower right portion of the pedestal is occupied by a devotee shown in aṇjali-mudrā. This piece belonging to the reign of Devapāla is the only example from Bengal.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Bengal is an undated specimen of art assigned to the reign of Devapāladeva. An epigraphic record is engraved on the middle portion of the pedestal as noticed in the available photograph. Unfortunately, I have not noticed any published literature on the transcription and translation of this inscriptional evidence. S. L. Huntington and Enamul Haque have given a meagre information on the style and iconographic composition of the image.

Sl. No. 4: An undated Mother and child image of Vigrahapāla II

Mother and Child image, Kosham Shahar
Photo Courtesy: Haque, E. The Art Heritage of Bangladesh. pl.111

Identification: Gauri with Sadyojāta Śiva.
Material: Stone
Provenance: Kosham Shahar, Khetlal (Bogra Dt), North Bangladesh.
Present Whereabouts: Mahasthan Museum, Bangladesh. Haque List No. 1523
Language: Sanskrit verse
Script: Gaudīya script according to Bhattacharya
Approximate date: Undated. This undated inscribed image is assigned to the reign of Vigrahapāla II (c.984-989 A.D.? ) the son and successor of Gopāla III (11 or 17 years).

Epigraphic Study: Variant Readings

Close up view of the inscribed lower edge of the sculpture

**Reading 1**: Bhattacharjee, Swapan Bikash. “Gaurisila Image of Mahasthangarh Museum” (Unpublished article).

**Text:**

L.1. *Jatārtha Rājyapālasya Rājyapālasya Bhū BhūjāhŚrīman Vāpila Nanditi Śānvi Bigrahikohbhavat Tasya Śrī Līla Nandīsti simūhanritabagasata*

L.2. ...*Cātuh sametitasayōotpattī Muddrādhiṁśārīna Śrī Subhangalā Dattasyakaya- tasyasatāh pituḥshcha irapā sutā Mātuh swa mānusyāḥ patī*

L.3. ... ... ... *Ardhya Bigrahapālasya Taya GAURISILA MAYI charurthang “Ka ... ... ... ... pratishṭita”*

**Translation:**

“Śrīman Bāpīla Nandi was treated as the right hand of the monarch, who was the chief of the real chiefs and was inheriting this goddess. His son Śrī Līla Nandi was serving as the chief of Royal seal who was renowned for his truthfulness. With the help of Śrī Subhangalā Datta he installed the goddess GAURISILA for the merit of himself, his wife, mother, father, son and for the people in the 4th regnal year of Śrī Bigrahapāla Deva”.


**Text:**

L.1 *sīdham yathārtha-rājyapālasya rājyapālasya bhūbhujāḥ | śrīmān vāpila (Vāpila) nand = iti sāndhivigrāhiko = bhavat (1) tasya śrī - līla- nand = iti sūmuḥ sūmātavāg = abhūt*

L.2 *cātuḥsam = eti tasya = āsīt = patī vudrādhiṁśārīṇāḥ (2) śrī - subhārīgala - datta syā kāyasthasya sataḥ pituḥ api cāyā sutā mātuh sumānusyāḥ patī-

L.3 *vṛata (3) rājye vigrāplaśa tayā gauri śilāmayi | caturthyāṁ kṣīrakpakṣasya jyeṣṭha - māe pratiṣṭhitā (4) floral design.*

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152 The text and translation of the inscription as read by Swapan Bikash Bhattacharjee is quoted from the end note 45. See G.Bhattacharya, *op.cit.* 2000, p.289.
Translation:
Let there be success! Śrīmān Vāyila Nandin was the Minister for war and peace of king Rājyaapāla, who was appropriately the ruler of a kingdom. He (i.e. Vāyila Nandin) had a son, sweet talking, called Śrī Līlā Nandin, who was the treasurer (of the ruling king) (and) his wife was (called) Catuḥsamā. The devoted wife was the daughter of the honest father, Śrī Subhaṅgala Datta, a Kāyastha (by caste) and her mother was Sumānuṣi. During the ruling period of (the king) Vigraha-pāla, in the fourth tithi of the dark half (of the month of Jyaṣṭha) the (image) of Gaurī, made of stone, was installed by her.

Additional References:
Huntington, S. L. *op. cit.* p.55 Appendix No. 28.

Iconographic Study:
The beautiful specimen of Mother and Child image is presently housed in the Mahasthan Museum. The sculpture carved in stone, is in a good state of preservation. The sculpture depicts a young bejeweled lady lying down on a bed-stead, her head to the right. Unfortunately her face is damaged. She puts her head on the left hand perhaps gazing at the wonderful child and holds an *utpala* in the right. A female attendant shampoos her left foot while two other attend upon. The child lies close to her, its head put on a cushion. On top Śiva-linga, Gaṇeṣa and Kārttikeya are shown from left to right. What is quite interesting in this image is the illustration of a pair of divine hands holding a pot at the right on top. Below on the pedestal, underneath the bedstead there are several offerings such as sweets, heap of rice, incense-burner, and conch etc, but a pair of wooden sandals is missing here. Two seated human figures are shown at the extreme left, one in side view and the other frontal. The corpulent figure in frontal view may be the husband and the other figure with folded hands his wife, in this case the donor of the image in question. Significantly the sculpture according to G. Bhattacharya\(^\text{123}\) bears an iconographic representation of the donor Catuḥsamā and her husband.

Observations:
The inscribed image of ‘Mother and Child’ from Kosham Shahar, Bogra District, North Bangladesh is an undated art specimen. It bears a three line epigraphic record on the lower edge. The Mother and child image in question is ascribed to the reign of Vigraha-pāladeva II (c.984-

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989 A. D.) and is the only image inscription of the ruling king. Two published literature with transcript and translation has been discussed by me. Gouriswar Bhattacharya (R. 2) is more acceptable and convincing. It is to be mentioned here that Bhattacharya reading differs considerably from S. Bhattacharjee’s reading (R. 1). Variant reading in words is noticed which inevitably changes the meaning of the record. Bhattacharya’s reading begins with the marigala symbol which is absent in S. Bhattacharjee’s transcription. Words like yath-ārtha and śāndhivigrāhiko in Line 1, sumānusyaḥ in Line 2 and rājye and caturthyāṁ in Line 3 noticed in Gouriswar Bhattacharya’s reading is different from S. Bhattacharjee’s transcription.

Bhattacharjee reads Jatārtha and Sānvi Bigrahiko in Line 1, swamānusyāḥ in Line 2, Ardhyā and charurthang in Line 3. The inscription records the auspicious titiḥ and month for image consecration as caturthyāṁ kṣṇapakṣasya jyeṣṭha-māse pratiṣṭhitā as read by G. Bhattacharya. S. Bhattacharjee on the other hand establishes that the epigraphic record is dated in the 4th regnal year of Vigrahapala II without referring to the auspicious titiḥ and month.

The epigraphic document is votive in nature recording the installation of the ‘Mother and Child’ image by a lady donor named Catuḥsama. The inscription records the name of the donor’s husband, Śrī Līla Nandīn who is a treasurer, her father-in-law Śrīmān Vāyila Nandīn is a Minister for War and Peace of King Rājyapāla. Both the members referred to enjoyed the post as higher administrative functionaries. It appears that both the father and son, Vāyila Nandīn and Līla Nandīn together served three Pāla rulers, viz; Rajyapāla, Gopāla II and Vigrahapāla II. The inscription further alludes that the donor Catuḥsama, daughter of Śrī Subhaṅgala Datta and Sumānusī was a devoted wife and a pious Hindu woman. Interestingly enough, the inscription refers to the caste of the donor’s parent. The reference to Kāyastha as a social groups is a pointer to the existence of elite Kāyastha class who seek avenues to high social status. The distinguished social status of the donor indirectly reveals her sound economic status. The record is also significant as it reveals the identity of the sculpture iconographically portrayed as ‘Gauri’ and not “Gaurisila” suggested by Swapan Bikash Bhattacharjee.

This is the only undated image inscription which records the auspicious titiḥ and month for image consecration. Its importance from the astronomical point of view will be discussed in the Chapter VI.
Sl. No. 5: An inscription on a unique Snake-Goddess of the reign of Mahipāla I

Snake Goddess, Rajshahi
Photo Courtesy: [Bhattacharya, G. EBHJIE, pl. 22.3]

Identification: Snake-Goddess
Material: Metal, 32.5 cm.
Provenance: Rajshahi District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Linden Museum, Stuttgart Inv. - Nr. SA 38226 L
Language: Sanskrit (Incorrect)
Script: Gāudiya script. 154
Approximate date: Undated. G.Bhattacharya dates the image in the early 11th century and ascribe this inscribed art specimen to the reign of Mahipāladeva I 155 (c.989-1037 A.D.).

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the broad rim of the prabhāmapāla.
Photo Courtesy: [Bhattacharya, G. EBHJIE, pl. 22.6]

154 G. Bhattacharya, op.cit, p. 256.
155 Ibid. p.256, fn.44.

Text:
L.1. siddham (symbol) śrīman - mahipāladeva rāja cha [tgra [ma] Svamgāī bhaṭṭarākī ḷ ||
L.2 mahata [syā]
Correct reading:156
siddham (symbol) śrīman-mahipāla deva rājye cha [tgra [ma] Svamgāī bhaṭṭarīkā ||
L.2 mahata [syā]
Translation:
Not given

Additional References:

Bhattashali, N. K. op.cit , pp. 212 - 227.


Iconographic Study:

The two-armed snake-goddess sits very gracefully on a visva- padma in lalitasana i.e. her bent left leg rests on the lotus, while the right leg hangs down. The right foot is placed on a small elephant. This is the most unique iconographical feature of this image. The goddess holds in her right hand a stalk perhaps of a plant, which has been broken away, and holds a child with her left hand. This is the snake child with a snake-hood above its head. The child is adorned with jewellery and upavlīta. The goddess is also adorned with various pieces of jewellery and ornamented upavlīta. Her facial expression is quite striking with large round eyes and fangs in the mouth which betray the unfriendly aspect of the mother. A nine-hooded snake-canopy is

156 G. Bhattacharya do not give a separate reading of the corrected text. The correct text is given by me following the end notes as stated by G. Bhattacharya.
provided behind her head. Nine-hooded snake-canopy is quite rare for the image of a snake-goddess.\textsuperscript{157}

The goddess is attended upon by two nāgīs, female snakes, holding some objects. The nāgī to the right holds most probably a fly-wisk (cāmara) and a mirror (darpana). They wear a bejeweled upavīta and each stand on a lotus. Above the nāgīs two seated figures are illustrated, at the proper right the four-armed Ganeśa sitting on the rat (mūṣka) and at the proper left the wind-god Vāyu on an antelope (mīga). The wind-god holds with his two hands a piece of cloth above the head indicating the movement of wind. The arcaded back-plate has been treated as prabhāmaṇḍala with design of flames. A one-line inscription is engraved on the prabhāmaṇḍala. The rod like object on top perhaps held an umbrella which is missing now. The lotus on which the goddess sits is placed on a tri-ratha pedestal supported by four legs.

The image under discussion bears two unique iconographical peculiarities. The nine-hooded canopy over the head is a rare representation. The number denotes her importance as an authoritative person, an individual goddess. Secondly, the snake-goddess with an elephant as her mount has been rightly called nāgendra-viśhini devi as pointed by art-historians.\textsuperscript{158}

\textbf{Observations:}

The undated inscribed image of the snake-Goddess from Rajshahi District, Bangladesh is unique from the epigraphic and iconographic point of view. Gouriswar Bhattacharya have edited the inscription and brought forth the uniqueness of its iconographic features. The purport of this votive inscription is to record the installation of a snake goddess called Svāṃgāri bhāttārikā by a donor named Mahata. It also refers to the name of the illustrious sovereign as Mahipāla during whose reign this religious act was performed. The king mentioned as Mahipāla was Mahipāla I whose paramountancy in Bengal and Bihar is evident in the early part of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century. The appellation Svāṃgāri bhāttārikā a local vernacular name has been used as a nomenclature for the snake-goddess is corroborated by the literary text Pratiṣṭhīlakṣaṇārthasamuccaya of Vairocana,

\textsuperscript{157} See G. Bhattacharya, \textit{op.cit.} 2000, p.253 for the iconographic description.

\textsuperscript{158} Both Bhattashali and Bhattacharya shares the same opinion. See, N. K. Bhattasali, \textit{op.cit.} 1972 and G.Bhattacharya, \textit{op.cit.} 2000.
a Śaiva compilation to be dated c.11th-12th century.\textsuperscript{139} The reference to the name \textit{chatragrama}, may be taken as a connotation of Chatingram (Bogra District, Bangladesh) the place where the Brahmanical deity was installed. Nothing is known about the socio-economic status of the donor. His religious affiliation is revealed by the nature of consecration made by him. From the epigraphic record it is learnt that the snake-goddess was locally called \textit{svamgāī bhattārikā} and was the object of worship by the local inhabitants of the region concerned.

Sl. No. 6: An undated inscription on a Manasā image of Nayapāla from Mandalgram

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.3\textwidth]{image}
\end{center}

\textbf{Manasā, Mandalgram.}

\textbf{Identification:} Manasā  
\textbf{Material:} Black basaltic rock  
\textbf{Provenance:} Mandalgram, District Burdwan, West Bengal  
\textbf{Present Whereabouts:} The image is enshrined in the flat-roofed temple of the village.  
\textbf{Language:} Sanskrit  
\textbf{Script:} Proto-Bengali characters\textsuperscript{160}  
\textbf{Approximate date:} Undated. Nayapāla ruled between c.A.D.1037-1052\textsuperscript{161} i.e for a period of 15 years.

\textsuperscript{139} A text called \textit{Pratiṣṭhālaksānasārasamuccaya} of Vairocana mentions the Snake-goddess as Svāṅgādevī and gives the \textit{dhyana} in its support. See, Prithvi Kumar Agrawala, \textit{op.cit}, pp.91-95.


\textsuperscript{161} The discovery of copperplate inscriptions have brought about a change in Pāla chronology and genealogy as noted earlier. The tentative reigning period of Nayapāla’s reign is based on my observations after the reconsideration of Pāla genealogy and chronology.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:


Text:

(a) left konikapaga : x x x x (peeled off?)
(b) left anurāhāpaga : [ vera orī - so ? ]
(c) rāhāpaga : x x [ II ] Śrī[ Śrī ] – [ Nā ] Na yapāladeva- va (vi) [iayama*] x x
(d) right anurāhāpaga : Sekapani ?
(e) right konikapaga : Māgadhak- kavdā (bdā) ka [ sya* ? ]

Translation:
Not given

According to the author, “the icon was donated during the illustrious Nayapāladeva. Probably the name of the donor is Māgadhakkabdāka and that of the goddess is Sekāpani”.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

This is the iconic representation of the folk-goddess Manasā presently enshrined in a modern flat-roofed temple at Mandalgram, district Burdwan. The image is still worshipped by the locale of Mandalgram as evident from the use of vermilion noticeable from the available photograph. Since the photograph available to me lacks the detailing, it is difficult to discuss its iconographic features. However an attempt is made to outline few iconographical peculiarities. The folk goddess with seven hoods is shown seated in lalitāsana, on a double petalled lotus placed on a pañcaratha pedestal. She is very likely two-armed. The left hand supports a hooded snake and the right hand holds an indistinct object. She is profusely ornamented. Interestingly the snake-
goddess appears to be pot-bellied, an unknown feature not usually noticed in Manasā images. On the right of the goddess is represented Rṣi Jaratkāru, her consort with a beard, emaciated body, is shown seated in yogapattisana. To her left is Āstikamuni, the savior of snakes in mahāralilīśana, with a single snake-hood at his back. Both the attendant figures are shown seated on lotus scrolls or lotus which emerges from the base of the viśvapadma. The pointed stele and the backslab comprises several iconographic components. However, the usual places of vidyadharas is taken by the flying therianthropomorphic nāgas one at each top corner carrying garland or flowers.

The rāharpaga of the pañcaratha pedestal is occupied by a globe like ghaṭa with snakes coming out of the pot. The left amṛṭharpaga is occupied by the figure of a devotee in aṅgalihaṭa. The right amṛṭharpaga is possibly occupied by other human figure holding a garland (?). Two naivedyas are depicted in the two koṭikapagas.

Observations:
The undated inscribed image of the folk-goddess Manasā from Mandalgram is assigned to the reigning period of Nayapaladeva (c.1037-1052 A. D.), the son and successor of Mahipāla I. A single reading of this inscription is noticed by me, and I have based my analysis on this published literary source. The discovery of the image inscription which records the name of the ruling king Nayapaladeva from central West Bengal is an important geo-historical document.

The votive inscription records the installation of a Manasā image during the illustrious reign of Nayapaladeva. The expression Śekāpaṇī in this epigraphic record is the nomenclature for the snake-goddess. We do not know if this non-sanskritic appellation for naming the snake-goddess is corroborated by any literary sources. If the term Māgadhakkavda indicates the name of the donor, then it may be suggested that the donor was an inhabitant of the region of Magadh or South Bihar, who might have travelled from his original homeland and reached...

162 I am unable to identify the iconographic components in the back-slab. Whether the top of the prabhāvalī, above the snake-hoods is occupied by a padma in place of kirtimukha or one of the nāgas is difficult to trace. See, Enamul Haque, op.cit. for a detail iconographic study on Manasa images, pp.286-295.

163 I have discussed earlier, that the snake-goddess from the region of Bihar-Bengal were worshipped under several local names, but none of these names suffice to her Sanskritic or mainstream Brahmanic identity. For details, See, Rajat Sanyal, op.cit, 2006.

164 The expression Māgadhakkavda as the name of the donor is doubtful.
Bengal to perform the religious act of image installation. An alternative view point may be given here. Since the word Māgadhā refer to a mixed caste (varṇasarikāra) in Bengal social history, we may state that the donor who is not known by name may belong to the uttama (High) satikāra who practiced the vocation of court bard and carrier of messages. The above cited views are two possibilities. It is difficult to come to any conclusion in this context unless the translation of the word Māgadhakkavādā is correctly established.

The consecration of Hindu snake-goddess by the donor points to his religious leaning towards Śaivism and the ruler i.e Nayapāladeva who patronized this pious act is known to have been a follower of Śaivism and an ardent worshipper of “mother goddess”.

The discovery of Manasā Mandalgram image inscription from the Rādhā region that formed part of the provincial administrative division called the Vardhamāna bhukti is certainly the only image inscription of the Pāla period that records the name of the ruling king Nayapāladeva.

Sl. No. 7: An undated inscribed image of Sun-god in the Stuart Bridge Collection, British Museum

![Sūrya, Bengal](photo.jpg)

Photo Courtesy: [Chanda, R. P. Medieval Indian Sculpture in the British Museum pl. XX]

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165 There are several instances which I have cited in context of dated inscribed images, that donors from distant land travelled to the other region for performing the religious act of image installation.

166 R.C.Majumdar, *op.cit*, p.418.

167 Ibid.

168 It is known that Manasā became a popular cult goddess having Śaiva affiliation in the early medieval and late medieval period after the compositions of *Manasā Maṅgala-Kārya* was completed in the late medieval period.

169 Rādhā territory comprised the mainly the districts of Birbhum, Burdwan, Hooghly. See R.C.Majumdar, *op.cit.* for a detail of the geo-political units of Bengal.
Identification: Sūrya
Material: Bluish stone/ Rajmahal slate, 42.5 x 22 inches.
Provenance: Bengal
Present Whereabouts: British Museum, London.
Language: Sanskrit (corrupt)
Script: Gaudīya characters of the eleventh century A.D.\textsuperscript{170}
Approximate date: Undated. The record belong to c.11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Chanda, R. P. *Medieval Indian Sculpture in the British Museum*, pl. XX, p.66.

Text:
\textit{Oṁ Indraṇilamaṇisyaḥ Śilāya buddhispālinā ghaṭitāya Kṛtaṇēna Amṛtena susi (l) pinā}

Translation:
“(This image) has been carved in stone by the wise, grateful, and good artist Amrta, pupil of Indranilamani.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The image of Sūrya is now in the gallery of the Stuart-Bridge Collection of British Museum, London. The image executed in black stone is in a good state of preservation. This is a typical sculpture of the sun-god of the Pāla-Sena period. The deity is standing erect on a saptaratha pedestal with a full blown lotus in both the hands. The central deity and all his attendants are booted. Sūrya is bejewelled with mukūta, hūra, mekhala and a long beaded upavita. Two oval shaped aureole encircles the head of the central deity. To the extreme right and the extreme left of the composition stands two women Uṣā and Pratyuṣṭā moving with bow and arrow. Behind the woman on the right stands the corpulent and pot-bellied Piṅgala holding a pen in his right hand and an inkpot in his left. Next to him stands a female, wife of the deity holding a cauri. To the left of Sūrya stands another wife holding a cauri, and the second male attendant, Daṇḍa, stands in \textit{trībhajīga} posture, offering protection with his right hand. At the feet of Sūrya stands the earth

\textsuperscript{170} Gouriswar Bhattacharya, \textit{op.cit.} 2000, p.364.
goddess, and in front of her is the winged charioteer, Aruna, guiding the horses with outspread wings.

The back-slab with kiritimukha at the pointed stele, the two flying figures occupying the two corners of the prabhāvali and the depiction of the leogryphs on the two sides overcrowds the composition. In between the two mouldings of the pedestal are delineated seven horses in movement with the icon of the charioteer in the middle.

Observations:

The undated image of Sūrya from Bengal (West Bengal and Bangladesh) bears a single line inscription on the upper moulding of the saptaratha pedestal. R. P. Chanda have edited the inscription and the transcript and translation is published in the monograph. According to R. P. Chanda, the image of Sūrya is carved by a good artist (susilpin) named Amṛta who is the pupil of Indranilamani. The translation given by Chanda is silent about the name of the donor who is responsible for the meritorious work. Later, G. Bhattacharya takes note of this inscription. His reading of the expression snigdha instead of sisyah as read by R. P. Chanda brings considerable change in the context and meaning of the record. According to G. Bhattacharya, snigdha means a smooth bluish sapphire, a precious stone, and does not refer to the teacher of the susilpin Amṛta. Thus Bhattacharya’s reading of the inscription negate the view proposed by R. P. Chanda. It is to be pointed here that the stone referred was generally known as Rajmahal schist which was an important sculptural medium used for carving Pāla-Sena images.

Thus the epigraphic record though votive in nature refers to a master-artist Amṛta who bears undoubtedly the stamp of an artist of consummate skill and ability to be designated as susilpin. Amṛta was a highly acclaimed artist to be recorded in the inscription. The social status of the sculptor as belonging to a consolidated occupational group dependent on vṛttis ‘occupation’ and consigned to the status of śūdra is evident from textual and epigraphical sources. Since the sculpture under discussion is a product of Bengal school of art, we may suggest that the master-

171 The exact findspot of the sculpture is not known.
172 G.Bhattacharya, op.cit, pp.363-365.
173 R. N. Misra. Śilpa in Indian Tradition Concept and Instrumentalities, 2009. See the chapters on ‘Silpin’.
artist had his atelier in Bengal. According to my opinion this is first image inscription which mentions the type of stone used for chiseling out the sculpture.

Sl. No. 8: An undated inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Kalāyanagar

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: stone?
Provenance: Kalāyanagar, Bogra district, North Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Unknown
Language: Sanskrit (corrupt)
Script: Gaudīya characters of the eleventh century A.D.
Approximate date: Undated. The records belong to c.11th century A.D.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Bhattacharya, G. ‘Susilpin Amṛta’ p. 364.

Text:

L.1 Siddham [*] indranilamaṇi- snighdha śilyāṁ buddhisālinī
L.2 ghaṭito = yam Kṛtajñena Amṛtena susilpinī

Translation:

(This image carved in smooth and bluish sapphire (Indranilamaṇi) stone by the wise, grateful, and good artist Amṛta.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The iconographic peculiarities of this image cannot be discussed, as I have not noticed any published photograph of the image concerned.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Kalāyanagar in the Bogra district of North Bangladesh (Ancient Varendra) is an undated epigraphic record. The inscription was first noticed by

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174 The image inscription to be discussed next will empirically substantiate this statement.

175 G. Bhattacharya, op.cit, p.364.

176 G.Bhattacharya gives no separate translation of the text. Since the reading of this votive inscription is quite similar to the earlier discussed image inscription, I have given the same translation.
Dr. G. Bhattacharya and the edited version was published by the author. Interestingly, the reading given by Bhattacharya for this inscription is similar to the Sūrya image inscription from Bengal in the Stuart Bridge Collection discussed above. The votive record refers to a master-artist Amṛta known for his consummate skill and ability in carving out the image. The provenance of the Kalyanagar Viṣṇu image is from ancient Varendra identified with the modern districts of Rajshahi, Bogra (Bangladesh) and Dinajpur District (West Bengal). It can therefore be suggested that Amṛta, the master artist had his atelier in Varendra or more precisely in the Rajshahi-Bogra region. The existence of the guild of artists in early medieval Bengal in the Varendra region\(^{177}\) to which susilpin Amṛta belonged supports the above statement.

**Sl. No. 9: An undated image of Devi from Badgaon, Nālandā**

![Devi, Nālandā](attachment:Devi_Nalanda.jpg)

**Text:**

*Identification:* Siddha cum Lalita

*Material:* Stone

*Provenance:* Modern temple of the Sungod at Badgaon near Nalanda, South Bihar.

*Present Whereabouts:* Unknown

*Language:* Sanskrit

*Script:* Siddhamātrkā\(^{178}\)

*Approximate date:* Undated. According to Gouriswar Bhattacharya\(^{179}\) the sculpture should be dated in the c.Tenth century.

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\(^{177}\) See, G. Bhattacharya, *op.cit.* p.364.

\(^{178}\) Since the image is dated to 10th century, the script used during the period was *siddhamātrkā*.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Bhattacharya, G. ‘A Special Type of Devi Figure From Bihar And Bengal’ p.184, pl.15.6.

Text:
Not published
Translation:
The donor’s name *Purnakamasena* or *kamasena*, is engraved on the pedestal.

Additional References:
Verma, B. S. *Socio-Religious Economic and Literary Condition of Bihar* (from ca. 319 A. D. to 1000 A. D.) Delhi, 1962, p.76.

Iconographic Study:
The sculpture in stone from Badgaon, Nalanda delineates a female deity identified as Siddha cum Lalita by G. Bhattacharya. The iconographic uniqueness about this particular deity or goddess is the presence of iguana or *godha* or *godhika* shown on the pedestal. She represents the ascetic type as classified by Bhattacharya. The female divinity stands on a lotus, profusely ornamented, and a long bejeweled *upavita* adorns her. Her attributes are *varadamudra*, *akṣamālā*, *kamaṇḍala* in three of her hands and a (damaged) *pustaka* in the upper left hand. Interesting features are the crescent moon and sun on either side of her head and the Śiva linga above her *jata-mukuta*. She stands amidst the forest of banana plants (*rambha-vana*) but no flaming vessels, while the *godha* is shown facing left below the lotus. The depiction of antelope at the extreme left of the pedestal and the lion at the extreme right surely indicates tranquility and peaceful coexistence in a penance-grove (*tapovana*). Karttikeya and Gaṇeśa are shown on two sides. The two-armed Karttikeya stands at her proper right with his peacock, while the four-armed Gaṇeśa stands at her proper left, without his rat. The iconographic features found in Siddha and Lalita aspect of Devi is found in the present inscribed image that have led Bhattacharya to identify the present image of Devi as a transition from Siddha to Lalita.

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180 See, G.Bhattacharya, for the iconographic identification of Siddha and Lalita *op.cit*, p.184.
Observations:

The inscribed sculpture of Devi from Bihar is an undated art specimen. The epigraphic record constitutes a single word, possibly the name of the donor. I have included this sculpture in my study because of its unique iconographic composition. The single word of the epigraphic record is far from being significant.

Sl. No. 10: An undated image of Hari-Hara in the Russek Collection of Switzerland.

Hari-Hara, Magadha

Photo Courtesy: [Bhattacharya, G. *EBHJIE*, pl.17.1]

Identification: Hari-Hara
Material: Stone, 77 x 39 x 15 cm
Provenance: Magadha, South Bihar.
Present Whereabouts: Russek collection of Switzerland, No.462 I B/P
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Siddhamārka script of the ninth century A.D.
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the illegible inscription on the pedestal

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Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The combined Hari-Hara image from South Bihar is iconographically an interesting production of the Pāla period. The image executed in stone measures 77 x 39 x 15 cm. The image stands in *samapāda* position on an expanded lotus reclining against the back-rest of the architectural construct. The two deities are bejeweled with necklace, *upavita*, bangles and anklets and other pieces of jewellery. However, the arm-lets, ear-rings and the girdle worn by both the deities are different. Few unique iconographic features have been noticed while studying the sculpture. The crown is half *jaṭa-mukūṭa* and half *kirita-mukūṭa*. The long *vanamīla* is quite interesting in this case. The *vanamīla* on the Hari side appears to be different than the portion on the Hara side. The portion of the *vanamīla* on the Hara side is made of sacred grass (?) stud with skulls (*karotī*) and a flower. On the Hari side the *vanamīla* bears a large flower in the middle as if it is made of utpalas. Similarly interesting is the *adhovastra* or lower garment of both the deity. Hari wears a short *adhovastra* marked with folding lines, Hara wears a tiger-skin (*vyūghra-carma*), the head of the tiger being shown clearly below the *upavita*. Hara is not marked with *ürdhvalinīga*. On the Hara side we notice only one *jaṭa* falling on the shoulder and there is a snake above it. Three locks of hair are seen on the Hari side. The nose of the image is damaged. Only the front hands of both the deities are visible. Hara counts *aksamālā* with his front right hand and with the back right hand holds *triśūla* which is placed vertically on the pedestal. Hari holds *śatikha* in his front left hand and the back left hand holds the *cakra* which is placed on the raised platform.

The iconographic peculiarity of the attendant figures also draws attention. A four-armed female deity stands in *abhaṅga* position close to Hara. She holds in her four hands the following...

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183 Text and translation has not been published by the author.

184 See for iconographic detail, G. Bhattacharya, ibid, pp.198-199.
attributes clockwise: vara, aksamālā, tridadā and kamandala, and her hair-do is in the style of an ascetic. She is Parvati, depicted as an ascetic and not as a bride holding a mirror. The two armed female figure standing close to Hari is undoubtedly Śrī or Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu. She is in abharīga position holding utpala in her right hand and placing her left hand on her left thigh above a sash which surrounds her thighs. Bhattacharya is of the opinion that the sculptor made a confusion between the figures Śrī and Cakrapuruṣa.

The back of Hari-Hara’s head is decorated with designs of flames. Vidyadharas carrying garlands fly against clouds, on the prabhāmaṇḍala, one on each side. Below, in front of the pedestal close to the lotus, at the left, is the bull (vrṣa) of Hara and at the right Garuḍa of Hari. To the left of Garuḍa sits a male figure with folded hands in front of an offering (naivedya). He is most probably the donor of the figure in question.

Observations:

This interesting and beautiful stone image finds mention in G. Bhattacharya article “The God Pradyumnesvara And Two Interesting Hari-Hara Figures From South Bihar” published in his voluminous work in 2000. Unfortunately, the transcription and translation of the epigraphic record has not been dealt by Bhattacharya in this work. The author however discusses the iconographic composition of the sculpture in detail. I have included the object in my study mainly because it is the single inscribed image of Hari-Hara from the Pāla period noticed by me.

Sl. No.11: An inscribed image of Snake-Goddess from Kurkihar

Snake Goddess, Kurkihar
Photo Courtesy: [ Bhattacharya, G. EBHIJE, pl.22.4, pl.19.4 ]
Identification: Snake-Goddess
Material: Bronze
Provenance: Kurkihar, Gaya District, Bihar.
Present Whereabouts: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, no.M.83.1.2
Language:
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. The sculpture is dated to 9th century A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

**Reading 1:** Bhattacharya G. "Nāgendravāhini Devī The Snake-Goddess on an Elephant Mount" p. 254, pl.22.4.

Text:
Text not given

Translation:
Text not given

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The beautiful bronze image of the snake-goddess from Kurkihar, Gaya District of South Bihar is an undated inscribed specimen. The two-armed deity sits on a double-petalled lotus in lalitkṣepa position on a saptaratha pedestal. The left leg placed on the viśva-padma and the right leg hangs down and is placed on a lotus-leaf. The deity has nine-hooded snake canopy behind her head and all the hoods have a jewel. The goddess supports the Nāga-child with her left hand on her lap, the child wears a crown, various jewelleries and a long adhovastra and a upavīta. He has a snake-hood above his head with a jewel. According to G. Bhattacharya\(^{185}\), the Nāga child may be identified as Āstika or Āstika-muni, son of Manasādevi and Jaratkāru. The right hand of the goddess disposes varada-mudrā with an auspicious mark on it. The female divinity is attired in a Śāṭī, the folds of which are marked with single lines and falls upon her ankles. The upper part of the body is covered with an uttariṇya. She wears various jewelleries but the bejwelled upavīta is

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conspicuously absent. Her face shows a benign expression. The deity is attended upon by two nāgis, female snakes, holding perhaps a cūmara. Each of them has a circular siraścakra behind the head and above that a single-hood snake-canopy.

The deity reclines against the backrest of a throne made of a horizontal bar with lotus design on it, and two plain vertical bars. Now at each end on top of the horizontal bar there is a four-armed seated figure of Gaṇeṣa at the left and two-armed male figure at the right. Gaṇeṣa sits in mahārājālīṣana position on a lotus and has a circular prabhamaṇḍala behind his head. The attributes in the four hand of Gaṇeṣa are the following in clockwise: a fruit (kapitha), a raddish (mutilaka), a battle-axe (paraśu) and a pot of sweets (modakabhāṇḍa). Interestingly the animal mount of Gaṇeṣa the rat is shown at the left on the lotus. The other male figure sits in the same position and delineates the gesture of explanation (vyākhyāna-mudrā). He also has a circular prabhamaṇḍala behind his head. Above the central snake-hood there are three chhatras or umbrellas surmounted by a knob. On both sides there is each a branch of a plant which appears to be Nāgavalli. The image may be dated to c. 900 A.D.

The pedestal of Manasa image from Kurkihar is conspicuous by the absence of ghata, figures of devotees and other iconographic detail usually noticed in the pedestal of Manasa images.

Observations:

The Manasa from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art is an undated art specimen. The sculpture with beautiful iconographic composition has been the subject of discussion among the art historians. But the epigraphic record along with a transcript and translation has not received due attention by the epigraphist. G. Bhattacharya (2000) writes that the inscription cannot be read satisfactorily. The sculpture is a product of bronze hoard from Kurkihar. The ancient site of Kurkihar or Kukkutapadagiri is a famous place of medieval Buddhism. A rich assemblage of Buddhist and a few Brahmanical sculptures were discovered at Kurkihar in 1930. The snake-goddess discussed above is a non-Buddhist? Snake goddess. G. Bhattacharya raised a question in regard to the category of worshippers who would worship the snake goddess and comments that
“but it remains to be seen if only the Hindus worshipped this type of snake-goddess or the Buddhist also took part in it.”

Sl. No. 12: An inscribed image of Snake-Goddess in the Malda Museum

Identification: Manasā
Material: Black stone, 61 x 23 cms
Provenance: Bamangola, Malda District, West Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Malda Museum, RMN-1
Language: Corrupt Sanskrit
Script: Gaudīya script
Approximate date: Undated. Dated approximately in the 12th century A.D on the basis of style and palaeography.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:


Text:
/// vacayālā-deva seve. ///

Translation:
Translation not given

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The image of the snake goddess from Bamangola, Malda District is presently in the collection of Malda Museum, Malda, West Bengal. The sculpture carved in black stone measures 56 cm x 26 cm. The four-armed deity sits on a double-petalled lotus in lalitāsana on a pañcaratha pedestal. The left leg placed on the viśva-padma and the right leg hangs down and is placed on a lotus leaf. The nine-hooded snake canopy encircles the head of the deity. She holds the branches with leaves (parṇavalli or nāgavalli) in her upper right hand a fruit in her lower right hand and holds a child with the lower left hand. The snake child is identified as Astika Muni, son of Manasā devī and Jara Kāru. The female divinity is adorned and interestingly a crown (mukuta) bedecks her head. The bejewelled upāvīta is conspicuously absent. Her breast is badly damaged. Her face shows a benign expression. A circular mark adorns her forehead which is not the third eye. The two nāgis as attendant of the main deity is absent here. But we notice a seated male figure with a sword to the right of the goddess. Bhattacharya is doubtful about the identification of this figure. The vidyadharas and the kirtimukha top the stela. The pointed stele as well as the kirtimukha suffers from mutilation.

The presence of a beautifully caparisoned elephant crouches on a lotus near her foot at the extreme left of the pedestal is interesting. This is the second image of the snake-goddess shown with elephant on the pedestal if not the depiction of the elephant as a mount. It appears

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188 The upper left hand is damaged.


190 The first image with this iconographic features is noticed in the Linden Museum bronze image of the snake-goddess assigned to the reign of Mahipāla I.
that the snake-goddess with an elephant mount or with elephant on the pedestal was worshipped in the North Bengal region. The pointed stele and the raised pedestal suggest the image to be of 12th century A.D.

Observations:
The undated image of Manasa from Bamangola, Malda District, West Bengal is inscised with a single line epigraphic record on the pedestal. The fragmentary record has not received due attention by the epigraphist. G. Bhattacharya give a partial reading of the inscription. No translation is added to the partial reading of the text. Bhattacharya writes that the donor’s name is engraved on the pedestal. It is therefore difficult to discuss this image inscription at length. The expression vacayālī-deva may stand for the donor’s name.

The significance of elephant crouching on a lotus near the foot of the deity as a unique iconographic feature await further investigation. The popularity of the worship of snake-goddess as one of the vyātara (‘cult’) in the North Bengal region is once again evident from this image inscription.

Sl. No.13: An inscribed image of Snake-Goddess from Marail

Identification: Snake-Goddess
Material: stone (?)
Provenance: Marail, South Dinajpur District, West Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Worshipped in the village shrine?
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. The image is dated on palaeographical ground to 10th-11th century A.D.192

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:


191 G. Bhattacharya, op. cit, fn.42.
192 S. K. Saraswati, “Notes on Two Tours in the Districts of Māldah and Dinājpūr” JASB [ N.S. XXVIII], 1932.
Text:
Bhattinī (nī) Maṭṭuvā |

Translation:
Not given


Text:
Bhattinī Maṭṭuvā |

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Bhattacharya, G. op.cit, p.260, fn.43.

Iconographic Study:
A study of iconographic peculiarities of this image is not possible as I have not noticed any published photograph

Observations:
The inscribed image of snake-goddess from the village Marail, Dinajpur District, West Bengal is an undated example. S. K. Saraswati (1932) and D.C. Sircar (1949-50) published the transcription of this epigraphic record. However, no photograph of the image nor the facsimile of the inscription is published in any of the textual sources. The reading of the inscriptive evidence given by both the scholars are similar. But both the readings lack translation and so it is difficult to understand the meaning of the record. The expression Bhattinī Maṭṭuvā is the name of the snake-goddess according to D. C. Sircar (1949-50) and Rajat Sanyal (2006). G. Bhattacharya maintains a different opinion. According to Bhattacharya Maṭṭuvā is the name of the lady who donated the image in question, and not that of the snake-goddess. However, the meaning of the word Bhattinī will help us to understand the context of this inscriptive evidence. The expression

193 G. Bhattacharya op.cit, p.260, fn.43.
Bhaṭṭīṇī means a noble lady or any woman of high rank. Some of the inscribed images from the ateliers of Bengal-Bihar is engraved with the word Bhaṭṭīṇī which signify the gift of a noble lady (to be discussed below). Thus in the present case, the word Maṭṭuvā is a name of the noble lady who was responsible for installing the image of the snake-goddess and not the local name of the snake-goddess.

Sl. No.14 : Inscribed image of Manasā from Valgudar

Identification: Manasā
Material: Stone
Provenance: Bālgūdar, Lakhisarai District, South Bihar
Present Whereabouts: Unknown
Language: Sanskrit prose, with some mistakes and signs of Prakrit influence
Script: Approximate date: Undated. According to D.C.Sircar195 the image on the palaeographical grounds is ascribed to the eigth or ninth century.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

![Close up view of the inscription on Manasā](Photo Courtesy: [EI, Vol. XXVIII, 3.])


**Text:**

1. Siddham [|| *] Kr̥imi [l-ा] dhīṣṭhān[े] Gausa ( se ) vā
2. [Nṛ] kaṭṭasya [de] dhvarmo =yatāḥ (yam ||)

195 D. C. Sircar, op.cit. 1949-50, p.139.
Translation:
Let there be success! (The goddess) Gausavā (or Gausevā) (is installed) at the city of Krimilā; this is the meritorious gift of Nrikaṭṭa.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
A study of iconographic peculiarities of this image is not possible as I have not noticed any published photograph of the sculpture.

Observations:
The Manasā image inscription from Bālgudar, Lakhisarai District, South Bihar was noticed by D.C. Sirar in 1950, when he was exploring the area in search of new inscriptions. Sircar,’s reading of the inscription along with transcription and translation is published in the pages of *Epigraphia Indica*. The purport of this inscription is to record the installation of a Manasā image by Nrikaṭṭa at Krimila. The record begins with the auspicious symbol *siddham* and refer to the expression Gauśevā or Gauśava. The donor Nrikaṭṭa, is a lay devotee and the follower of Brahmanical faith as revealed from his nature of donation. No information is given about the socio-economic position of the donor. Since the image is consecrated at the ancient city Krimila, we may suggest that the donor is a local devotee and an inhabitant of Krimila. The geo-historical importance of this city as the headquarter or visaya or district of the same name is once again established in this epigraphic record. The expression Gauśevā or Gauśava recorded in the inscription is a nomenclature given to the snake-goddess, unlike Svāṃgai bhaṭṭārīka and Śekāpani. The worship of snake-goddess was a popular cult in South Bihar known is from tradition and inscriptional evidences. It is therefore suggested that the local population of South Bihar worshipped the snake-goddess as Gauśevā or Gauśava.

196 The two local appellation for snake-goddess previously discussed.
Sl. No. 15 : Inscribed Image of Śiva from Maniari, Bangladesh

Dancing Śiva, Maniari
Photo Courtesy : [ Bhattacharya, G. EBHJIE, pl. 26.1 ]

Identification: Dancing Śiva
Material: Black basalt
Provenance: Maniari, Atrai, Rajshahi District, Bangladesh.
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi, Bangladesh. No.3682.\(^{197}\)
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Gaudīya script\(^{198}\)

Approximate date: Undated. Mukhlesur Rahman\(^{199}\) dates the image in 12\(^{th}\) century A.D. G. Bhattacharya suggest the date in the 10\(^{th}\) century A.D.\(^{200}\)

Epigraphic Study:

 Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal
Photo Courtesy : [ ed. from SVRM, Cat. pl.157]

**Reading 1**: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p.154.

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\(^{198}\) G. Bhattacharya, *op.cit*. p.283.


Text:
\textit{Om Śrīcatuḥ\,sa\,masyāḥ}

Translation:
The donor of the image is a lady named \textit{Śrī} (auspicious, beautiful) Catuḥsāmā.


Text:
\textit{siddham ²⁰¹ śrī catuḥsaṃāyāḥ}

Translation:
The image in question was the gift of lady Catuḥsāmā

\textbf{Reading 3}: Dasgupta, K. K. “Natarāja Images of Bengal” \textit{KB}, Vol.VIII, p. 4.

Text:
\textit{Om Śrī Chatuḥ Samayāḥ}

Translation:
(i.e., the image is donated by a lady named Chatuḥ-sama).

\textbf{Additional References}:
Rahman, M. “Siva Natarāja” \textit{JVRM}, Vol.6, 1982, pp.99-100, pl.VII.

\textbf{Iconographic Study}:
This is a well carved image of a dancing Śiva executed in black-basalt and now preserved in Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi. The image in question belongs to N.K.Bhattasali B class of images i.e; with twelve arms.²⁰² The iconographic composition of this sculpture has been discussed in great detail both by M. Rahman (1998) and G. Bhattacharya (2000). This is an image of \textit{vināḍhara} dancing Śiva. Śiva is twelve-armed. With the two main hands he plays \textit{vināḍ}, the uppermost two arms are raised above and the hands are joined together in a special dancing posture. With the following two hands he holds a snake. The fourth right hand from the top,

²⁰¹ Expressed by symbol.

holds damaru and the fifth is in abhaya-hasta. The lowest right hand has an aksamala. Of the left hands the lowest one holds kalasa, the fifth one with trilōṭa and the fourth one seems to hold kapala. Śiva wears a beautiful jatamukuta, the third eye on the forehead is seen. He wears a snake as his sacred thread (nāga-yajnopavita). He is tūrdhvalīṅga. Śiva dances on his bull (vṛśa) in cross-legged position.

Śiva is accompanied by two female figures in graceful standing posture, both holding cśamara. To his proper right stands Gaṅgā on makara. To the proper left of the central deity stand Yamuna on Kurma. Both the attendants has a snake-hood on their head. The two wives of Śiva named Gaṅgā and Gaurī generally accompany Śiva from Dacca-Faridpur region of Bangladesh. But the Maniari Śiva has Yamuna as of his consort. This feature is unique but not uncommon as a Śiva Nāṭarāja image from Churain, from Rampal has Yamuna as one of his consort.203 The two Gānas of Śiva, Nandin and Mahākāla are standing alone each attended upon by a female figure. On the saptarātha pedestal below, several figures are seen in different attitude. In the central projection of the pedestal is shown the emaciated Bhṛğinī, the other Gāta of Śiva. The pot-bellied, corpulent figure of Mahākāla may be at the left. There are four other figures of musicians and dancers, one of them might be of the donor.

The pointed stele supports the Kṛitimukha and the whole back-slab has been treated as prabhamaḍala. Stylistically the sculpture with pointed stele and the detailing of the back-slab suggest a work of the later period of Pāla artistic tradition.

Observations:

The short epigraphic record engraved on the central recess of the pedestal is in single line. I have discussed above three published readings of the inscription. No significant variation is noticed from the three published readings, except the reading of the auspicious symbol Om (R.1 and R. 3) and siddham ( R. 2 ). The votive inscription records the gift of the image by a lady named Catuḥṣamā. This is the second image inscription discussed by me where I have noticed the name

203 N. K. Bhattacharī, ibid, p.115.
of the donor as Catuḥsamā. The social status of the donor Catuḥsamā has been discussed earlier in context to the ‘Mother and Child’ image inscription of the time of Vigrahapāla II. However, two observations need to be added here. The lady donor who is associated with the consecration of two Śaiva images, the Mother and Child from Khetlal and the Maniari Śiva image must have been a devout follower of Śaivism. Secondly, installation of two huge sculptures substantiate the donor’s wealthy economic status. Catuḥsamā therefore, must have been an important female personage from Bangladesh.

Sl. No. 16: Inscription on Viṣṇu image from Keoar, Bangladesh

![Isolated image of Viṣṇu, Keoar](image)

**Identification:** Viṣṇu

**Material:** Black stone

**Provenance:** Keoar, P.S. Munshiganj, Dhaka District, Bangladesh

**Present Whereabouts:** The image is fixed against the outside wall of the math in the same village, Keoar.

**Language:** Correct Sanskrit, the inscription is in verse.

**Script:** N. K. Bhattasali comments that the inscription is in Bengali script of the 12th century.

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204 For the social status of the donor Catuḥsamā, see the undated ‘Mother and Child’ image inscription of the time of Vigrahapāla II from Khetlal, discussed earlier.

205 Both the images recording the gift of Catuḥsamā are from Bangladesh.


208 N. K. Bhattasali *op. cit.*, 1972, p.85.
Approximate date: Undated. The inscription on Keoar Visnu can be dated in early part of the 13th centuries A.D. on palaeographical ground.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:


Text: 209

L.1 [Siddhirastu] Ayamāṇiḥyameyena Sayogāṅga bhūvā vibhūh [ ]
L.2 Vaṅgokena kṛtoṣṭṛvṛṇśuṣaḥlokaḥkāmīṇāyā[ || ]
L.3 Varendriṭaṭākṣṭyena śaṅḍīlyakulajanmanā [ ] pitāma-
L.4 ṣaṣṭya pautreṇa prāṇapatṛā Śauriśarmanḥ ||

Translation:
May success attend ! Longing for a residence in the heaven of Vishnu, this ( image of ) the Lord Vishnu was consecrated by Vaṅgokā, hailing from [ the village of ] Taṭāka in Varendri, offspring of the body of Sayoga and ( begotten on ) Anuyami, in the race of ( the saint ) Śaṅḍilya, grandson of Pitāmahā and great-grandson of Šauriśarman.

Reading 2: Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS, p.85, pl. XXX.

Text: 210

L.1 Ayamāṇiḥyameyena Sayogāṅgabhūvā Bibhūh [ ]
L.2 Vaṅgokena kṛtoṣṭṛvṛṇśuṣaḥlokaḥkāmīṇāyā[ || ]
L.3 Varendriṭaṭākṣṭyena śaṅḍīlyakulajanmanā [ ] pitāma-
L.4 ṣaṣṭya pautreṇa prāṇapatṛā Śauriśarmanḥ ||

209 The transliteration is given by me on the basis of Devanagari script given by the author.

210 The transliteration is given by me on the basis of Bengali script given by the author.
Translation:
Desirous of a residence in the heaven of Viṣṇu, this (image of the) Lord Viṣṇu was consecrated by Vaṅgoka, of the race of Śāndilya, hailing from (the village of) Taṭa in Varendrī, grandson of Pīṭāmaha, great-grandson of Śauri-Śarmman and offspring of the body of Sayoga and (begotten on) Anuyāmī (i.e. Yamuna).

Additional References:
Haque, Enamul. op.cit; List No. 663, p.357.

Iconographic Study:
The Keoar Viṣṇu is an example of a typical four-armed Viṣṇu images from Bengal.211 It is a product of the developed phase of Hindu iconography and the paleographical date of the inscription corroborates our view. The deity is shown standing in the saṃapūkāsthaṇakā pose on a viśvatāma placed on the rāhṣ of the saptaraṭha pedestal. The developed state of iconography is apparent in the elaboration showing details of the background, the accessories figures and the wealth of jewellery with which the central deity and the companion figures are adorned. The keoar Viṣṇu is similarly adorned with jewellery like kīrtīamukūṭa, hūra, kundalas, keyūras, valayās, mēkhālā, etc. A short yajñopāvita212 and a long vaṇamālā, hanging down to the knee. The back-plate is replete with kirttimukha, a pair of garland bearing vidyādharas, two unidentified human figures at the dexter and animal and vegetal motifs. The distribution of attributes in four hands of the deity from the lower right order are padma represented as a little medallion or small lotus bud placed on the open palm which also display the gesture of varada, lower left holds a śatikha, the upper left a cakra and the corresponding right gada.213

Viṣṇu is accompanied by his two consorts, both standing to the left and right of the central figure. Both are two armed and carry their respective attributes. A separate lotus seat is provided to the consorts. In addition to the consort, a pair of Āyudhapuruṣas are depicted who bears

211The iconographical detail of this image is studied by the present author.
212Sculptures of Viṣṇu from North or West Bengal have a long upavīta which distinguishes them from an example in East Bengal with a short upavīta. See, for detail Enamul Haque, op.cit. p.64.
213The short gada in this case is also a feature of East Bengal sculptural style.
āyudhas either in hand or on the head or on the pericarp of a lotus stalk. The āyudhas held by the Āyudhāpuruṣas in our case is not very distinct.

The saptaratha pedestal comprises several human figures. These figures with folded hands and kneeling posture may be assumed to be the iconographic representation of the donor and his family members. To the left may be the donor’s mother with a veil covering her head. The donor, his father, grand-father and great grand-father are shown to the right side of the pedestal. Garuḍa, the vāhana of Viṣṇu is placed in the centre.

Observations:
The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Keoar, Dhaka District Bangladesh is an undated epigraphic record. A fairly long inscription in four lines is engraved at the bottom of the pedestal. Two published readings with text and translation has been discussed by me. No significant variation is noticed, except the expression siddhirastu in R. 1( N. K. Bhattasali: 1923-24). The purport of this votive inscription is to record the consecration of an image of Viṣṇu by Vaṅgoka, an inhabitant from Tatāka in Varendri (North Bengal). The inscription further alludes to the names of Vaṅgoka ancestors including his parents, grand-father and great grand-father. The family owe its origin to śaṇḍilya gotra. Careful analysis of this votive inscription reveals few interesting observations. We have learnt from the literary references214 that the Viṣṇu image has been discovered from the Vikramapura region or the Vaṅga country and is fixed against the outside wall of the math in the same village, Keoar. On the other hand the donor Vaṅgoka and his ancestors were inhabitants of Tatāka in the Varendra region as known from the inscription. Thus this epigraphic record unfolds the history of migration of Varendra Brahmaṇas from their original homeland Varendri to the other region of ancient Bengal. The Brahmaṇas as an upper caste in the social hierarchy of caste system played an important part in the social history of Bengal. The Kulaji texts and other traditional sources refer to the migration of Brahmans from outside Bengal ie. from the western part of the country to Bengal. The present inscription corroborates the literary evidences related to the social history of early medieval Bengal. It appears that the donor Vaṅgoka and his

ancestors who were Varendra Brahmins of ṣándlya gotra of Tātaka gāmi\textsuperscript{215} migrated to the Vaṅga country. Significant enough is the name Vaṅgoka after the name of the country Vaṅga to support the event of migration. Thus migration was an important event in the family history and speaks of spatial mobility prevalent among a section of the Brāhmaṇas. The donor and his family members were economically well-off to be enabled to make such a donation. Their religious affiliation as a devout worshipper of Vaiṣṇava faith is clearly stated in this inscriptive evidence.

Sl. No. 17: Inscribed image of Sūrya from Bairhāṭṭa, District Dinajpur

Plate: Sūrya, Bairhatta

Photo Courtesy: [Chakravarti, N. & Saraswati, S. K. pl. 2]

Identification: Seated Sūrya
Material: Black stone, 61.5 x 26 cm\textsuperscript{216}
Provenance: Bairhāṭṭa, District South Dinajpur, West Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Indian Museum, Acc. No.8601/ A 16241
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Proto-Bengali characters \textsuperscript{217}
Approximate date: Undated. The inscription is dated to the first quarter of the thirteenth Century A.D or even later.\textsuperscript{218}

\textsuperscript{215}Gāmi is a title derived from the name of the village endowed to a Brahmin family by the king or private donor. R. C. Majumdar, \textit{op. cit.} p.428.
\textsuperscript{217}N. G. Majumdar,1930-34.”Report of the year1932-33” \textit{ASI-AR}, p. 257.
\textsuperscript{218}N.Chakravarti and S. K. Chakravarti,” Note on a seated and inscribed image of Sūryya from Qaşbah ( Ekdāla), District Dinajpur”. \textit{JPASB}, Vol. XXVIII, 1931-32, p.150.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Chakravarti, N. & Saraswati, S. K. p.149]

Reading 1: Chakravarti, N. and Saraswati S. K. “Note on a seated and inscribed image of Śūryya from Qaśbah (Ekdāla), District Dinajpur”, JPASB, Vol. XXVIII, p.149.

Text:
L. 1 Om śrīmad = vaktraśivāchāryaka (kā) rito = bhu (bhū) tika (kā) madaḥ |
L.2 Śūryaḥ samastaroganāthhartā viśvapraka (kā) śakāḥ ||

Translation:
“(An image of) Śūrya (the Sun-god), the bestower of welfare and desire (of the people), the remover of all diseases and the irradiator of the Universe, has been caused to be made by the illustrious Vaktraśivaśāchārya’.

Text: To the right of the above inscription there are two short lines each containing four letters.
L. 1 Om Paṇḍarika
L.2 Vārapāsa

Translation:
The inscription most probably gives the name of the artist who executed the image, as Vārapāsa, who may be an original inhabitant of Puṇḍra i.e. North Bengal.


Text:
Om śrīmad - Vaktraśiv = āchārya kā rito bhūti - kāmadaḥ
Śūryaḥ samasta - rogānāṁ harttā viśva prakāśakaḥ
Translation:
*i.e. (This image of) the Sun who bestows splendour and fulfils desires, removes all diseases and illumines the universe, has been made by the master Vaktraśiva*.

Additional References:


Saraswati, S. K. 1932.”Note on Two Tours in the Districts of Māldah and Dīnājpur” *JASB*, N.S. XXVIII, Article No.7, pp.173-183.

Haque, Enamul. *op.cit*, List No. 996.219

Mevissen, G. J. R. *op.cit*, 2006, pl.33.

Iconographic Study:

The seated image of Sūrya from Bairhaṭṭa, District South Dinajpur, West Bengal is a very rare iconographic depiction. The sculpture is in a good state of preservation, except for the hands being broken off, the nose mutilated and the upper part of the body of the figure in front of the god is lost. The seated Sūrya image from Bairhaṭṭa is surrounded by Graha on each sides. The usual and most common mode of arranging the Grahas is their placement in two rows of four figures each on either side of the principal image, the internal order within the sequence of Grahas being clockwise. In this instance, Sūrya is surrounded by the pot-bellied Graha figures who are shown in a posture half way between standing and seated. Their iconography, too, differs from the normal mode: they are all oriented towards the central image, holding indistinct attributes in their upraised hands.220 Above, on either side a flying gandharva with garland overhangs the pointed stele which is topped by a kirttimukha.

The main deity sits in vajraparyātikāsana on a lotus. The deity is booted, wears a close fitting garment fastened to the waist by an elaborate girdle from which hang on either side a sword and

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219 Enamul Haque gives a short account of the Sūrya image from Bairhaṭṭa under Type 3 and refers to pl.124 for the photograph of the image concerned. But pl.124 displays no figure of seated Sūrya from Bairhaṭṭa. See, E. Haque, *op.cit*.1992, List No.996, pp.192-193 for the iconography of the image and p.486 for the wrong plate.

a dagger. He is bedecked with a kirtamukuta, necklace, the ear-rings, the bracelets and the armlets. He hold in his two hands (both broken away) two lotuses which rise a little above his shoulders. The deity is accompanied by his four attendants, all-booted and seated. To the right is a bearded male figure with pen and ink stand in his two hands. He is the Pingala. To the extreme left of the image is Daṇḍa with his right hand in abhayamudrā and the left resting on the thigh and holding a sword erect. The two female attendants with chowries on either side of the deity represent his two wives.

The pañcaratha pedestal, is divided into two sections, depicting seven horses. Below the central horse there is a wheel indicating the one-wheeled chariot of Sūrya, and to the extreme right there are two human figures, a male and a female, probably the donor and his wife. Uṣā and Pratyuṣā are shown on either side shooting arrows to dispel darkness at the approach of the dawn. Behind Aruṇa sits in ardhaparyanka a figure, the upper part of which is unfortunately missing. The figure most probably represents the goddess Mahāśvetā.

Observations:
The discovery of the seated Sūrya image from Bairhaṭṭa (Qasbah) of North Indian type is a rarity. The votive inscription is engraved on the lower moulding of the pañcaratha pedestal. The inscription was deciphered initially by N. Chakravarti and S. K. Chakravarti (1931-32) and later by N.G. Majumdar in the Annual Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India in the year 1932-33. The reading given by Chakravarti and Chakravarti is complete and therefore my observations is based on this reading. The context and content of the votive record is the same, except a single variation noticed in expression bhūtika kāmadaḥ (R. 1) and bhūti-kāmadaḥ (R. 2).221

The purpose of this votive inscription is to record the setting up of Sūrya image by an illustrious donor Vakrāśivaścārya. The name Vārapāśa points to the name of the artist or sculptor who is an original inhabitant of Pañḍarika (Punḍra) of North Bengal.222 Few interesting observations

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221 The meaning of the two expression are not clear from the translations.

222 Pañḍarika is identified with Punḍra country (North Bengal) by the author. See, the translation above, Chakravarti & Chakravarti.
can be made in this regard. It appears that the donor Vaktraśivaācārya is not a lay devotee but an ascetic or a śaiva religious Preceptor. Several Copper Plates and image inscriptions223 throws light on these religious gurus. It is known that the names of most of the Mattamayūraka ascetics end in śiva or in śambhu as referred in the Bangarh Copper Plate inscription of Nayapāladeva. The name of the donor in this inscribed specimen also ends in śiva. Thus there is every possibility that the donor, Vaktraśivaācārya was one of the ascetic of the Durvāsā sect. The above assumption can be substantiated from other aspect too. The findspot of Bairhaṭṭa Sūrya image is South Dinajpur and the Golaki Maṭha, the famous Brāhmaṇical ecclesiastical institution at Bangarh is also in South Dinajpur District. The donor Vaktraśivaācārya may have been an ascetic residing at the Golaki maṭha at Bangarh.

The sculptor whose name is recorded in the epigraphic record is obviously not an ordinary artist. He may have travelled from the Puṣṭra (northern Bengal) region to Bairhaṭṭa (Qasbah) for carving this beautiful image.

An interesting observation can be added here in context to the reading as given in L.2 of the inscription. In L.2 of the record, the Brāhmaṇical deity, is labeled as Sūryaḥ samastarogānāṁ arhatā which invariably means remover of all diseases. The later Vedic text Atharvaveda contains hymns related to diseases.224 N. K. Bhattasali while making some observations on the Kulkūḍī image Inscription of Govindaacandra, year 12 remarked that the sun-god is the reputed healer of leprosy and other skin diseases. Keeping this view in mind, it can be suggested that the Sūrya image from Qasbah is meant to be the special object of worship to the sufferers from various diseases.

Sl. No. 18 : An Inscribed Viṣṇu from Deopara, Rajshahi
Identification:Viṣṇu
Material:Cericitised slate, 61 x 58.4 cm
Provenance:Deopara, Godagiri, Rajshahi, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts:Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No. e (a) 43 /345
Language:Incorrect Sanskrit.

223 See, Chapter 3 Section IV of this dissertation. An attempt has been made by me to study few inscribed images from Bengal-Bihar which iconographically represent Preceptors.
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. Beginning of tenth century A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

![Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal](Photo Courtesy: [Mitra, H. *IHQ*, 1925])


Text:

[L.1] Viṣṇu- dāsa- sutena ca sita kuṭinakeynā /

[L.2] Srṣṭeṣyaṁ ( ? ) Vaiśṇavī-mūrtti ( ś ) candrākasthăyini subhām /

Emended text: ----

[L.1] Viṣṇu-dāsa- sutenapi
    sitā kūṭi Nakeynā

[L.2] Srṣṭeṣyam Vaiśṇavimūrttis =
    candrākasthāyini śubhā //

Translation:
“By Nakeyn, the son of Viṣṇudāsa, this auspicious image of Viṣṇu was installed-lasting till the Sun and Moon, as also this white shrine”.

**Reading 2:** Rahman, M. *SVRM*, Cat. p.65.

Text:

L.1 Viṣṇudāsa- sutena ca sita kuṭi Nakeynā

L.2 srṣṭeṣyaṁ Vaiśṇavī- mūrtti ( ś ) candrākasthāyini śubhāṁ

Translation:
‘This auspicious image of Viṣṇu, as well as its white shrine, were made by Nakeyn, the son of Viṣṇudāsa, to last as the sun and the moon endure’.
Additional References:

Haque, Enamul *op.cit*; List No.306.

Iconographic Study:

The iconographical dimension of this image cannot be illustrated in detail as I have not noticed any published photograph of the sculpture. Mukhlesur Rahman in his Catalogue\textsuperscript{225} has very briefly discussed the iconography of the said sculpture. The following description is based on Rahman’s work. The image is totally mutilated. What remain, is only the feet of the main image and the female attendants is preserved. The lower portion of the composition, shows Lakṣmī, Saraswati and the *ayudhapurasas*. The figures of the first two are damaged. The *Katihasta ayudhapurusas* carry the *saikha* and *cakra* on their heads and holds the *nīlopāla* in one of their hands. The *saptaratha* pedestal displays the figures of Garuḍa and worshippers between rosettes are carved from one end to the other.

Observations:

The two line inscription on the pedestal of the image is of an undated nature. I have discussed two published reading as noted above. The content and context is same in both the readings. A single variation is noticed in the word *Vismdasa* (R.1) and *Vistudasa* (R.2) indicating the name of donor’s father.

The purport of the votive inscription is to record the installation of a Brāhmaṇical deity, Viṣṇu by Nakeyin, son of *Viṣṇudāsa / Viṣṇudāsa*. The inscription do not throw any light on the socio-economic background of the donor and his father. But the religious faith of the family as a follower of Vaiṣṇavism is evidently justified by the name of the donor’s father Viṣṇudāsa who must have encouraged his son for such pious act. The consecration of a Viṣṇu image also supports our view. The discovery of Viṣṇu images and other images of Brāhmaṇical pantheon

from the Rajshahi District\textsuperscript{226} of Bangladesh suggest that Brahmanism was the dominant religion of the region and the period concerned.

### Sl. No. 19: An Inscribed Viṣṇu from Shihandi, Rajshahi

**Identification:** Viṣṇu  
**Material:** Ceriticised slate, 121.9 x 63.5 cm  
**Provenance:** Shihandi, Porsha, Rajshahi, Bangladesh  
**Present Whereabouts:** Varendra Research Museum, Accession No.468  
**Language:** correct Sanskrit.  
**Script:**  
**Approximate date:** Undated. The epigraph may be put in the first quarter of the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{227}  

**Epigraphic Study:**

#### Variant Readings:

![Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal](image)

_{Photo Courtesy: [Mitra, H. IHQ, 1925]}_{\textsuperscript{228}}


**Text:**

\[ L.1 \] [ Oṁ ] Jāyā Śrī - Narasi [ ṭṛ ] hasya Śrīmad Adipatātmajā  
\[ L.2 \] Nāpokā khyākarot pu [ ṭṛ ] ā [ ṭṛ ] [ * pratimāṃ * ] Vaiṣṇavimāṃḥ

\( ( m ) / / \)

\textsuperscript{226} See the discussion on inscribed Brāhmanical images in the foregoing pages from the Rajshahi district of Bangladesh.

\textsuperscript{227} H. Mitra, \textit{op. cit.} 1925, p.538.
Translation:
"Om! The wife of Śrī Narasimha, the daughter of Śrīmad-Ādipata, Nānokā by name, has made this auspicious image of Viṣṇu".

Reading 2: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p.67.

Text:
L.1 Orī Jaya Śrī - Narasi [m] hasya Śrīmad Adipatīmajā
L.2 Nānokā Khyakarot pu [ny]ā [m] pratimāṁ Viṣṇaṇīmāṁ [m]

Translation:
The wife of the illustrious Narasimha, the daughter of Śrī Ādipata, Nānaka (or Nālaka) by name, made this auspicious image of Viṣṇu.

Additional References:
Haque, Enamul, op.cit. List No. 309.

Iconographic Study:
The Viṣṇu image from Shihandi is a fragmented specimen of art. Mukhlesur Rahman points out that the image is of Trivikrama variety.\(^{228}\) The deity is shown standing in samapāda on a lotus seat placed on a navaratha pedestal. All the hands of the deity except the upper right hand is broken. The deity is bedecked in profuse ornaments, including an upaviśa and a vanamāla. The subsidiary figures are adorned and stands upon individual lotus footrest. The head of gada, right hand of Lakṣmī and left hand of Saraswati are clipped off. The śudhapurusas at the extreme right and left carry the respective emblems on their heads. The navaratha pedestal is rich in carvings and include the figures of worshippers to the right and Guruḍa to the left. The pointed stele is decorated with conventional motifs. The increase in the rathas of the pedestal is an example of late Pāla period artistic specimen.

\(^{228}\) I have not seen any published photograph of the sculpture. The iconographic description is based on Mukhlesur Rahman's Catalogue, op.cit 1998, p.67.
Observations:

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Shihandi, Naogaon District Rajshahi, is an undated specimen. The two published readings of the epigraphic record as stated above are similar with slight variations. The expression Jāya (R. 1) is not the same as the expression Jaya (R. 2).

The two line inscription is engraved on the pedestal of a mutilated Viṣṇu image and records the installation of the image by one Nānokā, the wife of Śrī Narasimha, and the daughter of Śrīmad-Ādipat. The donor, Nanoka is once again a female donor. The purpose of such donation however remains the same as to accrue merit and happiness of all sentient beings. The inscription throws light on the social position of the donor and her family members. The use of the prefix śrī both for the father as Śrī Ādipat and her husband as Śrī Narasimha suggest that the donor was a member of a respectable honourable family. The family members were devout worshippers of Viṣṇu is alluded by the epigraphic record itself. Narasimha, the lion incarnation of Viṣṇu is one of the name of the god. In this inscribed specimen the name Narasimha is used as a personal name for the donor’s husband.229

Sl. No. 20: An Inscribed Viṣṇu from Surohar, South Dinajpur

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Black basalt, 61 x 25.4cm

229 See, Claudine Bautze Picron, op.cit 1986, p.66.
Provenance: Surohar, Itahar, South Dinajpur District
Language: correct Sanskrit.
Script: 
Approximate date: Undated. The epigraphic record may be put in the first quarter of the twelfth century.230

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Text:
Danapati Madho. Pita Sano. Mata Samtih
Translation:231
Not given.
The image is the gift of Madho, who was the son of Sana and Samtih.

Reading 2: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p.85 and pl.96.
Text:
danapati Madho, pitā Sana mātā samtih
Translation:
Not given.

Additional References:
Majumdar, N. G. “A New Type of Vishnu from North Bengal” Modern Review, 1929. pp.174-176
Saraswati, S. K. “Notes on a Third Tour in the District of Dinajpur-chiefly along the Chirāmati River” JASB, N.S.XXVIII, 1932. pp.192-194, pl.9, fig.1
Banerjea, J. N. 1956, The Development of Hindu Iconography, pp.554-555, pl. XLVIII, fig.4.
Haque, Enamul. op.cit. List No.355, pl.31.

231 A tentative translation is given by me.
Iconographic Study:

The black stone image of Viṣṇu from Surohar (South Dinajpur) in Varendra Research Museum depicts the deity standing in samapāda on a small visvapadma placed on a pañcaratha pedestal. The deity stands under a canopy of seven snake hoods. A long vanamālā reaches up to the knee, with four hands bearing respectively padma, gadā, cakra, and śaṅkha. No consort is represented and Cakrapuruṣa and Śaṅkhapuruṣa, both making abhaya gesture are standing on the right and left respectively. A two-armed figure is shown seated on the top of the prabhāvali, above the snake hoods. Two garland bearing Vidyadharas are shown on both sides of the prabhāvali. The rāha (?) of the pañcaratha pedestal bears the icon of a six-armed dancing figure. The donors in anjalihasta (?) are beautifully carved on the pedestal.

The iconographic peculiarities of this particular sculpture is interesting. Scholars have drawn our attention on some of the unique features not often met with.232 The presence of two-armed seated male figure just above the head of the central deity in this sculpture is an important feature of Buddhist iconography.233 N. G. Majumdar and S.K.Saraswati took the two-armed seated figure as Brahmā. Secondly the presence of six-armed dancing figure in the middle of the pedestal below is conceived by scholars as dancing Śiva. N.G.Majumdar and S. K. Saraswati suggested that Brahmā on the top and Śiva on the pedestal represent the concept of Hindu Trinity. J. N. Banerjea rightly doubted the identification of Brahmā and is of the opinion that Brahmā is rarely depicted with two hands and one face.234 The image do not represent Trivikrama form of Viṣṇu as proposed by N. B. Sanyal.235 R. D. Banerji called this type of images with such iconographic features as Lokesvara-Viṣṇu. The snake has been taken as Ādiśeṣa, the attendant of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is also conceived as Ananta, or the Eternal, the hoods of the snake Ananta being utilized to impart to the deity an idea of eternity.236 The observations made by J. N. Banerjea in connection

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233 In Buddhist iconography Sākyamuni is usually shown with pārīkatthāgatas and the central position is occupied by Amitābha, the Transcendant Buddha.

234 J. N. Banerjea, *op.cit*. pp.554-555, pl. XLVIII, fig. 4.


to the image, as an image of Viṣṇu with some Mahāyāna iconographic traits is more acceptable and convincing.

**Observations:**

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Surohar, South Dinajpur bears inscription on the upper moulding of the amurāhapagas and left Konikapaga of the pedestal. Two readings of the inscriptive evidence is discussed above, and are similar with slight variations. The expression danapati (R.1) is not the same as the expression dānopati (R.2). Dānapati is the correct reading. Variation is noticed in the expression samtih and Sāṁtih used as the name of the donor's mother and Sana and Sāno used as the name of the donor's father. It appears from the above reading that the name Mādho, Sana or Sāno and samtih or Sāṁtih are all vernacular expressions.

The purpose of this votive inscription is to record the installation of a Viṣṇu image by Mādho son of Sāno and Sāṁtih thereby drawing our attention to the fact that the entire family members participated in the performance of the religious duty. This is further corroborated by the iconographic depiction of the parents and the donor on the pedestal? The donation of a large size beautiful image alludes to their social status and economic affluency. The religious faith of the donors family as being the followers of Vaishnavism is clearly gleaned from this inscription.

**Sl. No. 21: An Inscribed Viṣṇu image from Deopara, Rajshahi**

**Identification:** Viṣṇu  
**Material:** Black basalt, 53.4 x 24.1 cm  
**Provenance:** Deopara, Godagiri, Rajshahi, Bangladesh  
**Present Whereabouts:** Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.349  
**Language:** Sanskrit  
**Script:**  
**Approximate date:** Undated. The sculpture is dated to twelfth century.237

**Epigraphic Study:**  
**Variant Readings:**

**Reading 1:** Rahman, M. *SVRM*, Cat. p.66.

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237 M. Rahman, *op.cit.* p.66. The author dates the sculpture to twelfth century A. D. The photo of the image is not published in the monograph.
Text:
Śrī Maka Madhava

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The sculpture finds its mention in Mukhlesur Rahman Catalogue CAT No.151, VRM Accession No.349. The iconography of the image has not been discussed by the author. What he mentions is that except the size and minor details, the specimen is similar to VRM 19, CAT 107.ι take the opportunity to discuss the iconographic features of the image on the basis of the material provided by Mukhlesur Rahman. The figure of Viṣṇu is carved entirely in relief on a pointed slab with a pañcaratha pedestal which is embellished with lotus scrolls and the figures of Garuḍa and worshipper. The deity stands in samapākasthanaka and holds in his four hands gada in upper right hand, cakra in upper left hand, padma in lower right hand and śankha in lower left hand. He is flanked by attendants (not specifically mentioned). The decorative elements of the backslab are executed in different grades of relief.

Observations:

The Viṣṇu image is from the village Deopara, Rajshahi District, Bangladesh. The epigraphic record comprises only three words as deciphered by M. Rahman. The purpose though not fully outlined in this inscription incline us to suggest that the Viṣṇu image was installed by a illustrious donor named Maka. The expression *Madhava* in this instance implies to be one of the name of deity and not used as personal name for the donor.

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Sl. No. 22: An Inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Nahatta, Rajshahi

Viṣṇu, Rajshahi
Photo Courtesy: [Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. pl.74.]

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Black basalt, 73.7 x 38.1 cm
Provenance: Nahatta, Paba, Rajshahi, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.147
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. The sculpture on stylistic ground is a product of 8th - 9th centuries A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p.57, pl.74.

Text:
Dahilā dā ( napati )

Translation:
‘Gift of Dahilā’

Additional References:
Basak, Radhagovinda & Bhattacharyya, D. C. op.cit. pp.18-19.
Haque, Enamul op.cit, List No.326.
Iconographic Study:

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu in black basalt measures 73.7 x 38.1 cm. The example is in a good state of preservation except the mutilated pedestal. A portion of the feet of the female standing to the left is missing and not the legs of the female figure as mentioned by Rahman. The main figure of Viṣṇu is of Trivikrama variety. The deity stands in samapādasthanaka against a huge architectural construct. The lower left hand holds a śatikha, the upper left hand has a cakra and the corresponding lower right and the upper right bears a padma (a lotus bud) and a gāda respectively. The deity is simple and not profusely ornamented. Mukhlesur Rahman emphatically points that the sculpture bears some interesting iconographic features not usually noticed in other Viṣṇu images. The deity is accompanied by two female figures who are not the common attendants viz; Lākṣmī and Sarasvatī. Both the female attendants accompanying the deity stand in tribhāṅga, are two-armed and nimbate. The female standing to the right holds a flower (lotus) in her raised left hand and her right hand which hangs by her side, exhibits the varādā mudrā. The female to the left holds a flower (?) but not a cakra in her raised right hand as suggested by Rahman, the left hands which rests on her hip holds a śatikha. The two female attendants awaits proper identification. The indistinct pedestal bears an iconographic representataion of the donor who is shown in namaskāra mudrā to the right. The sculpture with round stele is a product of eighth-ninth century A.D.

Observations:

The undated image inscription illustrating the Brāhmaṇical deity Viṣṇu from Nahatta, Rajshahi District, Bangladesh is engraved with two words. The image is the religious or meritorious gift of the donor, Dahila. The installation of a Viṣṇu image give an insight to the ‘cult’ followed by the donor. The iconographic identification of the two female consort is intriguing.

Sl. No. 23: An Inscribed Viṣṇu image from Nischinta, Dinajpur

Identification: Viṣṇu lower portion
Material: Cericitised slate, 45.7 x 40.6 cm
Provenance: Nischinta, Tapan, South Dinajpur, West Bengal

239 Mukhlesur Rahman, op.cit, p.57.
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc No. 193
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Rahman, M. *SVRM, Cat.* p. 58.
Text:

Dvijattamasya

Translation:

‘Gift of the Brahmaṇa Uttama’.

Additional References:
Basak, Radhagovinda & Bhattacharyya, D. C., *op.cit*, p. 20.

Iconographic Study:

The image is fragmented. Since the photo of this example is not at our disposal, it is difficult to note down the iconographic features. We learn few points on the iconography of this image from the information given by Mukhlesur Rahman.²⁴⁰ Rahman states that the main deity is missing above the knees, but those of his attendants are intact. The richly carved pañcaraṇa pedestal bears the icon of Garuḍa to the proper left and a worshipper to proper right.

Observations:
The epigraphic record has been deciphered by Mukhlesur Rahman (1998, p.58). According to Rahman, the inscription records a gift of a Brahmaṇa named Uttama. The translation given by Rahman is not satisfactory. The word *dvijattama* in this inscription is used as an adjective and do not refer as a name of the donor, Uttama. According to traditional sources Brahmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya are considered to be *dvija* or twice born. The expression *dvijattama* used in this inscription may refer to a Brahmaṇa who is *uttama* among the *dvijas* i.e. Kṣatriya and Vaiśya in the caturvarṇa system.

Sl. No. 24: An Inscribed Viṣṇu from Nischinta, Tapan, Dinajpur

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Cericitised slate, 91.4 x 43.2 cm
Provenance: Nischinta, Tapan, South Dinajpur, West Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.195
Language: Sanskrit
Script: 
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Mukhlesur Rahman, SVRM, Cat. p.58.
Text:
Orō dānapati dānoḥ
Translation:241
The image is a gift of Dāno

Additional References:
Basak, Radhagovinda & Bhattacharyya, D. C. op.cit, p.18.

Iconographic Study:

The iconographic description of this image is briefly discussed by Rahman.242 The sculpture in question is in a good state of preservation. It is of the Trivikrama type with the same iconographic features and composition identical to the other Viṣṇu images from the region. The decoration of the stele, the female attendants in their tribhanga posture and the central deity in samapādasthānaka is similar.

Observations:

The inscription on the Viṣṇu image from Tapan, South Dinajpur is an undated epigraphic record. The inscription records the gift of an image by the donor Dāno, who is styled as dānapati. No information in regard to the socio-economic background of the donor is revealed from the inscription.

241 The translation of the reading is not given by the author. A tentative translation is given by me.
242 Mukhlesur Rahman, op.cit. p.58. The photograph has not been published by the author in his voluminous Catalogue.
inscriptional evidence. The installation of a Brāhmaṇical deity once again speaks of the religious affiliation of the donor.

Sl. No. 25: An Inscribed Viṣṇu image from Mahisantosh, Rajshahi

**Photo Courtesy:** [Rahman, M. *SVRM, Cat. pl.81*]

**Identification:** Viṣṇu

**Material:** Black Basalt, 86.3 x 53.4 cm

**Provenance:** Mahisantosh, Naogaon, Rajshahi, Bangladesh

**Present Whereabouts:** Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.302

**Language:** Sanskrit

**Script:** Proto-Bengali character

**Approximate date:** Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture may be dated to C.11th century A.D.

**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings:**

**Reading 1:** Rahman, M. *op.cit, SVRM, Cat. p.64.*

**Text:**

_Oṁ Dānapati Divo_

**Translation:**

Gift of Divo

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244 Ibid. p.63.
Text:
Om Danapati Budho

Translation:
Gift of Budho

Additional References:
AR- VRS, 1928-29, pp. 16-17, figs 2 and 3.
Haque, Enamul op. cit; List No.636, Type 15, p. 76.

Iconographic Study:
The mutilated Viṣṇu image from Naogaon Bangladesh is executed in black Basalt. The composition is completely knocked away from the bust of Viṣṇu down to the feet, leaving a hollow in the centre of the composition. The attributes in the four hands of the central deity is conspicuous. The attributes are in the PGCS order i.e. Padma, gadā, cakra, and śaikha. The deity is accompanied by two consorts and two Āyudhapuruṣas each standing on a viśvapadma. To the right of the central deity stands Lakṣmi and cakrapuruṣa and Sarasvati with śaikhapuruṣa to the left. The central deity stands in samapādasthanaka posture with his feet placed on a viśvapadma placed on a saptaratha pedestal. The central position of the pedestal is occupied by a four-armed dancing figure of Śiva within a ring. In his normal hands Śiva holds dhanus and bāpa, the upper two are raised over the head and shown clapping in accompaniment of music. Above the dancing Śiva are rosettes between the figures of donor couples. Garuḍa and worshipper, all carved in lateral angles on the pedestal. The upper part of the image is broken and lost, so it is not possible to guess whether it had snake hoods or the two armed seated figure on the top.

The iconographic feature of the image under discussion is similar to the Surohar Viṣṇu image. The presence of two consorts and two Āyudhapuruṣas, four armed dancing figure of Śiva within a ring (in the Surohar image Śiva is six armed) the snake hoods or the two-armed seated figure on the top (the presence of these two iconographic features are not noted here because of the severe mutilation of the image) are comparable iconographic traits. The image can possibly be identified to Lokesvara-Viṣṇu, if only all the iconographic peculiarities noted in Surohar Viṣṇu would be present in this example. On the other hand, the observation made by J. N. Banerjea, a
sculpture with some Mahāyāna iconographic traits is also suggested. The reverse bears arabesque decoration.

**Observations:**

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Mahisantosh is significant from the epigraphic and iconographic point of view. The donors are iconographically depicted on the pedestal and the inscriptions are engraved over their heads. The purport of this votive inscription is to record the religious gift of two donors, who are styled as dānāpati. Divo and Budho are responsible for this religious act. It is difficult to explain the reason behind the consecration of an image by two donor devotees. A possibility of family relationship is suggested between the two, however we are not sure on this ground. No information regarding the donors socio-economic status is recorded in the epigraphic record.

**Sl. No. 26: An Inscribed Viṣṇu from Ghanashyampur, Dinajpur**

**Identification:** Viṣṇu  
**Material:** Black Basalt, 11.5 x 9.9 cm  
**Provenance:** Ghanashyampur, District Dinajpur, West Bengal  
**Present Whereabouts:** Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No. 1449  
**Language:** corrupt Sanskrit  
**Script:** Proto-Bengali character of the twelfth century

**Approximate date:** Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture may be dated to C. 11th century A.D. Nirad Bandhu Sanyal suggest a date of 12th century A.D.

**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings:**

**Reading 1:** Saraswati, S. K. “Notes on Two Tours in the Districts of Māldah and Dinājpur” *JASB* [N.S.XXVIII] p.181.

**Text:**

_Vasathava_

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245 N. B. Sanyal, _op.cit_, 1932-33 & 1933-34, p.17.  
246 Mukhlesur Rahman, _op.cit_, p.84.  
247 N. B. Sanyal, _op.cit_, p.17.
Translation:
Translation not given. Saraswati writes "probably stands for Vasudeva, a name of Viṣṇu".

Reading 2: N. B. Sanyal. *op.cit.*, 1932-33 & 1933-34, p.17.

Text:
*Oṁ Va (a) suda (de) va*

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Rahman, Mukhlesur, *op.cit.* p. 84.
Haque, Enamul *op.cit.* List No. 295.

Iconographic Study:
The Viṣṇu image from Ghanashyampur is executed in black Basalt. The image is carved from the feet up to the armpit in the round. The image is of Trivikrama type as suggested by scholars like Mukhlesur Rahman and N. B. Sanyal. But it is difficult to give our opinion on the iconographic traits of this sculpture as there is no photograph of the image at our disposal nor I have seen any published photograph of the same. Rahman is of the opinion that the image is placed on a pāncaratha pedestal. A portion from the upper right with the figure of a flying vidyādhara is broken away.

Observations:
The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Ghanashyampur, West Bengal is undated. The single word at the base of the image cannot be labeled as a typical votive inscription. Two published reading are discussed above. The expression is variantly read as *Vasathava* (R.1, S. K. Saraswati) and *Vāsudeva* (R.2, N. B. Sanyal). The record begins with the auspicious word *Oṁ* followed by Vāsudeva according to the reading of N. B. Sanyal. This have led me to suggest that the inscription is a partial reading of the salutation to Lord Viṣṇu which begin with *Oṁ namo bhagavate vāsudevīya*. Two important words *bhagavate / bhagavan* and *namo* is missing in this context.248

248 A large corpus of epigraphic records (Copper Plates and image inscriptions) from Bengal and Bihar are inscribed with a salutation to Lord Viṣṇu. See, Bautze Picron, *op.cit.* 1986, pp.65-81.
Sl. No. 27: An Inscribed Image of Viṣṇu image from Nahet, Dinajpur

Identification: Pedestal of a Viṣṇu
Material: Black Basalt, 15.2 x 25.4 cm
Provenance: Nahet, Dinajpur District, West Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.1450
Language: Sanskrit
Script:

Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture may be dated to C.12th century A.D.249 S. K. Saraswati also suggest a date of 12th century A.D. 250

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Saraswati, S. K. “Notes on Two Tours in the Districts of Māldah and Dinājpur” JASB [N.S.XXVIII], p.181.

Text:
Danapati adet

Translation:
Not given
In context to the translation of the record, S. K. Saraswati is of two opinion. The word adet can be read as adadat i.e the donor gave it, or more likely ‘adīt’ meaning the donor (himself) carved (it).

Reading 2: Rahman, Mukhlesur. op.cit, SVRM, Cat. p. 84.

Text:
Oih danapati Adesa

Translation:
Gift of Adesa

Additional References:

Sanyal, N. B. op.cit. 1932-33 & 1933-34, p.17

Iconographic Study:

Viṣṇu image from Nahet, Dinajpur district is executed in black basalt of the Pāla-Sena period. Mukhlesur Rahman informs that the saptaratha pedestal is carved with the figures of Garuḍa

249 Mukhlesur Rahman, op.cit.1998, p.84.
251 Mukhlesur Rahman, op.cit, 1998, p.84.
and worshippers between lotus scrolls. The photograph of the sculpture is not found in any of the published materials.

Observations:

The surviving pedestal of the Viṣṇu image is engraved with a single line of writing. I have discussed two published reading. Rahman reads the epigraphic record as Oṁ Ṛṇapati Ādeśa and S. K. Saraswati as Dīnapati adet ( adadīt ). Saraswati explains his reading of the expression adet as adadīt meaning the donor's name or adāt meaning the donor (himself) carved (it). The reading as given by both the scholars are remarkably different. The name of the donor according to the second reading is Ādeśa and not adadīt as given in the first. As we do not have an eye-copy or the photo of the epigraphic record it is difficult to make any assessment in this context. However, the name of the donor in both the readings as Ādeśa and Adet ( Adadīt ) appears to be of non-sanskritic affiliation.

Sl. No. 28: An Inscribed Viṣṇu image from Kusumba, Rajshahi

Identification: Viṣṇu, Lower portion
Material: Black Basalt, 25.4 x 30.5 cm
Provenance: Kusumba, Naogaon Rajshahi District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.1478
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture may be dated to C. 12th century A.D.²⁵²

Epigraphic Study:

[Variant Readings]

Reading 1: Rahman, M. op. cit. SVRM, Cat. p.86.

Text:
Not given

Translation:
Not given

²⁵² Mukhlesur Rahman, ibid. p.86.
Additional References:
Sanyal, N. B. *op. cit.* 1932-33 & 1933-34, p.18.
Haque, Enamul. *op. cit.* List No.584.

Iconographic Study:

The image of Viṣṇu is in fragment.253 The figure of the main deity from above the knees, and the upper half of the back-slab is missing. The vanamāla is seen below and on either side of Viṣṇu’s knees. Figures of the attendants have survived. The attending figures and the main deity stand on individual footrest in their usual stance. Garuḍa sits in sukhāsana on a lotus placed in the centre of the pañcaratha pedestal, carved with rosettes, a lotus at each end and a worshipper to the right.

Observations:

The lower portion of Viṣṇu image as recorded by Mukhlesur Rahman bear an illegible inscription. The author makes no attempt to read the indistinct writing. I have included this sculptural object in my work because it is inscribed.

Sl. No. 29 : An Inscribed image of Kṛṣṇa and Yaśodā from Briddhigram, Bogra

Identification: The sculpture depicts Kṛṣṇa as a butter thief
Material: Black Basalt, 43.2 x 22.9 cm
Provenance: Briddhigram, Bogra District, Bangladesh
Language: Sanskrit
Script:

253 A short account on the iconography of the example is given by me on the basis of Rahman’s description, *ibid.*
Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is dated to C.12th century A.D.254

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p.131.

Text:
Not given

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Annual Report-Varendra Research Society, 1925-26, pp.5-6, pl. II.
Haque, Enamul, op.cit. List No.550, p.128, pl.100.

Iconographic Study:

The sculpture carved in black basalt has been discovered from village Briddhigram, Nandigram Bogra district. The sculpture is unique because of its iconographic representation. The specimen depicts a Purānic scene in which Yaśoda is shown standing on a viśvapadma and churning milk. The viśvapadma is placed on a paścaratha pedestal. The milk pot is placed on a platform and Kṛṣṇa as a child is seen squatting near the pot and stealing butter from the pot using his right hand. This Pūrānic scene is portrayed inside a room, suggested by trefoil arch supported by a pair of pilasters. On the right of the pedestal, a cow is being milked while a calf is standing nearby. The pedestal is decorated with lotus scrolls and several human figures. The upper part of the stele including the face of Yaśodā is damaged.

Observations:

This is the only inscribed specimen which depict Kṛṣṇa's childhood. A single line indistinct inscription is engraved on the upper moulding of the paścaratha pedestal. The epigraphic record is illegible and therefore has not attracted the attention of scholars.255 I have included this image in my study because it is inscribed.

254 Mukhlesur Rahman, ibid. p.130.

255 Mukhlesur Rahman, ibid. p.131 mentions that a single line inscription is indistinct.
Sl. No. 30: An Inscribed Viṣṇu image from Bihanali Rajshahi

Viṣṇu, Bihanali

Photo Courtesy: [SVRM, Cat. pl.71]

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Black basalt, 78.8 x 38.1 cm
Provenance: Bihanali, Rajshahi District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Accession No.81
Language: Sanskrit
Script: 

Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is dated to C.11th century A.D.256

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p.55, pl.71.
Text:
Oṁ Mahādeva Mādhava

Translation:
The great god Mādhava (Viṣṇu)

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The four-armed Viṣṇu is shown standing in samapādthānakā on a visvapadma resting on a saptaratha pedestal which has in its middle the figure of Garuḍa in bhadrakāna with a donor couple to his right. The lower hand of the deity, which held a śrīkha is broken. He is adorned

256 Mukhlesur Rahman, ibid, p.54.
with vanamālā, a karapāṭamukūṭa, uttariya and jewellery on his person. The attendant figures are also richly adorned. A separate lotus seat is given to the attendants including Lākṣmī, Sarasvatī, Saṅkhapuruṣa and Cakrapuruṣa. The pointed stele is decorated with the usual motifs, including the kūrtimukha.

Observations:

A single reading of this undated epigraphic record is discussed. The inscription refers to god Viṣṇu, as great (Mahādeva). The inscriptive evidence once again records one of the name of the deity, Mādhava, found in several copper plates and image inscriptions.

Sl. No. 31: An Inscribed image of Umā-Maheśvara from Mangalbari, Rajshahi

Identification: Umā-Maheśvara
Material: Bronze, 10.2 x 7.3 cm
Provenance: Mangalbari, Naogaon, Rajshahi District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.733
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Proto-Bengali

Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is dated to C.12th century A.D.258

258 ibid.p. 164.
Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p.165.

Text:

Not given

Translation:
The name of the donor appears to be Aineala

Additional References:

AR-VRS, 1927-28, p.3, fig.1

Iconographic Study:

The bronze image of Umā-Maheśvara from Mangalbari Rajshahi District, measures 10.2 x 7.3 cm. Umā-Maheśvara is shown seated in a conversational attitude on a full blown lotus placed on a triratha pedestal, resting on six legs. Śiva is ārdhavaliṅga and a snake (cobra) coiled around his neck. He is four-armed. One arm embraces his consort, another rests on her breast in tripatīka pose, the upper left hand holds a trident (trisula) and a lotus in the corresponding upper right hand. He wears a belted paridhāna and the usual ornaments, his hair is dressed high on the head. Parvati sits on Maheśvara left lap with her right hand placed around her consort’s neck and the left hand holds a mirror. Below the seat are the viṅhanas, the bull reclining and the lion standing. To the right and left are small figures of Kārtikeya and Gaṇeśa, each seated on a lotus. A female worshipper is shown seated on one of the leg of the pedestal to the left.

Observations:

The sculpture in bronze from Mangalbari, Rajshahi District, Bangladesh is inscribed in two lines at the back of the pedestal.259 Rahman only reads the expression Aineala. He further suggest it to be the donor’s name. It is difficult to draw any conclusion on the basis of this incomplete reading.

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259 This information is given by M. Rahman, op. cit.1998, p.165.
Sl. No. 32: Inscribed image of Durga Mahisamardini, Rajshahi

Identification: Durga Mahisamardini
Material: Cericitised slate, 33 x 43.2 cm
Provenance: Mahadevpur, Naogaon, Rajshahi District
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.263
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is dated to C.11th century A.D.260

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p.196.
Text:
Oṁ vis (s) ayyārīka Gaṅgā
Translation:
Not given.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The iconographic peculiarities of this inscribed image of Devī is given below on the basis of the description provided by Mukhlesur Rahman.261 Rahman mention that the entire composition is placed on a viśvapadma supported by a semicircular pedestal with the effigies of the donor and his wife in the midst of the rosettes. The image is mutilated, above the waist of the deity including her right hands. Only three of her left hands have partially survived. The central deity is represented in prayāṭiṣṭha with her right foot on the back of the buffalo, whose severed head is lying on the lotus seat. Her other leg is stretched. The asura has emerged from the body of the buffalo, but his left leg is within the animal’s neck, while the other leg has been grabbed by the jaws of the lion. The prong of the trident is seen sticking into the asura’s bosom. The attributes

261 Ibid.p.196. Photograph of the image is not published in the Varendra Research Museum’s Catalogue.
seen in the other two left hands of the deity is a cobra and a bow. Devi is attired in a sādī and a close-fitting jacket. She is bejeweled with a pearl upavīta and kaṃcidāma. To the right of the deity is her auxiliary, a female warrior, headless, holding a sword and shield.

**Observations:**

The inscribed Mahiṣamardini from Mahadevpur, Rajshahi District, Bangladesh, is undated. It is difficult to make any observation in connection to this inscription mainly for two reasons; no translation is given by the author, secondly it is difficult to make any sense from the incomplete reading of the text.

**Sl. No. 33: An Inscribed image of Durgā Mahiṣamardini from Dinajpur**

*Mahiṣamardini, Gangarampur*

Photo Courtesy: [Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. pl.191]

**Identification:** Durgā Mahiṣamardini  
**Material:** Buff sandstone  
**Provenance:** Gangarampur, South Dinajpur, West Bengal  
**Present Whereabouts:** Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.1391.  
**Language:** Sanskrit  
**Script:** siddhamātrkā  
**Approximate date:** Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is dated to C.7th century A.D.263

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262 M. Rahman mention that the script is of 7th century A. D. It is known that the script used during the period from CE 7th c - CE10th was known as siddhamātrkā.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Sanyal, N. B. \textit{op.cit}, 1931-32, p. 11.

Text: \textit{rajaputra \textit{Srî} Tikkukah / Bhattara ...}

Translation: Not given


Text: \textit{rajaputra \textit{Srî} Tikkukah / Bhaṭṭara ...}

Translation: Not given

Additional References:
Asher, Frederick. \textit{op.cit.} 1980, p.97, pl. 240.

Iconographic Study:

The deity carved in Buff sandstone stands in \textit{pratyāśīṣṭha}; the right foot is firmly stretched on the ground, while the left is placed in an archer’s pose on the back of the Mahiṣa with protruding tongue. Out of its head emerges the asura. He is clad in \textit{paridhāna} and a short sword. Part of his right leg remains within the body of the buffalo, and the other is raised, bent at the knee. The female divinity is six-armed. The main hands hold the hair of the asura and pierce him down with a \textit{trisula}. Two of the additional hands carry \textit{dhanus} and \textit{bana}; the attributes in the remaining hands are broken away. She is bejeweled on hip, neck, arms, wrist and feet. The head is missing. The sculpture is stylistically a product of pre-Pāla period.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Mahiṣamardinī from Gangarampur is undated. The single line inscription is engraved at the bottom of the pedestal. Two published readings have been discussed above. No variant expression is noticed in the given inscriptive evidence. The simple reading perhaps refer to a donor named \textit{Tikkukah} who is an honourable person or a noble Lord, justified by the
term \textit{rajaputra}. Thus the religious gift of the Mahiṣamardini image is offered by a devotee belonging to a royal household. The donor’s socio-economic position is evident from the inscription. The installation of a Brāhmaṇical deity speaks of his religious leanings.

\textbf{Sl. No. 34: An Inscribed image of Durgā Mahiṣamardini from Rajshahi}

\textbf{Identification:} Durgā Mahiṣamardinī  
\textbf{Material:} Black Basalt, 32.9 x 23 cm  
\textbf{Provenance:} Laksmipur, Nawabganj, Rajshahi District  
\textbf{Present Whereabouts:} Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.4066  
\textbf{Language:} Sanskrit  
\textbf{Script:} Proto-Bengali characters  
\textbf{Approximate date:} Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is dated to C.10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.\textsuperscript{264}

\textbf{Epigraphic Study:}  
\textbf{Variant Readings}:

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{inscription}
\caption{Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{264} Mukhlesur Rahman, \textit{op. cit}, p.203.
Reading 1: Mukhlesur Rahman, SVRM, Cat. p.204, pl.195.

Text:

Vikṛtānānā

Translation:

which means with a terrifying face'.

Additional References:

Rahman, M. “A New Type of Mahisamardini image from Bangladesh” Sraddhanjali, D. C. Sircar Commemoration Volume, 1988, pp.168-175, pl.22.

Iconographic Study:

The inscribed image of Durgā Mahiṣamardini from Laksmipur, Rajshahi District is a unique example from Bangladesh. The deity is four-armed, seated in lalitāsana on the back of her lion mount. The stele at the top along with her face is partially damaged. She is clad in paridhiṣṭāna and a thin uttarīya pass around her body. She is bejeweled in usual ornaments. The divinity face is turned towards her left. The demon Mahiṣa appears in pure animal form. The two main hands of the deity hold the trident in front and in the upper right hand is an object which resembles a drinking vessel (?) and in the upper left hand an ankusa. The lion mount is crouching on the plain pedestal with its head turned upwards. The facial expression of Devī as depicted with smiling countenance represents her saumya form rather than the terrifying aspect.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Mahiṣamardinī from Laksmipur is undated. A single reading is given by Mukhlesur Rahman, which he reads as Vikṛtānānā. Rahman however fails to notice the auspicious symbol siddhaṃ as vivd from the photograph of the pedestal, before the word Vikṛtānānā. According to Rahman the female goddess delineates a ‘terrifying face’ corroborated by the epigraphic word Vikṛtānānā. Vikṛtānānā means a ‘terrifying face’ but while examining the image from the iconographic point of view, I have noticed that the face reveal a smiling countenance and represent soft and placid (śānta) aspect rather than the terrifying form.

265 Expressed by symbol.
Sl. No. 35: An Inscribed image of Gaurī from Belamla, Bogra

**Identification**: Gaurī

**Material**: Black Basalt, 94 x 45.7 cm

**Provenance**: Belamla, Joypurhat, Bogra District, Bangladesh

**Present Whereabouts**: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No. 691.

**Language**: Sanskrit

**Script**: Proto-Bengali characters

**Approximate date**: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is dated to C.12th century A.D.267

**Epigraphic Study**: Variant Readings:

**Reading I**: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p.213.

**Text**:

Rajlii Śrī Gita Lalitā

**Translation**:

The queen Gita Lalitā, probably the donor of the image.

**Additional References**:

AR-VRS,1926-27, pp.3-4.

**Iconographic Study**:

The four-armed deity stands in *samapādasthānaka* on a *visvapādana* placed on a *pañcaratha* pedestal.268 According to the author, all four hands of the deity are badly damaged, except the upper right hand and the upper left that holds *aśyani* and *darpana* respectively. The lower hands are placed on the heads of her sons who are shown standing to her right and left respectively. Ganaša has an axe in right hand, but the bowl of sweets in his left hand is missing. The attribute in the right hand of Karttikeya is damaged. His left hand is on the hip. The goddess is bejwelled and wears a *jatamukūṭa*.

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266 Mukhlesur Rahman, *op.cit.*, p. 213.

267 Ibid.

268 The iconographic discussion follows the description given by Mukhlesur Rahman, *op.cit.* p.213. I have found no published photograph of this image.
Observations:

The inscribed image of Gauri from the village Belamla (Bogra District) is undated. The single line inscription at the bottom of the pedestal records the name of the donor. The donor is an illustrious lady named Sri Gita belonging to the royal household. It appears that the donor Sri Gita may have been a queen of the ruling king of the then period. A second observation regarding the identification of the female goddess as Lalita could have been possible only if the photograph of the image would be in our disposition. It is again noteworthy to mention here the opinion put forward by Enamul Haque who firmly establishes the identification of the female goddess as Lalitā. Haque also points to the religious significance of this essentially Bengali goddess and her popularity in Bengal during the last few centuries before the coming of the Muslims. However, no further observations in this connection can be made, until the photograph of the inscribed specimen is available and a proper epigraphic and iconographic examination is attempted.

Sl. No. 36: Inscribed Cāmunḍa from Dubail, Rajshahi

Identification: Cāmunḍa

Material: Cercitised slate, 50.8 x 21.6 cm

Provenance: Dubail, Rajshahi District, Bangladesh

Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No. 207

Language: Sanskrit

269 The iconographic description given by Mukhlesur Rahman is scanty. But the features noticed in the Gauri image from Joypurhat is more or less similar to Lalita, i.e., bridal type of the female goddess, Parvati or Uma. See, G. Bhattacharya, op.cit. 2000, ‘A Special Type of Devi Figure From Bihar And Bengal’, pp.181-187.

270 E. Haque, op.cit, p.235.
Script: Proto-Bengali characters

Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman, the sculpture is dated to the 11th century A.D. 271

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal

Reading 1: Bhattasali, N. K. *IBBS*, p. 211.

Text:

*Piśitāśanā*

Translation:
Not given


Text:

*Piśitāśanā*

Translation:
Not given

Reading 3: Rahman, M. *SVRM, Cat.* p. 221.

Text:

*Piśitāśanā*

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:


**Iconographic Study:**

The image of Camunda from Dubail, Rajshahi District is in a good state of preservation, except for the nose which is partially mutilated. The deity is four-armed and shown seated on a caparisoned ass which is facing to the left. The three eyed divinity holds a sword in upper right hand and a shield in the corresponding left. There is a cobra in the lower right hand and a kapāla in the lower left hand. The emaciated body of the deity is not so prominent in this example. The breast bones and sinews are indicated by incised lines over the arms and the torso. Her pendulous breasts and slightly sunken abdomen is covered with a šāṭī and an upavīṭa runs across her body. The necklace of human skulls (naramunda māla) is conspicuous by its absence. An oval aureole frames her head. The pointed stele is plain except for the lotus motif which crowns the apex.

**Observations:**

The inscribed image of Camunda from Rajshahi is an undated example. I have discussed three possible readings of the epigraphic record noticed by me. The reading of the word Pisitāsanā is same in the three readings with minor variation. Mukhlesur Rahman and Enamul Haque have given the same spelling of the term Pisitāsanā. They have used sa whereas N. K. Bhattasali have used ś instead of sa in the word Piśitāsanā.

The significance of the inscription on the pedestal as Pisitāsanā is uncertain. Enamul Haque has studied the image both iconographically and perhaps epigraphically and have raised few issues in context to the identification of this Camunda image. Initially it was pointed by N. K. Bhattasali that the image belong to the Kalikā variety according to the description as given in Matsya Purāṇa. Later Enamul Haque points out that except for the mount (the ass) and the general emaciated characteristics, no other attributes of the image agree with the text of Kalikā. Haque further points that Piśitāsa has been named as one of the 64 Yogiṇīs in the Agni-Purāṇa and in the Mayadipika, quoted by Hemādri. Haque finally suggest that Piśitāsa may be considered as one of the goddess, following an unknown text. The word Piśitāsa as recorded in the inscribed specimen is one of the name given to the wrathful aspect of śaktī deity,

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272 N. K. Bhattasali, op.cit, p. 211.

273 Enamul Haque, op.cit, p. 271.
Camunda. The image was certainly donated for acquiring religious merit. But the present epigraphic record do not give any information in this regard.

Sl. No. 37: Inscribed Camunda from Dinajpur

Camunda
Photo Courtesy: [Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. pl. 217]

Identification: Camunda
Material: Cercitised slate, 22.8 x 14 cm
Provenance: District Dinajpur, West Bengal (exact provenance unknown)
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Proto-Bengali characters
Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is dated to C.11th century A.D.²⁷⁴

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Plate: Close up view of the inscription to the left portion of the back-plate

²⁷⁴Mukhlesur Rahman, op.cit, p. 222.
Reading 1: Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS, p.209.

Text:
"Charchikā

Translation:
Not given

Reading 2: Haque, Enamul. BSHI, p. 272.

Text:
'Carcikā'

Translation:
Not given

Reading 3: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p. 222, pl. 217.

Text:
Carcikā

Translation:
Rahman suggest that the name of the goddess is Carcikā.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The sculpture carved in cercitised slate measures 22.8 x 14 cm and is presently housed in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi. The emaciated goddess with six arms is seated in lalitāśana on a dead male figure (śava) who is lying on his back above the pañcaratha pedestal. The pendent right leg of the deity is laid on a lotus footrest. The three-eyed goddess holds the kapāla, knife and sword on the right, Khatvāṅga-triśūla, munda and shield on the left. She is seated under a vata tree from the branches of which hang few skulls. The depiction of a vata-tree under which the goddess is shown seated (vaṭavyaḥśasamāśritā) is quite conspicuous in this example. She is modestly adorned and wears besides the upavīśa, a long garland comprising bones. Her pendulous breasts are hanging over the sunken abdomen. The deity reveals a smiling countenance. The pedestal from the extreme right depict a figure of the devotee with folded hands, followed by three human heads (naramuṇḍa) on a stand, human figure and an animal figure.
Observations:

The inscribed Cāmuṇḍa from Dinajpur District is a well known art specimen. It is an undated example with a single expression Carcikā appearing on the upper part of the back-plate. I have given the three possible readings of the inscription as discussed by scholars. N. K. Bhattasali, pointed that the image belong to the Rudra-Carcika variety according to the description as given in Agni-Purāṇa. Enamul Haque further points that according to the Agni-Purāṇa two of the hands of Rudra-Carcika is meant to support the elephant skin. This iconographic feature is missing in the present image. Following the iconographic dimensions as discussed by the scholars, it may be suggested that the present inscribed image do not belong to the Rudra Carcikā variety of the Eight Mothers. However, from the epigraphic point of view the word Carcika on the stele is considered to be one of the name of the śakta deity. The discovery of several Cāmuṇḍa images from the atelier of Rajshahi, Naogaon and Bogra District (Bangladesh) and the present one from Dinajpur District (West Bengal) suggest the region to have been a stronghold of Cāmuṇḍa worship.

Sl. No. 38: An Inscribed image of Sūrya from Jugpur, Rajshahi

Identification: Sūrya
Material: Black basalt, 27.4 x 29.4 cm
Provenance: Jugpur, Godagari, Rajshahi District
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No. 6
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is dated to C.12th century A.D. 276

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p. 235.

Text: Hibboka

275 N. K. Bhattasali, op.cit, p. 20.
276 Mukhlesur Rahman, op.cit, p.235.
Translation:
Rahman mention that the indistinct inscription reads the donor's name as Hibboka

Additional References:
Radhagovinda Basak & D.C.Bhattacharyya, op.cit, p. 25.

Iconographic Study
The inscribed image of Sūrya from Godagari, Rajshahi is a fragmented example. The iconographic description is based wholly on Mukhlesur Rahman’s observation. The deity stands *samapākasthānaka* on a *mahāmbuja* on a *saptaratha* pedestal with Mahāśvetā (*Prthivi / Vasumati*) standing between his legs in the same stance. Her hands are damaged. To the right of Sūrya are Piṅgala and Nikṣubhā (a consort of the god) with Uṣā in archer pose in front. Bearded and pot-bellied Piṅgala carries pen and ink-pot in his two hands and Nikṣubhā has a fly-whisk in right hand, while her left hand rest on hip. Aruṇa is shown seated in front of Mahāśveta. The central deity as well as the attendants are clad in *paridhīna* and booted. The *saptaratha* pedestal bears the figure of only six horses of the chariot (the seventh horse is missing).

Observations:
The inscribed image of Sūrya from Jugpur is undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the single expression engraved on the pedestal records the donor’s name. The name *Hibboka* is a non-sanskritic term.

Sl No. 39: An Inscribed image of Sūrya from Rajshahi

Identification: Sūrya
Material: Cericitised slate, 53.4 x 66 cm
Provenance: Rajshahi District( exact provenance unknown)\(^{277}\)
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No. 177
Language: Sanskrit
Script: 12\(^{th}\) century character
Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is dated to C.12\(^{th}\) century A.D.

\(^{277}\) Ibid.p.241.
Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:


Text:

\textit{O	extipa{t}"{i} Amita s (\textipa{\textsection}) ilp\textipa{\textsection}kena pratim\textipa{\textsection} g\textipa{\textsection}hatishah O	extipa{t}"{i} Taran\textipa{\textsection}si\textipa{\textsection}mya} (Taran\textipa{\textsection}si\textipa{\textsection}ya)

Translation:

“This image was made by the craftsman Amita of Taranisi” (?)

Additional References:
Radhagovinda Basak & D.C. Bhattacharyya, \textit{op.cit.} p.25.

Iconographic Study:

The inscribed image of Surya from Godagari, Rajshahi is another example which suffers from mutilation. The iconographic description is based wholly on Mukhlesur Rahman’s observation.\(^{278}\)

Only the lower portion of the image which is in two fragments with three attendants to right and the \textit{navaratha} pedestal, containing on its dado seven horses galloping between male and female worshippers have survived. The main figure is missing from above the booted legs which are placed on a \textit{padmap\textipa{\textsection}tha}. The figures of Mahasvetā and Aruṇa are badly mutilated. Piṅgala’s head is missing; he is pot-bellied and holds pen and inkpot in his two hands. The head of Uṣā, framed by nimbus, is chipped off. She is not represented in the archer pose but stands with the right foot forward, holding the bow in the left hand and drawing an arrow from a quiver on her back with right hand. Rājñī stands facing left holding a fly-whisk in right hand. Her left hand is placed on the hip. She as well as Piṅgala and Uṣā are attired in \textit{paridh\textipa{\textsection}ana}, high boots and bedecked with jewellery.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Surya from Rajshahi District is an undated inscribed specimen. The only published reading noticed by me has been discussed above. According to Rahman the image was

\(^{278}\) Ibid. Photograph of the image has not been published by the author.
made or sculpted by Amita, the šilpin. The inscription once again refers to a social group who practiced a low occupation such as image carving and was given the status of śūdra.\footnote{R. N. Misra, \emph{op. cit.} 2009.}

Sl. No. 40: Inscribed image of Manasā from Ghatnagar, Rajshahi

![Manasā, Ghatnagar](Image)

Manasā, Ghatnagar

Photo Courtesy: [Rahman, M. \emph{SVRM, Cat.} pl. 297]

Identification: Manasā
Material: Cericitised slate, 12.6 x 7.9 cm
Provenance: Ghatnagar, Naogaon Rajshahi District
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No. 736
Language:
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is dated to C.11th century A.D.\footnote{Mukhlesur Rahman, \emph{op. cit.} have dated the sculpture on the basis of iconographic features.}

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

\textbf{Reading 1:} Rahman, M. \emph{SVRM, Cat.} p.316, pl. 297.

\textbf{Text:}\footnote{The text of the votive record is not given by M. Rahman. I have included the art object in this work on the basis of information given by the author. Rahman mentions that traces of inscription appears at the base of the pedestal, \emph{ibid}. p.316.}

Not given
Iconographic Study:

The inscribed image of the snake-goddess Manasā from Ghatnagar, Porsha, Rajshahi District is in a fairly good state of preservation. The deity is two-armed and seated in *lalitāsana* on a *viswapadma* placed on a *triratha* pedestal. She holds a lotus in the right hand extended in *varamudrā* and a snake in the left. A seven headed snake canopy surrounds her head. To the right and left of the central figure on a higher plane two seated male figures are depicted. Both of them are provided with a lotus seat. According to Rahman the man to the left is seated in *bhaddhapadmāsana* with a snakehood and the other male figure to the right is bearded and appears like a yogi. The pedestal at its central position bears the *ghata* and a worshipper to the left. There is a lotus at the apex of the pointed back-slab with a flying vidyadharas on either side.

Observations:

According to Mukhlesur Rahman, the inscribed image of Manasā from Rajshahi bears traces of inscription on its pedestal. I have included the image in this study because it is inscribed.

Sl. No. 41: An Inscribed image of Sadāśiva from Khiratta, Dinajpur

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282 Ibid, p.316.
283 Since the photograph is very indistinct it is difficult to identify the two male companions.
Identification: Sadasiva
Material: Cericitised slate, 55.9 x 25.7 cm.  
Provenance: Khiratta, P.S.Tapan, South Dinajpur District, West Bengal.
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.160
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Proto-Bengali character
Approximate date: Undated. Mukhlesur Rahman suggest the date to C.10th-11th century A.D. Haridas Mitra has dated the image palaeographically to 950-1050 A.C.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal

Photo Courtesy: [Mitra, Haridas JPASB, p.184]


Text:


Translation:

Not given

Additional References:
Rahman, M. op.cit. p.149, pl.150.

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284 According to Haridas Mitra the sculpture is carved in black clay- chlorite stone, measuring 1’x 9”x10”. See, Haridas Mitra “Sadāśiva worship in early Bengal” JASB, N.S. Vol.29, 1933, p.209.

285 Mukhlesur Rahman, op.cit. p.149.

286 Mukhlesur Rahman have dated the sculpture on the basis of iconographic features.


288 H. Mitra, ibid. p.184, fn. 2 is not certain whether the eighth and the eleventh aksara within the brackets is bha or na.

200
Iconographic Study:

The iconographic description of the inscribed Sadāśiva image from Khiratta has been discussed in detail by Haridas Mitra and Mukhlesur Rahman. The three-faced and ten-armed deity is seated in baddhapadmāsanā on a visvapadma placed on a paścaratha pedestal. Of the three faces, the face at the front is badly mutilated. The two-side faces which have survived are three-eyed. The forearms of the proper right and left hands are amputated. In the surviving right hands the deity exhibits sakti, triśūla, Khattvāṅga and varada mudrā in bhūnisparsa style. The attributes in the corresponding left hands appear to be nilotpala,damaru,bhujāṅga289 and bijapīraka. The deity is adorned with a jatamukuta on his three heads and a garland of disc-shaped human bones hangs down the neck and reaches the throne. The chest of the figure is inflated. A tri-foil arch rises above the head of the main image. There is a kirtimukha at the top with the garland-bearing vidyādharas on either side.

The pedestal shows the device of elephant between lions suggesting that the deity is seated on a sitākāsana. At the extreme left is the kneeling figure of the donor and at the extreme right is naivedya. Mitra while discussing the iconographic peculiarities of this image have made some interesting comments. According to the scholar the specimen illustrates the “mutual assimilation and approximation of the Brahmanic and the Buddhistic faiths”. He further elaborates that the figure displays abhaya-mudrā in vyākha style and the varada-mudrā in bhūnisparsa style, which is peculiar to the Buddhist images. Moreover the device of two lions between the elephant is a common feature of Buddhist iconography.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Sadāśiva from South Dinajpur bear a single line votive record on the rāhastā of the paścaratha pedestal. Unfortunately the epigraph on the pedestal has received no attention by the scholars. Haridas Mitra refers to the inscription that find mention in the foot note. No translation of this incomplete reading is given by the author. Mukhlesur Rahman on the other hand gives a passing reference to the inscriptional evidence. The scholars have emphasized on the iconographic dimension of the image. The record begins with an auspicious symbol

289 M. Rahman is of this opinion. op.cit, p.149. According to Haridas Mitra, ibid. the attribute is sarpa or snake.
siddham\textsuperscript{290} noted in the ink impression of the epigraph. Haridas Mitra does not begin his reading with the auspicious word siddham.

It is difficult to make any observation on the basis of the reading as no translation is given by the author. But the two words \textit{Yajam\text{\text{"a}}na} and \textit{Val\text{\text{"a}}ka} as recorded in the first part of the inscription makes sense. The meaning of the word \textit{Yajam\text{\text{"a}}na} in M. Monier-Williams\textsuperscript{291} \textit{A Sanskrit-English Dictionary} means the pupil of a Br\text{\text{"a}}hman who defrays the expenses of a sacrifice. It appears that \textit{Yajam\text{\text{"a}}na} in this inscription is responsible for dedicating the image of Sad\text{\text{"a}}siva. The geographical connotation of the word \textit{Val\text{\text{"a}}ka}, can also be V\text{\text{"a}}l\text{\text{"a}}ika-V\text{\text{"a}}l\text{\text{"a}}ika-V\text{\text{"a}}l\text{\text{"a}}ika-V\text{\text{"a}}l\text{\text{"a}}ika country, geographically located in modern Balkh region on the Oxus in the northern part of Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{292} It appears on the whole, that the donor who is a \textit{Yajam\text{\text{"a}}na} in this inscription came from the North Western part of the subcontinent for image installation. The \textit{Yajam\text{\text{"a}}na} may belong to any social strata of the contemporary society. His economic position is clearly exemplified as a rich patron who could afford to install an image of the Br\text{\text{"a}}hmanical deity, Sad\text{\text{"a}}siva.

\textbf{Sl. No.42: An Inscribed image of Sad\text{\text{"a}}siva from Shahpur, Rajshahi}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image.png}
\end{center}

\textbf{Plate: Sad\text{\text{"a}}siva}
\textbf{Identification:} Sad\text{\text{"a}}siva  \\
\textbf{Material:} Cericitised slate, 51.5 x 23.5 cm.  \\
\textbf{Provenance:} Shahpur, Niyatmatpur, District Rajshahi, Bangladesh  \\
\textbf{Present Whereabouts:} Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.235

\textsuperscript{290} Expressed by symbol.

\textsuperscript{291} See, Monier-Williams, \textit{op.cit.} p.839.

\textsuperscript{292} D. C.Sircar, \textit{Studies In The Geography of Ancient And Medieval India}, 1960, p.184.
Language: Sanskrit
Script: East Indian Script of the latter half of the 12th century A.C.293
Approximate date: Undated. According to Mukhlesur Rahman the sculpture is
dated to C.12th century A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Mitra, Haridas JPASB]

Reading 1: Mitra, Haridas. "Sadāśiva worship in early Bengal, a Study in History, Art and
Religion." p.185, fn.1.

Text:
Dānapati ṭaṭāvāmaṭāpta

Translation:
Not given

Reading 2: Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. p.150, pl.152.

Text:
Dānapati ṭaṭāvāmaṭāpta

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The second inscribed image of Sadāśiva from Shahpur, District Rajshahi, Bangladesh is in a
good state of preservation in comparison to the first one. The three-faced and ten-armed deity is
seated in baddhapadmāsana on a visvapadma placed on a paṭkaratha pedestal. The attributes in
the right hands of the deity exhibits vyākhyāna-mudra in abhaya style, sakti or danda, trisūla,
Khaṭtvāṅga and the fifth right hand presents the vara-mudra in the bhūmisparsā style. The
attributes in the corresponding left hands appear to have an aksa-mālā, utpala, ḍamara, sarpa

293 Haridas Mitra, op.cit., p. 212.
The deity is adorned with a *jaṭamukuta* on his three heads and a garland of disc-shaped human bones hangs down the neck and reaches the throne. The figure is *urdhva-liṅga*. The chest of the figure is inflated. A tri-foil arch rises above the head of the main image. In front of the deity’s lotus seat is the figure of his *vāhana*. The deity is accompanied to the right and left by Gaṅgā and Yamunā, carrying flower and *ghaṭa* in their hands and standing on their respective *vāhanas*, the makara and the *kūrma*. There is a *kārṇimukha* at the top with the garland-bearing vidyādharas on either side. These celestials soaring to bring offerings to the deity are armed; the one on the proper right has a lotus bud in the left hand and a sword in right hand—the other is holding in left hand, a lotus-bud and a sword in right. The *pañcaratha* pedestal shows in its center the elephant between a pair of lions, and at each end a seated *dvārpaḷa* with a trident in left hand.

According to Haridas Mitra this sculpture too betrays Buddhistic influence.\(^{294}\)

**Observations:**

The inscribed image of Sadasiva from Rajshahi District, Bangladesh is undated. The translation of the inscription is not given by Haridas Mitra, the scholar who deciphered the epigraphic record. The record in this case begins with a *siddham* symbol as noted in the ink impression of the epigraph. Mitra do not mention about the *siddham* symbol with which the inscriptional record begins. The incomplete reading of the inscription do not make any sense.

**Sl. No. 43: An Inscribed image of Śiva Kalyāṇasundara from Chatingram Bogra District**

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\(^{294}\) Haridas Mitra *op. cit.*, p.185.

\(^{295}\) Expressed by a symbol.
Identification: Śiva Kalyānsundara mūrti
Material: Cericitised slate, 50.8 x 25.4 cm.
Provenance: Chatingram, Adamdighi, Bogra District
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No.77
Language:
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings

Text:
Not given

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Maitra, Akshay Kumar. The Ancient Monuments of Varendra, Varendra Research Society, 1949, pl.IX, no.18
Bhattasali, N. K. op.cit, pp.120-123.
Banerji, R. D. Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture. Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, XLVII. Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1933, p.112-113, pl. LIV.
Haque, Enamul. op.cit, pl.162, pl.131, List No.1727.
Rahman, M. op.cit, p.155, pl.158.

Iconographic Study:
The Kalyansundara image from Chhatingram (Bogra District) is in a good state of preservation. The ceremonial wedding of Śiva and Parvati is the subject matter of this specimen. Śiva and Pārvati are shown in abhārīga, the latter in front of the former, her head reaching up to the level of the chest of the god, in preparation before the Saptapadi performance. N. K. Bhattasali pointed that this is exactly the pose adopted preparatory to the saptapadi or the pādkramaṇa observance of Hindu marriage.296 Enamul Haque called this type of image as pādkramaṇa-type. The couple in this example faces towards the left and a smile of distinct pleasure increases the sublimity of the occasion. The god holds a kartri in his right hand and, as usual, a triṣūla in his left. The goddess holds a darpana in her left hand and a śrūkha in her right. The prabhāvali depicts a gathering of fewer gods than in other East Bengal images. On the top is the cluster of nine planets in a row. Below this, on the proper right, is Brahmā on a haṅsa holding a

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296 N. K. Bhattasali, op.cit.1972, p.121.
jar, his consort is shown behind him. On the proper left, a bearded figure holds another jar
behind whom is standing a female. Viṣṇu, Sūrya and Indra, on their respective vāhanas, and a
group of musicians and a dancer, occupy the right side of the prabhāvalī. On the left, from
bottom upwards, is a pair of devotees, Lakṣmi with a lotus, and an unidentified couple. One of
the vāhana is shown just under the double-faced lotus pedestal.

Observations:
The inscribed image of Śiva in Kalyansundara form from Chatingram, Bogra district is a well
known specimen of art. Renowned scholars298 of art history have mainly discussed in detail the
iconographic peculiarities of the image. The damage inscription on the pedestal of the inscribed
image has received no attention by the epigraphist and art historians. The single line inscription
as illustrated in the photograph is fragmented and illegible.

Sl. No. 44 : Viṣṇu from Kalandarpur, Bogra District

![Viṣṇu, Kalandarpur](image)

**Identification:** Viṣṇu

**Material:** Cericised slate, 81.3 x 38.7 cm

**Provenance:** Kalandarpur, Bogra District, Bangladesh

**Present Whereabouts:** Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No. 661

**Language:** Sanskrit

**Script:**

**Approximate date:** Undated. The sculpture is dated to C.12th century A.D.299

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298 Scholars like N. K. Bhattachari, R. D. Banerji, Mamman Ganguli, Mukhlesur Rahman, Enamul Haque have
focused mainly on the iconographic composition of the image.

299 Mukhlesur Rahman, *op.cit*, p.73.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [VRSM, pl. 3]

Reading 1 Sarkar, Kshitish Chandra. "A New Specimen of Bengal Sculpture" VRSM, No. 4, p. 22.

Text: 300
sādhaka lālasī (si) ha ............ samgha (syā)

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Banerjea. J. N. op. cit, p. 555.
Rahman. M. op. cit, pp. 73-74, pl. 88
Haque, Enamul. op. cit; List No. 356.

Iconographic Study:
The cericitised image of Viṣṇu from Kalandarpur, Bogra District is housed in Varendra Research Museum bearing an Acc. No. 661. The sculpture shows the central deity standing in samāpāda on a small visvapadma placed on a saptaratha pedestal. A long vanamālā reaches up to the knee, and an upavītā runs across the body. According to J. N. Banerjea, the image belongs to the sub-variety of Viṣṇu image named Śrīdhara owing to the attributes in the four hands. Cakra placed on a lotus in upper right hand, gadā placed in upper left hand, śaṅkha in lower left hand and padma in lower right hand. No consorts are depicted. Cakrapuruṣa and Śaṅkhapuruṣa, both making abhaya gesture, are standing on the right and left respectively. Two garland bearing vidyadharas are shown on both sides of the prabhāvali. Interestingly unlike the Surohar Viṣṇu 302

300 Transliteration of the text is given by me on the basis of Devanāgarī script given by the author.
301 See J. N. Banerjea, op. cit, p. 555.
302 The iconographic detail of this image has been discussed earlier.
a two-armed figure is shown seated above occupying the place of kirttimukha. The snake-hoods which encircles the head of Surohar Viṣṇu is remarkably absent in this specimen. Here lies the major iconographic dissimilarity with Surohar Viṣṇu. Secondly, the riha of the saptaratha pedestal bears the icon of a six-armed dancing figure. This figure is conceived by scholars as Śiva. A donor in atjalihasta is shown to the right of the pedestal. Taking note of the iconographic features discussed above, the present inscribed specimen from Kalandarpur represent the Śrīdhara form of Viṣṇu with some Mahāyāna iconographic traits.

Observations:
The reading of the inscription as given by Kshitish Chandra Sarkar is incomplete. The incomplete reading of the text reveals that the donation or dedication of the Brāhmaṇical deity has been accomplished or made effective by a member of a Buddhist Śaṅgha.

Sl. No. 45: An Inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Svamibag, Dhaka

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Black stone
Provenance: Vikrampur, Svamibag, Dhaka District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka
Language: Sanskrit
Script: The character of the script is dated to 11th-12th century A.D. 303
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS, p. 86.

Text:
Govinda

Translation:
Not given.

Additional References:
Enamul Haque, op.cit. List no. 662, p.82.

303 N. K. Bhattasali, op.cit, p.86.
Iconographic Study:

N. K. Bhattasali writes that the image is not traceable. Hence no iconographical traits to its minimum has been discussed by the author. The inscribed word is Govinda. According to Caturvimsatimurtis the correct arrangements of attributes in the hands of Govinda variety of Viśṇu image is cakra, gada, padma and śatkhā.304

Observations:

This is perhaps the only image of the Govinda variety and the name Govinda inscribed on the Viśṇu image. It is impossible to make any observations on the basis of this single word. In this inscriptive evidence Govinda stands for the name of the god.

Sl. No. 46: An Inscribed image of Vāmana from Rampal, Dhaka

Identification: Vāmana
Material: Black stone, 6’ in height.
Provenance: Rampal, Dhaka District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Bengali script. The character of the script is dated to 11th-12th century A.D.305
Approximate date: Undated. But the epigraphic record is dated on the basis of palaeographical dating.306

Epigraphic Study:

[Variant Readings]


Text:

namovā

Translation:
The beginning of namo vāmanīya i.e. Salutation to Vāmana

Additional References:
Haque, Enamul. op.cit. List No.658, p.113.

304 Enamul Haque, op.cit, p.53, Table-C.
306 Ibid.
**Iconographic Study:**

The iconographic representation of an inscribed Vāmāna, the fifth incarnation of Viṣṇu is a rare discovery in Bengal’s sculptural history. This unique specimen represent the huge colossus (Virāṭarūpa) aspect of Vāmāna who is about to take the three steps (Trivikrama). The Trivikrama-Vāmāna in the Vaiṣṇava Ākhra of Abdullahpur (Dhaka), depicts the deity with the lef leg raised. The attributes in four-hands are distributed clockwise i.e. the padma, gada, cakra and śatikha. The disposition of attributes reminds us of the Trivikrama of the twenty-forms. The deity is profusely ornamented and accompanied by his two usual consorts.

**Observations:**

The inscribed image of Vāmāna, the fifth incarnatory form of Viṣṇu is unique from the iconographic and epigraphic point of view. Iconographically, this is the only inscribed sculptural specimen depicting the (Virāṭarūpa) aspect of Vāmāna noticed by me. Secondly the incomplete inscription on the pedestal of the image is a salutation to Vāmāna avatāra. A large corpus of epigraphic records (copper plates and image inscriptions) from different ateliers of Bengal and Bihar bear inscriptions which refer to salutation offered to various aspects of Viṣṇu like Vāsudeva, Nārāyaṇa, Puruṣottama, and so on. But not a single epigraphic record other than the present one is illustrated with salutation offered to the Vāmāna aspect.

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308 Enamul Haque refers to plate XXXVIII in N. K. Bhattasali’s Catalogue for the image. See, Haque’s L. No. 658 for this reference. Bhattasali, on the other hand do not refer to this plate having the inscribed image of Vāmāna. Enamul Haque mentions that the central image is accompanied by two usual consort as discussed above. The photograph illustrated in Bhattasali’s *Cat.* do not depict the attendant consorts. The iconographic description given by Enamul Haque do not match with the photograph of the image given in N. K. Bhattasali’s Catalogue, pl.XXXVIII.

309 See, Bautze Picron, *op. cit.*, 1986, pp.65-81. The author have cited innumerable instances where she has referred to salutation offered to the Vāsudeva and Nārāyaṇa aspect of Viṣṇu, but salutation to the Vāmāna avatāra of Viṣṇu have not drawn her attention.
Sl. No. 47: An Inscribed image of Umā-Maheśvara from Jethagram, Comilla

Identification: Umā-Maheśvara

Material: Black stone, 2'7” x 1’5”

Provenance: Jethagram, Comilla District, Bangladesh

Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka, 3A.(ii)e

Language: Sanskrit

Script: The character of the script is dated to 11th-12th century A.D. 310

Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the base of the image

Photo Courtesy: [ Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS pl. XLIX, a. ]

Reading 1: Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS. p.128.

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310 N. K. Bhattasali, op.cit, p.128.
Text:

Kalikāmahesvarah

Corrected Text:

Kalikāmahesvarati

Translation:

Mahesvara with his wife

Additional References:

Haque, Enamul. op.cit. List No.1599, p.157, pl.128.

Iconographic Study:

The perfectly preserved black stone image from Jethagram (Comilla) shows the deity sitting in lalitasana and Umā seated on his left thigh. The deity is four-armed. Of the four-arms, the top right holds a trident, bottom right a lotus, top left a skull and bottom left holds Gauri’s breast. The front right hand displays vyakhyanamudrā. The goddess holds a mirror in her left hand and places her right hand on the right shoulder of the deity. The couple is adorned. Gañeśa and Kārttikeya are flanking the upper prabhavali and a chatra decorates the top. The vahanas are shown on the triratha pedestal and the skeleton Bhrīgū is dancing between them. Two worshippers in kneeling attitude is shown to the extreme right of the pedestal. The iconographic features of the present inscribed image suggest its identification with one of the variety of Āliṅgana-mūrti, the most popular form of iconic representation of Śiva in Bengal.

Observations:

The black stone image of Umā-Mahēśvara from Jethagram, Comilla District is inscribed with a single word Kalikā-Mahēśvara. Kalikā-Mahēśvara is one of the name of the deity i.e the Lord Śiva. The other names given to this iconographic type are Umā-Mahēśvara, Umāliṅganamūrti, Hara- Gaurimūrti found in inscribed images from Bengal.

311 Transliteration of the Bengali script is given by me.

312 N. K. Bhattasali notes the orthographical error in the transliteration of the inscribed label. I have given the correct transliteration following Bhattasali, op.cit.1972.
Sl. No. 48: Inscribed Mother and Child image from Khetlal from Bogra District

Mother and child, Khetlal
Photo Courtesy: [Rahman, M. SVRM, Cat. pl. 302]

Identification: Mother and Child
Material: Black basalt, 54.6 x 25.4 cm
Provenance: Khetlal, Joypurhat in Bogra District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Varendra Research Museum, Acc. No. 41
Language: corrupt Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. Mukhlesur Rahman dates the image to twelfth century A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:


Text: *Vansonigratima* 314

Translation: Not given

Reading 2: Bhattasali, N. K. *IBBS*, p.140, pl. LIV.


314 The reference and transliteration is quoted from N. K. Bhattasali, *op.cit.* p.138.
Text:

\textit{Vatśiṣṭhāna- lahitā}

Correct Text:

\textit{Vatiśamśīthā-lāhitā}

Translation:

'The beloved of the chief of the race'. 'Chief of the race' can only distantly mean Śiva.

\textbf{Reading 3}: Rahman, M. \textit{SVRM, Cat.} p. 320, pl.302.

Text:

\textit{Vatśiṣṭhāna- lutimā (?)}

Translation:

Not given

\textbf{Additional References:}

Haque, Enamul. \textit{op.cit.} p. 296.

\textbf{Iconographic Study:}

The sculpture carved in high relief is in a good state of preservation. It depicts a young mother shown reclining in left on an ornamental couch, the head and footrests of which are slanting backwards. Both her legs are bent at the knee and raised, the right resting upon the lap of the maid servant who is massaging the left. The lady has a blue-lily in her right hand and the left hand supports her head. The young mother is bejeweled and is dressed in \textit{sālā} and an \textit{uttariya}.

Close to her body is a child lying to the left like his mother. A female is shown standing behind the head of the mother holding a fly-whisk in her right hand and the left rest on the hip. The back-slab contains a \textit{liṅgam}, the figures of four-armed Gaṇeśa and two-armed Kārttikeya, carved in relief. The \textit{upacāras} shown below the couch are flowers and \textit{naivedya}. The iconographic depiction of \textit{navagrahas} is remarkably missing.

\footnote{M. Rahman writes that the child is lying on its back. But a closer examination have revealed that the child is reclining to the mother's left, \textit{op.cit.} p.320.}
Observations:

The inscribed image of ‘Mother and Child’ from Khetlal, Bogra District, North Bangladesh or from the Varendra region is an undated art specimen. The epigraphic record is engraved on the top of the image. Three published literature with transcripts has been discussed by me. N. K. Bhattasali’s (R. 2) of the inscription is more acceptable and convincing. A. Cunningham’s reading (R. 1) is remarkably different from R. 2 (N. K. Bhattasali) and R. 3 (Mukhlesur Rahman). The meaning of the epigraphic record is difficult to understand. This inscribed specimen is an iconographic representation of Sadyojāta Śiva and according to the translation as given by Bhattasali it refers to Śiva who is ‘Chief of the race’. The word Lalitā as found in the inscription possibly refers to Pārvati or Uma, the wife of Śiva.

Sl. No. 49: An Inscribed Mother and Child image from Nahar Collection

![Mother and Child Image](Bhattasali, N. K. *IBBS*, pl. LIV)

Identification: Mother and Child
Material: Stone
Provenance:
Present Whereabouts: Nahar Collection, Calcutta
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

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316 See, G. Bhattacharya, *op. cit*, 2000. “A Special Type of Devi Figure From Bihar And Bengal”, pp.181-187. Bhattacharya discusses the two types of Devi found in the region. The second type that is the bridal type, recognized by her attributes and accompaniment deity identified as Lalita.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Bhattasali, N. K. *IBBS*, p.141, pl. LIV.

Text:
De [ ya ] dhammyo ’ya [ m ] Śūkabha [ * ] pratipa [ a ] lāā

Bhattasali reads the inscription as
Śūkabhadra- pratipālī
d

Correct Text:
Śūrabhadra- pratipālī
d

Translation:
It means the cherished one of Śūrabhadra. ‘Śūrabhadra’ can only distantly refer to Śiva.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The inscribed image of ‘Mother and Child’317 from Nahar Collection, Calcutta is another well-preserved specimen. The sculpture is carved in stone. It depicts a young mother shown reclining to her right318 on an ornamental couch with her legs crossing each other. It appears that the foot is resting on the other cushion or pillow. The left hand is supporting her head which rests on a pillow and the right hand is placed on her hip. The young mother is bejeweled and is dressed in sāḍī and uttarīya. Close to her body is a child lying. The back-slab depicts a liṅgam as discerned from the available photograph.

317 Bhattasali gives the epigraphic record of the image, without giving any details of its iconographic features. The iconographic description of the image have been discussed by me.

318 Generally in these images the lady reclines on her left.
Observations:

The inscribed image of ‘Mother and Child’ housed in the Nahar collection is the third example of this variety. The sculpture finds mention in N. K. Bhattasali Catalogue, p.141. Bhattasali gives only the reading of the epigraphic record without mentioning the provenance and other details related to the sculpture. From the given translation two observations can be added. Firstly, the image is a religious gift of Śūrabhadra, who may perhaps be the donor. Secondly, according to N. K. Bhattasali, Śiva is referred as ‘Śūrabhadra’. Thus the epigraphic evidence can be corroborated by iconographical depiction where Śiva as a new born or Sadyojāta is lying beside Parvati.

Sl. No. 50: An Inscribed image of Śūrya from Nahapara, Dhaka

Identification: Śūrya
Material: Black stone, 4’3” x 2’3”
Provenance: Nahapara, Munshiganj, Dhaka District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka, 3A(iii)a / 3
Language: Sanskrit

Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal
[Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS, pl. LXXIX]

Reading 1: Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS, p.170, pl. LXXIX.

Text:

Subhachīttadāsasya

Translation:
‘of Subhachitta Dāsa’

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

I have not noticed any published photograph of the image in Bhattasali’s Catalogue. It is therefore difficult to discuss the iconographic composition of the image.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Sūrya from the village Nahapara, Dhaka District, Bangladesh is an undated epigraphic record. It appears from the translation as stated by N. K. Bhattasali that the image of the sun-god was installed by a donor named Subhachittadāsa. Bhattasali has remained silent about the prefix Śrī with which the votive records begins. Śrī means illustrious. Thus the donor Subhachittadāsa is an illustrious personage responsible for setting up an image. The consecration of a Śaura image points to the religious leaning of the donor.

Sl. No. 51: An Inscribed image of Mahiṣamardini from Dhamrai, Dhaka

Identification: Mahiṣamardini
Material: Black Stone
Provenance: Dhamrai, Dhaka District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka
Language: Sanskrit
Script: The short votive inscription on the pedestal is in script of the 12th century A.D. 320
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS, pl.LXXIX]

Reading 1: Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS, p.196, pl. LXXIX.

320 N. K. Bhattasali, op.cit, p.196.
Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
I have not noticed any published photograph of the image. It is therefore difficult to discuss the iconographic dimension of the image. Bhattacharya informs that the image is eight armed.\footnote{N. K. Bhattacharya, *op.cit.* p.196.}

Observations:
The Inscribed image of Mahisamardini from Dhamrai, Dhaka District, bears a short epigraphic record on its pedestal. The epigraphic record is interesting as it is inscribed with the words 'Khulamanika Candika'. The word Khulamanika has no meaning in Sanskrit language. The correct reading should be Kulamanika. If so, then Kulamanika is used as an adjective for the goddess Candika. It suggest that Candika was the principal goddess or the family deity being worshipped for generation. She was the deity of the kula. Candika is one of the appellation given to this personified energy.\footnote{The transliteration is given by me on the basis of the Bengali script given by the author.} The word Candika substantiate the association of Tantricism with Brahmanical Hinduism which was specially predominant in eastern India during the period. The installation of the image of Mahisamardini who is Candika suggest to the existence of sakti cult in the region.

\footnote{In the Devimahatmya section of Markandeya Pur\(\tilde{a}\)pa, the cult of sakti emerges with host of manifestations, in different names, and one of such name is Candi, Candika, etc.}
Sl. No. 52: An Inscribed image of Mahiṣamardini from Šākta, Dhaka

Mahiṣamardini, Šākta

Photo Courtesy: [ Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS, pl. LXVI ]

Identification: Mahiṣasuramardini
Material: Metal
Provenance: Šākta, Dhaka District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka District, Bangladesh
Language: Sanskrit
Script: The short votive inscription on the pedestal is in script of the 12th century A.D.324
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Bhattasali, N. K. IBBS, p.198, pl. LXVI.

Text:
Sri Māṣikā Chaṇḍī

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Haque, Enamul, op.cit, p. 237.

Iconographic Study:

This is a splendid ten-armed inscribed image of Mahiṣamardini from Šākta325 District Dhaka and presently kept in Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka. The deity is shown standing in Āliḍha.

324 N. K. Bhattasali, op.cit. p.198.
325 The iconographic description is based on Bhattasali discussion, op.cit. p.197.
The left leg of the demon is depicted as still within the trunk of the decapitated buffalo, while the lion, the vehicle of the goddess, has pounced upon his right leg. The deity has seized the locks of the demon by her left hand and is piercing his breast with a Śūla, held in her right hand. A female attendant on either side of the central figure is depicted fighting, sword and buckler in the hands. The following attributes are placed clockwise in the hands of the goddess. 1. A pointed weapon, the sūci? 2. Discus, 3. Arrow, 4. Sword, 5. Javelin, piercing the breast of the demon, 6. The locks of the demon, 7. Buckler, 8. Bow, 9. Axe, 10. Aṅkuśa (elephant goad).

**Observations:**

Images of Mahiṣasuramardini, i.e. the Devi as a slayer of Mahiṣāsura, the Buffalo demon is not a rare sculptural specimen in Bengal art, particularly from Bangladesh. The discovery of the second inscribed specimen of the Brāhmaṇical goddess from the village Śākta, Dhaka District, Bangladesh substantiates our statement. The inscriptive evidence once again refer to the expression 'Chapḍi'. The observation made above in context to the appellation enjoyed by the Brāhmaṇical goddess remains the same. Secondly, Bhattasali is doubtful in explaining the meaning of the qualifying term māṣikā. It appears that the term māṣikā may be the name of the donor? The prefix śrī before the expression māṣikā may support such an assumption. The discovery of the Mahiṣasuramardini image from the village named Śākta corroborates to the religious significance of the region as being a seat of śakti cult.

**Sl. No. 53: An Inscribed image of Viṣṇu from East Bengal, Bangladesh**

**Identification:** Viṣṇu  
**Material:** stone?  
**Provenance:** Viṣṇu, East Bengal, Bangladesh  
**Present Whereabouts:** Private Collection, Dhaka  
**Language:** Sanskrit  
**Script:**  
**Approximate date:** Undated.

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326 See the above observations as well as the fn.323.

327 I am doubtful if māṣikā is a name of sanskrit or non-sanskritic affiliation.
Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Hague, Enamul, *Bengal Sculptures*, p.72, list No.523.

Text:

Vāsudeva

Translation:

Not given

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

I have not noticed any published photograph of the image. It is therefore difficult to discuss the iconographic dimension of the image.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from East Bengal finds mention in the work of Enamul Haque as referred above. No reference or any detail related to the iconographic features or inscriptive evidence of this image is given by the author. Enamul Haque while discussing the Viṣṇu images makes a passing reference to this art specimen stating that the image is labeled as Vāsudeva with attributes *padma, gada, cakra* and *śāṅkha* order.\(^{328}\) The epigraphic word Vāsudeva in this case refer to the name of the god Viṣṇu.\(^{329}\) Thus, this undated Viṣṇu image from East Bengal engraved with the name of the deity as Vāsudeva is certainly an addition to the corpus of Viṣṇu images of Vaiṣṇava pantheon from Bengal and Bihar.

Sl. No. 54: An Inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Dinajpur, West Bengal

Identification: Viṣṇu

Material: stone?

Provenance: Brajavallabhpur, Dinajpur, West Bengal

Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka

Language: Sanskrit

\(^{328}\) E.Haque, *op.cit.* p.72, list No.523.

\(^{329}\) A large corpus of epigraphic records (Copper Plates and image inscriptions) from Bengal and Bihar are inscribed with the name Vāsudeva. See, Bautze Picron, *op.cit.*, 1986, pp.65-81.
Script:

Approximate date: Undated. S. K. Saraswati suggest a date of 12th century A.D. on the basis of palaeography and style of the image.330

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Saraswati, S. K. “Notes on Two Tours in the Districts of Maldah and Dinajpur” p.179, pl. XXVIII.

Text:

L.1 \textit{Lakṣmī- Sarasvatimāthah} ||
L.2 \textit{Pamidutha-devasya muktaye} ||

Translation:
The first line refers to the deity as the Lord of ‘Lakṣmī’ and ‘Sarasvatī’. The second gives the name of the donor- \textit{Pamidutha-deva}- for whose salvation the image was installed.

Additional References:

Haque, Enamul. \textit{op.cit.} 1992, p.79.

Iconographic Study:

Since we do not possess the photograph of the sculpture at our disposal nor any information related to its iconographic features, it is difficult to understand the iconographic significance of this inscribed image. Enamul Haque, however, mentions that the image is of Nārāyaṇa variety according to the attributes.331 The deity carries śaṅkha, padma, gādā and cakra respectively and is of is of the Nārāyaṇa variety in accordance with the attributes as mentioned in the list of the \textit{Caturvīrṣatimūrtis}.

Observations:

The undated inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Brajavallabhpur is significant as this is the first epigraphic record noticed by me which records the name of Viṣṇu’s consort, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī. Viṣṇu as the Lord of Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī is specifically inscribed on this image. Secondly the image is a meritorious gift of \textit{Pamidutha-deva}, the donor. No information is given.

331 See, E. Haque, \textit{op.cit.} p.79.
about the socio-economic status of the donor from the inscriptive evidence. But the record is a
direct evidence which speaks of the accomplishment for which the image is installed i.e for the
salvation of the donor, Parīkṣhādēva. The installation of a Viṣṇu image inscribed significantly
with the name of his consort evidently proves that the donor must have been a devout follower of
Vaiṣṇava faith.

Sl. No. 55: An Inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Bengal

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Bronze
Provenance: Bengal, exact find spot unknown
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka no.72.378
Language:
Script:
Approximate date: Undated

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the illegible inscription at the back
Reading 1:

Text:
Not given

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Haque, Enamul. op.cit. p.80, pl.42, List No.137.

Iconographic Study:

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu in bronze is of an unknown provenance. It is kept in Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka bearing an accession no.72.378. Enamul Haque is of the opinion that this piece of sculpture belong to the early part of the developed phase of Pāla art tradition.332 No consort or Āyudhapuruṣa is shown. The attributes in the hands are cakra, padma, śaṅkha and gada? The cakra on the right and the gada on the left are merely touched by the palms of the lower hands. The attributes in the upper hands are not very clear.

Observations:

The inscribed bronze image of Viṣṇu from Bengal has received partial attention by Enamul Haque. Meagre information on iconographical features has been given by the scholar. No attempt has been made by scholars to read the inscriptive evidence inscribed at the back of the pedestal. The decipherement of this epigraphic record is significant, for understanding the contribution of this image inscription in early medieval epigraphic history of Bengal.

Sl. No. 56: An Inscribed image of Umā-Maheśvara from Bogra

Identification: Umā-Maheśvara
Material: ?333
Provenance: Gopinathpur, Bogra District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka No.66.18
Language: Sanskrit

332 Enamul Haque, op.cit, p.80.
333 The sculpture may be in stone or bronze. The photograph of this image is not given in Enamul Haque’s book on Bengal sculptures, nor any information on the material used for carving is mentioned.
**Script:**

**Approximate date:** Undated.

**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings:**

**Reading 1:** Haque, Enamul. *BSHI* p.157, List No.1604.

**Text:**

_Uma-Mahesvara_

**Translation:**

Not given

**Additional References:**

**Iconographic Study:**

The inscribed image portraying Uma-Mahesvara from Gopinathpur, Bogra District receives a passing reference in Enamul Haque’s publication on Bengal Sculptures. No photograph of the image is published in this textual source and hence it is not possible to give an account of its iconographic features. We learn from Haque’s 334 description that the image is one of the four-armed images of Śiva out of the sixty-four images noticed by the scholar. The image therefore must have shared the stereotyped iconographic features of the Ālingana-mūrti.

**Observations:**

The above discussed undated inscribed image of Uma-Mahesvara from the village Gopinathpur, Bogra District, Bangladesh is engraved with the expression Uma-Mahesvara. Unlike Kaliṅgā-Mahesvara, Uma-Mahesvara is one of the name of the deity referring to Lord Śiva and his consort.

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Sl. No. 57 : An Inscribed Viṣṇu from Karanji, Dinajpur

Vṛṣṇu, Karanji
Photo Courtesy: [JPASB, XXVIII, 1932, pl.7, fig.2]

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Stone
Provenance: Karanji, Dinajpur, West Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. S.K.Saraswati suggest a date in the latter part of the 13th century A.D. on the basis of palaeography.335

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

यलिवगदीश्वरवाम

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [JPASB, XXVIII, 1932, p.180]

Reading 1: Saraswati, S. K., “Notes on Two Tours in the Districts of Māldah and Dinājpur” XXVIII, p.180, pl.7, fig. 2.

Text:
Palirayitaḥ Thakkuraḥ

Corrected Text:

‘Palerayam Thakkurah’

Translation:

It means the ‘God of the Palis’ (Poliyas), meaning thereby that the image was dedicated by (or for) the Poliyas.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Karanji, Dinajpur District shares the iconographic composition noticed in several other Viṣṇu images hailing from this part of Northern Bengal. The deity is shown standing in samapādāsthānaka attitude on a lotus seat placed on a pañcaratha pedestal supported by an architectural construct. The attributes in four hands are padma, gadal, cakra and śankha from the lower right hand. Two consorts are shown in their normal gesture and attitude on two sides. They are further accompanied by Ayudhapuruṣas. The central deity, consorts and the Ayudhapuruṣas are bedecked with usual ornaments. The back-plate is cusped at the apex. The motifs cannot be clearly defined from the available photograph. The pedestal on the other hand is decorated with volutes, a kneeling devotee is shown to the right. Garuḍa is perhaps shown to the left. On the basis of iconographical composition, the sculpture is ascribed to the later period of Pāla rule.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Karanji, Dinajpur is an undated specimen. The epigraphic record is significant and interesting. It refers to the dedication of Viṣṇu image for the Poliyas. Poliyas appears to be a low caste Hindu community (?), who were inhabitants of Karanji, Dinajpur district, West Bengal.
Sl. No. 58: An Inscribed Devi image from Simla, Rajshahi

Devi, Simla
Photo Courtesy: | Haque, Enamul BSHI, pl.185 |

Identification: Devi with twenty arms
Material: Stone
Provenance: Simla, Rajshahi District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Acc. No.69
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. The sculpture is assigned to 10th century A.D. 336

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Saraswati, S. K. ‘Mahalaksmi’ VRSM, No.6, p.23, pl.IV, fig.4.

Text:
Deyadharmma (rmmo) ya (yam ) Supa (ta) kasya

Translation:
The image is a pious gift of Sunaka or Sutaka.

Additional References:
Majumdar, R. C. op.cit. 1971, p. 452, pl.XIII.
Haque, Enamul. op.cit. 1992, pp.218-219, pl.185, List No.1117.

336 Enamul Haque, op.cit. p.218.
Iconographic Study:

The twenty-armed image of Devi from Simla is a remarkable example of art from the iconographical point of view. Several distinguished scholars have written on this specimen of art. The deity is shown seated in *lalitasana* on a *visvapadma* placed on a *triratha* pedestal. The upper part of the *prabhavali*, two right and two left hands are mutilated. The normal right and left hands hold a fruit and a conch respectively. The remaining hands hold from the bottom upwards the *varada, asi, abhaya, cakra, mudgara, śula* and *būpa* (being drawn from the quiver) in the right hand and the *kamandalu, cīpa, ghanṭā, pīśa, padma, gadā, kheṭa* in the left. The grimacing lion under the *mahāmbuja* occupies almost the whole front of the pedestal with a garland-bearing devotee on the proper right. The goddess is bejeweled with various ornaments and has a very high *jatī* on her head, one of the vertical loops of the *jatī* has been taken as *liṅga*. On the basis of such iconographical peculiarities, S.K.Saraswati tentatively identifies the deity as *Mahālaksmī*. This identification was later accepted by J.N.Banerjea. Enamul Haque identifies the deity as *Cāndī* on the basis of *Devimāhaṃmya*. The depiction of two quivers behind the right and left shoulders of the goddess as mentioned in *Devimāhaṃmya* justifies Haque's opinion.

Observations:

The undated image of Devī from Simla, Rajshahi is a remarkable piece from the iconographic point of view having twenty-arms. The votive inscription on the lower moulding of the *triratha* pedestal records the religious gift of the image by a donor named Sunaka or Sutaka. S. K. Saraswati perhaps being unsure regarding the donors name give two readings of the name. Since we do not have a photograph or any impression of the inscribed portion it is difficult to comment on the epigraphic record. The donor's socio-economic status is not revealed from the record. The installation of a Cāndī image identified by Enamul Haque, once again points to the religious leaning of the donor who may have been a Tāntric śakti worshipper. The find-spot of three Cāndī 337 E.Haque, *op.cit.* p. 219 for the detail iconographic description.


images (Mahisasuramardini from Dhamrai and Šākta, Dhaka district, and the present one from Simla (Rajshahi District) suggest that this part of ancient Bengal was a stronghold for śakti cult.

Sl. No. 59: Inscription on Maheśvari image from Bengal

Maheśvari, Bengal

Photo Courtesy: [Haque, Enamul BSHI, pl. 207]

Identification: Maheśvari
Material: Stone, 6” to 7” in height
Provenance: Bengal, exact provenance unknown
Present Whereabouts: Bangladesh National Museum, Accession No.63.68
Language
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

[Illegible inscription, Maheśvari]


Text:
Not given
Translation:
Not given

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The sculpture in stone represents a female deity seated in lalitasana on a visvapadma placed on a pedestal. The deity is four-armed and has a child on her left lap supported by the deity with her lower left hand. The attributes in the three other hands are in clockwise a lotus (or a fruit?), sword and shield. The goddess is adorned. The pedestal which is simple and plain bears a figure of a bull to the left corner and a devotee in anjalihasta to the right corner. Few illegible letters are noticed by me on the pedestal between the two figures. The prabhamandala is simple and represents the icon of Kirttimukha at the apex. Since there is an absence of any exact dhyāna to identify this type of images. Enamul Haque identifies the Devī as Maheśvari, being the emanation of Maheśvara who has a bull or nandi as his vihāna.

Observations:
The Maheśvari image finds mention in Enamul Haque’s book on Bengal Sculptures. The epigraphic record comprising few illegible letters on the pedestal is noticed by me. I have illustrated and discussed several inscribed images of Maheśvara delineating different iconographic forms, but the independent inscribed image of Maheśvari, the emanatory goddess or sakti of Maheśvara have received due attention for the first time. The letters are poorly illegible.

340 See Enamul Haque, op.cit, p. 259.

341 Enamul Haque do not mention about the inscription at the base of the pedestal.
Sl. No.60: Inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Burdwan

Viṣṇu, Burdwan
Photo Courtesy: [Burdwan University Museum, Burdwan]

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Greyish white sandstone, 45cm x 36 cm
Provenance: Burdwan District, exact provenance unknown
Present Whereabouts: Burdwan University Museum, Burdwan, No.M.A.G/33
Language: Incorrect Sanskrit
Script: The characters of the inscription belong to the 7th - 8th century Sīdhamātikā script
Approximate date: Undated, 7th - 8th century A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal

Reading 1:

Text: 342
dāna śrī Isvāro

342 I am thankful to Dr. Susmita Basu Majumdar for the reading of this inscription.
Translation:
The expression Iśvaro may be the name of the donor or it may suggest Iśvara or God.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The image is badly mutilated especially its face, the upper right arm and also a major portion of the stele. The deity stands in samapādasthānakā posture on a small lotus pedestal. The four-armed deity is holding clockwise a fruit (māṭulūṅga or bijāpura) or a jewel (mapī), disc (cakra) mace (gadāḥ) slightly damaged and conch (sāṅkha). The figure is sparsely ornamented with a pair of earrings, a necklace, armlets and the typical vanamāla. Strikingly the yajnopavita is missing. Iconographically the sculpture appears to be very interesting. The deity is attended upon by two male figures, may be personified cakra (proper right) and sāṅkha (proper left) in contrast to the usual female consorts of Viṣṇu. Below on the pedestal is shown four subordinate deities in anjalimudra, and they are probably devotees. Strangely enough, Garuḍa, the vāhana of Viṣṇu is absent. Stylistically, the sculpture confirms to the late 7th and early 8th century style prevailing particularly in the eastern parts of the Gaṅgā valley.

Observations:
I have found no reference to this particular inscribed sculpture earlier. I have discussed several extant Viṣṇu images from Bengal which are engraved with different names of the deity like, Govinda, Vāsudeva, etc. The epigraphic record on this particular image bears the expression Iśvaro that implies two different meaning. Iśvaro is synonym to God or Iśvaro can be the name of the dānapati (donor) of the image. The establishment of the Viṣṇu image points to the donor’s religious leaning. The single line inscription is silent about his socio-economic status. The material used for carving the two sculptures from Burdwan is different from the typical

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343 Cakra is damaged.
344 The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Burdwan was discussed by me in a seminar in the Department of Ancient Indian History & Culture, Calcutta University.
345 The second image is to be discussed below.
Pāla-Sena artistic medium i.e black chlorite. The Viṣṇu images from Burdwan carved in Greyish white sandstone is typical to the region.

Sl. No. 61: Inscribed Viṣṇu image from South Rasulpur, Burdwan

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Greyish white sandstone, 79cm x 39cm
Provenance: Village of South Rasulpur, Hooghly District, West Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Burdwan University Museum, Burdwan
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:
VariantReadings:

Reading 1:

On the pedestal there is a donative inscription

Text: \( \text{Sri pa (t) i} \)

\(^{346}\) I read the text as Šrī. The full reading as Šrī pa (t) i was given by Dr Susmita Basu Majumdar Department of Ancient Indian History & Culture, University of Calcutta.
**Translation:**
Śri stands for Lakṣmī and pa(t)ī for Viṣṇu. Śrīpati is also one of the names of Viṣṇu.

**Additional References:**

**Iconographic Study:**
The extant example is carved in greyish white sandstone (79cm x 39cm). The deity stands in usual *samapādākasthānakā* posture on a full blown double-petalled lotus (*viśva-padma*) placed on a *paṅcaratha* pedestal. The entire composition is supported by an architectural construct. Of the four arms the lower right hand is shown in *varada-mudrā* perhaps holding a small lotus flower, śatikha, cakra and gadā, from the lower right order. The central deity is attended upon by his two consort’s Śrī or Lakṣmī and Saraswati and possibly by two *Āyudhapurusas* at the two extreme corners beside the consort deities.347 Probably the face and the crown are restored. The deity is adorned with jewellery, and invariably wears a *yajnopavita* and a *vanamāla*, the latter hanging down to his knees. The two consorts accompany Viṣṇu as mentioned earlier; Śrī (proper right) is depicted in *Katihasta* or *katyavalambita* (the pose in which the hand (usually the left) is placed on the hip. Saraswati (proper left) holds a *vinā* with both hands. The central figure stands against the architectural construct with leoglyphs carved on both the sides. Below the lotus pedestal are adorant figures. The iconographic depiction of Garuḍa is missing in this image. This elaborately carved image with its details and accessory figures (showing pointed *prabhāvali*, the posture, form of the central figures and his consorts) represent a complex and developed iconography as noticed in the Viṣṇu images of the Pāla-Sena period. The stele is distinguished by a carved *śraśacakra* behind the head and a *kirttimukha* at the top. A pair of garland bearing *Vidyādharas* occupy the corners of the back-plate. The *paṅkaratha* pedestal is decorated with lotus scrolls distributed over the pedestal. Three human figures in kneeling attitude are shown on the pedestal.

Though iconometric study is yet to be made, a general observation clearly suggest a point of resemblance available in the iconographic expression found in the Betka (Paikpara) inscribed Vāsudeva of year 23 of Govindachandra from Vikrampur, Dhaka District, Bangladesh. It will be worth mentioning in this connection that Enamul Haque while discussing the Vaiṣṇava images points to the inter-regional difference within Bengal, both in iconographic conception and

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347 The *Āyudhapurusa* to the right is damaged.
Such inter-regional variation is apparent in these two figures hailing from two different territorial units of Bengal. Interestingly, the principal distinguishing feature in this context is that, the Viśṇu from Hooghly district wears a long upavita which generally descends from the left shoulder of the deity and reaches well below the waist delineating a western Bengal style. In the Betka Vāṃdeva, the upavita is short, hardly reaches up to the navel and passes from the left shoulder to the right armpit of the deity and is more an East Bengal feature.

Observations:

The single word epigraphic record on the second Viśṇu image from South Rasulpur was noticed by me while passing through the Museum and Art Gallery of Burdwan University Museum. Two important observations is to be made in context to this image inscription. The word śrīpati in this inscription is not used as a personal name but refers to the god Viśṇu who is known as Śrīpati, one of the name of the deity. Or it may also refer to Viśṇu who is the husband or pati of Śrī or Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Secondly, it has been mentioned above that the face as well as the crown of the deity is restored. The originality of this part of the composition is lacking as the physiognomy by no means illustrate the face of the god, Viśṇu.

Sl. No. 62 : Inscribed image of Cāmunaḍā from Gangarampur (South Dinajpur)

Cāmunaḍā, Gangarampur

Photo courtesy : Burdwan University Museum, Burdwan

348 Enamul Haque, op.cit. p.64. For a detailed understanding of Vaiṣṇava images of Bengal, see Chapter I & Chapter II, pp.37-128.

349 In the Mehar Copper plate inscription, Comilla district, Bangladesh, Śrīpati is used as a personal name. See, Bautze Picron, op.cit.1986, p.72.
Identification: Cāmuṇḍā
Material: Rajmahal schist, 49 cm x 24 cm
Provenance: Gangarampur, South Dinajpur, West Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Burdwan University Museum, Burdwan No. M.A.G./ P4
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Proto-Bengali script of 11th-12th centuries A.D.
Approximate date: Undated. The palaeographical and stylistic detail suggest a date of 11th-12th centuries A.D.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal

Reading 1:
Two possible readings of this inscription are as follows:

Text:
Bhaṭṭārīkā śrī... Suta Prahasita

Translation:
The image is a donation of Prahasita, the son of the illustrious...

Reading 2:
Bhaṭṭārīkā śrī jñā cāgjo (cāggo) Suta Prahasita

Translation:
The image is a donation of Prahasita, the son of the illustrious jñā cāgjo (cāggo).

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351 It is to be noted in this connection that the author who discussed this image earlier have wrongly ascribed the image to 10th-11th century A.D. on the basis of palaeography and mentions the character as Brāhma. Rangan Kanti Jana, op.cit. 2000, p.51.

352 Rangan K. Jana, ibid. p.52. gives the reading of the inscription as Dasharikāgā Chāngrāmyat Pradayita. The reading as given by the author is incorrect. The first four letters are clearly Bhaṭṭārīka and the last six letters contain the words suta Prahasita. In between these, there are three letters (two conjuncts and a single consonant in between). The first conjunct is jñā and the second appears to be gjo or ggo which doesn’t mean any sense. I am thankful to Dr.Suresh Chandra Bhattacharya for this explanation.

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Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The emaciated goddess with four arms is seated under a vata - tree in a quite unusual posture on a dead male figure (Śava). Similar unusual posture can also be noticed in an image of two-armed Cāmūṇḍā from Aṭṭahāśa (Burdwan). The back-plate is partially damaged to its proper left. The emaciated body with shrunken belly, showing protruding ribs and veins, bare teeth, sunken eyes with round projecting eyeballs is significantly delineated. The four-armed goddess holds a chopper (kartri), and a kettledrum (ḍamaru) in the proper right and the proper left holds a trident (trīśīla). Her lower body is draped in a tiger skin, and bejeweled with a necklace, yajnopavita and wears a garland of skull (muktaṁśīla). An oval śrāṣaṅkra with issuing flames is found behind her head. This feature is further surrounded by a flame motif. On a pedestal just below the seat, from the extreme right depicts perhaps a figure of the devotee with folded hands, followed by a vulture (?), three human heads (naraṇumūḍa) on a stand, an owl (vāhana), followed by a jackal devouring a dead body and an unidentified figure. The depiction of a vata-tree under which the goddess is shown seated (vataväksyasamāśritī) and the presence of an owl on the corner of the pedestal suggested to be a vāhana (Kauśikārohini) are unique iconographic features of this sculpture. Such depictions with skulls, flames and animals on the pedestal suggest the environment of a śmaśāna, the abode of the goddess.

Our further discussion on the sculpture highlights the following points:

The earliest textual reference to Devi Cāmūṇḍā comes from the Agni-purāṇa enumerating the eight varieties of the forms of goddess, which have been termed ambāṭakā or the eight mothers. Later, N.K.Bhattasali suggested their names as Rudra-carakī, Rudra-Cāmūṇḍā, and Mahālakṣmi.


355 Pūrvakāṇḍaṇiṇī, 12 paṭañ̥a, quoted in T.A.Gopinath Rao, Ibid.p.152.
so on and so forth each distinguished mainly by the number of hands and disposition of attributes.\textsuperscript{356} Incidentally, the four-armed Cāmuṇḍā image bears no specific name in Purānic texts. Bhattasali refers to this type of Cāmuṇḍā image only by making a passing reference.\textsuperscript{357} It should be mentioned in this connection that the four-armed Cāmuṇḍā sculpture from Gaṅgārampur do not commensurate the iconographic description as given in Agni-Purāpa. The sculpture with unique iconographic features as revealed in the sitting pose, the position of the śava on which the female deity is shown seated as well the depiction of animal figures on the pedestal especially draws our attention by superceding the other similar images recorded from Bengal and adjoining areas.

**Observations:**

The inscribed image of Cāmuṇḍā from Gangarampur, South Dinajpur is unique from the iconographic and epigraphic point of view. The pedestal is engraved beautifully with a single line donative inscription. The donor Prahasita is not unknown in Bengal inscriptions. Prahasita was the name of the minister and the eldest son of Vigrahapāla III, who acted as a Dūtaka of the Bangaon copper-plate of Vigrahapāla III.\textsuperscript{358} Thus the donor was a man of social eminence as illustrated by his social pedigree. The significance of the present epigraph has a bearing in the context of social history. The use of the prefix Bhaṭṭārikā and Śrī in context to the donor’s mother suggests her identity to a royal lineage. Interestingly enough, the donor Prahasita uses his mother’s name to legitimize his identity.\textsuperscript{359} It clearly implies to a special social status given to women in the contemporary socio-economic structure. The inclusion of the third\textsuperscript{360} inscribed Cāmuṇḍā image in my study from the Dinajpur region not only adds to the corpus of Cāmuṇḍā

\textsuperscript{356} N.K. Bhattasali, *op. cit.* 1972, pp.207-212.

\textsuperscript{357} N. K. Bhattasali, *ibid.* p.209.

\textsuperscript{358} See, D.C. Sircar, *op.cit.*,1982, p.86.


\textsuperscript{360} Two inscribed Cāmuṇḍā from Nothem part of Bengal has been discussed above.
images from Northern Bengal but once again proves to the existence of the cult of Cāmunda worship in the region concerned.

Sl. No. 63: Inscribed Vārāhī from South Twenty Parganas, West Bengal

![Vārāhī, North Kankandighi](image)

**Photo Courtesy:** [Sundarban Anchalik Sangrahasala, Baruipur](url)

**Identification:** Vārāhī

**Material:** Black stone, 57.3 cm x 24 cm

**Provenance:** North Kankandighi, P.S.Mathurapur, West Bengal

**Present Whereabouts:** Sundarban Anchalik Sangrahasala, Baruipur.

**Language:** Sanskrit

**Script:** Gaudīya

**Approximate date:** Undated. Palaeographically the epigraphic record may be dated in the eleventh century.

**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings:**

![Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal](image)

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Since the surviving letters are illegible, no reading of the inscription has been attempted.\footnote{Ibid. p.120.}

Text:

Not given

Translation:

Not given

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The sculpture executed in black stone is in a fairly good state of preservation. The female divinity with boar-face is identified as Vārāhi, the energy consort of Viṣṇu.\footnote{The iconographic study of the image has been made by Sudipa Ray Bandyopadhyay, \textit{op. cit.} 2010.} The four-armed goddess is seated in \textit{lalitāsana} on a \textit{viśvapadma} placed on a \textit{paṇcaratha} pedestal. The goddess holds a \textit{khaḍga} in her upper right hand and the corresponding upper left hand holds a \textit{khetaka}. The lower right holds a \textit{matsya}\footnote{According to J. N. Banerjea the fish held in one of the hands of the goddess indicates a Tāntrik trait. See, Banerjea, \textit{op. cit.} p.506.} and the corresponding left a \textit{kapāla}. The attribute in her hands evidently suggest her participation in the violent struggle against the demons. A pair of sharp teeth protruding from her mouth and the delicately incised third-eye is a noteworthy feature. In addition, the heavy breast, waist and massive hips adds to the feminine charm of the goddess. The dress and ornaments include a transparent \textit{kāṇchuli} and a \textit{sādi}, \textit{karpakupḍalas}, a \textit{graiveyaka}, a broad \textit{kantāhara}, decorated \textit{Kārtvandhanī} and plain \textit{nupuras}. Her hair is neatly arranged in a bun decorated with a triangular ornate projection at the centre. Mātrkā images are generally shown with a child on their lap emphasizing their motherhood. The Vārāhi image in the present example do not have a child on her lap.

The pedestal is composed of human figures and floral-vegetal motif. A human figure is shown seated in a similar posture like that of the goddess on a separate \textit{viśvapadma} just below the lotus seat and occupies the middle portion of the pedestal. He is holding in his right hand a \textit{cīmara} and an unidentified object, probably a \textit{ghanta} in the left placing his left hand on the left thigh. Interestingly the figure with an hair-do in the style of \textit{śīraścakra} have led Ray to identify the
image as that of a wingless Garuḍa who according to the scholar appears in this image as an attendant deity of the central figure and not as the mount or vehicle. To the left we notice another human figure, perhaps a devotee with namaskāra mudra. Two naivedyas are depicted at the two corner of the pedestal.

The partially visible oval halo behind the goddess is executed in plain relief. The pointed top of the stele bears the auspicious kūrtimukha, along with two flying celestial deities each holding a cāmara and a miśānabhāṇḍa alternately in right and left hands flanking on both sides of the stele. The sculpture is a product of the Eastern Indian School of medieval sculpture and can be stylistically dated to eleventh century A.D.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Vārāhī from North Kankandighi, South Twenty Parganas District, West Bengal is unique in its iconographic construct. The independent inscribed images of mūrka are rare in Bengal sculptural study. The discovery of the present Vārāhī image from southern part of West Bengal is therefore a rare specimen of sculptural art in Pāla-Sena art tradition.

Sl. No. 64: Inscribed image of Sūrya from Rajganj, Jalpaiguri

Sūrya, Rajganj, Jalpaiguri
Phot Courtesy: [Bhattacharya, P. K. IS.AKMM, pl. 3, fig. 6]

365 Enamul Haque’s exhaustive work mentions seven Vārāhī images from Northern part of West Bengal. See Haque, p. 260. It appears that none of them are inscribed.
**Identification:** Sūrya

**Material:** Black Stone, 56.5 x 27 cm

**Provenance:** Rajganj, Jalpaiguri

**Present Whereabouts:** North Bengal University Museum, Acc. No. 11

**Language:** Sanskrit

**Script:** Proto-Bengali

**Approximate date:** Undated. The sculpture is dated to 12th-13th century A.D.\(^{366}\)

**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings:**

**Reading 1:** Bhattacharya, P. K. *Iconography of sculptures*, Akshay Kumar Maitreya Museum, North Bengal University, (hereafter *ISAKMM*) p.12.

**Text:**

\textit{Oṁ Svasti  śrī-śiva-devādityāḥ}

**Translation:**

Not given

**Additional References:**

**Iconographic Study:**

The image of the sun-god from Rajganj, Jalpaiguri\(^ {367}\) North Bengal is executed in Black stone. The iconographical details of this sculpture is not easy to construct from the available photograph. The sculpture under discussion shares the common iconographic traits noticed in several other Sūrya images. The deity is shown standing in \textit{samapadasthānakā} pose on a lotus seat placed on a \textit{pañcaratha} pedestal. Two hands are raised up to the level of shoulder supporting full blown lotusus. The sun-god is accompanied by the standard accessory figures: his two principal male attendants Daṇḍin (usually on his right) and Piṅgala (usually on his left). Five female figures are representing as his consorts, of which the one standing between his feets is generally identified as the earth goddess Mahāśvetā, two female archers are shown in the act of shooting arrows; and two standing beside the central deity. Aruṇa, the charioteer, is depicted in directing the seven horses that draw Sūrya's one-wheeled chariot. Overall, the extant specimen is replete with detailing, comprises two flying celestial deities, \textit{kirttimukha}, flame motif as aureole


\(^{367}\) An attempt is being made to study the iconographic features of the Sūrya image as no iconographic discussion is given by the author who published this image in North Bengal University Museum Catalogue.
behind the central deity and other minute motifs which cannot be defined from the indistinct photograph.

**Observations:**

The Sūrya image from North Bengal University Museum is an undated inscribed specimen. It is difficult to understand the epigraphic record and comment on it, since no translation is given by the author. Inspite of it, I am inclined to make some observation in this regard. Firstly, the inscription begins with two auspicious expression *Om* followed by *Svasti* which has been rarely noticed by me. Secondly, does the name Śiva stands for the donor who is responsible for consecrating this image? However, the third part of the record mentions the name of the deity as Adityah. It is known to us that Sūrya is not only an independent god, but he is closely related to a number of deities that symbolize certain phenomena of time and space. He is considered as one of the Twelve Ādityas (*dvādaśāditya*), the ancient solar deities symbolizing the twelve months of the solar year. Thus the present epigraph that records the word Ādityah is significant in this context.

**Sl. No. 65: Inscribed Umā-Alingana image from Tapan, South Dinajpur**

![Umā-Maheśvara, Tapan](Photo Courtesy: Bhattacharya, P. K. *AS-AKMM*, pl.VI, fig.12)

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368 The present study have revealed the occurrence of the single auspicious word either *Om*, *Svasti* or *Siddham* inscribed or symbolically engraved in maximum number of images.
Identification: Umā-Ālingana
Material: Octo-alloy, 19 cm x 14.5 cm
Provenance: Tapan, South Dinajpur
Present Whereabouts: North Bengal University Museum, Accession No. 4 (B) /
Language: Sanskrit p. 354 ARI
Script: Proto-Bengali
Approximate date: Undated. The sculpture is dated to 12th century A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

[Reading 1]: Bhattacharya, P. K. IS-AKMM, p. 24.
Text:
Dānapati Āchali jechaka

Translation:
(i.e. the donor Āchali Jechaka)

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The octo-alloy image of Umā-Maheśvara from Tapan, South Dinajpur represent the Ālingana-murti of the Śaiva cult. The god and his consort are depicted in similar sitting posture delineating ālingana posture with their legs placed on their viśhāna. Śiva is four-armed. The upper right holds a mirror and touches the chin of his consort with the other right. The upper left holds a skull and the lower left is placed on the breast of the goddess. Umā is two armed, holding perhaps her normal attributes. Seated figures of Ganesa and Kārttikeya are shown on either side of the lotus pedestal upon which the image of Umā-Maheśvara is placed. The donor in aṅgalihasta is shown on the right side below the pedestal.

Observations:

The inscription at the back of the pedestal of the Umā-Ālingana image from North Bengal mentions about the religious gift of the donor named Āchali Jechaka. Nothing is known about the socio-economic status of the donor.

369 It is difficult to study in detail the iconographic dimension of the image from the available photograph.
Identification: Manasa
Material: Black Basalt, 60 cm x 31 cm
Provenance: Bad Bandalahar, West Dinajpur
Present Whereabouts: North Bengal University Museum, Acc. No. 22
Language: Sanskrit
Script: p.22 ARI
Approximate date: Undated. The sculpture is paleographically assigned to c.12th century A.D. ³⁷⁰

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings: Bhattacharya, P. K. IS-AKMM, p. 35.

Reading 1:

Text:
Om Sri Navakah

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:

³⁷⁰ P. K. Bhattacharya, op. cit, p.35.
Iconographic Study:

The inscribed image of the snake-goddess Manasā from Bad Bandalahar, West Dinajpur, West Bengal is perhaps in a fairly good state of preservation. The deity is two-armed and seated in lalitāśana on a visvapadma placed on a pedestal. The deity holds a lotus or fruit in the right hand extended in vara-mudrā and a snake in the left. A seven headed snake canopy shelters her head. To the right and left of the central figure on a higher plane, two seated male figures are depicted. Both of them are provided with a lotus seat. The pedestal at its central position bears the ghata and a worshipper to the left. There is a lotus at the apex of the pointed back-slab instead of usual Kirttimukha with a flying Nāga on either side.

Observations:

The Manasā image from Dinajpur District (West Bengal) is an undated inscribed example. The epigraphic record though votive in nature is incomplete. The image is a religious gift of the illustrious donor Navakah.

Sl. No. 67: An Inscribed image of Durgā in Museum fur Indische Kunst, Berlin

![Durgā, Nālandā](https://example.com/durgananda.jpg)

Photo Courtesy: [Claudine Bautze Picron, AEI, MIK, pl.230]

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371 The short iconographical note is given by the present author.

372 Since the available photograph is indistinct, it is not possible to study the pedestal in detail.
Identification: Durgā
Material: Sandstone, 26 x 18 x 8 cm
Provenance: Regions of Nalanda
Present Whereabouts: Rawlins collection, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin (hereafter MIK), Inv no. IC 38971.

Language:
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. 9th century AD

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the Illegible inscription on the plinth


Text:
Not given

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The image is rather well preserved, only one of the left hand and the related attribute have been damaged. The goddess sits in lalitākṣepa on a thick double lotus, the right foot resting on a single corolla of petals. Below her, her mount the lion is profiled towards the viewer’s left, turning the head towards the latter, and his long tail lies above the back. A narrow plinth supports the image, bearing the inscription.

The back-slab is round and is adorned by two broad bands of thick beads and large flames showed as question marks, motifs which are encountered at Nalanda. The Devī is adorned by the traditional jewellery, her round chignon is surrounded by a diadem supported three tiny fleurons. Her lower right hand open in the varada, holds the sword in the upper right hand and the shield
in the upper left hand whereas the now destroyed left hand held the trident. This distribution, where the triśula replaces the śarikha, is encountered on a limited group of the 9th c. images from various sites of Bihar.\(^{373}\)

**Observations:**

The inscription on the pedestal is illegible and therefore remains undeciphered.

**Sl. No. 68: An Inscribed Viṣṇu image in Museum fur Indische Kunst, Berlin**

![Image of Viṣṇu](https://example.com/image)

**Viṣṇu, Ghazole, Itahar**

**Photo Courtesy:** Claudine Bautze Picron, *AEI- MIK, pl. 242*

**Identification:** Viṣṇu

**Material:** Phyllite, 122 x 63 x 19 cms

**Provenance:** Gazole, Itahar, Bhadrasila in the district of West Dinajpur

**Present Whereabouts:** Art market, 1962, *MIK*, Berlin, Inv no.1 310

**Language:** Sanskrit

**Script:** Gaudīya script of the 12th century A.D.

**Approximate date:** Undated. The suggested date of the image is 12th century A.D.

**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings**:


**Text**:

L.1 Danapa... [pa] ti-
L.2 śri śaṅga ... [pa] h

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\(^{373}\) See Claudine Bautze Picron, *op.cit.* 1998, p.82.
Translation:
“The lord of gifts (danapati), architect (sthapati), the illustrious Śaṅga…”

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The image of Viṣṇu is well preserved even though three of the four arms of the deity is broken; only the upper left arm remains, holding the utpala. Two female attendants accompany him, i.e. Lakṣmi on his proper right, who holds the cīmara above her right shoulder and the padma, now destroyed, in her left hand, and Sarasvatī on his proper left, playing vīṇā with both hands. On either side, two tiny male figures stand as symbol of the conch and of the disk, which they bear as head-dress above the diadem. Both display the abhaya with the right hand and the left one put on the hip (katihasta). The viśāh, Garuḍa, the sun-bird who is represented as a human figure bear wings on his back. He kneels with hands joined in the gesture of veneration on the right part of the pedestal, symmetric to the group of four human devotees who occupy the left part of the pedestal. This group integrates a male figure who offers a garland to the god and is followed by a woman and two further persons, probably his wife and children.

The decoartation of the back-slab and the pedestal is very complex and does not allow any space free. Scrolls and volutes are carved in low relief on the pedestal behind the mount of the central deity and his devotees. The vidyākṣara fly towards the god, each profiled on a cloud. Both are male warriors, carrying a sword in the front hand and an offering in the back one. Both wear the same dress, are booted and wear the karandamukuta. A pointed nimbus narrowing in the lower part, is drawn behind the deity’s head, the inner surface is plain whereas a band of jagged flames runs along the edge. The back throne against which the deity stands is composed of broad lintel which is supported by equally broad posts. The traditional monstrous and real figures adorn this throne.

The treatment of the carving is extremely minute, the decoration betrays a great richness. The deities are dressed with diaphanous cloth, the folds of which are indicated through wavy double lines carved in low relief. The jewellery is very rich; the ornaments are large and illustrated with much care. Large pearls adorns the heavy upavīṭa, a double row of them forms the long neck chain falling on the breast encasing the broad necklace and the simple beaded row. Broad dsik – shaped ornaments adorn the ears of the goddess and Viṣṇu wears a ear-rings lying on the
shoulders. Pearled rings adorn the wrists and anklets. The vanamālī falls below the knees, each flower being rendered with accuracy. The central deity wears a bulbous kiritamukuta and a gemmed diadem.

A careful study of the composition, of its motifs and of their treatment permits to suggest that this image was carved in the northern part of the district of Malda or the southern part of the district of Dinajpur. This region seems to have constituted a major artistic centre in the 12th century. Images of various deities discovered from the region show the same motif which are carved identically, for instance, the floral and rhomboid motifs on the moulding of the aura, the shape of the nimbus, the plain traingles on either side, the mouldings of the pedestal, and the ornaments as noticed in various stelae have the same treatment.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu presently housed in Museum fur Indische Kunst, Berlin is unique for its intricate iconographic composition. The votive inscription though incomplete records the name of the donor Śaṅga who dedicated the image. Unfortunately, I have been unable to trace the inscription or the engraved portion in this artistic specimen. We may assume that the inscription is engraved at the back of the image.

Sl. No. 69: An Inscribed image of Umā-Maheśvara from Gazole, District Malda

Umā-Maheśvara, Malda
Photo Courtesy: Malda Museum, Malda

The ten inscribed images of Brāhmaṇical deities included in this section are from the rich collection of Malda Museum. I have been unable to trace the published reading of the inscriptions on these images. A futile attempt is made by me to give a tentative reading in most cases. The iconographic discussion of most of the images is given by me.
Identification: Uma-Maheśvara
Material: Black Stone, 64 x 31 cms
Provenance: Gazole, District Malda, West Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Malda Museum, Accession No. RUMH-4
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. Malaysankar Bhattacharya dates the sculpture to c. 11th century A.D.\(^{375}\)

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscribed portion of the pedestal

Reading 1: Tentative reading by me.
Text:
Mā sā ōrīmā.. dānapatiḥ
Translation:
I am unable to understand the text and give a proper translation.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The beautiful specimen of Umā-Maheśvara executed in black stone from Gazole is in a good state of preservation. This is another representation the Ālīgananmūrti, where Śiva and his consort are seen embracing each other. The four-armed Śiva and two-armed Umā is shown seated against a tre-foil arch background. Śiva embraces the goddess with one of the left hands, drawing her closer, while his normal right hand in the front touches her chin. The two additional hands hold an utpala and the triśūla on the right and left respectively. Umā’s right hand is placed on the shoulder of Śiva and a darpaṇa in her left hand. The foot of the pendant right leg of Śiva

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is resting on his vāhana, the bull. The pendant left leg of the goddess is placed on the lotus seat on which the couple are seated. Her vāhana, the lion is shown seated below.

The pañcarattra pedestal besides the icon of two vāhanas depict a devotee at the right end. A naivedya is shown beside the devotee. Strikingly in between the vāhanas we notice a two-armed seated emaciated male figure. Kirttimukha occupies the apex of the stele flanked by two flying celestial’s divinities.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Uma-Maheśvara from Gazole, District Malda bears a single line pedestal inscription. The epigraphic record is engraved on the rāhāpaga of the pañcarattra pedestal. The image is a religious gift of the donor (?). The epigraphic record of this beautiful image needs investigation.

Sl. No.70: An Inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Gazole, Malda

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Black Stone, 115 x 61 cms
Provenance: Gazole, District Malda, West Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Malda Museum, Acc. No. RVS-1
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Gaudīya characters
Approximate date: Undated. Malaysankar Bhattacharya dates the sculpture to 12th century A.D.376

376 Malaysankar Bhattacharya op.cit. 1982, p. 23.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Tentative reading by me.

Text:
Siddham (symbol) bhatta padmanārāyanaḥ

Translation:

Additional References:
Bhattacharya, Malaysankar. op.cit. 1982, pp. 22-23.

Iconographic Study:

The four-armed deity is shown standing in samapādasthānaka on a miniature viśvapadma placed on a pañcaratha pedestal. An architectural construct is provided at the background against which the deity is standing. Of the four hands, except the upper left all the hands are damaged. The upper left holding a gada suggest that the image belonged to the PCGS order and according to the list of the Caturvimsatimūrtis, the image is identified as Śrīdhara. The deity is bejeweled with the vanamālā, beaded upavītā, and the usual ornaments. Viṣṇu is accompanied, in addition to the two consorts, by two Ayudhapurusas, one on either side. The faces of the two consorts are mutilated. They are shown standing in abhaṅga on a separate lotus seat with their usual attributes. A kirttimukha occupies the apex of the stele flanked by two flying celestials divinities. The prabhāvalī is decorated with floral motif. The pañcaratha pedestal bears the kneeling figure of the devotee at the right end.

Observations:

The image of Viṣṇu from Gazole, District Malda bears a single line inscription on the upper rāhā of the pañcaratha pedestal. The reading of the inscription as deciphered by me proposes two different observations. Firstly, it is known that Nārāyaṇa is one of the name of the deity which
finds reference in several copperplate and image inscriptions. So in the present inscription Viṣṇu with one of his attribute as *padma* may refer to the god, who is known as *padmanārāyana*.

Secondly, *padmanārāyana* may also be the name of a Brāhmin donor as the word *bhatta* is a title affixed or prefixed to the names of learned Brāhmims.

**Sl. No.71: An Inscribed image of Trivikrama Viṣṇu from Gazole, Malda**

![Image of Trivikrama Viṣṇu](https://example.com/image.png)

**Viṣṇu, Malda**

**Photo Courtesy:** Malda Museum, Malda

**Identification:** Viṣṇu

**Material:** Black Stone, 76 x 41 cms

**Provenance:** Gazole, District Malda

**Present Whereabouts:** Malda Museum, Acc. No. RVS-25

**Language:** Sanskrit

**Script:**

**Approximate date:** Undated. Malaysankar Bhattacharya dates the sculpture to 12th century A.D.379

**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings:**

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378 See, Monier Williams, p.745.

[Reading 1]: Tentative reading by me.

Text:
Siddham (symbol) bhatta nāga Mādhava ||

Translation:

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu in black stone from Gazole, Malda District, is in a good state of preservation. The four-armed deity is shown standing in samapādaśṭhānaka on a miniature viṣṇapadma placed on a pañcaratha pedestal. An architectural construct is provided at the background against which the deity is standing. Of the four hands, the lower two hands are broken. The upper left holds a cakra and the upper right a gada. The deity is bejeweled with the vanamāla, beaded upavita, and the usual ornaments. Viṣṇu is accompanied, in addition to the two consorts, by two Ayudhapurusas, one on either side. The face of Laksṇī is mutilated. They are shown standing in abhatig on a separate lotus seat. A kirttimukha occupies the apex of the stele flanked by two flying celestials' divinities. The prabhāvali is decorated with floral motif. The pañcaratha pedestal comprises floral moral, volutes and the kneeling figure of the devotee at the right end.

Observations:

The image of Viṣṇu from Gazole, District Malda is an undated epigraphic composition. A single line inscription is engraved on the upper rāhi of the pañcaratha pedestal. The reading of the record proposes two different observations. Firstly, it is known that Mādhava is one of the name of the deity which finds reference in several copperplate and image inscriptions. So in the present inscription the word Mādhava refers to the name of the god. Secondly, bhatta nāga may possibly be the name of a Brāhmaṇ donor as the word bhatta is a title affixed or prefixed to the

380 See, C. Bautze, op.cit, 1986. Additional References have been made in the foregoing pages for Viṣṇu images with the appellation Mādhava.
names of learned Brāhmīns. Hence, it can be surmised that the image of Madhava (Viṣṇu) is a religious gift of a Brāhmin donor, bhṛttā nāga.

Sl. No.72: An Inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Babupur, Malda

[Image of the image]

Viṣṇu, Babupur, Malda

Photo Courtesy: Malda Museum, Malda

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Black Stone, 92 x 48 cms
Provenance: Babupur, Gazole, District Malda, Acc. No. RVS-45
Present Whereabouts: Malda Museum
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

[Image of the inscription]

Close up view of the inscription on pedestal

Reading 1:
Text:
Not published
Translation:
Not published

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381 See, Monier Williams, *op.cit*, p.745.
Additional References:

Iconographic Study

The inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Babupur, District Malda is in a good state of preservation. The iconographic features gleaned in this image is similar to the iconographic composition as noticed in Viṣṇu images discussed above. All the hands are broken. The deity is shown standing in saṃapāḍkāsthaṇaka on a miniature viśvapadma placed on a saptaratha pedestal. An architectural construct is placed at the background against which the deity is standing. The deity is bejeweled with the vanamālā, beaded upavītā, and the usual ornaments. Viṣṇu is accompanied, by two Ayudhapuruṣas, one on either side. Sarasvati and Lakṣmī are shown standing in abhaṅga to the left and right respectively. The attributes in the hands of the two consorts and their standing posture remains the same. Above the architectural construct and just below the flying Vidyadharas we notice two human figures, perhaps two musicians. A kirttimukha occupies the apex of the stele flanked by two flying celestials’divinities. The prabhāvalī is decorated with flora and motif.

The pedestal is bedecked with the icon of a devotee in kneeling posture and folded hands and the presence of Garuḍa is noticed at the middle of the pedestal.

Observations:

The image of Viṣṇu from Babupur, Gazole, District Malda bears a single line inscription on the upper raḥā of the pañcaratha pedestal. The illegible writing on the pedestal is difficult to transcribe. The epigraphic record needs further investigation.

Sl. No. 73: Inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Narasimhakuppa, Malda

Photo Courtesy: [ Malda Museum, Malda ]
Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Black Stone, 55 x 24 cms
Provenance: Narasimhakuppa, English Bazar, District Malda
Present Whereabouts: Malda Museum, Malda
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the Pedestal

Reading I:
Text:
Not Published
Translation:
Not Published

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The inscribed sculpture of Viṣṇu from Narasimhakuppa, district Malda is a well preserved one. Of the four Viṣṇu sculptures discussed above this is the only extant example which has suffered no abrasion. The four-armed deity is shown standing in the usual standing posture of samapāda on a miniature viṣvapadma placed on a pañcaratha pedestal. The attributes held by the deity are padma, gadā, cakra and śaṅkha, thus qualifying the Trivikrama variety. The deity is bejeweled with the usual ornaments. Viṣṇu is accompanied by his consorts, Sarasvati and Lakṣmi. They are shown standing in abhaṅga to the left and right of the central deity. The attributes in the hands of the two consorts and their standing posture remain the same. Āyudhapuruṣas are depicted one on either side of the consorts. A kirttimukha occupies the apex of the stele flanked by two flying celestials’ divinities. The pedestal of Narasimha image shares the same composition as noted in other Viṣṇu images from Malda. The sculpture is dated in 11th century A.D.
Observations:

The image of Viṣṇu from Narasimhakuppa, District Malda bears a single line inscription on the upper rāhā of the pañcaratha pedestal. I am unable to read the inscription on the image. The epigraphic record needs investigation by an expert. The iconographical composition in this image is similar to the other Viṣṇu images from the Malda District as stated above. This perhaps implies that the sculptures may be the production of the same artist. I intend to add one observation regarding the reading of the record. The inscription begins with an auspicious symbol, siddham and the last few letters possibly read Madhavasya. If this reading is acceptable than it may be conjectured that the expression Madhava refers to the name of the god.

Sl. No. 74: A Fragmented image of Viṣṇu from Malda

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Black Stone, 34 x 26 cms
Provenance: Malda, District Malda
Present Whereabouts: Malda Museum, Malda, Acc. No. RVS-30
Language:
Script: 
Approximate date: Undated. The image is dated to 11th century A. D. 382

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1:

Text:

Translation:

Other References:
Bhattacharya, Malaysankar op.cit, p. 27.

Iconographic Study:

A brief iconographic description of this image is based on Malaysankar Bhattacharya’s discussion on the sculpture in page 27 of his monograph. The sculpture is much mutilated. The

382 This date has been mentioned by Malaysankar Bhattacharya in his catalogue, op.cit.1982.
fragmentary piece shows the feet of Viṣṇu on the lotus pedestal and his attendants to the proper left, respectively Sarasvatī and Śaṅkhaputuṣa.

**Observations**:

I have missed the sculpture on my visit to Malda. I do not know if the inscription or the image has been published in any monograph. I have included the sculpture in this study on the basis of the information that it is inscribed. The Viṣṇu image with inscription therefore demands proper investigation.

Sl. No. 75: An Inscribed image of Sūrya from Englishbazar, Malda

Photo Courtesy: Malda Museum, Malda

Identification: Sūrya
Material: Black stone, 109 x 46 cms
Provenance: Englishbazar, Malda, district Malda
Present Whereabouts: Malda Museum, Malda, Acc. No. RSR-31
Language:
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

**Epigraphic Study**:

**Variant Readings**:

Reading 1:

Text: Not published

Translation: Not published
**Iconographic Study:**

The extant inscribed image of Sūrya is well executed. The deity stands in a usual *samapāda* posture on a lotus placed on the *saptaratha* pedestal. The architectural background against which the deity is shown standing is insignificantly depicted on the back-plate. The entire *prabhāvalī* is occupied by two bands of flame motif which encircles the image of the central figure. Both the arms of the two-armed god are lost. The deity is bedecked with ornaments, he wears a *ratnamukta*, and a dagger is attached to the proper left of the waist band. Sureṇu and Daṇḍi stand to the proper left. To the proper right stand Nikṣubhā and Piṅgala. The figure of Mahāśvetā is depicted in front of the principal deity. The female archers shooting arrows are depicted respectively to the proper right and left near the booted legs of the central deity. Aruṇa is engaged in driving the chariot and is placed in front of the figure of Mahasveta.

The pedestal bears the figures of seven horses. A *kirttimukha* occupies the apex of the stele flanked by two flying celestials’ divinities. The pointed *prabhāvalī*, the seven *rathas* of the pedestal suggest a 12th century date for the sculpture.

**Observations:**

The inscribed image of Sūya from Englishbazar, Malda district bears few illegible words engraved on the *rāha* of the *saptaratha* pedestal. The epigraphic record needs closer examination for its decipherment.

**Sl. No.76: An Inscribed image of Mahișamardini from Englishbazar, Malda**

![Mahișamardini, Englishbazar](Photo Courtesy: | Malda Museum, Malda |)

263
Identification: Mahiṣamardini
Material: Black Stone, 97 x 48 cms
Provenance: Englishbazar / Bamangola, district Malda
Present Whereabouts: Malda Museum, Malda, Acc. No. RMH-2 / 3
Language: Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the back-plate

[Reading 1]: Tentative reading is mine
Text:
Siddham (symbol) ma ... ca. śṛīḥ
Siddham (symbol) ma/ na, bhira caṇḍīh
Translation:

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The well-preserved and beautiful image of Mahiṣamardini from Englishbazar? District Malda is now preserved in Malda Museum. The eight-armed image stands in alidha, with one foot placed on the pedestal and the other foot placed on the body of the buffalo whose severed head lies on the pedestal. The lion is seen attacking the emerging demon by one of his legs. Of the eight arms, the two normal pairs of hand in front delineates the left hand holding the tuft of hair of the demon and the right one with a *trīśula* is seen piercing the demon. The three right hand holds the

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383 There is a problem in tracing the exact findspot of the image and the Acc. No. recorded. According to the information I gathered from my visit to Malda Museum, that the image is from Englishbazar, District Malda bearing an Acc. No. RMH-2. The photograph of the sculpture is stamped with number RMH-3. Bhattacharya’s in his Catalogue, neither gives the illustration of the Mahiṣamardini image nor mention that the RMH-3 is inscribed. On the other hand he informs that the sculpture bearing RMH-3 is from Bamangola. Therefore in place of provenance I have mentioned both Englishbazar and Bamangola.
The deity is attired in sadl and adorned with normal jewelleries. One female attendant is present on either side. The pedestal bears few icons and floral motif. The stele, almost rounded at the top, bears kirttimukha at the apex and the figures of flying gandharvas carrying garlands are depicted on two corners. The rounded backslab with a slight pointed edge and the rounded pedestal at the base ascribes an earlier date to this specimen of art.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Mahisamardini bears a beautiful inscription engraved on the left portion at the back-plate. A tentative reading has been suggested above. No observations can be made in regard to the epigraphic record until the inscription is deciphered properly.

Sl. No.77: An Inscribed image of Simhavahini from Englishbazar, Malda

Identification: Simhavahini
Material: Black Stone, 61 x 36 cms
Provenance: Englishbazar, Malda, District Malda
Present Whereabouts: Malda Museum, Malda, RSM-1
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

384 Enamul Haque, op.cit, p. 246, pi.199, refers to the eight-armed Mahisamardini image from Chandina, Comilla district having a snake as an attribute in the lower left hand.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal

Reading 1:
Text: Not given
Translation: Not given

Additional References:
Malaysankar Bhattacharya, op.cit, p.34.

Iconographic Study:
The inscribed image of a seated female divinity from Englishbazar, District Malda is a rare specimen of art. The back-plate is completely damaged and marks of abrasion is noticed on major part of the image. The deity is four-armed and is seated in *lalitāsana* on a *visvapadma* placed on a *saptaratha* pedestal. Of the four arms, the upper left seems to be broken and the lower left supports the child shown seated on the left thigh. The upper right holds a *khadga*?, and the lower right (broken) displays *varada*. The upper portion of the face is damaged. The deity is adorned with *jatāmukuta* and usual ornaments. A kneeling devotee and *naivedya* is depicted to the left of the pedestal.

The pedestal bears the *sirītha* (lion) which appears to be the *vāhana* of the goddess. To the left appear a kneeling devotee with folded hands, and a *naivedya*. The right side of the pedestal is seen a male and an animal figure. On the top right of the stele, a figure of flying celestial deity with garland is depicted. Haque\textsuperscript{385} refers to six four-armed images of Simhavāhini from different ateliers of Bengal, presently housed in different Museums. None of the Simhavahini images discussed by the author is shown with a child. The Simhavahini image from Malda District is therefore unique in this regard.

\textsuperscript{385} Enamul Haque, *op.cit*, p.215.
Observations:

Since I am unable to read the inscriptional evidence engraved on this image, it is difficult for me to comment on the importance of the epigraphic record. The sculpture is rare and significant for its iconographical features as outlined above. However, the depiction of a child in this sculpture may be conjectured as the goddesses having something to do with children. 386

Sl. No.78: Inscribed Manasā from West Dinajpur

Manasā, West Dinajpur

Photo Courtesy: [ Ashutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University ]

Identification: Manasā
Material: Black Stone, 61 x 31 x 8 cms
Provenance: West Dinajpur, West Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Ashutosh Museum of Indian Art (hereafter AM) Calcutta University.
Language:
Script:
Approximate date: Undated. The sculpture is dated to eleventh century A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal

386Several images of goddesses from different ateliers of Bengal and Bihar are shown with a child and inscribed with varied names like Gausava, Puṇḍeśvarī, etc. It may be assumed that these female goddess were worshipped for the specific protection of children.
Reading 1: The single line inscription is engraved on the middle rāhā of the pañcaratha pedestal.

Text: Not published

Translation: Not published

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The inscribed image of Manasa from West Dinajpur is now in the repertoire of Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta. The sculpture is beautifully preserved except the face which is considerably damaged. The deity is shown seated in lalitasana, with right leg pendant on a viṣvapadma placed on a pañcaratha pedestal. The goddess is two-armed, holding a fruit in the right hand in the varada fashion and a snake in the left. The goddess is adorned and sheltered under the hood of seven snakes. The deity is attended by two companions. On the right probably appears Rṣī Jaratkāru, seated in yogapattīsana, her consort with a beard, emaciated body, and with a unique turban. On the left is Āstikamuni, in mahārajallīsana with a snake-hood at his back. The pañcaratha pedestal is simple and plain in execution. The middle ratha bears a ghata, and two devotees are shown seated on both sides of the pedestal. They may perhaps be the donor. The back-plate is plain and similar to the pedestal. A remarkable feature as noticed in this sculpture is the presence of a padma at the top of the prabhavali, above the snake-hoods, occupying the usual place of the kirtimukha. The presence of therianthropomorphic nāgās delineated in place of the vidyadhāras, carrying garland of flowers is unique to the composition.

Observations:

The beautiful inscribed image of Manasa from West Dinajpur bears an undated epigraphic record. I have not found any reference to the image or the inscription on it in any published books and journals. The iconographic dimension illustrated above is based on the available photograph. The epigraphic record needs an investigation.
Sl. No.79: An Inscribed image of Viṣṇu from Mahadevpur, Bangladesh

Viṣṇu, Mahadevpur

Photo Courtesy: Ashutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University

Identification: Viṣṇu
Material: Black stone,
Provenance: Mahadevpur, Rajshahi District, Bangladesh
Present Whereabouts: AM, Calcutta University, Acc. No.648.
Language:
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Single line illegible inscription on the rāhā of the pāndaratha pedestal.

Text:
Not published
Translation:
Not published

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The sculpture of the Brahmanical divinity Viṣṇu is housed in the Ashutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta, bearing an Accession No.648. The sculpture depicts four handed Viṣṇu standing in samāpāda posture on a double-petalled lotus pedestal. Of the four hands, the two lower hands are damaged. The ṛṇudhas in upper two hands are cakra and gadā respectively. The deity is
The beaded upavīṭā and vanamāla is quite prominent. The consort of Viṣṇu, Saraswati (with a vīṇā) and Lakṣmi (holding a fly-whisk) in triṃbhaṅga posture are shown standing to the left and right of the central figure. Besides the consorts, we notice the appearance of two other figures, perhaps the Āyudhapuruṣas. Two garland bearing vidyādharas are depicted on the left and right of the stele. The vyālakas atop ṛṣis forms the architectural construct. Besides the elongated stele, a separate oval halo encircles the head of the main figure. Two figures in aṭṭajalī-mudrā are shown on the antūrāha pagas of the inscribed pañcaratha pedestal (may be the donor?). Kirtimukha decorates the apex of the stele.

**Observations:**

I have not noticed any published literature on the epigraphic record and iconographic features of this image. A single line illegible inscription is engraved on the ṛāhā of the pañcaratha pedestal.

**Sl. No. 80: Inscribed Baṭuka Bhairava from Bengal**

Baṭuka Bhairava, West Bengal  
Photo Courtesy: [AM, University of Calcutta]

**Identification:** Bhairava  
**Material:** Black Stone, 48 x 22 x 9 cm  
**Provenance:** West Bengal  
**Present Whereabouts:** Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta, Acc. No. 2002.8/4/20763  
**Language:**  
**Script:**  
**Approximate date:** Undated.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal

Reading 1: Single line of writing on the rāhā of the saptaratha pedestal is illegible.
Text:
Not published
Translation:
Not published
Additional References:
Haque, Enamul *op. cit*, p.169, pl.139, List No.1749.

Iconographic Study:

Bhairava group of sculptures represent the ugra or the aggressive manifestation of Śiva. The distinct iconographic features of this group of images are “dwarfish, with a flabby belly, hair knotted or flaring in a circle, moustache, beard, fangs, mundamālā, bare feet and three eyes. The image under study is four-armed. The deity stands in pratyālīṭha posture on a viśvapadma placed on a saptaratha pedestal. Of the four hands, the upper right (damaged) holds a club or sword, the lower right hand is completely damaged, the corresponding left holds a kapāla near the chest, and the upper left hand possibly supports the naramunda depicted at the back-plate. Besides various ornaments a mundamālā bedecks the deity and the head is encircled by flames. The right foot is placed on a lotus. A dog is depicted between the two legs, which justifies to the identification of the image as Batuka Bhairava. The saptaratha pedestal consist of three naramunda on a stand, two devotees in añjālimudra and an offering like naivedya depicted to the left of the pedestal.

Observations:

Few illegible letters are noticed on the rāhā of the pedestal. I have not noticed any published literature on the epigraphic record and iconographic features of this image.

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Sl. No. 81: Inscribed image of Bhairava from North Bengal in Indian Museum

Plate: Bhairava

Photo Courtesy: [Indian Museum]

Identification: Bhairava
Material: Black Stone, Ht. 120 x 47 cm
Provenance: Jagnail, West Dinaipur, North Bengal
Present Whereabouts: Indian Museum, Kolkata, Acc. No. 72/2
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal

Reading 1: A single line inscription on the pedestal.

Text:
Not published

Translation:
Not published

Additional References:
Mukherjee, Chhanda. op.cit, IMB, Vol. XXXVII, p.155, No.758.
Haque, Enamul, op.cit, List No.1771

272
Iconographic Study:

The inscribed specimen from Jagnail (Dinajpur) illustrates the ugra aspect of Śiva images i.e. Bhairava. The five faced ten-armed deity delineates a dancing pose noticed in varieties of the ugra-mūrtis. The figure stand on the toes of the left foot, the right leg raised and retraced near the left thigh. The left toe is placed on dead body (śava). The śava is shown lying on a miniature viśvapadma. The front face is three-eyed (trinetra) and bearded. All the five heads are with jata. Flames are issuing out of the body. The attributes in the right hand are the following from the top, khadga, bāda, śīla (?), varadī, and kapīla held near the chest. The corresponding left hand holds, khetaka, dhanu, indistinct, ārpa, and triśula. Below the upraised knee of the central deity four figures are depicted. All of them are four-armed carrying attributes which are somewhat similar to the central deity. Their standing pose delineating movement is interesting.

The semicircular pedestal constitutes four human figures delineating attitudes and gestures similar to the figures depicted on the back-plate. Each figure is four-armed. A figure to the left has a sow face (?). The central part of the pedestal is occupied with lotus scrolls from which sprang the stem of the viśvapadma. A devotee in kneeling pose is shown to the right of the pedestal.

Observations:

The lower moulding of the pedestal is inscribed. I have been able to read a single word siddhi engraved just above the single line inscription. The second line begins with an auspicious symbol reading siddham. Since I have not found any published reading of this epigraphic record, it can only be surmised that the inscriptive evidence is votive in nature.

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387 The iconographic study of the image is an attempt by the present author.
Sl. No. 82: Inscribed image of Crowned Sūrya from Bihar in Indian Museum

Plate: Sūrya
Photo Courtesy: [ Indian Museum ]

Identification: Sūrya
Material: Black stone, 120 x 56 cm
Provenance: Bihar
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Illegible inscription on the pedestal

Reading 1: The single line donative record is a religious gift of a donor.

Text:
Not published

deya ..... 

Translation:
Not published
Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The Brahmanical deity Sūrya is standing in *samapāda* on his chariot drawn by seven horses. The horses and the wheels are represented in the lowest part of the sculpture. Sūrya is represented with two hands, holding two lotuses, but the palm of both the hands are broken. The deity is beautifully ornamented and is crowned. A sword hangs from the belt. Aruṇa, the charioteer is seated in front in between the booted feet of Sūrya. In his left hand he holds the reins and in his right hand a stick. To the right of Sūrya is a pot-bellied male figure holding in his right hand a pen and an inkpot in his left. He is Piṅgala. To the left is another male figure with a big staff in his hand. He is Daṇḍi. The attendants Daṇḍa and Piṅgala are booted and provided with a plain back-plate. The two female figures who are commonly shown with the sun-god stands in *pratyāśiṣṭha* and *āśiṣṭha* postures. Uṣā and Pratuṣya are shown shooting arrows. The pedestal illustrates seven galloping horses. The stele is plain and lacks the iconographic detailing.

Observations:

The image is referred in Theodor Bloch’s Catalogue, p.77. Bloch makes few comment on the iconography of the image but do not refer to the single line inscription at the bottom of the pedestal. The letters of this epigraphic record is indistinct to make a sense. However, the record demands a closer examination.

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388 T. Bloch, *op.cit.* p.77, mentions that the deity is standing on a full blown lotus.
Sl. No. 83: Inscribed image of Manasa from Indian Museum

Identification: Manasa
Material: Black stone
Provenance: Unknown
Present Whereabouts: Indian Museum, Kolkata, Acc. No. 9112
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription

Reading 1:
Text:
Not published
Translation:
Not published

Additional References:

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Iconographic Study:

The image of the snake-goddess Manasā now preserved in the Reserve Collection of Indian Museum, Calcutta is in a good state of preservation. The extant image is shown seated in lalitāsana, with right leg pendant and placed on a rounded pedestal. The goddess is two-armed, holding a fruit in the right hand in the varada fashion and a snake in the left. The goddess is adorned and sheltered under the hood of seven snakes. The deity is attended by two companions. On the right probably appears Rṣi Jaratkāru, seated in yogapattīsana, her consort with a beard, emaciated body, and with a unique turban. On the left is Āstikamuni, in mahārajallīlīsana with a snake-hood at his back. The deity is bejeweled in her usual ornaments and a sarpa-kucabandha is held by her bosom.

The rounded pedestal do not bear conspicuous iconographic peculiarities. A ghata is at the centre of the pedestal with snakes coming out. Two naivedyas are depicted on two sides. There may be a depiction of a donor on the pedestal at the extreme corners which is completely mutilated. The plain back-plate illustrates the presence of a padma at the top of the prabhavali, above the snake-hoods,occupying the usual place of the kirtimukha. The presence of therioanthropomorphic nāgas delineated in place of the Vidyadharas, carrying garland of flowers is also unique to the composition.

Observations:

The epigraphic record on this inscribed image is very indistinct. The two-lined inscription is engraved to the right and left of the ghata.

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389 Iconographic study of this sculpture is attempted by me.

390 The iconographic features discussed by me in context to this image is quite similar to the Manasā image housed in Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta University.
Sl. No. 84: Inscribed image of Uma-Maheśvara from Bihar in Indian Museum

Identification: Uma-Maheśvara
Material: Black Stone, 44 x 26 cm
Provenance: Bihar
Present Whereabouts: Indian Museum, Kolkata, Acc. No.3834
Language:
Script:
Approximate date: Undated.

Reading 1:

Text: Not published
Translation: Not published

Additional References:
Mukherjee, Chhanda, *op.cit.* p.131, No. 290.

Iconographic Study:

The beautiful specimen of Umā-Maheśvara\(^{391}\) executed in stone from Bihar, is in a good state of preservation. The image is a representation of a composite type depicting the Ālitganamūrti, where Śiva and his consort are seen embracing each other. The four-armed Śiva and two-armed Umā is shown seated against a rounded stele. Śiva embraces the goddess with one of the left

\(^{391}\) An attempt has been made to study the simple iconographic construct of this image.

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hands, drawing her closer, while his normal right hand in the front touches her chin. The two additional hands hold a *trisūla* in the right and a *kapāla* in the left. Umā’s right hand is placed on the shoulder of Śiva and a *darpāṇa* in her left hand. The foot of the pendant right leg of Śiva is resting on his *vāhana*, the bull. The pendant right leg of the goddess is placed on her *vāhana*, the lion. The image is dated to pre-Pāla period.

**Observations:**

The Umā-Mahēśvara image inscription from Bihar is engraved with illegible inscriptional evidence. I have not seen the published epigraphic record of this image nor any discussion on its iconographic peculiarities has been possibly dealt with. I intend to make a single observation in context to the sitting pose of the female consort. The sitting pose of our image is similar to Uma-Mahēśvara image from Bengal discussed by Enamul Haque. In the extant specimen the consort is shown seated in ease i.e *sukhāsana* but the disposition of legs is different from the typical *sukhāsana* attitude. However, in most of the Umā-Mahēśvara images from Bengal the female goddess is shown seated in *lalitāsana*, very few illustrates the goddess in *sukhāsana*. The present specimen therefore belongs to a rare type.

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392 See Enamul Haque, *op.cit*, p.157, pl.127.

393 According to J. N. Banerjea in *sukhāsana*, one leg generally the left one, rests flat on the seat while the right knee is raised upwards from it and the right arm is stretched out on the raised knee. See, J. N. Banerjea, *op.cit*, p.271.
Section II (a):

Buddhist Dated Images
Sl. No.1: Inscription on Pañcika image, Devapala Deva Year 3

Pañcika, Nalanda

Photo Courtesy: [ Huntington, S. L. PSSS, fig.28]

**Identification:** Pañcika

**Material:** Metal, bronze.

**Provenance:** Nalanda, Bihar, Patna District.

**Present Whereabouts:** National Museum, New Delhi

**Language:** Sanskrit (Paninian)

**Script:** Nāgarī

**Approximate date:** Dated. The reigning period of Devapāla is assigned to c. 810-847 A.D. The votive inscription is dated to year 3 of the ruling king. Therefore the inscription is dated to c. 810 + 3 = 813 A.D.

**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings**

Close up view of the inscription

Photo Courtesy : [Sastri. H, Nālandā and its Epigraphical Material pl. X (b)]

**Reading 1:** Sastri. H. “Nalanda and its Epigraphical Material”, MASI, No.66, p.87.

**Text:**

1. Om śrī-Devapāla-rājye samvat 3 Rājaṛi ( grī ) ha-vi
2. sa (sha) ye Purika-grāma-nivāsinah Kalachuri-antake
3. ka (?) patni Vikhākāya [seha] janni (janāni ? ) śrī-Nālandāyani pra-
4. tipādaḥ
Translation:
Om. The third regnal year of the illustrious Devapala, Viṅkhāka (Viśākhā ?) the sole wife of the 'destroyer of the Kalachuris'? The resident of the village of Purika in the district of Rājagriha together with the people (?) set up at the famous Nālandā.


Text:

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Sahai, B. op. cit. pp.70 -71, No.77.
Huntington, S. L. op. cit. p.41, Appendix, No.7, Fig. 28.

Iconographic Study:
The Buddhist deity Pañcika is shown seated in lalitasana, with the right leg pendent and the left placed on a two-tiered lion throne (simhasana). The two-armed corpulent deity is sitting against an architectural construct characterized by its vyālakas atop elephants, decorated cross-bars and lion base. Two indistinct objects are held in his two hands.¹ The deity is ornamented, but the beaded upavīṭa is conspicuous. The facial physiognomy reveals a smiling countenance, defined by pointy nose and sharply delineated facial features. Surrounding the halo, the flames are depicted close together. Two devotees in kneeling attitude are seen in the lower moulding of the bronze pedestal.

Observations:
The inscribed Pañcika image discovered from the famous Buddhist monastic site at Nālandā, Patna district, Bihar is dated to the 3rd regnal year of Devapāla. The dedication of this image during the reigning period of Devapāla at Nālandā throws an interesting sidelight on his reign. Being a Buddhist king, his patronage and support to the Nālandā monastery is clearly evident from several copper-plate inscriptions and image inscriptions to be discussed below. The four line inscription records the installation of the Buddhist god, Pañcika at Nālandā, by the

¹ The objects in the deity's hands is not possible to identify from the available photograph.
inhabitants from Rājagriha-visoraya. The text and transliteration as referred above has been discussed by H. Sastri. The author however remains doubtful of his first reading and gives a separate reading of the inscription at the footnote of the textual source. The two readings cited above is remarkably different. Several variations in expressions is noticed, for instance, in the name of the village as Purika-grāma and Hada [thi] ka-grāma, name of the donor’s husband Kalachuri-antake (‘destroyer of the Kalachuris’) / Kalachuri-Anuka, and also in the name of the female donor, Vikhākā (Visākhā?) / Lakhukāyā.

Inspite of the wide discrepancies in the epigraphic record, the purport of this votive inscription is significant for more than one reasons. This is the earliest inscription of the reign of Devapāladeva discovered at Nālandā and is of immense historical value. The donor and her husband were inhabitants of village of Purika in Rājagriha District indicated by the term visaya, but their religious duty was performed at Nālandā, the centre of Buddhist learning and culture in Eastern India. Rājagriha and Nālandā, the two famous Buddhist sites are geographically in close proximity, and the discovery of the present image inscription clearly indicates that Nālandā was situated within the boundaries of Rājagriha-visoraya i.e Distict. We do not have any textual source to support the names of the two villages referred in this inscription, but the reference to the administrative units i.e visaya and grāma throws light on the existence of administrative tiers in early medieval Bengal polity. No information is given about the socio-economic status of the donor, but the installation of a bronze image is a costlier affair and points to the financial capacity of the donor enabling him to make such dāna.

Sl. No. 2: Avalokitesvara image inscription of the twenty-fifth Year of Devapāladeva.

Avalokitesvara, Kurkihar-Bodhgaya
Photo Courtesy: [Bhattacharya, G. EBHJIE, pl.12.2]
Identification: Avalokitesvara
Material: Stone, 87 x 43.5 x 19.5 cm.
Provenance: Kurkihar- Bodhgaya region
Present Whereabouts: Buddhist art gallery of the National Museum, New Delhi India.
Accession No. 60.605
Language: According to Gouriswar Bhattacharya, the inscription at the back plate is in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and the other two lines are in corrupt Sanskrit.
Script: Siddhamataraka script.
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Devapala is assigned to c. 810-847 A.D. The votive inscription is dated to year 25 of the ruling king. Therefore the inscription is dated to c. 810 + 25 = 835 A.D.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription to the left ratha of the triratha pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Bhattacharya, G. EBHJIE, pl. 12.3 a]

Close up view of the inscription on the raha
Photo Courtesy: [Bhattacharya, G. EBHJIE, pl. 12.3, b]

Close up view of the inscription on the right ratha
Photo Courtesy: [Bhattacharya, G. EBHJIE, pl. 12.3, c]

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3 G. Bhattacharya op.cit. 2000, pp. 139-146.

Text:
L.1. Siddham (symbol) samvat pañca-vinśate atike 25 śri-devapāla-devapavardhamāna- vijaya-rājya samvatsare āśādha- śukla-dvādaśīyā dedharmmā = yam para-
L.2. ma-bhakti-vatsala-tailika-mūsēka-dāmēka-putrasya mūtpitrau pūrvvaigamaṁ k (ṛ) tvā
dedharmmā = yah

Translation:
Success! In the year twenty-five, in numerical figure 25, in the increasing victorious regnal year of the illustrious Devapāla-deva, on the twelfth day of the bright half of (the month of) Āśādha [i.e, July- August] this (image) is the meritorious gift. This (image) is the gift of the son of Mūsēka-dāmēka, the oilman (and) on account of kind great devotion, keeping in front (his) parents.

Reading 2: The correct Sanskrit reading according to G. Bhattacharya has been discussed in fn.34, p.146.

Text:
L.1. siddham (symbol) samvat pama-vimsatitame atike 25 śri-devapāla-deva-pravardhamāna-vijaya-rājye samvatsare āśādha-śukla-dvādaśīyām deya-dharmma = yam para-
L.2. ma-bhakti-vatsala-tailika-mūsēka-dāmēka-putrasya mūtpitrṛ pūrvvaigamaṁ kṛtvā deya-
dharmma = yam

Translation:
Translation remains the same .

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:
The sculpture is in relief. The central image, is identified as Jātāmukutā-Lokeśvara, who stands in sama-bharīga on a double-petalled lotus against an elongated, oval-shaped back-plate. He is four-armed: his lower right hand shows varada mudrā with a cakra sign on the palm, the upper

4 See, G. Bhattacharya for the beautiful iconographic description, op.cit , pp.139-146.
right hand holds aksamālā; the upper left hand holds the stem of a full-blown lotus; and the lower left hand holds the top portion of an ornamental kamandalu. He wears a long lower garment touching his ankles, which is tied with a double girdle (mekhālā) with hanging tassels. The upper body of the deity is adorned with a broad necklace and a skin of a black antelope (kṛṣṇa-mṛga) worn as an uttarīya. In addition, he wears a muktśhāra-yañjopavita, armlets, bangles, ear-studs and anklets. His hair is tied in the shape of jaṭā-mukūṭa with a diadem of beads. Inside the jaṭā-mukūṭa is shown a tiny figure of a Buddha or Jina in samādhi or dhyānamudrā. The full round face of the Bodhisatva is slightly corroded; otherwise it has a serene, meditative expression. The oval-shaped back-plate has been treated as prabhāmaṇḍala with beads interspersed with ornamental floral designs and surmounted floral petals; perhaps a jewel (mani) is shown in the middle on top.

Avalokiteśvara is attended by two smaller female deities, each standing against an undecorated back-plate. The deity at the proper right stands in abhāga position showing abhayamudrā in the right hand and holding the stalk of a blue lily (-nilotpala) with the left hand. Her lower garment is tied with a girdle and a sash with a large knot around the thighs. She wears a diadem, large ear-rings, a necklace and a sacred thread studded with pearls and bangles, but no armlets. She is the famous Buddhist Tārā, the consort of Avalokiteśvara. At the proper left of the central deity stands another deity in a very graceful position in adoration. She is four-armed, with the main hands showing anjalimudrā, and perhaps holding aksamālā in the lower right hand and a kamandalu in the lower left hand. She wears ear-rings, necklace and a simple sacred thread studded with pearls and bangles. She wears a long lower garment and perhaps a scarf (uttariya), but no sash around the thigh. Quite striking, no doubt, is her tall jaṭā-mukūṭa, like that of the central figure. She is Bhṛkti. No caitya is to be seen in her jaṭā-mukūṭa. The triratha pedestal is simple and undecorated in execution similar to the back-plate.

Observations:
The Avalokiteśvara image dated to the 25th regnal year of the illustrious Devapāladeva is a new addition to the corpus of Pāla-Sena dated images. The epigraphic record is engraved in two parts. The famous Buddhist creed, possibly illegible is engraved at the back-plate and the donative record on the pedestal. I have discussed the two readings given by the same author and no significant variation is noticed, except the correct Sanskrit reading of expression like vināsate,
pavardhamana, dedharmma and so on. The historical importance of this inscription lies in the fact that, it gives an extended ruling period of twenty-five years to the reigning monarch. The discovery of this image along with its inscription from the Kurkihar-Bodhgaya region points to his hegemony over the region in the period concerned. Secondly, the votive nature of the record is exemplified by the usage of the word deyadharmma, i.e the image is the religious gift of the donor. Gouriswar Bhattacharya points to the fact that the name of the donor is not mentioned in the record. He is known as the son of Musekādāmuka. He suggest Mūseka to be the donor who was the son of Dāmūka, and in that case Bhattacharya have read the passage as tailika-mūsekasya dāmūka-putrasya, that is “(the gift) of the oilman Mūseka, the son Dāmūka.”

Interestingly, the socio-economic position of the donor and his father is apparent from the word tailika. In the Bṛhad-dharma Purāṇa and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, we find reference to the word tailakāraka (oilman) as one of the caste or mixed caste of the madhyama / intermediate saṅkaras. The tailakāraka practiced a special caste-profession as an oilman. Thus it may be ascertained that Mūseka, the donor and his father Dāmuka belonged to the caste of madhyama saṅkara and carried business in oil trade. The common expression paramopāsaka qualifying the donor is missing in this record. The expression parama-bhakti-vatsala is used instead of paramopāsaka which is unique in this record. According to Gouriswar Bhattacharya, parama-bhakti-vatsala means “extremely kind to worshippers” This is the only inscriptional evidence of the Pāla period so far known, where the term parama-bhakti-vatsala is recorded.

The astronomical data mentioning the auspicious time i.e day, month and tithi in the epigraphic record is significant and will be discussed in Chapter VI. The donor Mūseka’s religious leaning towards Buddhism is clearly indicated by the nature of his image dedication and so he performed his religious task in the auspicious time.

5 See, G. Bhattacharya, ibid, p.143.

6 See, R. C. Majumdar, op.cit, 1971, p.418.
Sl. No. 3: The Hilsa image inscription of the Twenty-Fifth Year of Devapāladeva.

Tārā, Hilsa

Photo Courtesy: [Huntington, S. L. *PSSS*, fig. 33]

Identification: Tārā  
Material: Black stone, 39.5cm  
Provenance: Village Hilsa, Patna district, Bihar  
Present Whereabouts: Patna Museum, Arch No.6014.  
Language: Sanskrit (incorrect)  
Script: Siddhamātrkā  
Approximate dated: Dated. The reigning period of Devapāla is assigned to c. 810-847 A.D. The votive inscription is dated to year 25 of the ruling king. Therefore the inscription is dated to c. 810 + 25 = 835 A.D.

Epigraphic Study: Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscribed pedestal


Text:

Inscription 1: On the rim at the top

L 1. ᪐ō ᪐ō ᩄĕ ᩄĕ (tu) ᩄĕ ᩄĕ (tu) [Tā] re

L 2. Svāha
Inscription 2: On the lotus pedestal
L.1. Ye dharmma het- prabhavah hetuneshthathāgatohyavadatteshatī ca yo ni rodha avamvādi.
L.2. mahāśramaṇaḥ

Inscription 3: Below the lotus pedestal
L.1 Om Satvat 35 śrī Devapāla deva vijayarājye Śrī- Nālanda mahāvaihārikastha - bahuśruta Śrī Mañjuśrīdevaḥ Sakka para-
L.2. mopāsaka Gaṅgādharaśya devadharmmoyaiṁ yadadtra putya tad bhavatu Āchar-yaṁ-mṛtyupiṭṭha purvāṁ [śga]ṁ kṛitvā sakalasa-
L.3. tta rūshe anutarjñaṁ vyāpta iti.

Translation:
Inscription 1: On the rim at the top

Inscription 2: On the lotus pedestal
“Of those things (conditions) which spring from a cause, the cause has been told by Tathāgata; and their suppression likewise. The great Sramanā has revealed.”

Inscription 3: Below the lotus pedestal
Om. In the year 35. During the prosperous reign of His Majesty the illustrious Deva Pāla. The learned (and) illustrious Mañjuśrīdevaḥ of the illustrious great convent of Nalanda. This (is) the religious gift of Gangadhara, a great lay devotee of Sakka (Buddha). Whatever merit (there be) in it, let it be for the attainment of the supreme knowledge by all creatures having in their front rank the āchārya(guru), mother and father.


Text:

Inscription 3: Below the lotus pedestal
L.1[Om] Sarvat 35 śrī- Devapāla deva- vijaya rājye śrī- Nālanda- Mahāvaihārai (i) ka-stha - va(ba) hu-śruta śrī- Mañjuśrī-devaḥ satīgha- parā-
L.2. mopāsaka- Gaṅgādharaśya devadharmmo= yati [ | * ] yad = artra ( tra) pun (ni)ya [tin *] tad = bhavatu iĉhā [rya- *] mṛtyupiṭṭha purvāva (a)ṇgamati kṛitvā sakala -sa-
L.3. [rva] - rūshe (s) e [r= *] anuttara jñānati vyāpta (m= avāiptaya) iti ||

Translation:
The object is to record the consecration of the image on which it is incised in the 35th regnal year of Devapāladeva by the lay disciple Gaṅgādhara at the instance of (?) the great monk śrī- Mañjuśrīdeva of the Mahāvihāra of Nalanda for the attainment of the excellent knowledge by his unrivalled teacher, parents and all sentient beings.
Inscription I: On the rim at the top
L 1. Om Om Tare Om Tare Om Tare Om Tare [Tā] re
L 2. Svāha

Inscription 2: On the lotus pedestal
L.1. Ye dharmāhetu-prabhavaḥ hetuneshāntathāgatohyava datteshāmin ca yo ni rodha avamvādī
def
L.2. mahāśramaṇaḥ

Inscription 3: Below the lotus pedestal
L.1. Om Saṅvat 35 Śrī Devapāla deva vijayarāja Śrī Nālandā Mahāvihārīkaṣṭha -bahuṣrūta
Śrī Mañjuśrīdevaḥ Sakka para-
L.2. moḻisaka Gaṅgādharasya deyadharmmoyāṁ yadātra punya tadbhavatu Ācharyamaṁiptī puṇvāṅgam krītvā sankaḷasa-
L.3 tta rāshe anutarāṇa vyāpta itī.

Translation:
Inscription I: On the rim at the top

Inscription 2: On the lotus pedestal
“Of those things (conditions) which spring from a cause, the cause has been told by Tathāgata;
and their suppression likewise. The great Śrāmaṇa has revealed.”

Inscription 3: Below the lotus pedestal
Om. In the year 35. During the prosperous reign of His Majesty the illustrious Deva Pāla; the
learned (and) illustrious Mañjuśrīdevaḥ of the illustrious great convent of Nālandā, this is the
religious gift of Gaṅgādharā, a great lay devotee of Sakka (Buddha). Whatever merit (there be)
in it, let it be for the attainment of the supreme knowledge by all creatures, having in their front
rank the teacher (Āchārya), mother and father.

Reading 4
Choudhary, R. K. op. cit. p. 36.

Text:

Inscription 1: On the rim at the top
L 1. Om Om Tare Om Tare Om Tare
L 2. Svāha

Inscription 2: On the lotus pedestal. In this context Choudhary comments that it is a usual
Buddhist legend.

7 The transliteration of the text is given by me on the basis of the Devanāgari script given by the author.
Inscription 3: Below the lotus pedestal

L.1 Om Samvat 35 (or 25?) sri Devapāla deva vijaya rājye Śrī-Nālandāmahā vaihāri kastha - vahuṣṭuta Śrī Māṇjuśrinevāḥ Sakka para-

L.2 mopāsaka Gaṅgādharaśya devadharmaṁ yadatre puṇyataḥ bhavatu Āchar-yār-

L.3 uttāśhe anutarjñāna vyūpta iti

Translation:


Text:

L.1 Samvat 35 śri Devapāla deva vijaya rājye

Refers to Māṇjuśrideva of Nālandā.

Additional References:
Ghosh, Mallar. 1980 Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India: A Study of Tārā, Prajñās of Five Tathāgatas and Bhūkuti, p.70
Sahai, B. op. cit, 1983, p.76 No. 86.
Huntington, S. L. op. cit, 1984. pp.43-44, Appendix, No.12, Fig.33.

Iconographic Study:
The Hilsa Tārā, measuring 39.5 cm is iconographically and stylistically important. Bhattacharya assumes that the goddess Tārā of this image is of green colour (śyāma or harita). The deity sits in ardha-paryatikā-āsana or lalita-āsana on a full blown double-petalled lotus which is placed on a triratha pedestal. The right hand showing varada-mudrā and the damaged left hand holds the stalk of a blue lotus (nilotpala). Her hair is tied in a bun and placed above her head. The deity is

8 G. Bhattacharya, op. cit, pp.462- 463, pl.50.2.
adorned with various jewelleries and a long sacred thread studded with pearls (muktāhrayajnopavita). The central figure of Tārā is depicted within a makara-torana. On top of the toraṇa in the middle there is kirtimukha. The whole back-plate has been treated as prabhāmapāda with a design of flame which appears to be quite unusual. Tārā is accompanied here by the four-armed Ekajati at her right and Hayagrīva at her left. The female figure to the right holds kartrī and kapāla with her front hands and the back hand holds the elephant-hide with the severed heads of the animal. The corpulent male figure at the proper left holds parasu in the left hand, while his right hand is in abhaya-mudrā. Below the pedestal perhaps sits the donor (damaged) in aṭṭhāla-mudrā and in virāsana. The recess of the pedestal is decorated with lotus-root and ornamental lotus foliage with buds.

**Observations:**

The inscribed Tārā from Hilsa, Patna District, South Bihar is one of the most discussed object of art. Five published readings of this epigraphic record has been discussed by me. The readings⁹ are more or less similar except few differences in punctuation, sentencing and arrangement of lines (of translation) occur. The word sakka (R.1, R.3, R.4) saṅgha (R.2) used in reference to the donor Gaṅgadhara is variant. Nevertheless, the term sakka i.e Sākhyā (Lord Buddha) and saṅgha (Buddhistic monastic order) are related to Buddhism. It may be understood that the donor Gaṅgadhara is a lay devotee of sakka / Buddha and was a member of the famous Nālandā Mahāvihāra.

The epigraphic record constituting three parts begins with the invocation to the goddess Tārā, the second part constitute the Buddhist dhaṇḍa. The votive nature of the inscription is illustrated in the third part of the record, that begins with a reference to the victorious reign of Devapāladeva. The image of Tārā is consecrated by the lay devotee (paramopāsaka) Gaṅgadhara at the instance of illustrious monk Mañjuśrīdeva of the Nālandā Mahāvihāra. The meritorious act was performed in the 35th year of the ruling king, Devapāladeva. Scholars are not unanimous about the date of the inscription. S. N. Chakravarti¹⁰ had been the first to give the reading of the date as 25th regnal

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⁹ Readings of the text is indicated by the abbreviation R 1, R.2 and so on in the following pages.

¹⁰ S. N. Chakravarti, op.cit.1938, p.390.
year instead of 35\textsuperscript{th} regnal year. The reading given by S. N. Chakravarti has been accepted by D.C. Sircar\textsuperscript{11} and Gouriswar Bhattacharya.

The inscribed image of the Buddhist deity throws light on the historical, socio-economic and cultural viewpoint. Devapāladeva, the third illustrious king as mentioned above, was not only a devotee of Lord Buddha but a distinguished patron of Nālandā Mahāvihāra. The mentioning of the name of the illustrious monk Mahāśrīdeva of Nālandā monastery once again proves the existence of Nālandā as a great centre of Buddhist religion and theology and one of the greatest centers of Buddhist researches during the Pāla-Sena rule in Bihar-Bengal. The inscription is rather silent about the economic affiliation of the donor but his religious leanings towards Buddhism is explained by the word *paramopāsaka*.

**Sl. No.4: A Second dated Tārā image of Devapāladeva, year 31.**

Plate: Tārā, Nālandā

Photo Courtesy: [Bhattacharya, G. *EBHJIE*, pl. 50.3]

**Identification:** Tārā

**Material:** Stone, 61 cm in height.

**Provenance:** Nālandā, Patna Dt, Bihar

**Present Whereabouts:** Private Collection of West Berlin

**Language:** Sanskrit

**Script:** According to G. Bhattacharya, the inscription is in early Gaudīya characters as mentioned in his publication, 1982\textsuperscript{12}. Later Bhattacharya confirms the script to be *siddhamārka* script.\textsuperscript{13}

**Approximate date:** Dated. The reigning period of Devapāla is assigned to c.810-847 A.D. The votive inscription is dated to year 31 of the ruling king. Therefore, the inscription is dated to c.810 + 31 = c.841 A.D.

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\textsuperscript{11} S. L. Huntington, *op. cit.*, 1984, p.224.


\textsuperscript{13} G. Bhattacharya *op. cit.* p.463 & plates 50.3 & 50.4.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the dedicatory inscription on the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Bhattacharya, G. *EBHJIE*, pl. 50.4]

**Reading I**: Bhattacharya, G. “A Second dated Tārā Image of the reign of Devapāla in

**Text**:
Text not given

**Translation**:
Not given.

**Additional References**:

**Iconographic Study**:
The deity sits in the usual *lalitāsana* on a double-petalled lotus which is placed on a lion throne
(*simhāsana*). She shows *varada-mudrā* in her right hand and the left holds a *nilotpala*. The
jewelleries and hair-do appears to be similar to the Hilsa Tārā. The tassels of the girdle have the
similar lance-and bell-heads and are placed below the left foot of the deity. On the palm of her
right hand, there is an auspicious mark with a flower. The left hand which holds the *utpala-stalk*
is also turned inwards. The lower garment is tucked to the proper right side of the waist in this
figure. Below the lotus on which the deity sits, hangs down a piece of cloth. The deity is shown
reclining against the back-rest of a throne formed of a horizontal (damaged) and two vertical
bars. Two ornamental elements (jewels) are shown each above the horizontal bar. Quite
significant is the presence of a votive *stūpa* on the proper right side of the deity on top.
*Prabhāmapāda* is shown with a half circle formed with bands and ornamental design of flames
behind the head of the deity. Instead of *kirtimukha* (as seen in the Hilsa Tārā) there is a
“sprawling lotus” in the middle of *prabhāmapāda*. Two banners are tied each to the vertical bar
of the back-rest of the throne. This deity is not accompanied by any attending figure. She may
simply be called Ārya-Tārā according to Sadhanamalā 89 where she is described as seated in ardha-paryankta-āsana. The designation Śyāma-Tārā, usually given to this type of Tārā, does not exist in Sadhanamalā.14

Observations:
The four lined epigraphic record is engraved on the rim of the pedestal which appears to be damaged. Bhattacharya15 does not give a clear reading of the text of the inscription. He only mentions that the Buddhist creed is engraved on the pedestal of the image followed by the name of the donor, the devout worshipper, Aryyaka (Bhattacharya is doubtful about the reading). The name of the ruling monarch, Devapāla occurs in line three together with his regnal year 31. The historical importance of the record lies in the fact that it gives an extended rule of 31 years to Devapāladeva over Bihar-Bengal.

Sl. No. 5: Khasarpana Lokesvara Image Inscription of Mahendrapāla, Year 2.

Khasarpana Lokesvara, Magadh

Photo Courtesy: [Picron, Claudine B. The Art of Eastern India, MIK, pl.50]

Identification: Khasarpana Lokesvara
Material: Sandstone, 84 x 53 x 12 cm
Provenance: Magadha, South Bihar.
Language: Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit
Script: Siddhamārka of the Eastern Indian variety.
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Mahendrapāla, the Pāla king is assigned to c.847-862 A.D. The epigraphic record under discussion is dated to the regnal year 2. The inscription is dated to c.847+2= c.849 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription no. 1 (This is the major inscription engraved on both sides of the main deity)
[Photo Courtesy: Bhattacharya, G. Deyadharma 1986]

Reading 1: Bhattacharya, G. 16 op.cit. 2000, pp.66-68.

Text: Inscription no.1

L.2 jye /// r=eva hu [sa]je-śr[ī]
L.3 /// to-de /// [de va]
L.4 /// dhyaṇa ///
L.5 /// amu- ttara ///
L.6 /// kanal ///

Translation:
This record though almost completely damaged, is very important as it refers to the 2nd regnal year of Pāla ruler Mahendra-pāla.

Close up view of the inscription no.2 (On top of both sides of the seated Buddha figure)

Text: Inscription no.2

L.1 Siddham (symbol) /// bhavā hetu /// hya
L.2 va /// rodha eva hāśrāmaṇaḥ ///

16Similar text and translation of this inscribed specimen is given by the author in Claudine Bautze Picron, AEI, MIK, 1998, p. 35.
Translation:
This is the Dharmaparāya or the Buddhist creed.

Close up view of the inscription no. 3, (On top of the Buddha image in bhūmisparśa-mudrā)

Text: Inscription no. 3
L.1 Siddham symbol is missing. Oṁ Vajra tha svāhā

Translation:
The seated Buddha here is most probably is Aksobhya who is called here perhaps Vajratha (?)..

Close up view of the inscription no. 4, on top of the left side seated headless, male deity with vajra and ghañṭā.

Text: Inscription no.4
L.1 Siddham [symbol] Oṁ Vajrasatva hum svāhā

Translation:
The deity is Vajrasatva, who is quite different from Vajrapāṇi. This short formula is jāpa-mantra or dhāraṇī of Vajrasatva.

Close up view of the inscription no.5, inscription on top of the right side of the headless Bodhisatva

Text: Inscription no.5
L.1 Siddham [symbol] Oṁ Vāgiśvara muḥ
Translation:
The deity is Vāgīśvara, a variety of Mañjuśrī, whose figure is quite rare in Bihar-Bengal. The short formula is no doubt jāpa-mantra or dhāraṇī of Vāgīśvara.

Close up view of the inscription no.6, on the prabhamaṇḍala of the main figure of Avalokiteśvara

Text: Inscription no.6
L.1 Siddham [symbol] Om Āry-Āvalokitesvara-Vajradharma hriṅ svāhā.

Translation:
The deity is called- Āvalokitesvara-Vajradharma and not Khasarpaṇa-Lokesvara as described in Sadhanamāla.

Close up view of the inscription no.7, on the prabhamaṇḍala of Tārā standing at the right of Avalokitesvara

Text: Inscription no.7
L.1 Siddham [symbol] Om Tāre tutāre ture svāha

Translation:
This short formula is jāpa-mantra or dhāraṇī of Tārā.

Close up view of the inscription no.8 on the prabhamaṇḍala of Bhūkutī standing at the left of Avalokitesvara

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Text: Inscription no.8
L.1 Siddham [symbol] Om Bhr svāhā.

Translation:
This short formula is jāpa-maṇtra or dhāraṇī of Bhṛkutī.

Close up view of the inscription no. 9, inscription below the lotus of the standing Tārā.

Text: Inscription no.9
L.1 // upasthāyaka-Tārā

Translation:
According to Bhattacharya, the inscription must have started with Siddham [symbol] Oṃ. Upasthāyaka-Tārā means the attending Tārā. The famous Buddhist goddess is not the principal figure but an attendant to Avalokitesvara here.

Close up view of the inscription no.10, engraved below the Hayagrīva figure

Text: Inscription no.10
L.1 Oṃ Padamā-
L.2 nta kṛ hriḥ

Translation:
This short text in two lines seems to be jāpa-maṇtra or dhāraṇī of a deity other than Hayagrīva. He may be Padmāntaka, but written wrongly).

Additional References:
Picron, Claudine Bautze. EBHJIE, pp.34-35.
Sanyal, R. *op.cit.* pp.304-305.

**Iconographic Study:**

The sculpture has been worked out in deep relief. The two-armed, central male figure stands in *samapāda* position on a double petalled lotus (*visvapadma*). The deity wears a short under garment (*antariya*) marked with floral design. The deity is adorned with a necklace and a long sacred thread of pearls (*muktihāra- yajnopavita*), which passes through the sash in an artistic way. The *jaṭā-mukūṭa* and the diadem of the deity are completely damaged. Five curly *jaṭās* fall on each side of the shoulder. There is an oval shaped aureole (*prabhamandala*) around the head of the deity, surrounded by design of flame on it. A short inscription is engraved on the aureole. Over the left shoulder of the main figure there is a full-blown lotus with a bud and a leaf attached to it, coming out of a stalk with a stylized root with buds and leaves. Very interesting of course is the presence of a jar (damaged) with a lead and jewelries placed on a lotus leaf of the stalk. It appears that the deity held the lotus-stalk in his left hand (damaged), and in that case he may be safely identified as Avalokiteśvara. The jar is rather unusual for a two-armed Avalokiteśvara of this period. The ugly Śucimukha is depicted below the damaged right hand of Avalokiteśvara. The emaciated Śucimukha is shown seated in the kneel down (*virāsana ?*) position on emaciated legs with his hands in *ajjali-mudrā*. To the right of Avalokiteśvara stands a female deity on a lotus in a very graceful *abhanga* position. Her face and hands are damaged. She holds the stalk of a blue lily with her left hand and with the right hand she counts the petals of the flower. She is Tārā. The oval shaped back-plate against which she stands contains an inscription. There is also an inscription below her lotus pedestal. To the left of Avalokiteśvara, the lotus-stalk at the back, stands in *āśīḍha* position, his left foot on a lotus, Hayagrīva, a short but stout figure with a round belly. His face is damaged. His right hand is raised in the gesture of adoration (called *vandanabhinayi mudrā*), and the elbow of his left rests on a club (*gada* or *danda*). By the side of Hayagrīva stands also in *ābhartiḍa* position a four-armed female deity. She holds *aṃśamālā* in her back right hand and perhaps a *kalasa* in her back left hand (damaged). Her two front hands are in *sampuṭṭāṭalī mudra*. The face of this goddess is damaged too. She wears the same jewelries as those of Tārā, but her hair-do is different, perhaps it is *jaṭā-mukūṭa*. She is Bhṛkuṭī. The oval shaped back-plate against which she stands is also inscribed. Below, on the pedestal, near *preta*

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17 The iconographic analysis of this image is based on Gouriswar Bhattacharya's description, *op.cit.* 2000.
Sucimukha sit two smaller male figures. The first figure holds an incense burner (dhūpakatācchū) in his right hand, his left hand is raised perhaps in the gesture of veneration (vandanābhinayi mudrā). The second figure, perhaps bearded, holds an offering with his two hands. He may be the donor of the image. Avalokiteśvara belongs to the family of the Transcendent Buddha Amitābha. On the top of the figure sits a Buddha (damaged) in bhūmisparśa-mudrā on a double petalled lotus. He appears to be Aksobhya. But the inscription on his prabhāmapāda describes him differently. To the right of Avalokiteśvara above sits in sarvaparyatikāsana a Bodhisattva (damaged) on a double-petalled lotus holding a vajra in the right hand and ghanta in the left hand. Similarly on the left of Avalokiteśvara on top sits in the same position another Bodhisattva holding the stalk of utpala with a manuscript on it (damaged) in the left hand, his right hand rests on his leg in varada-mudrā (?). He looks like Mañjuśrī.

**Observations:**

The inscribed image of Avalokiteśvara dated to the year 2 of Mahendrapāla, the son and successor of Devapāla is unique for more than reasons. It is the earliest epigraphic record incised on an image of the Buddhist deity, ascribed to the reigning period of Mahendrapāla. The most unique feature of this highly mutilated composition is that it carries as many as ten inscriptions recording the names of individual deities illustrated in the stone relief. The record begins with reference to the victorious reign of Mahendrapāla, followed by the Buddhist formulae. Then follows the the names of individual deities who are iconographically depicted viz; Aksobhya, Vajrasatva, Vagiśvara, Āvalokiteśvara-Vajradharma, Tārā, Bhrkūṭi, and so on. Inscription No.10 as cited above refers to Padmāntaka, but the iconographic depiction is that of Hayagrīva. This is an interesting part of the record. Similar instance is noticed in the case of Inscription No.3, where Aksobhya is iconographically represented, but the inscription labels him as Vajratha (?). According to Gouriswar Bhattacharya, Aksobhya is perhaps called Vajratha (?) as he is the leader of the vajra family and played a great role in medieval Buddhism of Bihar-Bengal.18

The inscribed image is important from the politico-historical view point. The political authority of Mahendrapāla over Magadha in the early years of his rule was an established subscription in

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the historiography of early medieval political history, primarily owing to the fact that a large number of dedicatory inscriptions, eight on images that records the name of Mahendrapāla, the ruling King is found distributed over a vast territory of Bihar and north Bengal. The discovery of the present inscription from Magadha once again supports the point.

The second uniqueness about this inscriptive record is its different epigraphic composition, when compared to several dated and undated Buddhist images from atelier of Bengal-Bihar. The votive inscription do not refer to a donor or his place of residence (although the donor is iconographically represented on the pedestal) and other related information. Instead we find Buddhist dhāraṇīs associated with different deities recorded. The religious Buddhist dhāraṇī confer great merit when said repeatedly for a number of times. It may possibly be for this reason that the inscriptive record on the present image records the dhāraṇīs which was meant for repeated utterance thus increasing the puṇya of the donor. It is possible to think in this connection that the Buddhist dhāraṇīs were popular in Magadha, perhaps during the period of Devapāla and Mahendrapāla and this may be the time when Vajrayāna Buddhism took its root in Eastern India.

Sl. No. 6: Bihar Buddha Image Inscription of Mahendrapāla, Year 4.

Identification: Buddha Taming Nālāgiri

Photo Courtesy: [Huntington, S. L. PSSS, fig. 38]

19 See, B. Bhattacharya, op.cit, p.10.

20 The Hilsa image inscription of the reign of Devapāla begins with an invocation to Tārā, Om Tāre tuttāre ture svāha.
Material: Grey black Stone.
Provenance: Bihar, (exact find spot unknown).
Present Whereabouts: Indian Museum, No.4246/ A25297
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Siddhamātrika
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Mahendrapâla, the Pâla king is assigned to c.847-862 A.D. The epigraphic record is dated to the regnal year 4. The date of the inscription is to c.847+4=851 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Chanda, R. P. ASI-AR, p.102, pl. XXXVI (b)
Text:
L.1 Śrī- Mahendrapâladeva-râjya- samvachchhare chaturtthe ma-
L.2 rgaśira- śuklapratipadāyāṁ bhikshu-Dharmmamitra-
L.3 mātā Gautamyāh [ putyārttham]
L.4 devadharmmoyath prati [ pā]
L.5 ditamiti.

Translation:
‘In the fourth year of the reign of Śrī-Mahendrapâladeva, on the first day of the bright half of the month of Margasira (Agrahayana= November-December), this pious gift was executed for the religious merit of Gautami, the mother of the monk, Dharmanimitra.’

Reading 2: Bhandarkar, D. R. op.cit, 1983. List No.1642
Text:
L.1-2. Śrī- Mahendrapâladeva-râjya- samvach-chhar (e) chatut (r) the Mā-
rgaśira- śukla-pratipadāyāṁ

Close up view of the inscription
Photo Courtesy: [Sanyal, Rajat Prajñadhara, pl. 31.2]
May success attend! “In the fourth year of the reign of Śrī- Mahendrapāladeva , on the first day of the bright half of the month of Margasira ( Agrahayana= November- December), this pious gift was executed for the religious merit of Gautami, the mother of the monk, Dharma-mitra.”

Additional References:
---------- 1933, op.cit. pl. III. c
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. 1984. p.48 Appendix, No.60, Fig. 38.

Iconographic Study:
The grey black stone image from the Indian Museum,Calcutta represent one of the event associated with the life of Lord Buddha i.e. subduing the wild elephant Nālagiri or Ratnapāla. The deity is shown standing in samapāda on a double-petalled lotus seat (viśvapadma) under the bodhi tree. The facial features and the major portion of both the hands are broken. A uṣṇisa

Translation:
Not given

Reading 3:

Text:

Translation:
Not given

Reading 4:
Sanyal, R. op.cit.2009, p.305.

Text:

Translation:
May success attend! “In the fourth year of the reign of Śrī- Mahendrapāladeva , on the first day of the bright half of the month of Margasira ( Agrahayana= November- December), this pious gift was executed for the religious merit of Gautami, the mother of the monk, Dharma-mitra.”

Additional References:
---------- 1933, op.cit. pl. III. c
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. 1984. p.48 Appendix, No.60, Fig. 38.

Iconographic Study:
The grey black stone image from the Indian Museum,Calcutta represent one of the event associated with the life of Lord Buddha i.e. subduing the wild elephant Nālagiri or Ratnapāla. The deity is shown standing in samapāda on a double-petalled lotus seat (viśvapadma) under the bodhi tree. The facial features and the major portion of both the hands are broken. A uṣṇisa

21 Transliteration is given by me on the basis of the Devanāgari script given by R. K. Choudhary, op.cit.1958, p.205.
22 Translation of the text is not given by the author. Since the reading is similar to Reading 1, the translation remain the same.
covers the curly hair. The deity is robed fully leaving the right hand bare. To the left side stands another male figure with a bowl and a danda (?) probably a monk and the corresponding right hand is perhaps placed above the elephant’s head, shown on the right end of the stele. Below the elephant is shown a female seated in kneeling position. The top portion of the rounded prabhavali is occupied by two well carved stūpa.

**Observations:**
The inscribed dated sculpture from Bihar ascribed to the ruling year 4 of the Pāla ruler, Mahendrapāla represents an important event associated with the life of Lord Buddha, i.e. the taming of the mad elephant, Nālagiri at Rājagriha. Four published readings of this epigraphic record have been discussed above with no significant variations noted. This dated record from the reserve collection of Indian Museum can be placed under the first Class of image inscriptions as suggested by R. D. Banerji, consisting entirely of votive record mentioning the name of the reigning monarch, the year of his reign and the name of the donor or donors.²³ Besides the historical and socio-religious importance of the inscription, the astronomical data recording the auspicious day, *tithi*, month for image installation or dedication is significantly recorded (to be discussed in the Chapter VI). The votive inscription clearly expresses that in the 4th regnal year of Mahendrapāla the inscribed Buddhist image was installed by Gautami, the mother of the monk, Dharmaśīla. It is not unlikely that the monk Dharmaśīla, whose mother was the actual donor, had some link with the Buddhist establishment that flourished in the area. His mother Gautami, on the other hand, must have enjoyed some hierarchic social/ institutional prerogative as ‘the monk’s mother’.

Identification: Buddha in Dharmacakra-mudrā
Material: Stone.
Provenance: Bihar Sharif, Patna District, Bihar.
Present Whereabouts: Nālandā Museum, Nālandā.
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Siddhamārka
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Mahendrapāla, the Pāla king is assigned to c.847-862 A.D. The epigraphic record under discussion is dated to the regnal year 4. The inscription is dated in c.847+4 = 851 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription

Photo Courtesy: [Sastri, H. “Nālandā and its Epigraphical Material” pl. XI, d]

Reading 1: Sastri, H. op.cit. pp. 105-06. The Buddhist creed is engraved on the upper portion of the image and the pedestal contains the donative record.

Text: Inscription no.1 on the aureole

The Buddhist creed\(^{24}\)

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\(^{24}\) The text of the Buddhist creed is not given by Sastri. I have given the text of the Buddhist formulae on the basis of information given by H. Sastri. See, op.cit. 1939, p.105.
Inscription no.2 Donative record on the pedestal.

L1 [Oṃ] samvat 4 Chaitra śūdi 10 śrī- Mahāindrādeva- rājye-Saindhavā nām
L2 dīna (ā) rthe Kumārabhadra (dre) nā devaddh (dh) armma [ḥ *] pratipādi (i) tāh

Translation:
‘In the year 4, on the 10th day of the bright half of Chaitra during the reign of Mahendrapāladeva (the image) was set up by Kumārabhadra as a gift of the Saindhavas (the residents of Sindh).

[Reading 2]: Chowdhury, R. K. op.cit. p.204

Text:
L1 Siddham [symbol] samvat 4 Chaitra śūdi 10 śrī- Mahāindrādeva- rājye-Saindhavā nām
L2 dīna (ā) rthe Kumārabhadra (dre) nā devaddh (dh) armma [ḥ *] pratipādi (i) tāh

Translation:
May success attend! “In the year 4, on the tenth day of the bright half of Chaitra during the reign of Mahendrapāladeva (the image) was set up by Kumārabhadra as a gift of the Saindhavas (the residents of Sindh)”.

Additional References:
Sahai, B. op.cit.1983, p.112 No.133.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. 1984. p.49 Appendix, No.61, Fig.39.

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25 The transliteration of the record is given by me on the basis of Devanāgarī script given by the author.

26 Rajat Sanyal have mismatched both the images of Mahendrapālā dated to the regnal year 4th in Table 1, cited by the author in connection to the donor and the geographical data furnished by the inscription. See, R.Sanyal, op.cit. 2009, p. 304.
Iconographic Study:
The sculpture depicts Buddha seated in dharmacakramudrā on a double-petalled lotus pedestal. The facial features are indistinct. The drapery covers the entire body, except the palm and the feet. The architectural construct supporting the figure and the two stūpas on each side are conspicuous. The central portion of the pedestal is occupied by a cakra with two deers on both the sides. This is the depiction of the famous Mrgadāva scene, signifying the turning of the wheel of law. Two male figures are depicted on the two end of the pedestal. The figure to the left may be the donor, shown with a garland.

Observations:
This is the second inscribed specimen dated to the regnal year 4th of the Pāla ruler, Mahendrapāla. This dated image once again throws light on the politico-historical situation and the astronomical information embodied in it. The votive inscription can be categorized under the ‘first Class’ as suggested by R. D. Banerji consisting entirely of votive record mentioning the name of the reigning monarch, the year of his reign and the name of the donor or donors. Interestingly, the name of the place from where the donor hailed is mentioned too. The discovery of the epigraphic record from Bihar Sharif, Patna District is a clear evidence of South Bihar being under the rule of Mahendrapāla in the beginning of his reign. The votive inscription records the religious or meritorious gift of the donor Kumārabhadra from Saindhavas. Saindhavas is identified with Sindhu, i.e. as extending from Laṅka-Pradeśa as far as Makka.27 We may presume that Kumārabhadra represented the merchants group from the northwestern provinces. The record evidently proves Kumārabhadra’s attraction and devotion towards the Buddhist religion who travelled from the western part of the sub-continent to the eastern part of the country for performing the religious act of image consecration.

Sl. No. 8: Tārā from Itkhauri dated to 8th regnal year of Mahendrapāla

Standing Tārā, Itkhauri

Photo courtesy: [Huntington, S. L. PSSS, fig. 40]

Identification: Tārā
Material: Stone.
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Siddhamātākā
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Mahendrapāla, the Pāla king is assigned to c.847-862 A.D. The epigraphic record is dated to the regnal year 8, thus the inscription is dated to c.847+8= c.855 A. D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription
Photo Courtesy: [Sanyal Rajat, Prajñadhara, pl.31.5]


Text:
L.1. /// hayācīmaṁ- mahā-manusyaṇāṁ sudhīna-tvana /// sta [t*]puttra rājakā- śri

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The names of two ṛāpaka ('royal officer') category of functionaries, viz; Bhāṣīvaka (?), and Cakṣaka, are mentioned. The relationship of Cakrapāṇi, son of Bhāṣīvaka (?), with the donation cannot be ascertained; similarly the name of the place from where he hails (vinirgga) could not be read with satisfaction. However, the contents from the middle of line three to the end suggest that the bhaṭṭārīka (i.e. the image of the goddess?) was donated by the ṛāpaka named Cakṣaka. A tentative translated version of this segment (consisting of the last four and half lines) should be: "The (image of the) goddess has been donated according to the custom prevalent. This is the achievement of the ṛāpaka Śrī-Cakṣaka, on the fifteenth day in the bright half of the (month of) jyeṣṭha in the year 8 of the reign of the paramount sovereign, the illustrious Mahendrapāladeva".

Other Additional References:
Huntington, S. L. op.cit., 1984. p.49 Appendix, No.63, Fig.40.

Iconographic Study28:
The standing image of Tārā is currently in active worship in a temple at a village named Itkhauri, modern Jharkhand. The goddess stands in graceful abhaṅga-position on a full-blown lotus placed on a triratha pedestal. She is accompanied by two female divinities. Tārā shows varada-mudrā with the right hand and holds the stalk of utpala in the left hand. Her beautiful hair-do is tied with a diadem, and various jewellery adorns her. A typical Pāla girdle (mekhala) with tassels, and a long upavita stud with pearls (mukta-hūra-yajñ-opavita) are beautifully delineated. The presence of Amoghasiddhi, the kulesā of Tārā is not noticed from the available photograph. The back-plate depicts the architectural construct against which the deity stands, and two caityas on the left and corresponding right. Tārā is attended upon to her right by the four-armed, corpulent Ekaṭa, holding a sword (asi for a knife, Kartri) and a cup (kapāla) in the front hands. The back hands which might hold the elephant skin (hasticarma) is not clear in this iconographic depiction. To the left of Tārā stands Aśokakāntā-Mārici, holds abhaya in the right hand, and a

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28 An attempt has been made to understand the iconographic composition of Itkhauri Tārā by the present author.
noose (pāsa) in the left hand. According to Sadhanamālā 89, Tārā with Ekajāta and Asokakāntā-Mārici as her companion deities are called Khadiriṇī Tārā. The inscribed specimen of Tārā from Itkauri is an example of Khadiriṇī Tārā. The left konikapaga of the trirātha pedestal depicts two human figures, may be the donor and his father and the right konikapaga bears two animal figures.

Observations:

The epigraphic record of this unique inscribed specimen have received due attention for the first time by Rajat Sanyal. The author fails to give a complete text of this fairly long inscription for the reasons stated by him.29 The inscription begins with a reference to the donor and his father, the establishment of the Buddhist deity referred as bhattārikā and the last two lines mention the name and the regnal year of the ruling king during whose reign the image was dedicated and the auspicious tithi on which the religious task was performed. The discovery of the votive inscription from Jharkhand, Hazaribagh district, south Bihar evidently proves the establishment and continued rule of Mahendrapāla in this territorial region till eight century A.D. The historical information supplied from this unique piece of evidence is significant. Secondly, the donor Śrī-Caṃśaka was an illustrious personage as his social status as rāpaka (‘royal officer’) is clearly mentioned. The donor may have been an important administrative functionary during the rule of Mahendrapāladeva. This possibly suggests a genealogical connection of the donor’s family with the practice of patronizing ritual activities at local shrines, as evident from the mention of at least two rāpaka officials in the epigraphic record.30 Thirdly, the auspicious tithi and the day recorded in this votive inscription do throw light on the astronomical information to be discussed in the Chapter VI of the present study.

29 See, Rajat Sanyal, op. cit, p. 306.

30 This remark has been made by Rajat Sanyal, ibid. p. 312.
Sl. No. 9: Inscribed Buddha from Guneriya dated to year 9 of Mahendrapāla

Seated Buddha, Guneriya

Photo Courtesy: [Huntington, S. L. PSSS, fig. 41]

Identification: Seated Buddha, bhūmisparśa
Material: Stone.
Provenance: Guneriya, Bihar
Present Whereabouts: Indian Museum Calcutta
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Siddhamātrkā
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Mahendrapāla, the Pāla king is assigned to c.847-862 A.D. The inscription is dated to the regnal year 9. The epigraphic record is dated to c.847+9 = c.856 A.D. of the Pāla ruler Mahendrapāla.

Epigraphic Study:

[Variant Readings]

Close up view of the inscription

Photo Courtesy: [Kittoe, M. JASB pl.V.1]


Text:
L.1 Sam 19 Vaiśakha
L.2 Sudi 5, Sri Guna-Charita Sri Mahendra Pāla
L.3 Deva Rāje Deva dhaimmajam  *****

Translation:
“In the prosperous Gunacharita.” “In the year 19, the 5th of the waxing moon of Vaiśākh, in the reign of the fortunate Mahendra Pāla Deva, the pious gift of”.

Reading 2: Banerji, R. D. Pālas of Bengal, p.64.

Text:
L.1 Ye dharma hetu prabhava hetun = teṣāṁ ta
L.2 thāgato hy =avadat teṣāmca yo nirodha evam vā
L.3 - dī mahāśrāmapāḥ Samvat 9 Vaiśākh
L.4 sūdi 5, Śrī-Guna-
L.5 -carita Śrī Mahīndra pā-
L.6 - ladevarājye devadha
L.7 -rmmeyatṁ ...

Translation:
Not given


Text:
L.1 Samvat 9 Vaiśākh
L.2 Sūdi 5, Śrī- Guna-
L.3 -carita Śrī Mahīndra pā-
L.4- la-deva -rājye deva-dha
L.5 -rmm [o] yatm paramopāsaka
L.6 -vanika Haridattaputra Śrī (? ) pa ...

Translation:
“In the year 9 on the fifth day of the bright half of Vaiśākh, in the reign of illustrious Mahendrapāla, at the illustrious Gunacarita, the pious gift of Śripā (? la), son of the merchant Haridatta”.

Reading 4: Bhandarkar, D. R. op.cit. List No.1646.

Text:
( L.3-4) Samvat 9 ( Cunnigham reads as 19 ) Vaiśākhā sūdi 5.

Translation31:
Not given

31 The translation to the text of Bhandarkar is given by me.
(In the) year 9 (on the) fifth day of the bright half of the (month of) Vaiśākha,

Reading 5: Sanyal, R. op.cit, pp.307-308.

Text:
L.1 Ye dharma hetu prabhavā hetum = teśām ta
L.2 thāgato hy =avadat teśāmcya yo nirodha evam vā
L.3 -di mahāśramatā [ h ] // sidhām [symbol] samvat 9 Vaiśākha
L.4 śūdi 5, śrī- gurṇa-
L.5 carita śrī- Mahendrapā-
L.6. la -deva-rājye deva-dha
L.7 rmma (o) ya parama (o) pāsaka
L.8. vanika Haridatta putra Śrī(?) pa...

Translation:
"The states arisen from a cause. Their causes the Tathāgata proclaims, as well as their cessation:
This is the teaching of the great ascetic" (In the) year 9 (on the) fifth day of the bright half of the
(month of) Vaiśākha, in the reign of illustrious Mahendrapāladeva, (the king with) illustrious
character full of virtues, (this is) the pious offering of Śrīpā (la), son of the merchant Haridatta”.

Additional References:
Kittoe, M. 1847. Notes on the Viharas and Chaityas of Behar. JASB 16 /1: 272-279
Banerjii, R. D. op.cit, 1933, pl.III ( d )
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. 1984, p.50 Appendix, No. 64, fig.41.

Iconographic Study:
The inscribed image of Tathāgata is presently housed in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The
sculpture carved in relief depicts the Sākyamuni seated on a visvapadma placed on a simhāsana.
The deity is in the earth touching attitude, displaying the bhūmisparsamūdra. The head is
covered with uspīsa and the urāśī on the forehead is prominent. The deity is draped on the left
portion of the body. The architectural construct with the vyāla has at the sides of the throne and
two stūpas on each side along with a tree surmounts the top of the stele. Stylistically the image is
the product of the late 9th century. The pedestal bears the figures of lion separated by columns.

Observations:
The inscribed image of seated Buddha from Guneri, Gaya District Bihar is dated to the year 9 of
the Pāla ruler Mahendrapāla. Five published readings of this votive inscription has been
discussed above. The readings of the texts followed by translation in most cases remains the same, except that of Cunningham (R.I) who dates the inscription to samvat 19. The accepted date is regnal year 9. The epigraphic record is replete with historical, socio-religious, economic and astronomical information. The inscription dated to regnal year 9 is a clear evidence of Mahendrapâla’s sway over the region of South Bihar till 9th century A.D. Secondly, the donor Śrīpāla was a son of the merchant (vaṇīk), Haridatta. It can be assumed that Śrīpāla, the donor of the image may have been a merchant like his father Haridatta. This is however, not clearly recorded in the inscription. The expression ‘paramopāsaka’ for the donor father’s may suggest that the donor may have been a follower of Buddhist faith.

Sl. No. 10: Uddanḍapura Image Inscription of year 3 of Śurapāladeva (I)

*Identification:* Buddha’s descent from Trayatrimśa

*Material:* Black Stone.

*Provenance:* Uddanḍapura (Bihar Sharif) Patna District, Bihar

*Present Whereabouts:* Indian Museum, No.3763

*Language:* Incorrect Sanskrit prose

*Script:* Eastern variety of Nāgarī character of the 12th century, A.D.32

*Approximate date:* Dated. The reigning period of Śurapāladeva, the Pāla king is assigned
To c.862-875 A.D. The epigraphic record is dated to c.862 + 3= c.865 A.D.

32 The identification of the script as the eastern variety of Nāgarī is correct. The script was also known as ‘Siddhamātrika’ script during the period of Pāla rule in Bengal. The script was in use between sixth and the tenth centuries A. D. not 12th century A. D. as mentioned by Nilmani Chakravarti, 1908. “Pala Inscriptions in the Indian Museum” JPASB, Vol.IV, p.107.
**Epigraphic Study:**

**Variant Readings:**

Close up view of the inscription on the pedestal

Photo Courtesy: [Chakravarti, N. *JPASB*]

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**Reading 1:** Chakravarti, Nilmani “Pala Inscriptions in the Indian Museum”, *JPASB* vol.IV p.108.

**Text:**

L 1. ॐ [symbol] Mahar (अ) jādhīrāja (आ) Śrī Śūrapāla-devarājye satīvat 2

L 2. Dvīrāṣā (श) dīha vadi 11 Asmin satīvatsara māsa diva

L 3. sānukrame śrimad Uddanācūr (ॐ) iha vihiyā nevā

L 4. Sika sindhadesa (दे) vinirgatapāṭikramanamanati vihāra vriddha

L 5. pariṣadhyā (सुध) pradarsinati (अ) sthavira purṇapāsena sakārita caitya

   bhāṭārākasya śilā pratimā devadha(य) mārya pratisth (ॐ) pita yatpī

L 6. ṭya ( ) mātāpitara ( ) upādhyāye purvavaman kritva anuttara ( ) sakala satīvarāśe

   ( h) itih

**Translation:**

The second year of the reign of Maharajaśrī Śūrapāla, the 11th day of the dark fortnight of Asadha. In this year, month and day fortunate Uddanā Čuda had the stone image of the Lord placed in a caitya which he himself caused to be made, by the elder Pūrṇadāsa who was in the Vihāra there, who was the oldest person in the Pāṭikramaṇa Vihāra, and who was possessed of a pure sight. Whatever merit......

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**Reading 2:** Bhandarkar, D. R. *op. cit.* List No.1615.

**Text:**

(L 1-2). Mahar [अ] jādhīrāja (आ) Śrī-śūrapāla-deva rājya satīvat 2 (possibly 3)

   dvirāṣā (श) dīha vadi 11

**Translation**:

Not given

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33 The transliteration is given by me on the basis of the Devanāgarī script given by the author.

34 Translation is ours.
The second year of the reign of Mahārājadhīrāja Śūrapāla, the 11th day of the dark fortnight of Āśādha.

Additional References:
Chakravarti, S. N. *op.cit.*, 1938, p.390.
Huntington, S. L. *op.cit.* 1984, p.45. Appendix, No.13, fig.34.

Iconographic Study:
The black stone image in relief depicts one of the major scenes of Śākyamuni's life. It represents the Buddha's descent from Trayastrīṃśa, as may be deduced by the figures of Indra (holding the umbrella over the head of the Buddha to the proper left) and Brahmā (to the proper right of the deity) attending him. The stūpa motif is placed on the pilaster to the left. Buddha is shown standing in *samaśādha* position on a *visvapadma* placed on a *triratha* pedestal. His two hands are broken. The drapery covers the entire body leaving the left shoulder bare. The style of this sculpture testifies it to the mid-9th century date.

Observations:
The two inscribed Buddhist sculptures dated to the regnal year 3 of the Pāla ruler Śūrapāla, The younger brother of Mahendrapāla has been discovered from the monastic establishment of Uddaṇḍapura, South Bihar. Surprisingly, the epigraphic record engraved on the pedestal of both the sculptures (Indian Museum No.3763 and 3764) are similar in composition. But interestingly, the iconographic construct of the two objects are different. It is for this reason I have discussed the two objects separately.

The inscribed Buddhist images (Indian Museum No.3763 and 3764) are dated to regnal year 3 and not 2. S. N. Chakravarti's view suggesting the date of the epigraphic record being issued in year 3 of the Pāla ruler is more acceptable. But the readings discussed above give the regnal year 2. The inscription is important from the historical point of view pointing to the fact that Śūrapāla I had already established his sway over southern Bihar in the the early part of his reign. Secondly, the votive inscription is a gift at a *vihāra* in Uddaṇḍapura by an old Buddhist monk.

35 A closer palaeographical examination of the record reveals the numerical sign 3. See, S. N. Chakravarti, *op.cit.* 1938, p.389, Fig. X.
Pūrṇadāsa of the Padikramana vihāra. The social status of the donor is clearly explicit in the record as a member of the monastic community. However, the geographical and religious antiquity of the Padikramana vihāra is difficult to ascertain. The religious work of image installation was done by the donor on the auspicious 11th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Asāḍha. The importance of the astronomical data will be discussed in Chapter VI.

Sl. No. 11: Buddha Image Inscription of year 3 of Śurapāladeva (II)36

Buddha Uddanḍapura
Photo courtesy: [Indian Museum]

Identification: Buddha taming Nālagiri
Material: Black Stone.
Provenance: Uddanḍapura (Bihar Sharif) Patna District, Bihar
Present Whereabouts: Indian Museum, No.3764
Language: Incorrect Sanskrit prose
Script: Eastern variety of Nāgari character of the 12th century, A.D.37
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Śurapāladeva, the Pāla king is assigned to c.862-875 A.D. The epigraphic record is dated to c.862 + 3 = c.865 A.D.

36 This is the second inscribed image ascribed to the reign of Śurapāladeva I, bearing an epigraphic record similar to the previous image inscription as enumerated above.
37 See the discussion in the above footnote 31 made in this connection.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the Buddhist creed over the trefoil arch

Close up view of the inscription on the left and middle ratha

Close up view of the inscription on the right ratha


Text 38:

L 1. Om [symbol] Mahār ( ā) jādhirājā (ja) Śrī Śrīrāmeśvarādvarājye satīvat 2
L 2. Dvīrāsā (ṣa) ḍha vadi 11 Asmin satīvatsara māśa diva
L 3. sānukrame śrīmad Uddānḍācūro (ḍo) iha vīhāya nevā
L 4. Sika sindhadeśa (deśa) vinirgatāṇḍākramanato vīhāra vṛiddha
L 5. pariṣadhya (suddha) pradaśāṇam (a) śthavīra purpaṣāṇa sakārita caitya
   bhaṭṭārakasya śīlā pratimā devadha( yadha) māńya pratisth (a) pita yatpū
t
L 6. Ṇya ( ) mātipitara ( rau) upāṭhāyayē purvaṃgaṃan kṛtva amuttara ( ) sakala sattvarāse
   ( ṇ) itih

38 The transliteration is given by me on the basis of the Devanāgarī script given by the author.
Translation:
The second year of the reign of Mahārāja Śūrapāla, the 11th day of the dark fortnight of Āśāṅga. In this year, month and day fortunate Uddanda Cūḍa had the stone image of the Lord placed in a caitya which he himself caused to be made, by the elder Pūṇadāsa who was in the Vihāra there, who was the oldest person in the Pāṭikramaṇa Vihāra, and who was possessed of a pure sight. Whatever merit........

Text:
(L 1-2) . Mahār [a] jādhirajā (ja) śrī-śūrapāla-deva rājya sattvat 2 (possibly 3) dvirāśa (shā) ṭha vadi 11

Translation39:
Not given by the author.
The second year of the reign of Mahārājadhirāja Śūrapāla, the 11th day of the dark fortnight of Āśāṅga.

Additional References:
Bloch, T. op.cit. 1911, pp.51-52
Banerji, R. D. op.cit. 1915, p. 57.
-------, op.cit.1933, Pl.II (a ), p. 21
Chakravarti, S. N. op.cit, 1938, p. 390
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. 1984, p.45, Appendix, No.14, fig.35.

Iconographic Study:
The sculpture in relief is executed in black-stone. It is a well preserved specimen in comparison to the previous example of Śūrapāla I discussed above. The sculpture represents another major scene of Śākyamuni's life. It illustrates Buddha's taming of the mad elephant, Nālagiri. The central deity is shown standing against an architectural construct, surmounted by a trilobate arch supported by pillars. Śākyamuni is shown standing in samāpāda position on a small visvapadma placed on a trirātha pedestal. The deity holds with his left hand the clinging end of the drapery and the right hand is placed over the head of the elephant who is depicted in the act of submission. A male attendant stands to the left of the central figure. At the right corner of the pedestal is shown another male figure (face mutilated) holding a snake. Two miniature stūpas are placed on the two pilasters. The style of this sculpture testifies it to the mid-9th century date.

Observations:
The second image inscription dated to Śūrapāladeva I is iconographically different from the first example, for which I have discussed the iconographical aspect separately. Since the epigraphic

39 Translation is ours.
composition of this image is similar to the previous one, no separate observations is added in this connection.

Sl.No. 12: Vasudhārā Image Inscription (I) of the year 31 or 32 of Rājayapāla

Vasudhārā, Kurkihar
Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar, *EIB*, fig.132]

**Identification:** Vasudhārā  
**Material:** Metal  
**Provenance:** Kurkihar, Gaya District, Bihar.  
**Present Whereabouts:** Patna Museum, Acc. No.9738  
**Language:** Sanskrit  
**Script:** Nāgarī alphabet of 9th-11th centuries A.D.  
**Approximate date:** Dated. The reigning period of Rājayapāla, the Pāla king is assigned to c. 930 - 967 A.D. The metal sculpture is dated in the 32nd regnal year of the ruling king. Therefore, the epigraphic record is dated to c. 930 + 32 = c. 962 A.D.

**Epigraphic Study:**  
**Variant Readings**

Close up view of the inscription at the back
Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar, *EIB*, fig. 318]
**Reading 1**: Banerji-Sastri A. *op.cit.* pp.247-248.

**Text:**

&Svasti (symbol) Śrī Rājyapāla-deva-raje samvacchare 32 srmad = Āpaṭaka = maha -vima hāre
&Gopālahīno (?) - ḫārya (ā) Vāṭu (?) kūya (āḥ) devadharma kṛitāṁ Šopālahorā sṛtha (stha) pati-
pītītaṁ. Vasudhā.

**Translation:**

Records the gift of the image by Vāṭu (āḥ) the wife of Gopālahīno, in the Āpaṭaka monastery in the 32nd year of king Rājyapāla. The image was probably cast by the architect (?) Šopālahorā, a curious name, though there is no doubt about the reading.

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**Reading 2**: Gupta, P. L. (ed) *op.cit.* pp.149-150.

**Text:**

&Siddham (symbol) Śrī-Rājyapāladeva-raj [y*]e Samvacchara (satiṇvatsare) 32. srmad- Āpaṭaka-
&mahā vima hāre (a ḫārya - Gopālahīno (?)- ḫārya (ryā) Vāṭukīyā devadharma kṛitāṁ
&Gopālahorā sṛtha (stha) patiṇītāṁ.

**Translation:**

Records the gift of the image by Vāṭukī, the wife of Gopāla-Hīno, in the Āpaṭaka monastery in the 31st year of king Rājyapāla. The image was probably cast by the architect Gopālahorā; a curious name though there is no doubt about the reading.

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**Reading 3**: Choudhary, R. K. *op.cit.*, p.66.

**Text**


**Translation:**

Not given.

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**Additional References:**

Jayaswal, K. P. *op.cit.* 1934, 72, No.2-3, pl. XXXII
Huntington, S. L. *op.cit.* 1984, pp.52-53 Appendix No. 22, fig.46.

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40 The transliteration is given by me on the basis of the Devanāgarī script given by R. K. Choudhary, *op.cit.* p.66.

41 The author has not given a translation to the text of the inscription. Since the reading is similar to R.1 and R.2, the translation remains the same.
Iconographic Study:

Vasudhārā, the Buddhist deity figures in the pantheon of the Mahāyāna Buddhists as the consort of Jambhala, the Buddhist god of wealth. The two-armed Buddhist deity is shown seated on a lotus seat in lalitasana placed on the triratha pedestal. She is profusely ornamented. Of the two hands, the left hand holds staff, which has four ends around with which a thin wire is entwined. The right hand delineates varada-mudrā with a fruit. A figure of a boy appear on a separate projection to the right. The left hand of the boy holds a pot filled with gems (?) and the right hand has a round object. A human figure in kneeling posture and delineating ānijali mudra is noticed to the right corner of the pedestal.

The architectural construct comprising the vyālikas, hamsas and other element of the throne, and the beautifully executed elongated halo suggest the sculpture to be a more finished product.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Vasudhārā from Kurkihar is ascribed to the 32nd regnal year of the Pāla ruler Rājyapāla. I have discussed three published readings of this epigraphic record as cited in textual sources. R. K. Choudhary (R.3) follows Banerji-Sastri (R.1) and do not calls for attention. Significant variation is noticed in R.1 (Banerji-Sastri) and R.2 (P.L.Gupta). Banerji-Sastri begins the text with svasti, the mangala symbol and reads the name of the architect who carved the image as Śopālahora. P. L. Gupta (R. 2 ) reads the word siddham which marks the beginning of the votive record and the architect’s name as Gopālahora.

The purport of the votive inscription is to record the installation of the Buddhist deity by a lady donor named Vātuka wife of Gopālahino. The inscription mention their place of residence i.e the Āpaṇaka mahavihāra and the name of the architect as Śopālahora / Gopālahora who was responsible for carving the metallic sculpture. It is ascertained that the donor couple were lay residents of the Āpaṇaka monastery, presumably at the monastery itself. The occurrence of the name of the Āpaṇaka monastery in this dedicatory inscription once again suggest that Āpaṇaka was an important religious establishment at Kurkihar, South Bihar. The socio-religious affiliation of the donor and her husband is clearly evident as both of them were lay devotees and a devout

42 It should be pointed here that scholars like N. K. Bhattasali and G. Bhattacharya suggest the reading of the maṅgala word as siddham or Siddhir = astu and not svasti or Om. See, N. K. Bhattasali, op.cit.1923-24, p.352 and G. Bhattacharya “The auspicious symbol commencing a Pāla Record and its Development”JBA, Vol.5, pp.137-142.
worshipper of Vasudhārā. The social status of the architect (sthapati) class as an occupational caste-group once again finds recognition in this record.

Sl. No.13: Vasudhārā Image Inscription (II) of the year 31 or 32 of Rājayapāla

Identification: Vasudhārā
Material: Metal, ht. 21.5 cm
Provenance: Kurkihar, Gaya District, Bihar.
Present Whereabouts: Patna Museum, Accession No. 9741
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Nāgarī script of 9th-11th centuries A.D.
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Rājayapāla, the Pala king is assigned to c.930-967 A.D. The metal sculpture is dated in the 32nd regnal year of the ruling king. Therefore, the epigraphic record is dated to c.930 + 32 = c.962 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Banerji-Sastri A, op.cit. p.248.

Text:
Svasti (symbol) Śrī-Rājayapāla-deva-raje sanvacchare 32 śrimad =Āpaṇaka=mahāvihāre vāstavya - Gopālahino (?)-bhṛya (ā) Gaukāyā devadharma...... horāsthapati-pātītātī.

Translation:
Not given. The author mention that the “contents of the inscription are the same, except that the name of the wife here is Gauka” 43

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43 Banerji-Sastri A, op.cit. p.248. ‘Same’ means similar to the epigraphic record discussed in relation to Vasudhārā image (I). See above.
Reading 2: Gupta, P. L. (Ed) op.cit. p.150, pl.XXXIV.

Text:
Siddham (symbol) śrī Rājyaśāladeva-raja [ y9] e samvacchāra (samvatsare) 32 śrīmad-Āpūṣaka-mahā-vihāre (a) vāstavya - Gopālahino (?)-bhārya (ryā) Gaukayā deva -dharmaḥ

Translation:
Not given.

Reading 3: Choudhary, R. K. op.cit. p. 66.

Text:
Svasti Śrī Rājyaśāladeva-rajaśe samvacchare 32 śrīmadāpūṣaka mahāvihāre vāstavya Gopālahino bhārya Gaukayā devadharma..... horāsthapatipātaḥ

Translation:
Not given.

Additional References:
Jayaswal, K. P. op.cit. 1934, p.72, No.2-3.
Sircar, D. C. op.cit. 1982, p.13
Huntington, S. L. 1984, pp.52-53 Appendix, No.21, fig.45.

Iconographic Study:
A preliminary observations is to be made in context to the iconographic construct of the image. The iconographic peculiarities of the Buddhist deity Vasudhāra has been discussed above. Vasudhāra (II) shares the same identical features of Vasudhāra image (I). The only observation to be made in context to this image is that the major portion of the back-plate which comprises the architectural construct supporting the deity is fragmented.

Observations:
The second inscribed image of Vasudhāra (II) from Kurkihar is ascribed to the regnal year 32 of the Pāla ruler Rājyaśāla. I have discussed three published readings of this epigraphic record as cited in textual sources. R. K. Choudhary (R. 3) follows Banerji-Sastri (R. 1) and do not calls for attention. Significant variation is noticed in R.1 (Banerji-Sastri) and R. 2 (P.L.Gupta). Banerji-

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44 The transliteration is given by me on the basis of the reading in Devanāgarī script given by R. K. Choudhary, op.cit.1958, p. 66.
45 Since the record is similar to R.1 and R.2 , the translation remains the same.
Sastri begins the text with svasti, the maṅgala symbol, P. L. Gupta (R. 2) on the other hand reads the word siddham which marks the beginning of the votive record. This is the only variation noted in the reading of the text.

The image of Vasudhārā is a meritorious gift of a lady named Gauka, wife of Gopālahino. Surprisingly, the name of the husband Gopālahino has also been found in the reading of the previous inscription where Gopālahino is the husband of Vatuka. It appears that Gopālahino had two wives who made the gift of two Vasudhārā images one after another in the same ruling year of Raṇyapāla. The inscription mentions their place of residence i.e the Āpanaka mahāvihāra and the name of the architect as horāsthapati46 who was responsible for carving the metallic sculpture. It is ascertained that the donor couple were lay residents of the Āpanaka monastery, presumably at the monastery itself. 47

Sl.No.14: Nalanda Vagiśvari Image Inscription of year 1 of Gopāladeva (III)

Vagiśvari, Kapatiya, Nalanda
Photo Courtesy: [Indian Museum]

Identification: Vagiśvari
Material: Black stone, 88 x 51 cm
Provenance: Kapatiya, Nalanda, Patna District, Bihar.48
Present Whereabouts: Indian Museum, accession No.3947/A25296

46 The name of the architect is incomplete in this reading.
47 The epigraphic content of Vasudhārā (II) is similar to the Vasudhārā (I) to some extent. The importance of the Āpanaka monastery and its contribution has been discussed above.
48 S. K. Saraswati gives the provenance of the Vagiśvari image as Bodhgaya. See S. K. Saraswati, Tantrayāna Art An Album, 1977, pl.LXX.
Language: Sanskrit
Script: Siddhamatrka
Approximate date: Dated. The inscription under study is dated to the 1st regnal year of Gopāla (III), the son of illustrious Rājyapāla. The reigning period of Gopāla (III) may be tentatively placed between c. 967 A.D. – 984 A.D. Therefore, the present epigraphic record can be dated to c. 967 + 1 = c. 968 A.D. approximately.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Cunningham, A. Archaeological Report, vol.III, 1871-72. No.4 p.120.
Text:
L1. Sarvāt 1, Aswin badi 8, paraṃ bhaṭṭāraka Mahāraja-dhiraja parameswara Sri Gopāla
Sri Nalandayam
L2. Sri Vagiswari
Translation:
“In the year 1, on the 8th day of the waxing moon of Aswin, in the reign of the paramount sovereign, the king of kings, the supreme lord, the auspicious Gopāla, in Nālanda, * the auspicious Vagiswari (a goddess)*.”

Text
Sarvāt 7, Aswinsūdi 8, paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājaḥdhiraja parameswara Sri Gopālarīja nisā (?) na taṭhāyatī (yavyāṁ) Sri Vagisvarabhāṭṭārikā sūvallaviklesasthāḥ

49 The transliteration of this inscription is given by me on the basis of the Devanāgari script given by the author.
Translation:

"In the eighth of the waxing moon in the month of Asvina, Samvat 7, the most worshipful, the great king of kings, the great lord, Sri Gopala Raja, and his wife the worshipful Vagisvari of the country of Suvallavi, erected this."

[Reading 3]: Chakravarti, Nilmani. op.cit, JPASB, Vol.IV pp.105-106.
Text: 50

L1. Satinvat 1, Asvinī sūdi 8, paramabhattāraka Mahārāja-dhīraja
Parameśvara Śrī Gopāla rājani Śrī Nalandayāni
L2. Śrī Vagisvari bhaṭṭārikā Suvarṇa Vṛhi Sakti

Translation:

In the year 1, the eighth day of the bright fortnight of Āsvina, while the paramount sovereign, the king of kings, the great lord Gopāla was king, at Nalanda the goddesses Vagiswari was tinged with gold streaks.

[Reading 4]: Maitra A. K. Gaudaṇekhamala, p. 87.
Text: 51

L1. Satinvat 1, Asvinī sūdi 8, Paramabhattāraka - Mahārāja-dhīraja
Parameśvara- Śrī Gopāla -rājani Śrī Nalandayāni
L2. Śrī Vagisvari- bhaṭṭārikā - Suvarṇa Vṛhi-Sakti

Translation52

1) In the year 1, the eighth day of the bright fortnight of Āsvina, while the paramount sovereign, the king of kings, the great lord Gopāla was king, at Nalanda [ in a place named ] |

2) The goddesses Vagisvari was tinged with gold streaks (?).

[Reading 5]: Sastri. H. op.cit. p.84.
Text:

L 1. Satinvat 1 (?), Aśvinī śūdi 8, paramabhattāraka - mahārājadhirāja -
parameśvara- śrī Gopāla rājani (?) Śrī Nalandayāni
L 2. śrī Vagisvari bhaṭṭārikā- [suvarṇa- vṛhi sakti]

50 Ibid.
51 The transliteration of this inscription is given by me on the basis of the Bengali script given by the author.
52 The translation is given in Bengali script by the author. I have given the Roman translation.

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Translation: Not given

**Reading 6**: Choudhary, R. K. *op.cit.* p.66.53

Text:

L.1. *Saññat 1 (?), Aśvinī śūdi 8, paramabhaṭṭāraka - mahārājādhirāja- parameśvara - śrī Gopāla - rājani (?) Śrī Nalandayīnī
text:  śrī Vagisvari bhaṭṭārīkā [suvarṇa- vṛihi saktā]

Translation: Not given

**Reading 7**: Mukherjee R. R & Maity. S. K. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions Bearing on History and Civilization of Bengal*, p.188.

Text: 54

L.1. *Saññat 1 , Aśvinī śūdi 8, paramabhaṭṭārakamahārājādhirāja- parameśvara - śrī Gopāla - rājani (?) Śrī Nalandayīnī
text: śrī Vagisvari bhaṭṭārīkā [suvarṇa- vṛihi saktā]

Translation:

This idol of the goddesses of Learning endowed with corns (was established) on the eighth day of bright moon of the month of Aśvina in the first year of the reign of His Highness Paramount Sovereign of Mahārājādhirāja Gopāladeva.

**Reading 8**: Bhandarkar, D. R. *op.cit.* No.1622.

Text:

L.1. *Saññat 1 (?) , A śvinī - śūdi 8, paramabhaṭṭāraka - mahārājādhirāja-parameśvara - śrī Gopāla - rājani (?)

Translation: Not given.

Additional References:

Bloch,T. *op.cit.* 1911, pp.87-88
Banerji, R. D. *op.cit.* Rept.1973, p. 25
Saraswati, S. K. 1977, *Tantrayāna Art* An Album, 1, pl.LXX.
Sahni, B. *op.cit.* 1983, pp.84-85.

53 The transliteration of this inscription is given by me on the basis of the Devanāgarī script given by the author.

54 Ibid.
Huntington, S. L. *op.cit.* 1984 p.54 Appendix, No.25, fig.49,

**Iconographic Study:**
The sculpture executed in black stone is three feet high. The Buddhist goddess of learning is shown seated on the back of a lion-couchant, in *lalitasana*. The right leg rests on a lotus platform. The deity is four-armed. The upper hands are upraised: the right holding a hammer or an axe and the left a mace. The lower hands grasp pincers, and are stretched forth right and left in the act of seizing the tongues of two unfortunate attendants who crouch at each corner to the figure, with their hands tied with cords behind their backs. The deity is moderately ornamented; the hair is dressed in a conical shape bejeweled with a crown. Broadley (1979: 101) comments that a figure of a miniature Buddha is shown seated on the conical headdress.55 In the upper part of the slab are two small figures of Vidyadharas with garlands. The head is encircled by an ovoid halo. The rounded border of the stele is treated with flame motif.

**Observations:**
The Nālanda Vāgiśvāri image inscription of year 1 of Gopāladeva (III) is the only dated epigraphic record ascribed to the ruler. The epigraphic record of this image has attracted the attention of several scholars. I have discussed eight published readings with translations as given in published literature. In the eight readings, the reading given by Bhandarkar is incomplete. A variation in expression as well as in concept is significantly noticed in R.1 and R.2. The use of the word *badi* by A.Cunningham ( R.1 ) in line one of the texts is different from the word *sudi* mentioned by other scholars in the same line. The word *ba-di* or *va-di* refer to the dark fortnight and *su-di*, the bright fortnight. Therefore, the two words *ba-di* and *su-di* bear two opposite meanings.56 On the basis of the translations as given by other scholars I have noticed that the text and translation discussed by A.M.Broadley (R.2) is totally different to what is engraved in the sculpted image. What I have learnt from the translation as given in A. M. Broadley is that the text refers to year seven (*Sātiwart 7*) instead of year one (*Sātiwart 1*) for image consecration. Secondly the name of Vāgiśvāri as ‘goddess ‘is recorded in the text of the inscription and

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55 On a closer examination of the image I have not noticed any figure of Transcendent Buddha on the hair-do.
mentioned by other scholars except Broadley who refers to ‘Vagisvari’ as the wife of Gopāla who was an inhabitant of Suvallavi country. Hence the sculpture which iconographically represent goddess Vāgiśvāri has been ignored by Broadley.

The record emphasizes on the donation of the image made in year 1 of the Pāla ruler Gopāladeva (III), but there is no mention of the donor who performed this act of piety. The auspicious day, month and tīthi for image installation has been mentioned in the record. (The astronomical information referred in the record will be discussed in Chapter VI.) The inscription records the name of the sovereign as Gopāla during whose reign the Buddhist goddess of learning Vāgiśvāri was tinged with gold streaks. This is justified by the expression *suvarṇa-vrīhi saktā*. The record is significant as it throws light on the religious leaning of the Pāla monarch Gopāla and the person (?) who tinged the deity with gold streaks towards Buddhism. The sacred work of covering the body of the goddess with gold definitely proves the reverence for the Buddhist goddess.57 Secondly, the installation of the image at Nalanda, an important Buddhist establishment is significantly recorded in this inscription. It also alludes to the continuation of the successful political sway of the Pāla ruler Gopāladeva (III) after his father Rājyapāla.

Sl. No. 15: Bodhgaya Buddha Image inscription of the 11th regnal year of Mahipāla I

![Buddha, Bodhgaya](Photo courtesy: [Huntington, S. L. PSSS, fig. 54])

57 This is the second example noticed by me where the body of the female goddess is tinged with gold streaks. The brāhmanical deity Sarvannā image from Deulbādhī was covered with leaves of gold by the Queen Prabhavati Gupta, of the Khadga dynasty.
Identification: Seated Buddha representing the eight principal events.
Material: Blackish Stone (schist), 143 cm high.
Provenance: Located in the southern flank on the west wall of the so-called Paîca- Pâñḍava temple within the enclosure of the Mahâbodhi temple at Bodh-Gaya.
Present Whereabouts: Temple, in-situ.
Language: Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Dated. Mahâpala I was the son and successor of Vigrahapâla II (c.984-989 A.D.). Mahâpala I ruled from c.989-1037 A.D.
The epigraphic record is dated to the 11 th regnal year of the ruling King. Therefore, the date of the inscription is c.989+11 = c.1000 A. D. approximately.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription
Photo Courtesy: | Banerji, R. D. The Pālas of Bengal |

[Reading 1]: Cunningham, A. op. cit. 1871-72. No.9, p.122.

Text: 58
L. 1. includes words mātā-pitrī, etc.
L. 2. Parama bhattaraka, parama Saugata Sri man Mahâpala Deva pravardhamāna vijaya rāje *
* dasame Samvatsare **

Translation: “In the 10 th year of the prosperous and victorious reign of the paramount king, the eminent Buddhist, the fortunate Mahâpala Deva”.

[Reading 2]: Banerji, R. D. The Pālas of Bengal, p.35.

Text:
L.1. Deya-dharma-ayo m ... tad-bhavatv = ścāry = opādhīya- mātā- pitr-pūrvvaigamanī kṛṭva sakala-satva- rāśer = anuttara- jīkṣa = āvāptaya-iti || Mahā

58 For a similar version of the text, see Cunningham, A. Mahâbodhi, 1892 p.65 and R. L. Mitra, 1878, Buddha-Gaya, the Great Buddhist Temple, the Hermitage of Sākyamuni. pp.198-199.
L.2. [rajādhīrāja-Parameśvara-Pa]ramabhattāraka-Paramasāgata - Śrī - mān = Mahipāladeva
-pravardhamāna viṣayarājye ekāḍāsāme samvatsare abhilikhya [ māne ]
L.3. .............. pañcāmyaṁ = tithau gandha - Kūṭi-dvaya- sahitā ....... kāṛitāv = iti.

Translation:
Not given

**Reading 3**: Choudhary, R. K. op.cit. p.68.

Text:
59
L.1.Deva-dharmayam ........ tad-bhavatvācāryopādhyāyamāṁ - pitṛ- pūrvvatigamatī kṛtva
sakalasatva rāṣeṣaṁuttara- jāmāvīptaya – iti || Mahā
L.2. [rajādhīrāja- Parameśvara – Pa] ramabhattāraka-Parama-sāgata - Śrīṁān = Mahipāladeva
-pravardhamāna viṣayarājye ekāḍāsāme samvatsare abhilikhya [ māne ]
L.3. .............. pañcāmyaṁ = tithau gandha - Kūṭi-dvaya-sahita ....... kāṛitāv iti.

Translation:
Not given

**Reading 4**: Bhandarkar, D. R. op.cit. No.1627.

Text:
L.2.paramasāgata-śrīṁān=Mahipāladeva-pravarddhamāna viṣaya rājye ekāḍāsāme
samvatsare abhilikhya ...... pañcāmyaṁ = tithau

Translation:
Not given

**Reading 5**: Mitra, Debala, “Image of Buddha of the 11th Regnal Year of King Mahipāla”

Text: Inscription No.1 (On the dexter of the halo) is the Buddhist creed
Siddham [symbol] Ye dharma hetu prabhavā hetum (n) = ta (te)śāt Ta-thāgato hy=
avadat teśāntca yo nirodha eva [m] vā-di mahāśrāmapāṭhi

Translation: This is the Dharmaparyāśya or the Buddhist creed.

Text: Inscription No.2 (The corresponding part on the sinister bears the initial part of a
donatory inscription)

59 The transliteration is given by me on the basis of the Devanāgari script given by R.K. Choudhary.
deyadha (r)moayam pravara-maha(hā) yinah Simhala-dvipa-vinirgata-sākhyā-bhikshu-bhadanta ( ?)- Buddhasena (or va)

Text: Inscription No.3 (The remaining major part of this dedicatory inscription runs on the top khūra- shaped of the tri-ratha pedestal).

L.1.[yad-atra-punyaṁ] tad-bhavatv = īchārya=opādhīya-mārā-pitr- pūrvvaṅgamath kṛtva sakala-satva- rūṣer = amuttara- jīvan = śvāptaya – iti || mahā
L.2.[rājāḥhiraja-parama] meśvara-paramabhattarakā- paramasaugata - Śrīmān = Mahāpāladeva - pravardhamāna vijayārye ekākāsane samvatsare abhilikhya mā
L.3. [ne] ...... paṇćamayān = tithau gandhakūṭī-dvaya- sahītī ........... kūritāv = iti. ||

Translation:
This inscription records the gift of an image by a person from Simhala (Sri Lanka). The donor Buddhasena (?) was a venerable monk (Śākya-bhikshu) and a follower of the excellent Mahāyāna (pravara-Mahāyāna) and he hailed from the island of Simhala (Simhala-dvipa-vinirgata). The donor recorded that the religious merit accrued from his gift was for the attainment of the supreme knowledge of all sentient beings including above all his īchārya, upādhyāya and parents. The gift was made in the eleventh year of the prosperous and victorious reign of Mahādhirāja, Paramesvara and Paramabhattaraka Mahāpāla-deva who was devoted to Saugata. The pious gift included at least the image under notice and two gandhakūṭīs or temples, one of which have enshrined this image.

Additional References:
Cunningham, A. Mahabodhi, 1892, p.65.
Mitra, R. L. Buddha-Gaya, pp.198-199.
Banerji, R. D. op.cit., 1933, pp. 22-23.
Huntington, S. L op.cit. 1984 p.57 Appendix, No.31 fig. 54.

Iconographic Study:
Eight principal events60(āṣṭa-mahāpṛāthīḥāyas ) of the life of Śākyamuni Buddha at eight places (āṣṭa-mahāśīthāras) are grouped in this sculpture. The important incident occupying the central part, representing his victory over Māra and assertion of his right to the seat under the asvattha tree at Uruvela (Bodh-Gaya) on the eve of his achievement of enlightenment (bodhi). The central figure of Buddha is seated in vajra-paryāṭkāśana on a viśvapadma over a inscribed triratha pedestal in bhūmisparsā-mudrā (the middle finger of his right palm touching a petal). The soles on a feet bear a wheel-mark in the form of a lotus within a circle. The left palm (placed on a lap)

60 See, Debala Mitra for the detail iconographic features, op.cit.1991.

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is damaged. Buddha is robed in an antarvāśa and an uttarāsāṅga which leaves his right chest, shoulder and arm uncovered and a folded part of which falls from his shoulder to his left chest. The head and the lower part of the conical uṣṇīṣa are covered by rows of coiled curls of hair. Behind the head of the Buddha is the halo edged by tongues of flames appearing like foliated leaves or petals. Rearing up above the halo are the branches of the Bodhi tree. Below the top moulding are the three compartments (one each on the two kanikas and one on the rāhā). Within the central compartment on the rāhā are: (starting from the dexter) (i) a half-kneeling monk (representing the donor) with a garland in hands, (ii) the bejwelled half-kneeling earth-goddess with her raised right palm above her right shoulder and a ghaṭa (possibly covered by a lid) on her raised left palm (the elbow resting on her raised knee) and (iii) the dejected seated bejeweled Mara with his raised right palm touching his face and the left palm on the pedestal. Within the two compartments of the kanikas is the forepart of a lion (facing).

The stele depicts seven other incidents from the life of Buddha. Buddha’s birth at Lumbini is represented on the sinister above the bottom niche containing a bejewelled seated male with his damaged palm of the extended right arm resting on the knee. Māyādevi is standing, on a viśvapadma, and holding with her right palm the branch of a tree which bends over her head, her left arm hanging down. The incident represented on the corresponding dexter relates to the offering of honey by a monkey at Vaisali. Buddha with both shoulders covered by sarīghati is seated on a plain seat in pralambapadāsana with a bowl in his palms, his feet resting on a viśva-padma. Below the viśva-padma is seen a monkey standing with slightly bent knees and holding a bowl of honey in the pose of offering it to Buddha.

The scene, above the scene of the offering honey, represents the episode of taming the infuriated elephant Nālāgiri at Rājāgrīha. Buddha is standing on a viśva-padma with a slight flexion and with both shoulders covered by sarīghati. Near his right foot is the partially kneeling submissive figure of Nālāgiri. By the left side of the central figure is a standing monk (presumably his faithful disciple Ānanda) with an alms-bowl on his left palm, holding with his right hand a staff capped by a ring (khakkhara). Behind Buddha (together with the monk) is the raised stele with a pointed top and with aborder of two bands.
The corresponding sinister shows a similar figure of the standing Buddha on a visva-padma, in vara-mudrā, his slightly raised left hand holding a folded end of the sarīghaṭi. Above his head is an umbrella, the umbrella-bearer Indra is absent. Near the right foot of Buddha is a kneeling figure (perhaps Utpalī or Utpalāvarpa) with the palms and head touching the ground. The scene represents Buddha’s descent at Sāṅkṣāya from the Trayāstrīśa heaven. The scene above represents the miracle of Śrāvasti. Buddha is seated on a high seat in pralambapadāsana with both feet resting on a visva-padma and palms in dharmachakra-mudrā. Behind him is a raised back-ground with a border and a pointed top.

The figure of the deity on the corresponding dexter is identical with the preceding figure in sitting posture, mudrā and raised background. Buddha’s First sermon at Mṛgadāva, as a wheel (on a base) flanked by a deer on either side is carved against the visva-padma on which his feet are resting.

The scene above the branches of the Bodhi tree shows the mahāparinirvāṇa at Kuśinagara. Buddha is lying on his right side on a bed on a bedstead with two curved side-planks. By the side of the side-planks is a seated mourning male figure. Above Buddha, in the centre of the back-slab with an arched top is a stūpa with a bell shaped drum above the low projected base, a plain dome and a conical top. On the either side of the stūpa is a pair of disembodied hands, the pair on the dexter beating a drum and the other pair on the sinister playing on a pair of cymbals.

**Observations:**

The inscribed image of Buddha from Bodhgaya is still worshipped in the Mahābodhi temple at Bodhgaya. This huge sculpture was installed during the illustrious reign of paramasaugata Mahīpāladeva I in his 11th regnal year. I have discussed above five published readings. The most significant variation is noticed in the date/regnal year of the ruling King. A.Cunningham (R.1) reads the date daśame i.e 10th regnal year. The word ekādaśame on the other hand is found in (R.2-R.5 ). The purport of this votive inscription is to record the pious gift of a Buddha image and two gandhakutiṣis or temples by a venerable monk (śākya-bhikṣu) named Buddhasena. Buddhasena who is a follower of the excellent Mahāyāna (pravara Mahāyāna) hailed from the
island of Simhala. The expression *Simhala-dvīpa-vinirggata* clearly points to this. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether the monk donor came to Bodhgaya on a pilgrimage or was resident of a Simhalese monastery flourishing at Bodhgaya. Apparently, the residents of the Simhalese monastery at Bodhgaya belonged to the orthodox *sthavira* school. The donor Buddhasesa was a staunch mahāyānist, and so his being as a member of the *sthavira* school was doubtful. Thus the only conclusion drawn in this connection is that Buddhasesa was a southern Buddhist who came to Bodhgaya to perform his religious duty. This epigraphic record is an evidence of contact between eastern India and south indicative of extensive travel for religious purpose.

Secondly, the damaged or unreadable section preceding the word *pañcamyam tīthau* in Line 3 of the record might contain the name of the month and fortnight (*sukla pakṣa* and *Kṛṣṇa pakṣa*) on which the two gifts were made.

**Sl. No. 16: A Dated Inscription on Cuṇḍā image of the year 31 of Mahīpāla I**

![Image of Cuṇḍā](Photo Courtesy: [Huntington, S. L. PSSS, fig. 61])

**Identification:** Cuṇḍā  
**Material:** Metal  
**Provenance:** Kurkihar, Gaya District, Bihar  
**Present Whereabouts:** Patna Museum No.9696  
**Language:** Sanskrit

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61 The donors travelling from different parts of the Indian Sub-continent to the religious site of Bihar for consecrating images as noticeable in several epigraphic document was a common feature. The record gleaned from this image is another instance in this regard.

62 Debala Mitra, has given this opinion on the basis of Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang, *op.cit*, 1999.
Script: The characters belong to the Nāgari alphabet.

Approximate date: Dated. Mahipāla I ruled from c.989-1037 A.D.tentatively.

The epigraphic record is dated to the 31st regnal year of the ruling king. Therefore, the date of the inscription is c. 989+31 = c.1020 A.D.approximately.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Banerji-Sastri A, op.cit., p. 245.

Text:

L.1 Svasti śrīman = Mahipāla-deva-ra (jyasa *)
L.2 mvat 31 suvarṇa-kāra Kesavassa......
L.3 sya (?) devadharma.

Translation:

'The gift of the goldsmith Kesava in the 31st year of the illustrious Mahipāla.'

Reading 2: Gupta, P. L. op.cit. p.149.

Text:

Siddham ś [r*] īman- Mahi (hi) pāladeva - rājye Sarivata (vat) 31 suvarṇapakāra - Keśavasūta-devadharma = yah (th *).

Translation:

'The gift of .... Son of the goldsmith Keśava in the 31st year of the reign of the illustrious Mahipāla.'

Reading 3: Choudhary, R. K. op.cit. p.70.

Text:

L.1 Svasti śrīman Mahipāla deva-rājya sa
L.2 mvat 31 suvarṇapakāra Kesavassa......
L.3 sya deva dharmma.

Translation:

Not given

Additional References:

Jayaswal, K. P. op.cit. 1934, p.72, No.110, pl.XXXIV, fig. 2.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. 1984 p.60, Appendix, No.37, fig.61.

63 The transliteration of the record is based on the Devanāgarī script given by R. K. Choudhary.
Majumdar, R. C. 1941. "Some Dates in the Pāla and Sena Records." 

**Iconographic Study:**

The Buddhist deity Cunda is shown seated in *Vajrāsana* on a single lotus seat placed on a high raised *tri-ratha* pedestal. Of the four hands of the goddess, the lower left hand rests on the lap with a shallow cup or *pūtra* on palm, the upper left holds a lotus by its stalk (whether this hand supports a *pustaka* is difficult to make out from the available photograph), the upper right holds an *akṣamalā*, while the lower left display *varada mudrā*. The three-eyed deity is adorned with *hāra*, plain bangles, plain armlets, beaded *kundalas* and a *mukūta*. Tied by an ornate ribbon major part of the hair is arrayed in the form of bun, while some coiled locks of hair falls on the shoulders. The two-tiered *triratha* pedestal is simple in execution supporting the lotus seat. A donor in kneeling attitude with folded hands is depicted in the right comer of the pedestal. The raised border of the oval back-slab is edged by coiled tongues of flames.

**Observations:**

The inscribed image of Cunda from Kurkihar, Bihar is ascribed to the regnal year 31 of Mahipālàdeva I. Three published reading of this short epigraphic record has been discussed by me. I have noticed few significant variant expression in the published transcription of the text. R. K. Choudhary (R.3) is similar to the reading 1 of A. Banerji-Sastri. The maṇḍala symbol *svasti* (R.1) and *siddham* (R. 2) is to be noted in this connection. Secondly, the expression used to identify the donor of this image inscription is important to note. Kesavassa (R.1) and Kesavasūta (R. 2) used in context to the donor is different. The Sanskrit word Kesavassa (syā) means by Keśava i.e. the donor as suggested by A. Banerji-Sastri. P. L. Gupta on the other hand believes that the donor is the son of the goldsmith Keśava, which is expressed by the term Keśavasūta. This variation is of considerable interest which entirely changes the meaning of the inscription. In this case the donor is Keśava or son of Keśava.

The epigraphic record is purely votive in nature. It records the dedication of Cunda image by a donor Keśava or son of Keśava in the 31st regnal year of the illustrious Mahipālàdeva I. Interestingly the social status of the donor as a *suvarṇapakāraṇa* finds mention in the record. The
word suvarṇakāra literally means a goldsmith or a dealer in bronze. The donor is therefore a member of the occupational caste group of goldsmith. The inscription is indicative of the financial status of the donor who made a religious gift of goddess of his faith carved in bronze, if we assume that Keśava, a goldsmith was also a dealer in bronze.

Sl. No. 17: Shantipur Image of Buddha of the time Mahāpāla I

Mutilated sculpture of Buddha, Shantipur
Photo Courtesy: [ Malda Museum, Malda ]

Identification: Buddha representing the eight great miracles
Material: Greenish black stone, 81.3 x 71 cm
Provenance: Shantipur (Police Station Old Malda, District Malda, West Bengal)
Present Whereabouts: Malda Museum, Acc. No. BGB- 4
Language: Sanskrit
Script: 
Approximate date: Undated. The inscription under study is probably dated. According to Debala Mitra a two digits numeral engraved on the anurāhā of the pedestal, but unfortunately it is peeled-off. The sculpture records the name of the ruling king Mahāpāla, who ruled from c.989 A.D.-1037 A.D. tentatively. Therefore the date of this epigraphic record falls within the period.

64 P.V. Kane, History of Dharmasāstra, V. 2, Part I, 1941, p.98.
65 This sculpture is not recorded in Malaysankar Bhattacharyya’s Catalogue, 1982 ‘Art in Stone’ Malda Museum.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscribed pedestal of Buddha image
Inscription A - Inscription on raḥā
Photo Courtesy: Mitra, Debala, Pratnasamiksha, fig. 3]

Inscribed pedestal of Buddha image
Inscription B - On the anurāḥā & on the anuratha
Photo Courtesy: Debala Mitra, Pratnasamiksha, fig. 4]


Text: On the raḥā
L.1. Siddham ( symbol ) ye dharmāḥ hetu- prabhavā hetutteshāṁ ( hetuṁ teshāṁ ) tathāgato
hyā (?) vadaṛaṭācha (hy = avadat teshāṭaḥ) yo nirodha evatī vādi mahāśra (śra) māpaḥ || deva
( correctly deya) dha-
L.2 mmo ( rmmo ) = yati pravara- mahāyīna x rā (?) hā (?) or bhā (?) ka (?) sya ( yad = atra
putyaṁ tad = bhavatv = ācchā ) ry - opādhyaṁ - mārā śiṭṭhi- pitṛi- pūrvvatīgamāṁ kṛi-
L.3 tvā sakala-satva-raṣer = anuttara - jūna (n =ā ) vāṃtaye iti x (mahā ) raijādhiraiś (raiśa) -
śrīṁma (man) mahi (hi ) pāla

Text: On the anurāḥā
deva- vi (vi )jaya - raiya - sarīvat |

Text: On the anuratha
āśūḍha dine 11
Translation:
Success! Tathāgata (i.e., Śākyamuni Buddha) has revealed the cause of those phenomena which emanate from a cause and also (the means of) their cessation. So says the Great Monk. This is the pious gift of ..., a follower of the excellent Mahāyāna. Whatever merit (is derived from this gift) let that be for the attainment of the supreme knowledge of all sentient beings keeping in front (his) preceptor, teacher, mother and father. (The image was donated or consecrated in the reign of) Maharajadhiraja śri Mahīpāladeva in his victorious regnal year, the day being the 11th of Āshādha.

Additional References:

Iconographic Study:

The greenish-black stone sculpture (67 cm wide, 24 cm in height) depicts the ashta-mahāpratihārya (eight great miracles) of the life of the Śākyamuni Buddha. Unfortunately, a large part of the black slab is broken, as a result of which five life-scenes are missing. The remaining three life-scenes available in this fragmentary sculpture are Māra-vijaya indicating Śākyamuni’s imminent enlightenment, the birth of Gautama at Lumbini depicted on the dexter. On the corresponding sinister is depicted the miracle of Vaiśālī where Buddha was offered a bowl of honey by a monkey. Dominating the central part of the sculpture is the incident representing Śākyamuni’s victory over Māra (Māra-vijaya) and his achievement of the enlightenment (bodhi). The central figure of Buddha is mutilated. The major portion of the head is missing, the facial features are chipped off, almost the entire right arm and the left forearm are broken off and the knees are battered. Robed in an antarvīśa and an uttarāśatigā which leaves the right chest, shoulder and arm uncovered, the bejeweled Buddha with auspicious lines on the neck is seated in vajra-paryyātikāsana on the stamens of a neatly done viśva-padma placed on a simhmana. In the scene which depicts the birth of Gautama at Lumbini on the dexter, Māyādevi is shown standing with flexions, her right leg bent and crossed behind her stretched left leg, under a tree. With left palm on her left thigh, she is grasping a bent branch of the tree. Considerably below the baby is the damaged standing figure of Śakra holding perhaps a piece of cloth for receiving the baby. In the scene of the miracle of Sravasti, Buddha is seated in pralambapāda on a viśva-padma, above a pañca-ratha pedestal. Buddha holds with his two palms a bowl (partially damaged) of honey.

67 See, Debala Mitra for the detail iconographic discussion of the image, op.cit. 1995-96.
Below the pedestal of two mouldings and against a high pañca-ratha background is a monkey in the gesture of offering.

Of the back-rest of the throne (śīrāsana), the major portions of the oblong uprights have disappeared. Immediately below the upright on either side appear an elephant (on both the flanks) on an utpala-like flower. The viśva-padma rests on the top of the central part of a sapta-ratha pedestal with a succession of two mouldings, a broad recess (compartmented by pilasters) and a khurā-shaped moulding (at the top). On the middle part of the central ratha (rāhā) of the last moulding is spread a drape on which is placed a vajra (thunderbolt) which symbolizes the adamantine seat (vajrāsana) of Buddha. The central compartment of the broad recess is flanked on either side by a pilaster resting on a squarish stand. Mostly inside and partly outside of this compartment is the damaged figure of the bejeweled earth-goddess (?) almost in a kneeling posture on an utpala-like flower. Her right palm is raised towards her mutilated head, while her raised left palm along with an object (ghaṭa ?) held is broken. On either side of this compartment on two anurāhas is an animated lion (head damaged) on a multi-petalled flower. Beyond both the lions and on the anurathas is a caparisoned elephant (head broken) with a bulky body, about to trot on a multi-petalled flower, from the stalk of which have sprung up a bud and a leaf (?). Beyond the elephant on our right kanika (on the extreme sinister) is depicted the lone dejected figure of the sparsely-bejeweled Mara, drained of strength, brooding over the defeat by putting his right palm near the head (damaged). On the extreme dexter (on our left kanika) is a kneeling couple (heads damaged) on a multi-petalled flower, the man in front with folded palms in adoration and his wife at his back, possibly also, with folded palms. Rising from the central part of the body of the central projection (rāhā) of the bottom moulding of the pedestal is also a triangular projection relieved with the half of a floral motif with luxuriant stalks and leaves. The rāhā is inscribed with a long inscription of three lines.

Observations:
The inscribed image of Buddha from Shantipur, District Malda is assigned to the victorious reign of Mahāpāla I. The art object received scholarly attention by Debala Mitra who studied the object from the epigraphic and iconographic point of view. The fairly long inscription is engraved on the rāhā, anurāhā and anuratha of the pedestal. The votive record begins with the Buddhist formulae, ye dharma hetu prabhava. This is followed by the words commonly found in Buddhist

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images and refer to the attainment of puṇya and happiness for all beings. The name of the illustrious sovereign Mahipāladeva I is engraved in Line 3 of the published transcription. According to Debala Mitra, the date of the record and the name of the donor has been peeled off. 68 But the donor is iconographically represented on the pedestal as mentioned above. Mitra identifies the donor as a wealthy lay follower of the Mahāyāna Buddhism and not a monk owing to the jewels worn by the male donor. 69 The incomplete astronomical data of this image inscription is to be dealt in Chapter VI.

Sl. No. 18: Puṇḍeśvari Image Inscription of year 13 of Nayapāla

Identification: Puṇḍeśvari
Material: Stone
Provenance: Rajauna, Monghyr District, Bihar.
Present Whereabouts: Ashutosh Museum of Indian Art, University of Calcutta.
Language: Incorrect Sanskrit
Script:
Approximate date: Dated. Nayapala, the son and successor of Mahipāla I (c.989 A.D.- 1037 A.D.) ruled for a period of 15 years according to D. C. Sircar. 70 According to the revised Chronology, Nayapala ruled from c.1037 A.D. + 15 = c.1052 A.D. The present inscription is dated to the 13th year of the ruling king. Therefore, the date of the epigraphic record is c.1037 + 13 = c.1050 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Banerjee, P. op.cit, ‘Some Inscriptions From Bihar’ p.109.

Text:
(i) Pā(Pr) ramabhṛttaraki (ka)-
(ii) Parameśvara – [i] tyā *
(iii) dī-ra (rā) jāvali- śrīman- Nā (Na) yapālade-
(iv) va- paravardhamāna – vi [ja ] ya- rījye

68 A major portion of writing on the rāhā is abraided. The date mentioning the regnal year and the name of the donor might have been engraved in this part.
69 According to Debala Mitra, the donor is adorned with ornaments, and therefore the question of his having been a monk does not arise, ibid. p.169.
(v) Samvat** 13
(vi) Āśāḍha-dine 24
(vii) Krimiliyāḥ (?) /
(viii) samasta- mahā
(ix) Trikaṭāḥ
(x) Śrī Puṇḍeśvarī - bhattārī ( ri )kāṭ( kāṭ ) (/*)
Sānakaśya devadha [r] mo = yam ( yatrii)
Mahātriṣada - samarpitāpitīḥ ( pita = iti ) (//)

Translation:
This is the pious gift of Sānaka dedicating in Mahātriṣada (?) of krimilā (?) the image of Puṇḍeśvaribhattārīkā on the 24th Āśāḍha of the 13th regnal year of the victorious reign of the illustrious Nayapaladeva.

Additional References:
Sircar, D. C. op.cit. 1982, p.16.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit.1984, p.64 Appendix, No.40.
Sircar, D. C.1949-50, Three Inscriptions From Valgudar, EI, vol. XXVIII.

Iconographic Study:
I have not seen the image of this art specimen in any published textual sources. Therefore it is difficult to make any observations regarding the iconographic composition. The only information drawn from published literature that the image is of a four-armed seated goddess with a child on her lap, named Puṇḍeśvari as recorded in the epigraphic record.

Observations:
The Puṇḍeśvari image inscription dated to year 13 of Nayapāla (c.1037-1052 A.D.) is perhaps the only dated image inscription of the ruling king. D.C. Sircar has furnished a meagre information on this inscribed specimen. Later, the inscription was edited by Priyatosh Banerjee and published in the pages of Journal of Ancient Indian History. The inscription begins with a

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72 P. Banerjee, op.cit, pp.108-9, based on the original stone and impression.
eulogy for the king, Nayapāla who is a paramabhattaraka and paramesvara. It further records the date of installation of Puṇḍeśvari image styled as Puṇḍeśvari bhaṭṭārikā on the auspicious day of 24th Āśāḍha by a donor named Sāṇaka. The information regarding the socio-economic status of the donor is not revealed from the inscription. His religious leaning towards Buddhism is clear from the inscriptive evidence. He happens to be a local patron residing at a place called Mahātrikāda in the ancient city of Krimila, Monghyr District, South Bihar. This city was the head quarter of the viṣaya or district of the same name that formed part of the Pāla dominion. The image of Devī with a child on her lap must have enjoyed great popularity amongst the people of the region in the early medieval period. Since we are unable to categorize the female goddess in the Brahmanical or Buddhist pantheon due to lack of supportive evidences, we may assume that she may have been a local deity worshipped by the people of the region. This view is corroborated by D.C. Sircar’s opinion that the Devī styled Puṇḍeśvari/ Purṇeśvari with child on a lap had enjoyed great popularity amongst the people of South Bihar in the early medieval period. The importance of the astronomical data furnished in this image inscription is to be dealt in Chapter VI.

Sl. No. 19: Inscribed Bronze Buddha from Kurkihar, year 3 of Vīgrahapāla III

Crowned Buddha

Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar, EIB, fig. 249]

73 Sircar, D. C. op.cit.1949-50.
Identification: Crowned Buddha
Material: Metal, bronze
Provenance: Kurkihar, Gaya District, Bihar.
Present Whereabouts: Patna Museum, Patna, Bihar, Arch. No.9595.
Language: Incorrect Sanskrit
Script: Proto-Bengali or Proto-Maithili according to K. P. Jayaswal.74
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Vigrahapāla (III), the Pāla king is assigned to c.1052 -1078 A.D.75 The metal sculpture is dated in the 3rd regnal year of the ruling king. Therefore, the date of the epigraphic record is c.1052 + 3 = 1055 A.D. approximately.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription at the back of the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar EIB, fig. 327]

Text:
L.1 Svasti srīma-Vigrahapīladeva-vijaya rāje sarhmat 3.
L.2 devadharmo = ‘yam pravara- mahāyāna- jaina pramopsa-
L.3 ka - Dulapa- sutah Tikukasya
Translation:
Blessing. Year 3 of His Majesty Vigrahapāladeva’s victorious reign, this is the sacred gift of Tikuka, son of Dulapa the devoted worshipper of the great Mahāyāna Jaina.

Reading 2: Gupta, P. L. (ed) op.cit. pp.131- 132. pl.XXX.
Text:
L.1 Siddham (symbol) srīma [n *] - Vi(i) grahamāladeva-vi(i) jaya- rāj [y*] e sarhmat (sariwat) 3.
L.2 devadharmo = yarih pravara- mahāyāna jā (yā) [y*] [h*] prā (para) - mopsa-
L.3 Ka- Dūlapa- sūtaḥ (tasya) Tikukasya.

74 K. P. Jayaswal, op.cit.1934, p.72.
75 Gouriswar Bhattacharya, op.cit. 1998. Bhattacharya assign a period of 26 years to Vigrahapāla III.
Translation:
Records the gift of the image in the 3rd year of king Vigrahapāla by Tīkūka, the son of the Mahāyāna lay – worshipper Dūlapa.

Reading 3: Choudhary, R. K. op.cit. p.67.

Text:
L.1 Svastiśrīma-Vigrahapāladeva Vijayarāje Sarīmat 3
L.2 deva dharmmoyatī pravara mahāyāna jaina Pramopāsa
L.3 ka Dūlapasūṭah Tikukasya .

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Jayaswal, K. P. op.cit. 1934, p.72, No.7. JISOA pl.XXXXIII, fig.1
Sahai, B. op.cit. 1983, p. 91.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. 1984 p.65 Appendix, No. 41, fig. 69.
Picron, Claudine Bautze. 2010, The Bejewelled Buddha From India to Burma. Sixth Kumar Sarat Kumar Roy Memorial Lecture. Kolkata, p. 93, No.77

Iconographic Study:
The iconographic representation of a ‘crowned’ or, the ‘bejewelled Buddha’77 from Kurkihar constitutes a major form of the Buddha Sākyamuni. Here Sākyamuni is shown standing alone without being flanked by Bodhisattvas. The deity is shown standing in samapāda posture on a viśva padma placed on a trirātha pedestal. Of the two hands, the right displays abhaya mudra and the left perhaps holding the end of the sanghāṭi which reaches down to the ankles. He wears an elaborate necklace, earrings, beaded diadem and a highly ornamented crown, inlaid with jewels. The eyes and the first hūra (necklace) are completely in silver. The face portrays beautifully the calmness of a yogi, ‘the eyes concentrated on the tip of the nose’ signifying deep meditation. A circular ārṇā adorns the forehead greatly enhancing the beauty of the full round face. The trirātha raised pedestal is strikingly simple and plain in contrast to the prabhāvalī shown beautifully with edged flames beset with ‘gem’ surmounted by a floral ribbon. A floral design is depicted on the rāhāpagā (central projection).

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76 The Transliteration is given by me on the basis of the Devanāgarī script given by R. K. Choudhary.
77 The term ‘bejewelled Buddha’ has been coined by Claudine Bautze Picron. See, Claudine Bautze Picron, The Bejewelled Buddha From India to Burma. Sixth Kumar Sarat Kumar Roy Memorial Lecture, 2010.
Observations:
The crowned image of Buddha from Kurkihar is the earliest inscribed sculpture dated to the regnal year 3 of the Pāla ruler Vigrahapāla III son and successor of Nayapāla. The inscribed image is one of the exquisite pieces from the 226 objects recovered from a room at Kurkihar, the famous monastic establishment. Three readings of the votive inscription published so far has been discussed above. The inscription records the installation or meritorious gift of the Buddha image by Tikuka, son of Dulapa who has been noted as a devout Mahāyāna worshipper. This pious work was undertaken in the third regnal year of Vigrahapāla III which evidently prove the existence of the last vestiges of Pāla rule in south Bihar. Here lies the historical importance of the epigraphic record. It is known to the students of history that the political situation in Bengal succeeding the victorious reign of Mahipāla I was marked by an end of era of ascendancy soon followed by the era of decline and disintegration. In the second place, the donor Tikuka is a lay devotee of Buddhistic faith very rightly expressed in the word paramaopāsaka. The inscription is silent about his socio-economic status.

Sl. No. 20: Inscribed Buddha from Rohoi, year 12 of Vigrahapāla III

Identification: Miracle of Śravasti
Material: Black stone, 68.5 x 38cm
Provenance: Rohoi, Patna District, Bihar.
Present Whereabouts: Indian Museum, Kolkata, No.3731.
Language: Incorrect Sanskrit
Script: Gaudīya

78 Chhanda Mukherjee, op.cit, p.127.
79 The script used during the period 11th-13th centuries were known as Proto-Bengali or Gaudīya. Since the present image is dated to the ruling period of Vigrahapāla III, it can be ascertained that the epigraphic record belonging to his reign were written in Gaudīya or Proto-Bengali script.
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Vigrahapāla (III), the Pāla king is assigned to c.1052-1078 A.D. The stone sculpture is dated in the 12th regnal year of the ruling king. Therefore, the date of the epigraphic record is c.1052 + 12 = c.1064 A.D. approximately.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Bhandarkar, R. G. in A. M. Broadley op. cit. p.89.

Text:
Śrīmadvigrāhapāla devarājya satīvat [figure indistinct 4 or 5] Mārgga dine 19.
deyadharmmayatād Sūvārṣākāra Dehabusuhe ? Sūtasya.

Translation:
"Year of the reign of Śrīmad Vigrāhapāla four [2] Mārga, 19th day. This is a religious gift of the son of Dehabū, a goldsmith."

Reading 2: Babu Rajendralal Mitra in A. M. Broadley op. cit. p.89.

Text:
Śrīmadvigrāhapāla devasya rājya satīvat 12 Mārgga dine 15
deya Dharmaṃmayatā Sūvāṛṣākāra Dehekaṁs tu Sūtasya

Translation:
"On the 15th of the month of Mārga (November-December), in the Saṁvat year 12 of the reign of Śrīmat Vigrāhapāla Deva, (the rest illegible)".

Reading 3: Cunningham, A. op. cit. 1871-72. No.7, p.121.

Text:
L.1 Sri Mat Vigraha Paḷa Deva rājya *
Samvat 12 Mārga, dine 18
L.2 Deya Dharmmayam *

Translation:
"In the reign of the fortunate Vigraha Paḷa Deva, the 12th year, the 18th day of Mārga."

Reading 4: Banerji, R. D. op. cit. p.72.

80The transliteration of the inscription is based on the reading in Devānāgarī script given by R. G. Bhandarkar.
81The transliteration of the inscription is based on the reading in Devānāgarī script given by Babu Rajendralal Mitra.
Text:
L.2 Deya [dha] rmmoyam suvarnakara Dehekasya Sāhe sutasya

Translation:
"The year 13, the 14th day of mārggaśīrṣa, of the reign of the illustrious Vīgrahapāladeva. The religious gift of the goldsmith Deheka, son of Sāhe.

Reading 5: Bhandarkar, D. R. op.cit. Inscription No.1633.

Text:
L.1 Śrīmad Vīgrahapāladeva-rajya-satīvat 13 Mārgga dine 14.

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Bloch, T. op.cit.1911, p. 50.
Baneji, R. D. op.cit, 1933, pl.V, a.
Sahai, B. No111, p.93.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit.1984 p.47 Appendix, No 17, fig.37.

Iconographic Study:
The black stone sculpture (68.5 x 38 cm) under study is in an excellent state of preservation.

The elaborate stelae represents one of the eight events associated with the life of Śākyamuni Buddha, commonly known as Miracle of Sravasti. The stelae depicts Tathāgata seated in vajraparyatvaśāsana (?) on a well expanded double-petalled lotus seat (viśvapadma) placed on a paścarathā pedestal. Śākyamuni displays dharmacakra / Sikshamudra. On each side of the principal figure, two Buddhas are shown seated in pralambapadā fashion, but with the hands in the same posture. On the backslab we find three other similar figures in the three remaining cardinal points. In addition there are four standing figures of Buddha on lotus flowers issuing from the same stalk. Under each side of the main stalk is a Nāga with hand clasped in adoration. In addition to these figures we find the representation of Buddja’s death i.e. Buddha

82 Broadley gives the inscription in p.89 and discusses the sculpture in p.79; apparently he mis-matched the piece and the inscription. See, A. M. Broadley, op.cit. Reprint 1979.

83 The facial features of the central figure and the figure on the right is severely damaged.
Mahāparinirvana just over the head of the main figure. Two garland bearing Vidyadharas are depicted on the corners.

On the pāṭkarathau pedestals eight figures are carved. On the rūhāpaga, two of the worshippers are in aṇījali mudra and the other two figures (Buddha ?) are shown standing showing abhaya. On the anurāhā paga, two devotees in namaskāra or aṇījali mudra. The kopikapagas are probably occupied by two figures.

Observations:
The inscribed sculpture from Rohoi, Patna District, Bihar illustrates one of the event associated with the life of Śākyamuni Buddha i.e the Miracle of Sravasti. Six published readings of this dated epigraphic record has been discussed above. Few remarkable variations in expressions and concepts is discerned from the published texts. Significant variant reading is noted in the date of the regnal year of the ruling King and the auspicious date on which the pious gift was made. Scholars have suggested regnal year 4 or 5 (R.1), year 12 (R.2 & R.3) and regnal year 13 (R.4, 5 & 6). S. N. Chakravarti suggest the reading to be as year 12. His view corroborates the reading given by Cunningham as the year 12 instead of 13.

Similarly scholars are not unanimous on the auspicious date on which the image was consecrated. R. G. Bhandarkar reads the date Mārgga dine 19, followed by Mārggadine 15 (R.2 ) and Mārga, dine 18 (R.3). The 14th day of the month of Mārgga put forward by scholars ( R.4 & R.5) is suggested on the other hand. Besides the confusion in datings, I have noted a variant reading in the name of the donor and his father. This view is corroborated by the expression found Dehabu (R.1), Dehekaṇṣu ( R.2 ) and Deheka (R.4) for the name of the donor. However, my observations is based on the translation given by R. D. Banerji. The purport of the votive inscription is to record the religious gift of the donor Deheka, son of Sāhe. The inscription clearly express the socio-economic status of the donor in the contemporary society. He is a suvarṇapakāra i.e goldsmith by profession. Thus the donor belonged to the occupational caste-group of goldsmith. The donor's religious affiliation is revealed by the nature of his dedication.

84 See, S.N.Chakravarti, op.cit. 1938, p.390.
85 See the above reading 3, given by A.Cunnigham.
86 This is the second dated inscribed image studied so far which reveals the social position of the donor as goldsmith. See the dated Cunda image, year 31 of Mahāpāla in which the donor belongs to the occupational group of goldsmith.
The astronomical data furnished in this inscriptions evidence records the gift in the month of Margga and the importance of the image inscription from the astronomical viewpoint is to be discussed in Chapter VI.

Sl. No. 21: Inscribed Bronze Buddha from Kurkihar, year 19 of Vigrahapāla III

Identification: Crowned Buddha
Material: Bronze, H: 56 cm.
Provenance: Kurkihar, Gaya District, Bihar.
Present Whereabouts: Patna Museum, Patna, Bihar, Arch. No. 9594.
Language: Incorrect Sanskrit
Script: Gaudīya
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Vigrahapāla (III), the Pāla king is assigned to c.1052-1078 A.D. The metal sculpture is dated in the 19th regnal year of the ruling king. Therefore, the date of the epigraphic record is c.1052 + 19 = c.1071 A.D. approximately.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription at the back of the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakhshkar, EIB, fig. 328]
Reading 1: Banerji-Sastri A, op.cit. p. 240.

Text:
L.1 Svasti srîman - Vigrahapûla devasya - râjadhîrîjâh.
L.2 Pramabhâtîka- râj e sarîmat 19 mahatama-
L.3 Dulapavadhu --- Pekhokâyâh.

Translation:
Blessing. Of His Majesty Vigrahapûla, the King of Kings. In the year 19 of his most pious reign, of the wife or daughter-in-law of Mahattma Dulapa.

Reading 2: Gupta, P. L. op.cit. 133, No. 33.

Text:
L.1 Siddham (symbol) Srîman - Vigrahapûladevasya râjadhîrîjâh (ja) [sya *]
L.2 pra (pa) rama - bhaṭṭa (ṭṭa) raka [sya *] - râj [y*] e sarîmatah
(satīvat) 19 mahat [t*] amâ-
L.3 Dûlapa-vadhû - Yekhokâyâh.

Translation:
Records the gift of the image in the 19th year of king Vigrahapûla by Yekhokâ, the wife of the mahattma Dûlapa.

Reading 3: Choudhary, R. K. op.cit. p.68 (g, iv).

Text 87:
L.1 Svasti srîman - Vigrahapûla devasya - râjadhîrîjâh.
L.2 Paramabhâtîkârîje sarîmat 19 mahatma-
L.3 Dulapavandhu --- Pekhokâyâh.

Translation:
Not given

Reference:
Jayaswal, K. P. op.cit. 1934, p.72, pl.XXXIV, fig.3.
Sahai, B. op.cit. 1983, No. 115, p.95-96
Huntington, S. L. op.cit.1984 p.65 Appendix, No.43, fig.70.
Picron, Claudine Bautze, 2010, p. 93, No.78.

87 The transliteration is based on the Devanâgarî script given by R. K. Choudhary, p.68.

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Iconographic Study:

This is the second example of crowned Buddha or ‘bejewelled Buddha’ from Kurkihar dated to the year 19 of the illustrious Vigrahapāla III. There is an evidence of striking similarity in the iconographic detail and stylistic execution of this image with the one discussed above (Crowned Buddha, year 3 of Vigrahapāla). This may be due to a coincidence as both the images are from the same provenance and ascribed to the same period (ca. third quarter of 11th century). Śākyamuni Buddha is shown standing in sama-pāda on a viśva-pāda, carved on the upper part of the central projection of a tri-ratha pedestal. Of the two hands, the right displays abhaya mudra and the left perhaps holding the end of the saṅghāṭi which reaches down to the ankles. Buddha is adorned with a beaded hāra, a broad necklace with a row of bud-shaped pendants and a lavishly decorated central piece with gems (maṇi). Flower shaped ear-ornaments coming out from the elongated ear-lobes and a highly ornate mukūṭa adorns the head. Significantly, no ornaments have been provided for the arms. The stylized coiled locks of hair, seen below the mukūṭa resemble pellets.88 The deity with a broad face, elongated bodily features, serene facial expression, nearly closed eye-lids, trivali round the neck and a raised circular āṇa holds the folded part of saṅghāṭi. The folds of saṅghāṭi are not indicated by wavy lines. The border of the semi-circular prabhāmaṇḍala is edged by closely-arrayed tongue of flames.

Observations:

The inscribed image of ‘Bejewelled Buddha’ from Kurkihar is dated to year 19 of the Pāla ruler Vigrahapāla III, son and successor of Nayapāla. The inscribed image is an artistic find from the 226 objects recovered from a room at Kurkihar, the famous monastic establishment. Three readings of the votive inscription published so far has been discussed above. One significant variation in connection to the name of the donor has been noticed. Banerji-Sastri A. (R.1) reads the word as Pekhokāyāh and P.L. Gupta, (R.2) read as Yekhokāyāh. The inscription records the installation or meritorious gift of the Buddha image by Pekhokāyāh i Yekhokāyāh daughter-in-law of Dulapa.89 The kinship-based identification of the female donor as a daughter-in-law is clear from the epigraphic record. Secondly, the use of the word mahattama before the word

88 Details of the head-dress, standing posture, disposition of hands, treatment of the prabhāmaṇḍala is similar to the crowned Buddha image referred earlier.

89 Daughter-in-law of Dulapa means the wife of Tikuka. See the above discussion on the epigraphic record dated to year 3 of Vigrahapāla, where Tikuka is mentioned as the son of Dulapa.
Dulapa is quite interesting in this regard. The word *mahattama* literally means a ‘person of high rank’, ‘richman’ or ‘the village headman’. Since the votive inscription do not record any village name, we cannot say that Dulapa the donor’s husband was a bonafide member of the village administration. But he was certainly a man of socio-economic eminence in the contemporary society is firmly established.

**Sl. No. 22 : Inscribed Bronze Buddha from Kurkihar, year 19 of Vigrahapāla III (2)**

*Crowned Buddha, Kurkihar*

**Photo Courtesy:** [Ray, Khandalavala & Gorakshkar, *EIB*, fig. 251]

**Identification:** Crowned Buddha  
**Material:** Bronze. H: 112 cm.  
**Provenance:** Kurkihar, Gaya District, Bihar.  
**Present Whereabouts:** Patna Museum, Patna, Bihar, Arch. No.9588.  
**Language:** Incorrect Sanskrit  
**Script:** Gaudīya  
**Approximate date:** Dated. The reigning period of Vigrahapāla (III), the Pāla king is assigned to c.1052 -1078 A.D. The metal sculpture is dated in the 19th regnal year of the ruling king. Therefore, the date of the epigraphic record is c.1052 + 19 = c.1071 A.D.approximately.

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90 The word *mahattama* as a prefix to Dulapa is also recorded in the second image dated to regnal year 19 of Vigrahapāla III, to be discussed below.


92 Ibid.

93 Ibid.
Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

**Reading 1**: Banerji-Sastri A, *op.cit.* p. 239.

**Text**:
L.2 *Mahātama Mṛidvala . . .ta || Utīmarīkasyaḥ.*

**Translation**:
Blessing. His Majesty Vigrahapāla-deva, the King of Kings. The year 19 in the reign of the most pious sovereign.

**Reading 2**: Gupta, P. L. (ed) *op.cit.* p.133, No.34.

**Text**:
L.1 *Siddham (symbol) śrīmanata (Śrīmataḥ )-vī (vi) grahaḥ ( ha ) pūladevasya rījādhirījāḥ (jasya) pra ( para ) ma- bhū ( bha) ta ( tā) raka [ sya * ] rīj [ y* ] e satīmatāḥ (sativat) 19*
L.2 *mahā ( ha ) t ( t * ) ama- Dīlapa- sīīa-Utīmarīkasyaḥ ( ya ).*

**Translation**:
Records the gift of the image in the 19th year of king Vigrahapāla by one Utimarāka, the son of Mahattama Dīlapa.

**Reading 3**: Choudhary, R. K. *op.cit.* p.68 (g, iii).

**Text**:
L.1 *Svasti śrīmanat - Vigrahapāladevarījākṣāh. paramabhaṭṭiraka ṛje satīmat 19.*
L.2 *Mahātama Mṛidvala . . .ta || Utīmarīkasyaḥ.*

**Translation**:
Not given

**Additional References**:
Sahai, B. *op.cit.* 1983, No. 114, p.95.
Huntington, S. L. *op.cit* 1984 p.65 Appendix, No 44, fig.71- 72.
Bautze, Picron Claudine 2010, p. 93, No.79.

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94 The transliteration is given by me on the basis of the Devanāgarī script given by R. K. Choudhary.

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Iconographic Study:

**Detail of the back slab showing two seated figures**

This is the second example of crowned Buddha or 'bejewelled Buddha' from Kurkihar dated to the year 19 of the illustrious Vigrāhapāla III. There is an evidence of striking similarity in the iconographic detail and stylistic execution of this image with the two images discussed above. This may be due to a coincidence as all the three images are from the same provenance and ascribed to the same period (ca. third quarter of 11th century). Śākyamuni Buddha is shown standing in *sama-pāda* on a *viśva-padma*, carved on the upper part of the central projection of a *tri-ratha* pedestal. Of the two hands, the right displays *abhaya mudra* and the left perhaps holding the end of the *sarghāṭī* which reaches down to the ankles. Buddha is adorned with a beaded *hīra*, a broad necklace with a row of bud-shaped pendants and a lavishly decorated central piece with gems (*maṇī*). Flower shaped ear-ornaments coming out from the elongated ear-lobes and a highly ornate *mukūṭa* adorns the head. Significantly, no ornaments have been provided for the arms. The stylized coiled locks of hair, seen below the *mukūṭa* resemble pellets. The deity with a broad face, elongated bodily features, serene facial expression, nearly closed eye-lids, *trivali* round the neck and a raised circular *ūrṇā* holds the folded part of *sarghāṭī*. The only different iconographic peculiarity noted in this sculpture is the presence of two human figures shown seated just above the shoulder of the central deity. The border of the semi-circular *prabhamaṇḍala* is edged by closely- arrayed tongue of flames.

**Observations:**

The image of 'Bejewelled Buddha' from Kurkihar is the second inscribed sculpture dated to year 19 of the Pāla ruler Vigrāhapāla III, son and successor of Nayapāla. Three published readings of

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95 See, the iconographic detail of two bronzes from Kurkihar dated to year 3 and Year 19 of Vigrāhapāla III.
the votive inscription has been discussed above. The reading given by R.K. Choudhary (R. 3) is similar to reading 1 of A. Banerjee-Sastri. According to A. Banerjee-Sastri’s reading the image is a religious gift of the donor Utimarāka, son or daughter of a person named Mṛdvāla. The name of the donor’s father is Mṛdvāla in this reading. P. L. Gupta (R. 2) on the other hand records the donor’s name as Utimarāka, but the name of his/her father is Dulapa. Since Gupta’s reading is complete, I intend to base my observations on the basis of the translation cited by P. L. Gupta. The inscription records the installation or meritorious gift of the Buddha image by Utimarāka son of Mahattama Dulapa. The donor Utimarāka is probably the younger son of Dulapa, the elder being Tikuka as recorded in the epigraphic record donated in regnal year 3 of the illustrious Vighrahapāla III.96 Significantly the mentioning of the expression Mahattama before Dulapa once again throws light on the changing social and economic status of Dulapa in the intervening years since the first sculpture was dedicated.97 Thus it is to be mentioned in this connection that the three inscribed bronze images of Buddha (discussed above) were donated by the members of one family who were related to Dulapa i.e. his two sons Tikuka and Utimarāka and his wife Pekhokāyā / Yekhokāyā. Surprisingly, Dulapa or Mahattama Dulapa who patronized the religious act of his family members did not participate directly for the same. Secondly, the financial support which Dulapa extended to his sons and wife to pursue the pious act of installation of Bronze image is clearly expressed in these votive inscriptions. Besides the social implication gleaned from this record, its historical importance cannot be overshadowed. The consecration of two dated images in the regnal year 19 of the illustrious reign of Vighrahapāla III is an evidence of his continued political hold over the region of south Bihar.

96 See the previous discussed bronze Buddha image from Kurkihar donated in regnal year 3 of Vighrahapāla III.

97 Ibid.
Sl. No. 23: A dated inscribed image of Aparājitā of Vigrahapala III.

Aparājitā, Bihar

Photo Courtesy: [Bhattacharya, G. *EBHIIE*, pl. 9.9]

Identification: Aparājitā
Material: Basalt
Provenance: Bihar
Present Whereabouts: Private collection in New York
Language: Sanskrit (corrupt)
Script:
Approximate date: Dated. The reigning period of Vigrahapala (III), the Pala king is assigned to c.1052 - 1078 A.D. The inscription is dated to regnal year 22.\(^8\)
Therefore, the date of the epigraphic record is c.1052 + 22 = c.1074 A.D. approximately.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription on the rāhā of the pañcaratha pedestal

**Reading 1**: Bhattacharya, G. *op.cit.* ‘The Dual Role of Ganesh in the Buddhist Art of South Asia’, p. 102.

\(^8\) G. Bhattacharya, *op.cit.* “The Dual Role of Ganesh in the Buddhist Art of South Asia”, p.102.
Aparājita is an interesting Buddhist goddess. A very short sīkṣā in the Buddhist iconographic text Śādhanamālā is devoted to her worship and the dhyāna contained in the Śādhanamālā describes the two-armed Aparājita. The Śādhanamālā do not give an account of the four-armed Aparājita which enhances the significance of the sculpture under study. The iconographic representation of four-armed Aparājita is not commonly found. This sculpture is housed in a private collection of New York. The four-armed deity stands in alidha position, trampling the two-armed, elephant headed male figure who holds a knife in the left hand and stares at the goddess. The deity holds a sword in her back right hand; her raised front right hand is in the attitude of giving a slap (chapeta-dana), her back left hand holds a shield, and the front left hand is in a threatening attitude (tarjani mudra). The umbrella or parasol above her head is held by a male attendant. As mentioned earlier, the elephant headed male figure who is being trampled is two-armed. In this connection we may take note of the epithet ‘Ganapatisamākṛta’ mentioned in Śādhanamālā. The epithet appropriately corroborates the iconographic depiction of the image under study. In the description given in Śādhanamālā, the goddess is delineated with awful, terrible and ferocious facial expression. The facial expression of the inscribed image on the other hand, reveals just the opposite peculiarities characterised with saumya and not the ugra aspect of the deity. The simple paścaratha pedestal bears the iconographic representation of a female figure, who may be a donor. The back-slab is occupied with two celestial deities.

Observations:
The inscribed image of Aparājita dated to the regnal year twenty-two of the Pāla ruler Vigrahapāla III is from an unknown provenance of Bihar. The inscribed specimen has attracted

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99 The brief iconographic discussion is based on G. Bhattacharya, op.cit. 2000, p.102.

100 Benoytosh Bhattacharya, op.cit. 1958, p.246.
the attention of Gouriswar Bhattacharya who gives a brief discussion on the image in the above mentioned literary reference. The author however gives no transcription and translation of the said sculpture. Bhattacharya only explains "the image was donated by a merchant’s son from Gaya in the twenty-second regnal year of the Pala-ruler Vigrahapāla III, who ruled in the eleventh century". I have included this image in my study because it is inscribed and iconographically unique. The discovery of this epigraphic record dated to 22\textsuperscript{nd} regnal year of Vigrahapāla III have extended the rule of the sovereign over the region for another three years i.e from 19\textsuperscript{th} to 22\textsuperscript{nd} regnal year. Taking note of the explanation put forward by Bhattacharya in context to the epigraphic record of this image it appears that the donor was a local inhabitant of the region. Secondly being a son of merchant qualifies to his strong economic status enabling him to make a gift of the Buddhist deity.

**Sl. No. 24: Tetrawan Image Inscription of year 2 or 3 of Rāmapāladeva**

![Khadiravāni Tārā, Tetrawan](Photo Courtesy: Indian Museum)

**Identification**: Khadiravāni Tārā  
**Material**: Black stone, 121 x 62\textsuperscript{101}  
**Provenance**: Tetrawan, Patna District, Bihar.  
**Present Whereabouts**: Indian Museum Calcutta, No.3824/ A25158  
**Language**: Incorrect Sanskrit  
**Script**: Eastern variety of Nāgari character,\textsuperscript{102} / Gaudīya

\textsuperscript{101} Chhanda Mukherjee, *op.cit.* 2002, p.131.  
\textsuperscript{102} Nilmani Chakravarti, *op.cit.* 1908, p.108.
Approximate date: Dated. Rāmapāla, the son of Vigrahapāla III (c.1052 -1078 A.D.) came to rule after his elder brother Sūrapāla II. A reigning period of 53 years is assigned to Rāmapāla. The epigraphic record is tentatively dated to the 2nd regnal year. The inscription is dated to c.1078 – 2 = c.1080 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:

Variant Readings:

Reading 1: Broadley, A. M. *op.cit.* p.74.

Text:

_Deyadharmmoyām paramabhāttāraka [..pāsaka ?] bhattā nā... sūta_  
bhattā Ichchhasya yadatra punyāri tadbhavatu mātrapiṭāppurvarīgamaḥ  
sakalasatvānīgrahe ya ? nū ....? _rāja Śrīrāmapatideva satīvat vaiśāśa_  
[śikha] dine 28 sitūsūta ( about six letters illegible )

Translation:

“This is a gift to gods, by the pious devotee Bhaṭṭa Ichchha, the son of Bhaṭṭa Naho. May the merit abiding in this, contribute to the welfare of all beings with his father and mother at the head! The second year of the king Śrī Rāmapati Deva; 28th day of Vaiśākha”.

Reading 2: Cunningham, A. *op.cit*, 1871-72, No.15, p.124.

Text:

*_* * rāje Śrī Rāma Pāla Deva, Samvat 2

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103 The transliteration is based on the reading in Devanāgarīscript given by A. M. Broadley.
Vaisākha, dine 28.

Translation:
“In the year 2, the 28th day of Vaisākh, in the reign of fortunate Rama Pala Deva”.

Reading 3: Chakravarti, Nilmani. op.cit. p.109.

Text:
L.1 Devadharmmoyaih paravaramahija...... saka || Bhaṭṭanubhausūtabhaṭṭa Ichchharasa yudatra pīṇa tadbhavatu mātā.  
L.2 pitū pūrvvaṅgamaṁ sakalasatvāṁreṣe sanū ------ ------ ------ rīja Śrī Rāmapīḷa deva satīvat 2 Vaiṣākha dine 28 Setāsūta Mahāśita ghaṭhitaiṁ ci |

Translation:
“The pious gift of the best of lay disciple Bhaṭṭa Iśvara, son of Bhaṭṭa Nūbhā, who was a follower of the greater vehicle. What ever merit .... In the second year of the reign of Rāmapīḷa, 28th of Vaiṣākha. Carved by Mahābita, the son of Setā.”

Reading 4: Choudhary, R. K. op.cit. p. 61.

Text:
L.1 Devadharmmoyaih paravaramahija......ja......saka|| Bhaṭṭanubhausūtabhaṭṭaichchharasa yadbhāpiṇātadbhavatu mātā.  
L.2 pitū pūrvvaṅgamaṁ sakalasatvāṁreṣe anū ...... rīja Śrī Rāmapīḷa deva satīvat 2 (sic) Vaiṣākha dine 28 Setāsūta Mahāśita ghaṭhitaiṁ ci |

Translation:
Not given

Reading 5: Bhandarkar, D. R. op.cit, Inscription No.1634.

Text:

Translation:
“Engraved (gaṭhitaiṁ) by Mahābita, son of Setā.

Additional References:
Bloch, T. op.cit. 1911, p. 65
Iconographic Study:

This is one of the well-known image of Khadiravāṇi Tārā, dedicated in the 2nd regnal year of Rāmapāladeva. The image carved in black stone is from Tetrawan, Patna District, Bihar, and now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (No.3824/ A25158). It measures 121 x 62 cm. Tārā stands in accented tribхаṅģa posture on a viśva-padma, with her right palm (having a lotus mark) in the vara-mudra she holds stalk of a damaged flower which rears up symmetrically above her right shoulder. She holds with her left palm the stalk of an utpala (damaged) which rises above her left shoulder. The deity is bejewelled and draped in a long sāḍī with prominent but stylized folds and a scarf worn in a upavita fashion. A tiara, beaded upavita and a typical pāla girdle adorns her. The five Transcendant Buddhas are shown on top, Amoghasiddhi being in the middle, the others are from left to right, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Aksobhya and Amitābha. The pañca-Tathāgatas sit each on a viśva-padma. Tārā is accompanied by Aśokakānta-Mārice at her right. She wears a high conical karanda-mukuta, holds an aśoka—bough in her left hand and on her right palm, placed horizontally near the chest, rests a thunderbolt placed vertically. To the left of Tārā is the two-armed Ekajāta standing in pratyālīḍha posture holding a knife (kartri) in her right hand and skull-cap (kapāla) in her left. Her fiery nature is indicated by flames covering her back. The pedestal is composed of scroll work of the most elaborate description. Below in the recess of the pedestal three small devotees, probably portraits of the donor of the image are shown in the gesture of adoration. The arcaded back-plate has been treated as prabhā-mapḍala with design of flame. Broadley has identified this figure as Māyādevī.

Observations:

The inscribed image of Khadiravanī Tāra from Tetrawan dated to the regnal year 2 or 3 of Rāmapāladeva is the earliest image inscription ascribed to the ruler. The image is important from the epigraphic record it embodies, and the iconographic content. Five published readings of the record has been discussed. The content of this votive inscription is similar to the votive

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inscriptions discussed so far. The only significant variation is noticed in the name of the sculptor. The word *Mahābīta* occurs in Reading 3 and Reading 5 as stated by Nilamani Chakravarti and D. R. Bhandarker. R. K. Chaudhury (R.4) reads the word as *Mahāṣīta*.

The purport of the inscriptive evidence is to record the dedication of the Tārā image by Bhaṭṭa Iśvara, son of Bhaṭṭa Nābhah. The socio-economic status of the donor is not revealed from the epigraphic record. The donor had faith in Buddhism is clearly expressed from the expression *pravara mahāyāna* and *paramopāsaka* recorded in L.1. This is further supported by the nature of dedication. The votive record significantly mentions the name of *silpin* /sculptor as *Mahābīta* who was the son of Seta. It appears that the sculptor who carved the sculpture wanted to be remembered by the posterity for the wonderful execution in stone.

The historical importance of the record lies in its date mentioning regnal year 2 or 3 of the ruling King. S. N. Chakravarti\(^4\) corroborates the reading as the year 3 instead of 2. The importance of the astronomical data embedded in this image inscription is to be dealt in Chapter VI.

**Sl. No. 25: Chandimau Image Inscription of year 42 of Rāmapāladeva**

[Image: Khasarpana Avalokiteśvara, Chandimau]

**Identification:** Khasarpana Avalokitesvara  
**Material:** Black stone  
**Provenance:** Chandimau, Patna District, Bihar.  
**Present Whereabouts:** Indian Museum Calcutta, No.N.S.76  
**Language:** Sanskrit  
**Script:** Gaudfra

Approximate date: Dated. Rāmapāla, the son of Vigrahapāla III (c.1052-1078 A.D.) came to rule after his elder brother Śūrapāla II. A reigning period of 53 years is assigned to Rāmapāla. The epigraphic record is tentatively dated to 42nd regnal year. The epigraphic record is dated to c.1078 + 42 = c.1120 A.D. tentatively.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscribed portion of the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Banerji, R. D. A.S.I.-AR pl. LXXIII, 1]

Reading 1: Cunningham, A Reports of Tours in the Gangetic provinces from Badaon to Bihar in 1875-76 and 1877-78, ASR (Cunningham Series), XI, p.169.

Text:
Not given

Translation: (It [the inscription] opens with the Buddhist creed, mention the name of Śrīmad- Rāja-griha, and after recording the gift of the statue by a Parama Upāsika, or chief lay brother, gives the name of the great sovereign, the King of kings, Rāma Pāla Deva. The record ends with the date of ‘Samvat 12 Aṣāḍha dine 30’.)


Text:
L.1 Oṁ Ye dharmaṁ hetu prabhavā hetu teṣāṁ hy- avada [ t ] teṣāṁ (cha) yo nirodha evaśī

L.2 Saharāpaśya (?) Śāḍhu Bhāḍulva-sutasya yad-atra putyaḥ // Tad-bhavata = āchārya -
opādhyāya mārṇī pita (pitṛī ) purvvarāgama- (m) Kṛiṇa sakala (satva) sāस [ r-avattara ] jñāna- phala-vāpātya itiḥ // Parama-bhaṭṭāraka Parameśvara Pārāśaran ( ? )

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Translation:
(The Inscription] records the dedication of the image on the 30th day of Asadha of the 42nd year of the reign of Rāmapaladeva of Bengal by a merchant named Sadhu Saharana, son of the Sadhu Bhadulva, who was originally an inhabitant of Rajagriha).

_text:  
L.1 Ye dharmmā hetu prabhavā hetu (ṁ) teśāṁ hy-avadat (ṁ) eśāṁ (ṁ) yo nirodha evaṁ vādī mahāśramaṇaṁ | Śrī-mad-ṛajagṛhā vinirgyateḥ Etrahagṛhamavasthitah || Paramopīśaka paramamahājīṁ (āṁy) āyinaḥ | Vapika Ṛṣīdhu.
L.2 Saharapasya Śaḍhu Bhāḍulvavasutasya yadatra punyāḥ || Tadbhavatā śatāryopādyāya - mātā-pita purvvaratigama-(ṁ) Kṛtvā sakala (satva) rāṣer-ajñāna-phalavyaptaya iti || Paramabhaṭṭāryaka Paramesvāra Pārīṇāmasau (?)
Translation:
Not given

_text:  
L.1 Ye dharmmaḥ hetu prabhavā hetu (ṁ) teśāṁ hy-avadat teśāṁ yo nirodha evaṁ vādī mahāśramaṇaṁ. Śrī-mad-Rājagṛha vinirgyateḥ Etrahagṛhamavasthitah ||Paramopīśaka Paramamahājīṁ (āṁy) āyinaḥ Vapika Ṛṣīdhu.
L.2 Saharapasya Śaḍhu Bhāḍulvavasutasya yadatra punyāḥ || Tadbhavatā śatāryopādyāya mātā-pita purvvaratigama-(ṁ) Kṛtvā sakala (satva) rāṣer-ajñāna-phalavyaptaya iti || Paramabhaṭṭāryaka Parameśvāra Pārīṇāmasau (?)


Text:
L.1 Ye dharmmaḥ hetu prabhavā hetu (ṁ) teśāṁ hy-avadat teśāṁ yo nirodha evaṁ vādī mahāśramaṇaṁ. Śrī-mad-Rājagṛha vinirgyateḥ Etrahagṛhamavasthitah ||Paramopīśaka Paramamahājīṁ (āṁy) āyinaḥ Vapika Ṛṣīdhu.
L.2 Saharapasya Śaḍhu Bhāḍulvavasutasya yadatra punyāḥ || Tadbhavatā śatāryopādyāya mātā-pita purvvaratigama-(ṁ) Kṛtvā sakala (satva) rāṣer-ajñāna-phalavyaptaya iti || Paramabhaṭṭāryaka Parameśvāra Pārīṇāmasau (?)

105 The transliteration is based on the reading in Devanāgarī script given by R. K. Choudhary.
Translation:
Not given

Reading 5: Bhandarkar, D. R. op.cit. Inscription No. 1635.

Text:

Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Banerji, R. D. op.cit. 1933.
Huntington, S. L. op.cit. 1984, pp.68-69, Appendix No. 50, fig.75.
Bhattacharya, B, op.cit. Rept.1987, fig.104.

Iconographic Study:
The inscribed image of Avalokiteśvara is presently housed in the reserve collection of the Indian Museum. Khasarpāṇa Avalokiteśvara, a special form of Avalokiteśvara has six sūdhanas (13, 14, 15, 16, 24, 26) in the Sūdhānamsūti describing the deity as Khasarpāṇa-Lokeśvara. The iconographic characteristics are not very prominent due to abrasion. An attempt is made to study the iconographic construct of the image from the remaining portion of the sculpture. The deity is two-armed and accompanied by four companions. The face of the central deity and Tārā his attendant, to the right is seriously mutilated. Their hands and the upper portion of the stele are equally fragmented. The central figure of Avalokiteśvara is shown seated in lalitaśāna on a high raised double-petalled lotus pedestal with the right leg placed on a lotus seat. The deity is bejeweled in a broad necklace, beaded upavītā, nupura and girdle. The folds of his paridhāna are quite conspicuous. Of the two hands, the left holds the stalk of a lotus and the right broken, apparently disposed in varadamudrā. To the right stands Tārā with the left hand holding a nilotpala and the mudrā in her right hand is not clear. Sudhanakumāra is shown kneeling with hands in añjali with a manuscript in left armpit (?). To the left stands four armed Bhṛkūṭi. Two hands in front delineates añjali or namaskara mudrā. Hayagrīva is shown seated below.

106 The sculpture has been noticed by me in the lower rack of Cellar 4.
The back-slab with figures of Transcendant Buddhas are shown to the left and right (damaged) of the prabhaivali. Two caityas are illustrated below the figure of Transcendant Buddhas. In the bottom section of the pedestal to the right is seen Suchimukha in the attitude of drinking nectar. A devotee, perhaps a donor is seen to the left section of the pedestal.

Observations:
The long votive inscription engraved on the pedestal of an Avalokiteśvara image dated to the regnal year 42 is assigned to the victorious reign of Rāmapāla. The discovery of the inscription in Chandimau, Patna District, South Bihar establish the political sovereign of Rāmapāla in the region. The epigraph dated to year 42 extends Rāmapāla rule from 2nd to 42nd regnal year. Five published readings of the votive inscription has been discussed above on the basis of published literature. The readings are similar in composition with one noticeable variation. The record is dated to year 42 as evident from (R.2, R.3, R.4 and R.5). Cunningham (R.1) reads the date as 12 which is incorrect.107

The votive inscription begins with the Buddhist creed, ye dharma hetu. This is followed by the name of the donor Sadhu Saharaṇa who is a son of Sadhu Bhadulva. The inscription throw light on some interesting informations related to the religious and socio-economic status of the donor and his father. The donor and his father were local residents of the neighbouring city Rājagrha is evident from the record. The phrase Śrī-mad-Rajagāhī vinirggateḥ corroborates this view. Secondly, their religious affiliation towards the Buddhist faith is suggested by the epithet paramopāsaka (devout worshipper) paramamahāyāna (excellent Mahāyānist). Thirdly, the donor who was a merchant by profession probably belonged to the non-brāhmaṇa social groups and enjoyed the status of a śudra in the early medieval society of Bengal. It is interesting enough, to note the meaning of the term sādhū in this context. The term sādhū used before the name of the donor and his father literally means ‘a priest’.108 But the identification of the donor recorded in the inscription is not a priest but a lay worshipper. Merchants, as generally found are very devoted and generous lay worshippers for which they enjoyed the appellation of sādhū.

107 R. D. Banerji (R. 2 and R. 3) is complete and have been taken in account.
before their names. According to Banerjee, these merchants who enjoy wealth must not only seek divine grace by dedicating an image and serving the śādhus, but must themselves be śādhus. It is known that the merchant families of Bihar and Bengal are called sāhu. Thus this term was first used to denote the honesty and integrity of the merchants or businessmen in their secular and religious life and later came to mean a particular community. Thus the donor’s wealthy economic status is conspicuous by the record which enabled him to dedicate the huge image of the deity. Besides the socio-cultural implication, the astronomical data furnished in the image inscription is to be dealt in Chapter VI.

**Sl. No. 26: Pūrṇeśvari Image Inscription of year 35 of Palapāla**

**Identification:** Pūrṇeśvari or Pūṇyeśvari  
**Material:** Black Stone  
**Provenance:** Jaynagar, Lakhisarai, Monghyr District, Bihar.  
**Present Whereabouts:** Victoria and Albert Museum, London.  
**Museum #:** S.71-1880  
**Language:** corrupt Sanskrit  
**Script:** Gaudīya, 12th century.

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110 Ibid.
Approximate date: Dated. The successor of Govindapāla was Palapāla (c.1179-1214 / 15 A.D.) who is known to have ruled for a period of 35 years according to the said image inscription. The inscribed image from Jaynagar is dated to the 35th regnal reckoning of Palapāla, the last known sovereign of the Pāla dynasty. The date of the votive inscription can be tentatively placed in c.1179 + 35 = c.1214 A.D. approximately.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscription
Photo Courtesy: [Cunningham, *ASR*, Vol.XLV, No. 33]


Text:
Śrī-Gai (Gau) āra-Palapāla-pādānāṁ sarī 35 Chai (tra) dī3.

Translation:
Not given


Text:
L.1 Om Śrī-Gai (Gau) āra-Palapāla-pādānāṁ sarī 35
L.2. Cai (tra dī 3) Śrī-Campāyāyāṁ ....... bhaṭṭā
L.3 rākā Puṇḍēśvari ......... Sāmaṇa
L.4 Śaṅghāpā ....... Vāsava- kuṭumbāja (ya) d-ātra
L.5 Puṇyaṁ

Translation:
“In the year 35 of the illustrious Lord of Gauda, Palapāla, on the third day of (the month of) Caitra, in illustrious Campā ...... the lady Puṇḍēśvari ...... of the assembly of Samaṇas (Śramaṇas), the wife of Vāsava, whatever merit there may be”.

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Text:
L.1. Siddham (symbol) Śrī- Ge (Gau) ṣeṣva (ra *) - Palapāṅga (la) - pāḍeṇāṁ saṁ 35

L.2. Caie (tra) -di ( di ) 3 śrī-Caṭiapāyami 2 ṭū ( hna ) Ělakv [ ena ] bhaṭṭā

L.3 rī (rī) kā Puṭpeśvarī (Pūneśvarī) saumīja – siddhava- sūmaṇa-

L.4 sāṁgharpau haḍinevadhī-saṁiva- kuṭumva jadatra (yad= atra)

L.5 Puṇya (puṇyavaḥ tatr sarvāṁ bhavatu ||

Emended Text:
Siddham || śrī- Gaudēśvara- Palapatāla- pāḍeṇāṁ Saṁvatsare 35 ( paṇcatriṁśe ) Caitra-divase 3
(trīye) śrī-Caṭipāyāṁ = iha Ělakvena bhaṭṭārikā Pūneśvarī (or, Pūneśvarī) ( pratiṣṭhāpīti | *)

siddhasamāja- śramaṇa - saṅgihināṁ haḍinibaddha-saṁva- kuṭumbāṅāṁ ( ca * ) yad = tra

puṇyāṁ ( tat = sarvāṁ bhavatu * ] ||

Translation:
May there be success! On the 3rd day of (the month of) Caitra in the 35th year of the feet of
Palapāla, the illustrious lord of Gauḍa, here at the illustrious (city of) Caṁpa, the (goddess)
Bhaṭṭārika Pūneśvarī (or Pūneśvarī) (installed) by Ělakva. Whatever merit is here (i.e. in
this work) (let it go) to the communities of Siddhas and the congregations of Śramaṇas (i.e.
Buddhist monks) (as well as) to all the relatives of Ělakva who are bound by fetters (of
worldly existence).

Reading 4: Choudhary, R. K. op.cit. p. 94.

Text:
Siddham || śrī- Gauḍesvara-Palapāla-pāḍeṇāṁ Saṁvatsare 35 divase 3 śrī-Caṭipāyāṁiha-

Ělakvena bhaṭṭārikā Pūneśvarī (pratiṣṭhāpīti) | siddhasamāja-śramaṇasatāghināṁ

haḍinivaddhasaṁva-kuṭumbāṅāṁ (ca *) yadstr puṇyāṁ ||

Translation:
Not given

Reading 5: Bhandarkar, D. R. op.cit. Inscription No.1648.

Text:
(L.1-2) Gai (Gau) ṣeṣ[ v ] ara- Palapāla-pāḍeṇāṁ saṁ 35 Chai [ tra ] di

3 Śrī-Champāyāṁ

111 The transliteration is on the basis of Devanāgarī script given by R. K. Chaudhury.
Translation:
Not given

Additional References:
Sinha, B. P. 1977, *Dynastic History of Magadha*, pp.31-33.
Huntington, S. L. *op.cit.* 1984, pp.72-73 Appendix No. 59, Fig. 80.

Iconographic Study:
The image of the deity *Pūrneśvarī* (or, *Pūrneśvari*)\(^{112}\) is shown seated in *lalitāsana* on a well-expanded lotus placed on a *pañcaratha* pedestal. Of the four hands, the two back hand holds to *āṣudhas* upright. The front left hand supports a child on her lap. The corresponding right displays *varadā* with a *bijapura* or fruit. The deity is bejeweled in circular earrings, necklaces, beaded *upavita*, ornamented girdle, armlets and bangles. A *sari* drapes her body, the incised folds are conspicuous on the lower portion of the right leg. Her feet are ornamented with pair of anklets. A pot-bellied figure is shown seated to the right of the female goddess. The back-slab is covered with the highly decorated *kirttimukha*, and two celestial deities emanating from clouds. The *pañcaratha* pedestal is simple in execution with a jar like object placed above the lateral pāga to the left.
The published literature do not illustrate the iconographic dimensions of this particular deity. It therefore appears that the deity labeled as *Pūrneśvarī* (or, *Pūrneśvari*) was a local deity popularly worshipped in Bihar.

Observations:
The epigraphic record incised on the pedestal of the goddess *Pūrneśvari* discovered from Jaynagar, Monghyr District, Bihar is dated to the regnal year 35 of the Pāla ruler Palapāla. The discovery of this inscription is an important historical document which has proved, that Palapāla, (c.1179-1214 /1215) who ruled after or contemporary to Govindapāla (c.1175-1179) was the last ruler of the Pāla dynasty. The provenance / findspot of the inscription from Jaynagar suggest that the Monghyr region formed a part of Palapāla’s dominion during his 35\(^{th}\) regnal year apparently

\(^{112}\)The iconographic illustration of the Buddhist deity *Pūrneśvarī* is rare. The inscribed image dated to the ruling year of Palapāla is the second image of the deity. The first image of the deity is ascribed to the 13\(^{th}\) regnal year of Nayapāla.
in the second half of the twelfth centuries. It is therefore not difficult to reconcile Palapāla’s rule over East Bihar for not less than thirty-five years. Secondly, the image in question was apparently installed at Champa, the capital of the ancient Āṅga janapada in East Bihar. This suggest that Champa being its place of installation formed part of East Bihar which was under the political hegemony of Palapāla, the last ruling king. Five published readings of this votive inscription has been discussed above. The readings are similar in content with few variations noted. Banerji (1930:400) reads Oūī in line 1. Sircar (1955:152-153) gives a complete reading of the text and begins his reading with the auspicious word siddham. R.K.Chaudhuri (R.4) fails to read the important expression Caitra, which signifies the month of a year for image installation. The object of the inscription is to record the meritorious deed of installing the image of the deity Pūrṇesvari as recorded in the votive inscription at a place named Champa by Utakva, the donor. Nothing is known about the social and economic status of the donor Utakva. But the Buddhist subject is clearly implied in the inscription which offers the merit gained through the dedication of the image to the siddhas and śramanas along with the relatives of the donor Utakva. The inscriptional evidence records the auspicious month and date for the performance of the meritorious act. The astronomical aspect is to be discussed in Chapter VI.

Sl. No. 27 : A Dated Inscription on Jambhala Image from Bihar

Jambhala, Ghoshikundi, Bihar
Photo Courtesy: [ Indian Museum ]

Identification: Jambhala with seated Buddha
Material: Black stone, 51 x 27 cm
Provenance: Ghoshikundi, near Kiul, Monghyr District, Bihar
Present Whereabouts: Indian Museum, Acc. No.4571 / A23013
Language: Prakrit influenced by Sanskrit, though a sentence in line 7-8 is in correct Sanskrit.
Script: Bhaiśajī-lipi or the arrow-head script.
Approximate date: Dated in the 70th year belonging to the new era of the Gauḍa king. The record is dated in the 70 year of the Lākṣmānasena era, i.e. c.1179 +70 = c.1249 A.D.

Epigraphic Study:
Variant Readings:

Close up view of the inscribed portion of the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: Indian Museum

Close up view of the inscription on the second and third section of the pedestal
Photo Courtesy: [Indian Museum]

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113 Chhanda Mukherjee, op.cit, p.146.
115 Ibid.p.81.
Brethren, the Lord teaches the doctrine of origination as a necessary result from an antecedent cause. The cessation of the conditions having its origin in a preceding cause [is also taught by the Lord]. The sentient being (the Buddha) spoke of the cause of the conditions arising from a preceding cause. The great ascetic (the Buddha) also spoke about their destruction.
The translation of the first section:

"The illustrious Maharaja Purnavikrama, son of the illustrious Samyya, is the lord of the earth (i.e. the ruling king). Sircar writes "this apparently refers to the ruler of the territory in which the image of Jambhala bearing the inscription under study was installed."

The translation of the second section:

"This (i.e. the image bearing the inscription) is the religious gift of the Venerable Jayasena at Sirhananaga." Sircar further writes, this section refers to a Buddhist monk named Jayasena who set up the image at a place called Sirhananaga no doubt for worship.

The translation of the third section:

"[It is ] installed in the month of kārttika of the 70th year belonging to the new era of the Gauḍa king.

Other Additional References:
Bloch, T. op.cit. 1911, p.61.
Mukherjee, Chhanda op.cit. 2002.

Iconographic Study:

The beautiful image of Jambhala, the Buddhist god of wealth is presently housed in the reserve collection of Indian Museum. The sculpture executed in black stone is well preserved. The relief depicts a two-armed pot bellied Jambhala, seated in ardhaparyākkāsa on a viśvapadma with the left leg placed on a lotus seat. Of the two hands, the left holds a mongoose (nakula) and the right a fruit (pomegranate or citron). The nose, chin and a finger of the right hand suffers abrasion. The Buddhist deity is bejwelled with necklaces, armlets, bracelets, earrings. The high mukuta on the head bears an effigy of of the Transcendant Buddha, Ratnasambhava, from whom he takes his origin. The presence of nakula (mongoose) and a citron or pomegranate in the two hands of Jambhala as illustrated in the example under study fully corroborates the textual

117 The iconographic study of the image has not been dealt earlier, an attempt is being made in this regard.
118 According to Stāhananītha, the god may emanate either from Aṣṭobhya or from Ratnasambhava. The characteristic feature of Jambhala emanating from Ratnasambhava is that he carries the mongoose in his right hand and the citron in the left. See, B. Bhattacharya, op.cit. p.238.
description as stated in *Sadhanamāalī*. On each side of the central deity is a figure of Śākyamuni in *bhumi-sparsamudra* seated on a *vīśvapadma*. Two motif (unusual in form) symbolizing an inverted *ghata* with a fly-whisk occupies the corners of the *prabhāvalī*. The pointed stele has a floral motif. The flame motif borders the *prabhāvalī*. The high raised *paścaratha* pedestal supports the entire composition. It is divided in three broad sections. On the lateral right section of the pedestal we notice the *naivedya* offering. The pointed stele, the high pedestal, and the expanded *vīśvapadma* suggest the sculpture to be a product of twelfth century A.D.

**Observations:**

The epigraphic record on the Jambhala image is a unique historical document. The inscription is a dated record and the largest of all that is written in *Bhaikṣukī* script. D.C. Sircar, the eminent epigraphist was the first to decipher this difficult inscription. The epigraphic record is engraved in three sections in the left portion of the huge *paścaratha* pedestal on which the deity is seated. The epigraphic record bears the date I quote “the 70th year belonging to the new era.....”. According to D.C. Sircar the record refers to the year 70 of the Lakshmaṇasena *saṁvat*. Lakshmaṇasena *saṁvat* is counted from the accession of the Sena king Lakshmaṇapasena in c.1179 A.D. Therefore, the epigraphic record under study is dated to c.1249 A.D.

The purport of the inscription is to record the installation of the deity by a Buddhist monk named Jayasena, at a place called *Śīmhanāgā* under the rule of Mahārāja Pūrṇavikrama. Pūrṇavikrama appears to be the ruling king of the territory i.e South Bihar region during the period concerned. The geographical name mentioned in the inscription is *Śīmhanāgā* where the image of Jambhala was installed. Sircar identifies the place *Śīmhanāgā* with Ghoshikundi, where the image bearing the inscription was found. It appears that there exist a Buddhist monastery at *Śīmhanāgā* and that the image was installed in the said monastery. The donor of the image, Jayasena was not a lay *upāsaka* but a venerable monk who dedicated the image. It may be assumed that the donor Jayasena belonged to the Buddhist monastery at *Śīmhanāgā*. It should be mentioned in this connection that the script known as the *Bhaikṣuṅki lipi* as mentioned by Al-Berunī was used in

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119 See the detail discussion on this issue in D.C. Sircar, *op.cit.* 1963-64, p.81.
Uddāṇḍapura-vihāra located at modern Biharsharif near Patna and the script being “the writing of Buddha” was prevalent among Buddhist Bhikshus or monks.\(^{120}\) Thus the significance of the use of the Bhaiṣaṇa-liṅga in the present epigraphic record is rightly justified.

To this dated epigraph is recorded the name of the auspicious month kṣṛttika chosen by the monk for image dedication. The astronomical importance of this image inscription is to be discussed in Chapter VI.

\(^{120}\) See in this context, D. C. Sircar, *op. cit*, 1949-50, p.222.