CHAPTER - VI

ŚARABHAPURIYAS OF SOUTH KOSALA
Towards the close of the fifth century A.D.,
the imperial designs of the Nalas had been foiled, the
power of the Guptas was fast declining and the Vākātakas
after the last flicker shown by Harisena had also disappeared
from the political scene. A state of political anarchy had
prevailed over South Kosala. It was in the midst of such a
chaotic condition that the tribal Chief 'Sarabha', identified
with Sarabharāja of the Eran inscription, established the
royal house in Sarabhapura, which was destined to play an
important role in the history and culture of South Kosala.

The origin of the Sarabhapuriyas of South Kosala,
like the origin of many other dynasties of the Post-Gupta
period, is not clearly known from their inscriptions. The
following copper plate grants of the Sarabhapuriya dynasty
have been discovered.

1. Pipardula Copper Plates\(^1\) of Mahārāja Narendra
   (3rd regnal year)
2. Kurud Plates\(^2\) of Mahārāja Narendra (24th regnal year)
3. Rawan Plates\(^3\) of Mahārāja Narendra
4. Amgura Plates\(^4\) of Jayarāja (3rd regnal year)

\(^1\) IHQ, vol.XIX, pp.139-46.
\(^2\) EI, vol.XXXI, pp.263-68.
\(^3\) JESI, vol.VI (1979), pp.44-45.
\(^4\) The plates are with Sri J.P.Singh Deo, Yuvaraj, Khariar,
edited in JESI, vol.IV, pp.70-75.
5. Ārang Plates⁵ of Jayarāja (5th regnal year)
6. Mallār Plates⁶ of Jayarāja (5th regnal year)
7. Mallār Plates⁷ of Jayarāja (9th regnal year)
8. Khariār Plates⁸ of Sudevarāja I (2nd regnal year)
9. Sirpur Plates⁹ of Sudevarāja I (7th regnal year)
10. Arang Plates¹⁰ of Sudevarāja I (8th regnal year)
11. Raipur Plates¹¹ of Sudevarāja I (10th regnal year)
12. Sārangarh Plates¹² of Sudevarāja I
13. Damaged Sirpur Charter¹³ of Sudevarāja I
14. Thākurdiyā Plates¹⁴ of Pravararāja (3rd regnal year)
15. Mallār Plates¹⁵ of Pravararāja (7th regnal year)
16. Mallār Plates¹⁶ of Vyaghrarāja (4th regnal year)

7. ibid, vol.XXXIV, p.29ff.
10. ibid, vol.XXIII, p.20ff.
   Utkirn Lekh (Hindi) B.C.Jain, pp.18-22.
15. ibid, vol.XXIV, p.52 ;
These nineteen copper-plate grants of this royal house have been discovered so far, but none of them gives us the information regarding the place of their origin. On the other hand, twelve of these nineteen grants of the Sarabhapuriyas refer to Sarabhapura as their capital which was obviously the metropolitan fort founded by Sarabha, the progenitor of the dynasty. The site of this fort has been traced in the dense forest region of Kalahandi in a locality called Maraguda. This hilly tract appears to be the homeland of the Sarabhapuriyas who expanded their territory in the northern and western direction and ruled almost over the whole of South-Kosala in their palmy days.

The Sarabha monarchs, as we learn from their charters, were peculiarly reticent to give an account of their origin and genealogy. The seals attached to their

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18. ibid, vol.XXXI, pp.314-16 (Kuvatal copper plate of Mahasudevaraja II are also known as Sarangarh Copper Plates, published by L.F.Pandey Sharma in IHQ, vol.XXI, pp.294.

The first and the third plates of Pokhar Grant are missing, therefore, the place of issue and the name of the donor are not known. However, the text of the available plate clearly indicates that it is a Sarabhapuriya charter.
charters, however, throw some light on the genealogy of their family and about the progenitor of the dynasty. The Pipardula Copper Plate grant\textsuperscript{20} which is the first known charter of the Sarabhapuriyas was issued from Sarabhapura, and the couplet\textsuperscript{21} in the seal attached to it gives us the information regarding Sarabha as the progenitor of this dynasty. In this couplet Mahârâja Narendra traces his descent from Sarabha who is not mentioned in any other source as a reigning monarch with any imperial title. The term 'Sarabha' means "a fabulous animal having eight legs stronger than a lion"\textsuperscript{22} An animal with eight legs is a fantastic fit of imagination and to trace descent from such a creature is indeed a conscious attempt to mystify the real origin of the dynasty.\textsuperscript{23} It is learnt from the Harshacharita of Bâna\textsuperscript{23} that Sarabhaketu was a tribal chief who lived in the Vindhya mountain in the seventh century A.D. and who was very familiar with the regions of 'Vindhyâtavi'. It may be mentioned in this context that the Pulindas, Kirâtas, Sabaras

\textsuperscript{20} IHQ, vol.XIX, pp.139-46.
\textsuperscript{21} Khâdgadhârajita bhuvah Sarabhatprâptajanmanah/ nêpâteh Shri Narendra sya Sâsanam ripuśâsanaṁ //
\textsuperscript{22} Apte,V.S. The Students Sanskrit Dictionary, p.549.
and such other aboriginal tribes, according to Varāhamihara, lived in the Vindya region. One Pulinda Chief Pulindasena, according to the Šailodbhava charters, dwelt in Mahendragiri, the homeland of the Śabara, as the progenitor of the Šailodbhavas dynasty of Kaliṅga. The Bhaṅjas of Khijṅgakoṭā also trace their descent from the egg of a peahen (mayurāṇḍabhuta). It is striking to note that in the early medieval period several such dynasties trace their origin from Sun, moon, egg of a peahen and other inanimate objects. Our contention is that among tribal people such concepts of miraculous origin were widely prevalent in ancient India. The name Sarabha of Sarabhapuriya seals, well compared with Sarabhaketu of Bāṇa's Harshacharita leaves no doubt that such a name as Sarabha was popular among the tribal people of Vindhyāṭavi. We are, therefore, inclined to believe that the progenitor of Sarabhapuriya dynasty like Pulindasena of Kaliṅga was a powerful tribal chief of South Kosala. It is in the fitness of things that Sarabha of the Pipardula and the Kurud plates has been identified with Sarabharāja


27. *IHQ,* vol.XIX, pp.139-46ff.

the maternal grand-father of Goparaja of the posthumous Eran inscription\(^{29}\) of 510-11 A.D. The reference to the maternal grandfather of Goparāja in the aforesaid inscription indicates that Sarabharāja identified with Sarabha of the Sarabhapuriyan charters was undoubtedly famous for his power and pelf. It was only a man of such extraordinary ability who, being very much familiar with the hills and daks of strategic importance of South Kosala, could carve out a kingdom of Sarabhapura in the dense forest region.

In South-Kosala the Sarabhapuriyan monarchs who were the successors of the tribal chief Sarabharaja claimed their mystic origin from Sarabha, the fantastic creature with eight legs. At a later stage there was a conscious attempt to give an Aryan colour to the tribal origin of the family. The royal house under the influence of the Pancharātra system accepted Bhāgavata Cult and patronised Hinduism by donating land to the Brāhmaṇas of different gotras. Under the influence of the Brahmanical school they claimed that they belonged to Amarāryakula. This is known to us from the Mallār plates\(^{30}\) issued by Vyāghrarāja from


Prasannapura which was, obviously, a new capital founded by Prasannamātra of the Sarabhapuriya family. Lines 3 and 4 of the Mallār plates describe Pravara-bhāṭṭāraka (who is no other than Pravararāja of the Mallār plates) as the moon in the sky of Amarāryakula (Amarārya Kulambara Śaśhinah). In these copper plates Vyāghrarāja describes himself as the younger brother (anuja) of Pravara-bhāṭṭāraka (Pravararāja) and son of Jaya-bhāṭṭāraka (Jayarāja). This genealogy indicates that Jayarāja and Pravararāja also belonged to the dynasty called Amarāryakula. Ajaya Mitra Shastri, however, holds a different view. He is of the opinion that Jayabhāṭṭāraka and Pravara-bhāṭṭāraka of Mallār plates who belonged to the Amarāryakula were not identical with Jayarāja and Pravararāja of the Sarabhapuriya family. But D.C. Sircar, the editor of the Mallār plates is of the opinion that Jayabhāṭṭāraka, Pravara-bhāṭṭāraka and Vyāghrarāja who belonged to the Amarāryakula were Sarabhapuriyan monarchs. The charter of Vyāghrarāja may be assigned, on palaeographical ground, to the seventh century. In our opinion when Pravararāja was ruling over the locality issuing his charter

35. D.C. Sircar assigns the plates to the sixth century A.D.
found at Mallār, there could not have been a ruler of another dynasty in the same locality during the period; and therefore Vyāghrarāja, Pravarabhaṭṭāraṇa and Jayabhaṭṭāraṇaka who claimed their descent from Amarāryakula were no other than the Šarabhapuriya monarchs. D.C.Sircar rightly thinks that the expression 'Amarāryakula' sounds like a Brahmanical personal name, and points out that names of such families are often noticed in South Indian records. He has drawn the attention of scholars to the Bahmani plates of Bharatabala which describe Lokaprakāśa of the Amarāja family as a princess of South-Kosala. Lines 28 and 29 of the Bahmani plates clearly reveal that Lokaprakāśa, queen of Bharatabala of Mekhala, hailed from the illustrious Amarājakula (Amarāryakula) of Kosala. There is no doubt that Kosala in this case refers to South Kosala which was under the rule of the Šarabhapuriyas in the 6th century A.D. It is further known to us from Burhikhar copper plate grants that Surabala, son of Bharatbala, donated to God Jayadeva the village Sangāma, which he purchased from a rich merchant.

It is quite likely that the temple of Jayēśwara-bhāṭṭāraka

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36. The South Indian records such as Hinginiberdi plates of Bibhurāja, EI, vol.XXIX, p.176; Kanpur plates of Mādhavavarman, EI, vol.XXVII, pp.316-17.
37. ibid, vol.XXVII, p.132.
was built by Jayarāja himself to perpetuate the memory of his own name. K.D. Bajpayee\(^40\) has rightly identified the village Sangāma with the present village Tālā, also called Sangāma, located near the confluence of Maniāri and Śivnath (Seonath) in the Bilaspur district.

At one time B.V. Krishnarao\(^41\) proposed an identification of Śarabhapuriyas with the Sulkis of the Haraha inscriptions\(^42\) of the time of Isānavarman. According to Hiranand Sastri\(^43\) the Sulikas are identical with the Sulikas of Brihatsamhitā; and he is of the opinion that in the light of Mārkendeya Purāṇa the territory of the Sulikas ought to be located in the South-eastern part in India along with Kaliṅga-Vidarbha. Dr. B.V. Krishnarao supports Dr. Shastri's view that the Sulika territory was probably the same as the territory of South Kosala since the lord of Sulikas might be the same as the Śarabhapuriyan kings. But there is no doubt that Isānavarman, having defeated the Viṣṇu-Kuṇḍin monarch of Āndhradesa, subjugated the Sulikas and then inflicted a defeat on the Gauḍas. Therefore the Sulikas of Haraha inscription were different from the Sulikas of Orissa; and neither of them had anything to do with the Śarabhapuriyas.

\(^{40}\) ABOI (Diamond Jubilee), vol. 1977-78, p. 435.

\(^{41}\) EDA (1942) Krishnarao, B.V., p. 647ff.

\(^{42}\) EI, vol. XIV, p. 110.

\(^{43}\) Krishnarao, B.V. The Early Dynasties of Andhradesa (1942), p. 647ff.
The Śarabhapuriyas, according to their inscriptions had a tribal origin. Śarabha, the proprietor of the family, is represented as a fantastic animal possibly for the purpose of indicating a miraculous origin, which had become the order of the day. It is quite likely that this Śarabha, from whom Narendra claimed his descent, was a tribal chief of the Vindhyas; and it is not unreasonable to identify him with Śarabharāja of the Eran inscription. It was under the influence of the Brahmanical culture that at a later stage there was a fusion of the tribal and Āryan concepts which led the royal penegyrist of the same family to trace the origin of the dynasty from Amarāja-kula to Amar-Āryakula.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ŚARABHAPURIYAS

It is known to us from inscriptional sources that the Vākātakas of Vatsagulma who had exercised their suzerainty over South Kosala under Harisena at the expense of the Nalas disappeared from the political scene in the first decade of the sixth century A.D. In the chronology of the Vākātakas Harisena is usually assigned the period from c.495 to c.520 A.D. It was at the end of the Nala supremacy followed by the invasion of Harisena that the Śarabhapuriyas emerged in the limelight of history.

44. ASWI, vol.IV, p.125.
Sarabha, the progenitor of the dynasty, is usually identified with Sarabharaja who is referred to as the maternal grandfather of Goparaja in the Eran stone inscription dated the Gupta Era 191 corresponding to 510-11 A.D. The Eran Stone inscription is indeed a milestone in the chronology of the Sarabhapuriyas, as it indicates the beginning of their epoch. In accordance with the identification of Sarabha with Sarabharaja it can be said that if Goparaja died in or about 510 A.D. Sarabha may be assigned the period from c.495 A.D. to c.510 A.D. By the time he founded the kingdom of Sarabhapura he was an old man, probably in his sixties. In that case he may be assigned a reign of about fifteen years.

Sarabha was succeeded by his son Narendra who, according to his Kurud plates, is known to have ruled at least for twentyfour years. Narendra must have struggled hard for a protracted period and in all probability he fought against Bhimasena II who flourished in 510 A.D. before he stabilized his political power. He may be assigned a period of 30 years, i.e. from c.510 A.D. to c.540 A.D.

46. IHQ, vol.XIX, pp.139-46 (vide Pipardula Copper Plates); EI, vol.XXXI, pp.263-68.
Inscriptional evidences do not throw light regarding the immediate successor of Narendra. We learn from the inscriptions of Jayarāja that his father Prasanna flourished some time later than Narendra. Thus there is a gap in the genealogy of the Sarabhapuriyas between Prasanna and Mahārāja Narendra. The gap in the genealogy between Narendra and Prasannamātra may be bridged with the help of several gold coins. Mahendrāditya whose coins exactly tally with the coins of Prasannamātra, was in all probability a predecessor of Prasannamātra and a successor of Narendra. In the chronology of the Sarabhapuriyas, thus, Mahendrāditya may tentatively be assigned a period of twenty-five years from c.540 to c.565 A.D.

Mahendrāditya seems to have been succeeded by Prasannamātra whose coins closely resemble those of Mahendrāditya, though the relation between the two is not known. It is probable that Prasannamātra was the son and successor of Mahendrāditya. Prasannamatra is known to us from his large number of gold coins found in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh as well as from the inscriptions of Jayarāja and Sudēvarāja. In the coins he is mentioned as Prasanna. Although there is no

47. Mahendrāditya type of Gold coins. Kindly refer to Chapter III of the present work.
epithet like Mahārāja associated with Prasanna in the Śarabhapuriyan inscriptions, there is no doubt that Prasanna is the same as Prasannamātra. Prasanna is just mentioned without epithets only because such an expression fits in with the Anustubh Chhanda in which the legend of Śarabhapuriyan seals were composed. Not a single copper plate of Prasannamātra has yet been discovered, and therefore there is no evidence about his regnal year. In the absence of such evidences it may be presumed that in all probability he ruled for thirty years from c.565 A.D. to 595 A.D.

Prasannamātra was succeeded by his son Jayarāja who is known to us from his Angura plates of his 3rd regnal year, Mallār plates of 5th his regnal year, Ārāng plates of his 5th regnal year and Mallār plates of his 9th regnal year. In each of the seals attached to these copper plates we find a couplet which reveals that Jayarāja happened to be the son of Prasanna. At one time B.V. Krishna Rao, S.N. Rajguru and D.C. Sircar held the view that Prasannamātra

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48. JNSI, vol.IV, pp.70-75.
had another son called Manamatra who is represented in the inscriptions of Sudevaraja I as a moon born out of the ocean of Prasanna. But whereas no copper plate exists of a separate king called Mānamātra, there are four copper plate grants of Jayarāja. Moreover, the description that Mānamātra was born as a moon from the ocean of Prasanna symbolically indicates that he was the only son of Prasannamātra, whereas from the inscriptions of Jayarāja it is clear that the latter was the son of Prasanna. Therefore, it seems that Jayarāja and Manamātra are identical. However, it is indicated by the legend of his inscription that he ruled with full glory for a long time and therefore he may be assigned a period of twentyfive years from c.595 to c.625 A.D.

Jayarāja alias Mānamātra was succeeded by his son Sudevarāja I who is known to us from the Khariar plates of his 2nd regnal year, Sirpur plates of his 7th regnal year, Ārang plates of his 8th regnal year, Raipur plates of his 10th regnal year, the incomplete Sārangarh plates, and

58. ibid, vol.XXXI, pp.103-08.
59. ibid, vol.XXIII, pp.18-23.
the damaged Sirpur plates. Most of the scholars who have worked on the genealogy of the Sarabhapuriyas hold the view that there is only one Sudevaraja who issued two more copper plate grants, Mahasamund plates and the Kauvatāl plates of his 3rd and 7th regnal years respectively, in addition to the six charters mentioned above. Out of these eight plates so far known to have been issued by Sudevaraja, the Kauvatāl plates refer to Sudevaraja as the son of Durgārāja, while the other plates, without making any reference to Durgārāja, only refer to Mānamātra as the father of Sudevaraja. This led all earlier scholars to identify Mānamātra with Durgārāja. But a close study of the Mahasamund and Kauvatāl plates indicates that their donor is different from the donor of the other plates of Sudevaraja. Further Mānamātra, as has been discussed earlier, is identical with Jayarāja whose son and successor Sudevaraja I had nothing to do with Durgārāja whose name does not find place in his charters. Mahāsamund and Kauvatāl plates were issued from Sripura which was the capital of the junior branch of the Sarabhapuriyas. However, like his illustrious predecessor, he too may be assigned a long period of about 25 years from c.625 A.D. to c.650 A.D.

63. JESI, vol.V,
64. EI, vol.XXXI, pp.314-16.
Sudevarāja I was succeeded by his brother Pravararāja as is known from the former's Thākurdiyā plates and the Mallār plates. D.C. Sircar and S.N. Rajguru are of the opinion that Pravarabhaṭṭāraka, son of Jayabhaṭṭāraka of the Mallār plates of Vyāghrarāja, was Pravararāja I while Pravararāja, son of Mānāmātra of the Thākurdiyā and Mallār plates was Pravararāja II. But, as has been shown earlier, Jayarāja and Mānāmātra are identical, and as such there is no scope for two Pravararājas in our study of the genealogy of the Sarabhapuriyas. Pravararāja may be tentatively assigned a reign of about twentyfive years from c.625 A.D. to 650 A.D.

Pravararāja seems to have been succeeded by Durgārāja whose relation with the former is not known. As we have discussed earlier Durgārāja, who belonged to the junior line of Sripura, seems to have been succeeded by Pravararāja who, on hypothetical consideration, may be taken to be his son.

66. ibid, vol.XXXIV, pp.51-52.
67. ibid.
Burgarāja was succeeded by his son Sudevarāja II who was the last known king of the Sarabhapuriya line. It is interesting to note that one Indrabala who finds mention in the Kauvatāl Mahāsamund plates of Sudevarāja II was a powerful officer who has been referred to as Sarbādhikaradhi-krita. In our opinion this Indrabala is identical with the Panḍuvaṃsi king Indrabala of the Bonda plates of Mahāśiva Tivaradeva. We know further from the genealogy of the Panḍuvaṃsis that Indrabala was succeeded by his son Nanna who in our opinion is identical with the prince of the same name mentioned in the Sripur plates of Sudevarāja I. Indrabala who was the Dutaka of Sudevarāja II was succeeded by his son Nanna who in his turn was succeeded by Tivaradeva known to us from the Bonda, Rajim, Baloda and Adabhava plates. Tivaradeva, who has been described in the aforesaid plates as the lord of entire Kośala and Utkala, is also known to have been defeated by the Sailodbhava king Dharmarāja II alias

70. EI, vol.XXVII, p.290.
73. ibid, vol.XXXI, p.221.
Srimanabhita who flourished in the last quarter of the 7th century A.D. The synchronization of Dharmarāja II and Tivaradeva in the last quarter of the 7th century A.D. is a landmark in the chronology which indicates that the Sarabhapuriyas fell from power in the last quarter of the 7th century A.D., some time after Sudevarāja II. Sudevarāja II possibly ruled for a period of about two decades towards the last part of the 7th century A.D.

RISE OF THE SARABHAPURIYAS

Sarabha - Towards the close of the fifth century A.D. when the Gupta political power and the Vākātaka supremacy were fast declining Sarabha appeared in the limelight of history as the founder of a new royal house, known to historians as the Sarabhapuriya dynasty. This progenitor of the Sarabhapuriya dynasty is known to us from the Piparāda and Kurud plates of Maharaja Narendra. The Rawan plate of Narendra, being incomplete, does not reveal anything about the founder of the new royal house. In all probability Sarabha is identical with Sarabharāja, the maternal grandfather of Goparāja of the title of Bhānu Gupta. The reference to a maternal grandfather indicates that the prominence of Sarabharāja was responsible

75. Supra, p.105
76. IHQ, vol.XIX, pp.139-46.
for this type of reference. Šarabharāja was undoubtedly a tribal chief like Šarabhaketu of Vindhyatāvi mentioned by Bāṇa in Harshacharita. Being associated with Goparāja Šarabharāja was very much aware of the declining power of the Guptas and the Vākātakas towards the end of the fifth century A.D.; and it is probable that during Harisena's invasion of South Kosala, he might have rendered military aid to the Vākātaka conqueror and secured his support for ascendancy over South Kosala. We think that in order to resist the remnant Nala political power he must have chosen the site of his new capital, named after him, not far from the northern border of the Nala territory. Šarabha founded the hill-fort of Šarabhapura in the forest region of Mārāguṇā, near Khariar in the Kalahāndi district of Orissa.

Šarabha who was in all probability a royal chieftain of the Guptas at one time continued to acknowledge their nominal suzerainty in a respectful manner during his life time. This is indicated by the Kurud plates which reveal that in an earlier period Paramabhaṭṭāraka who was obviously a Gupta overlord, while taking a sacred bath in the Ganges, had donated the village Keśavaka to Bhasrutasvāmin for the increase of his own merit by issuing a charter written on palm

77. EI, vol.XXXI, p.263 line 4-6.
leaves (Tālapatra-Śhāsana). As the plates further reveal, the palm leaves charter was burnt in a conflagration in the donees' residence. As such Mahārāja Narendra reissued the charter for the Gupta monarch in a copper-plate grant. This indicates that in the time of Sarabha the Gupta suzerainty, however nominal it might be, was still honoured in South Kosala. M.G. Dixit78 presumed that Paramabhaṭṭārakapāda of Kurud plates was no other than Sarabha. He further presumed that Sarabha had donated the village Keśavaka while taking bath in Mahānadi which was represented as a Gangā in Kurud plates. But Sarabha could not have used the title of Parambhaṭṭārakapāda which could only be used by the Guptas during that period. The influence of the imperial Guptas over South Kosala is indicated by the discovery of the coins of Kramāditya in the Raipur and Durg districts of Madhya Pradesh79.

The rise of Sarabhapura synchronized with the rise of Mekala as a contiguous territory in the last quarter of the fifth century A.D. The Malga plates of Indrarāja, the Bahmani plates of Bharatbala and the Burhikhar plates80 of Sarabala clearly reveal that while the Panḍuvaṃśis began

78. EI, vol.XXXI, p.263 line 4-6.
79. See Chaprer III of the present work.
80. EI, vol.XXVII, p.132.
their ascendancy over Mekhala, the royal house of Sarabhapura, called Amarāryakula, began its ascendancy over South Kosala. The relation between the two royal houses seems to be quite cordial leading to matrimonial alliances in the reign of Bharatbala. From the genealogy of the Panḍuvaṁśis of Mekhala it is learnt that Jayabala or Indrarāja was a contemporary of the founder of Sarabhapura.

Narendra

Śarabha, identified with Śarabharāja, was succeeded by his son Narendra who is known to us from his Pipardula, Kurud and Rawan plates. Unlike Indrarāja Śrīśamanta of Mekhala, Narendra was an independent and powerful ruler who assumed the title Mahārāja. Although he was still respectful towards Gupta suzerainty he was no more a sub-ordinate of Paramabhaṭṭaraka Pādanudhyāta. On the contrary, he refers to himself as Mātāpitru Pādanudhyāta. Having stabilized his position at Sarabhapura he seems to have extended his territory in the north-western direction. This is indicated by the find spots of his inscriptions in the Raipur and Raigarh districts of Maṭhya Pradesh. The

82. EI, vol.XXVI, p.140.
place mentioned in his records are identified with the villages located in the Raipur, Bilaspur, and Raigarh districts. While his Pipardula plates are dated his 3rd regnal year, Kurud plates are dated his 24th regnal year, when he was engaged in campaigns against the existing ruling families of South Kosala. His Kurud plates were issued from the victorious military camp (Vijayakshanḍhāvara) at Tilakeśvara. We propose to identify Tilakeśvara with the present Tālā where we find two Śiva temples of the Śarabhapuriya period. It seems that having served his allegiance towards the Vākātakas, he had asserted his sovereign status over Kośala by subjugating the existing local chiefs. We learn from the Ārang copper plate grant, dated 182 G.E (= 501 A.D.) that Mahārāja Bhimasena II was a contemporary of Narendra, who was defeated by him. It is however Mahārāja Narendra who, having acquired the Ārang Region had to fight against other local chiefs for a long period in the course of which he regranted the village Keśavaka in the Chullādasimabhoga from his victorious military camps of Tilakeśvara. His twentyfourth regnal year seems to have marked the climax of his policy of imperial expansion of the Śarabhapuriya kingdom. His conquests of a considerable part of South Kosala is indicated by the legend of the seal in

his charters. The couplet in the legend reads his victory
over his enemies and conquests of territory by the sharp
edge of his sword. The village Kesavaka regranted by him
in the Karud plates is identified with the modern village
of the same name, situated at a distance of five miles to
the South-east of Mahasamund. Chulladasimabhoga from
where village Kesavaka had been granted has also been
identified in the Mahasamund Sub-Division with the present
village Charod. Besides, Narendra is also known to have
donated the village Sarkarapadraka identified with the
village Sakara in the Nanapura-bhoga, which is the same
as Nandagoan in the Bilaspur district. It is further
known to us from the Rawan plate that Mahäräja Narendra
donated the village Aramaka in the Manjaraja-bhukti. We
have identified Aramaka of the Rawan plates with Arama
Vijayakataka of Gaintala plates of Janmejaya Mahabavageupta.

85. This bhoga called Chulladasima was one of the important
administrative divisions of the Sarabhapura kingdom.
It is mentioned in the plates discovered from Kurud
which is located in the present Mahasamund Sub-Division
of Raipur district of Madhaya Pradesh. The learned
editor of the Kurudh plates has proposed to identify
Chulladasima with modern Charod (EI, vol.XXXI, p.265)
located in the same Mahasamund Sub-Division where the
plates has been discovered. The identification seems
to based on reasonable grounds because the village
Kesavaka which was located in the Chulladasima-bhoga
is no other than the village Keshavaka located at a
distance of about seven miles South-East of Charod
(Gupta, P., Geography in Ancient Indian Inscription,
Delhi,1973, p.32).

86. GAII, p.212.
The same place may be identified with present Rampur in the Bolangir district of Orissa. We may point out in this context that it was located in the Manṭarājabhukti which was so named after the king Manṭāraja who ruled over Kaurāla, same as Karlā\(^9\) of the Bolangir district, according to the Allahabad Pillar Inscription. In view of this identification we may say that a considerable part of Bolangir district of Orissa was also conquered by Mahārāja Narendra in the course of his expansion of the Śarabhapuriya territory.

While Mahārāja Narendra was busy in the expansion of his territory in the northern and north-western directions in the second quarter of the sixth century A.D. the mighty Gupta empire which was fast declining collapsed in the middle of the sixth century A.D. The rising Śarabhapuriyan monarch who had intimate knowledge of the decline of the Gupta empire had, obviously, made himself independent of whatever control the Gupta had over South Kosala during the reign of Śarabha in the beginning of the sixth century A.D. While Mahārāja Bhimasena II used the Gupta Saṃvat Mahārāja Narendra used only his regnal years in his charters. However, he had only a sense of reverential recognition of the suzerainty of the Guptas which is indicated by his confirmation of the earlier

\(^{89}\) See Chapter II of the present work.
grant made by a Gupta overlord (Paramabhattaraka) in the Chulladasimabhoga. Unlike the feudatory chiefs, he never described himself asParamabhattaraka Pādānudhyāta.

Mahārāja Narendra was the first great king of Sarabhapura line who by his own prowess had uplifted Sarabhapura from obscurity to a rising power. The foundation of the empire was followed by a period of expansion and consolidation in the succeeding four generations. The kingdom of Sarabhapura which had already expanded in the north-western direction as far as Raipur under Mahārāja Narendra was further spread towards Chanda district of Maharashtra and Durg district of Madhya Pradesh under Mahendrāditya who succeeded Mahārāja Narendra. Mahendrāditya was the first king of the royal house of Sarabhapura who minted gold coins which have been found in large numbers in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The coins minted by him in South Kosala when compared with those of the Gupta gold coins are found to be made of debased gold. However, minting of gold coins under Mahendrāditya was itself an indication of the economic prosperity of the kingdom of Sarabhapura. The provenance of the coins also indicates that in the farflung territory of Sarabhapura, stretching from Kalahandi district of Orissa upto the Chanda district of Maharashtra, the authority of Mahendrāditya was honoured.
The economic prosperity of the kingdom of Sarabhapura seems to have reached its zenith under king Prasannamātra who was in all probability the successor of Mahendra[ditya]. We learn from the Mallār plate of Vyāghrarāja that Prasannapura was a prosperous city situated on the bank of the river Nidilā in the midst of forests (Upavanarājirājita .... srotasvatyā Nidilyāpavitrīkṛtāt).

It seems that this Prasannapura was another hill-fort founded by Prasannamātra in some significant place of strategic importance surrounded by forests. The hill-fort located on the bank of the river Nidilā has not yet been identified.

However, the reference to Purvarāṣṭra in the Mallār plates leads us to presume that Prasannapura was probably located in the region on the eastern side of Sheorinarayana. The establishment of a hill-fort in the name of Prasannamātra certainly indicates the greatness of the monarch.

When Jayarāja succeeded to the throne in the beginning of the seventh century A.D. South Kosala had already reaped the benefits of a century of iron rule of the Sarabhapuriyas. Towards the end of the sixth century Prasannamātra had brought about the political and economic stability of the kingdom of Sarabhapura which was reckoned as

90. EI, vol. XXXIV, pp. 49ff.
91. Supra, p. 105
a force in the Central Indian politics of that time. With the accession of Jayarāja, son and successor of Prasannamātra, South Kosala was involved in the Indian politics of the seventh century A.D.

The seventh century A.D. witnessed the rise of three great personalities of Indian history. Harshavardhan, who succeeded to the throne in 606 A.D. emerged as the Lord of Northern India. Śaśāṅkā, with his capital at Karnasuvārṇa, made himself master of Eastern India in the first half of the seventh century A.D. Pulakesin II, who succeeded to the throne in 610 A.D. exerted political supremacy almost all over Southern India. In this political setting of India Jayarāja cautiously handled his political power and saved the country of South Kosala from the imperial designs of Harsha and Pulakesin II.

Jayarāja is known to us from his four copper plate grants which have been found at Amugura92 in the Kalahandi district of Orissa, Ārang93 in the Raipur district and at Mallār94 in the Bilaspur district of Madhaya Pradesh. His Amugura plates of third regnal year refer to him as a

92. JESI, vol.IV, pp.70-75.
devout worshipper of Vishnu and the feet of his own parents
(Paramobhāgabato mātāpitra pāḍānudhyāta)⁹⁵. But his Ārāṅg
and Mallār plates describe him as one who subjugated many
Sāmantas by his prowess.

The rising power of Kosala under Jayarāja seemed
to have drawn the attention of Mahārāja Nāgabala of the
Pāṇḍava family of Mekhala. Consequently, there was a
matrimonial alliance between the Śarabhapuriyas of Kośala
and Panḍuvamsis of Mekhala. This is indicated by the Bahamani
copper plates⁹⁶ of Bharatbala. Bharatbala refers to his
queen Lokaprakāśā as a princess of Kośala, born of Amarāja-
kula. As we have discussed earlier Amarājakula is identical
with Amarāryakula which was dynastic appellation of the
Śarabhapuriyans. The union of Panḍuvamsis of Mekhala and
Śarabhapuriya or the Amarārāja of South Kosala seems to be
vital which served the integrity of both the territories from
the imperial designs of Harsha and Pulakesin II. However
there was a temporary set back caused by the Chālukyan
aggression⁹⁷. Jayarāja maintained the integrity of the
kingdom of Śarabhapura. The reign of his son and successor
Śudevarāja I, was only a period of peace and plenty.

⁹⁷. ibid, vol. VI, p. 1
We learn from the Mallār and the Thākurdiya copper plates that Pravararāja, the younger son of Jayarāja alias Mānamātra acquired his territory by his own power and prowess and established the capital of his territory at Sripur identified with modern Sripur near Raipur. While all the known copper plate grants of Suđevarāja I were issued from Sarabhapura, those of his younger brother Prāvararāja were issued from Sripura. It is known from the topographical features of the Sarabhapuriya charters that Sripura (Sripur) was a part of the kingdom of Sarabhapura from the earliest period of their rule. Pravararāja's ascendancy at Sripura and the facts known from his seal that he conquered this kingdom by his arms (Svabhyanparjita) indicate clearly that there was a fratricidal war between Suđevarāja I and Pravararāja which resulted in the division of the empire.

The Sarabhapuriyas by entering into a matrimonial alliance with the Pāṇḍuvaṁsis of Mekhala intended to strengthen their kingdom to resist the aggression of Harsha and Pulakesin II. But by resorting to this policy of dynastic marriage they committed a blunder by maintaining friendship

98. JIH, vol.XXXVII, p.265.
100. ibid, vol.XXIII, p.119.
with a neighbouring territory which in the long run was always expected to overpower the adjacent country. The history of the Sarabhapuriyas of South Kosala and that of the Panḍuvaṁsi of Mekhala reveal the veracity of Kautilya's warning. The Sarabhapuriyas had adopted the policy of dynastic marriage in violation of the Maṇḍalas theory of Kautilya. Thus in course of time the scions of the Pāṇḍava family of Mekhala found their access into the territory of Kośala. Surabala took advantage of this relation and pushed as far as the heart of Bilaspur. In the next generation Indrabala conquered a portion of South Kosala and occupied the position of Chief minister under Sudevarāja II. His son Nanna entered into the court of Sudevarāja I and ultimately seized the throne of Sarabhapura. Thus the violation of Kautilya's Maṇḍala theory and wrong application of the policy of dynastic marriage resulted in the rise of the Panḍuvaṁṣis at the expense of the Sarabhapuriyas of Kośala.

101. The Maṇḍala Theory of Kautilya:
"A neighbouring foe of considerable power is styled an enemey and when he is involved in calamities or has taken himself to evil ways, he becomes assailable; and when he has little or no help becomes destructible; otherwise (i.e. when he is provided with some help), he deserves to be harassed or reduced, such are the aspects of an enemy".

102. Detail earlier in the Chapter.
Another important factor which had contributed to the disintegration of the kingdom of Sarabhapura was the fratricidal conflict between Sudevarāja I and Pravararāja. The inscriptive sources indicate that there was a fratricidal war resulting in the division of the kingdom. The scions of the Pāṇḍava family entered into the divided kingdom with ulterior motive and brought about its fall by the policy of 'Divide and Rule'.

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