CHAPTER II

INVASION OF SAMUDRAGUPTA
The political condition of Orissa in the Pre-Gupta Age was characterized by the absence of any paramount power. The Kushāṇas and the Muraṇḍas seem to have exercised their control over Orissa for some time. By the end of their supremacy the political unity of Kaliṅga had given way to the rise of many small kingdoms. Kalidasa¹ mentions that the river Kapiśā (identified with modern Kasāi) was the boundary between Utkala and Kaliṅga during this period. We also learn from Silapadikarani and Manimekhalai² that internal wars and rebellions brought about the disunity of Kaliṅga in the Pre-Gupta period. In fact, when Samudragupta led his South Indian expedition he did not encounter any opposition from Kaliṅga.

Lines 19/20 of the Allahabad Pillar Inscription throw light on the nature of Samudragupta's conquests of Orissa in the course of his South Indian campaign. The rulers of Orissa who were vanquished by Samudragupta were Mahendra of

1.  Ṛaghuvaṁsa, canto IV, verse 38.
2.  Manimekhalai, Ch.XXVI, vide the English translation of the epic by A.S.Panchapakesa Ayyar. Also UUHO, p.414.
Map of Orissa showing modern districts and district headquarters.
South Kosala, Vyāghrarāja of Mahākāntāra, Maṇṭarāja of Kurāla, Mahendragiri of Piṣṭapura, Swāmīdutta of Koṭṭura, Damana of Erandapalla and Kuvera of Devarāṣṭhra.*

KING MAHENDRA OF KOSALA:

Kosala, the territory of king Mahendra, was the same as Dakṣiṇa Kosala (South Kosala) comprising the modern districts of Bilaspur and Raipur of Madhya Pradesh and Sambalpur of Orissa³. Scholars have put forward various theories to identify King Mahendra. Recently, P.L.Mishra⁴ has suggested that since we know of no other dynasty than the Nalas ruling over South Kosala in the fourth century A.D., Mahendra (Varman) who was the contemporary of the Gupta emperor, must have belonged to the Nala dynasty.

*...Kauśalaka-Mahendra-Mahākāntāraka
Vyāghrarāja Kaurālaka Maṇṭarāja-Paiṣṭapuraka
Mahendragiri Kauṭṭuraka Svāmīdutta-
Airaṇḍapallaka-Damana-Kāñcheyaka
Viṣhnu-gopa Avamuktaka-Nilarāja-Vaiṅgeyaka
Haṣṭivarman-Pālakkak-Ograsena Daivaraṣṭarakauvera-
Kauṭṭholapuraka Dheṇanjaya Prabhṛiti Sarva Daṅṣhiṅg-
patha Rāja.


These are his other arguments in support of this theory:

i) According to the Purāṇas, Nalas were ruling over Kosala in the fourth century A.D.

ii) That Mahendra had the proud title of 'Aditya' before the Guptas took over Kosala.

iii) The Mahendra of coins (i.e. of Mahendrāditya coins) and the Mahendra referred to in Allahabad Pillar Inscription must be identical.

iv) The name Mahendravarman sounds well with some of the Nala rulers like Bhavadattavarman and Skandavarman.

The Nalas ruled over Nisādha country and not over Kosala as is evident from the Purāṇic source. Moreover, as regards the Nisādha country B.C.Law writes:

During the period represented by epic and Purāṇic tradition the Nisādas seems to have had their habitat among the mountains of Jhalwār and Khāndesh in the Vindhya and Satpūrā ranges.

This is proved by the reference in Mahābhārata to a Nisādha-rāṣṭra in the region of the Srāvasti and the Western Vindhyas, not far from the Paripatra. The Brihadsāmīhitā of

5. Pargiter, F.E. Dynasties of Kali Age, p.73. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa IV, Ch.24)
Varāhamihira (XII, 10) seems to recognise a kingdom or ṛāṣṭra of the Nisādas in the South-east of Madheyadesa. A Nisāda kingdom whose capital was Sringaverapura is referred to in the Rāmāyaṇa⁹ (Canto II, 50, 53). Further Mr. Wilson¹⁰ thinks that it was near the roads which lead from it across the Rksa mountain to Avanti and the South as well as to Vidarbha and Kosala. Burgess¹¹ places the Nisāda country to the South of Mālwa. Finally, according to D.C. Sircar¹² Nisādhas were associated with Pariyatra. They probably lived about Nalapura, modern Narwar in the Sivapuri district of Madhaya Pradesh.

The different interpretations which are given here prove the separate existence of a Nisāda country (along with Kosala and Mekala) which was ruled by Nala kings. This proves the wrong presumptions of Misra that the Nalas were ruling over Kosala on the eve of the campaign of Samudragupta. Again, Mahendra of Allahabad Pillar Inscription

   Rāmāyaṇa - (Trans.) by M.N.Dutta, Calcutta,192-94
   Ed. by Raghu Vira, Lahore, 1938.


12. Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India, p.35.
cannot be identified with king Mahendrāditya who issued the Khairtal hoard of gold coins. 'Mahendrāditya' legend of the coins indicate that Mahendra belonged to a period much later than the fourth century A.D. Of Mishra's suggestion that the name Mahendra(varman) sounds well with some of the Nala rulers like Bhavadattavarman, Skandavarman etc. N.K.Sahu says that it is not only vague but also unwarranted since neither the Mahendrāditya of the coins nor the Mahendra referred to in Allahabad Pillar Inscription had the surname 'Varman', and no Nala ruler was known to have the title of Aditya as suffix to his name.

As to the other identifications of king Mahendra, K.D.Bajpai considers him to be a Megha king. He writes that from the coins and some epigraphs, from the Vatsa and South-Kosala regions we know that this part of the country may have remained independent till about 335 A.D. when Samudragupta annexed it. We do not know if Mahendra of South Kosala who was thus defeated by Samudragupta bore any relationship with Meghas. Since we have not come across any coin or inscriptions showing Mahendra's relationship with the Meghas, Bajpai's suggestions appear untenable.

Contiguous to the kingdom of South Kosala was the territory known as Mahakantara which, according to the Mahabharata (Sabhāparva XXXI), extended from the East of Kosala up to the bank of river Vepā (Waingaṅgā). This territory is generally identified with the kingdom of King Vyāghra, father of Jayanātha, belonging to the Uchchakalpa family, who was a feudatory of the Vākāṭakas. Inscriptions of this king were found at Nach-ne-ki talai and Gang in Madhya Pradesh. But this king was the ruler of the Bundelkhand region, North of Vindhyā, and therefore cannot be classed with the rulers of the Dakṣiṇāpatha. Mahakantara appears to be the same as Mahāvana referred to in two of the Amaravati Stupa Inscriptions and may be identified with the wild tracts of modern districts of Kalahandi and Koraput in Orissa. Vyāghrarāja, the king of Mahakantara gallantly fought with Samudragupta but was ultimately defeated by him. The coins of Tiger type which depict the emperor Samudragupta as overpowering a tiger are said to have represented this war: the victory over Vyāghrarāja was considered a significant one by the emperor himself.

18. Burgess, Notes on Amaravati Stupa Inscriptions Nos. 8 and 231.
MANṬARĀJA OF KURĀLA:

After subduing Mahākāntāra territory Samudragupta defeated king Manṭarāja of Kurāla, a territory which is identified by many scholars with the Sonepur region of Bolangir district. Barnet suggests, identification of this place with Koraṭa in South India; Jayswal locates it in the territory on the bank of the Kollear (Kollair) lake; but Raychoudhury suggests that this place must be within the territory of Hastivarman of Vengi mentioned separately in the Allahabad Inscriptions. According to S.N. Rajguru, however, Kurāla may be the same as Kolaulapurapattana or Kokolavalapurapatṭana mentioned in the records of Eastern Gaṅgas of Kaliṅga and identified with the modern town of Kulāda in Ghumsur, Taluk of Ganjam district. But Kalaulapura was the seat of the Western Gaṅgas and has been identified with Kolār in Mysore. If Kolaulapurapatṭana is taken to be the town established by the Eastern Gaṅgas it must be ascribed to a period much later than that of Samudragupta.

The Sonepur region of Bolangir district which was contiguous to Mahākosala may be said to have represented the territory of Kosala. The villages named Baḍa-Karalā and Sāna-Karalā near Binkā (Vinitapura of medieval epigraph) are very likely reminiscent of the name of ancient Korāla.\(^{26}\)

This region is located in the Aṅg river valley and is found rich in antiquities datable to both Pre-Gupta and the Post-Gupta periods and also occupies an important position in between the territories of Mahākosala and Mahākāntāra.

In this connection we draw the attention of Scholars to a Saravapuriya copper plate grant of Maharaja Narendra discovered at Rawan\(^{27}\) in Madhaya Pradesh. In the second line of the said charter there is mention of the village Āramaka situated in Manṭarājabhukti. We suggest that the kingdom of Kurāla which was under the suzerainty of Manṭarāja in the time of Samudragupta was subsequently designated as 'Manṭarājabhukti' in the sixth century A.D. during the reign of the Sarvapuriyas. Āramaka, mentioned in the Rawan copper plates, is very likely the same as modern Rāmpur in the Bolangir district. In that case the identification of Kurāla in Bolangir district seems to be quite tenable.

---


Under these circumstances we may suggest that Manṭarāja was ruling over the region surrounding Sāna-Karalā and Baḍa-Karalā which was later known as Manṭarājabhukti.

Mahākosala, Mahākāntāra and Korāla composed the western region of the South-western part of modern Orissa, and the exact territorial limits of these three kingdoms are difficult to determine. It seems that Samudragupta started his campaign from the Jamunā valley, more particularly from Kauśambi, and marching through the modern Rewa and Jabalpur regions, entered the territory of South-Kosala. After subduing Kosala, Mahākāntāra and Korāla he could easily proceed towards the eastern coast through the ancient trade route that linked Kosala with Kaliṅga.

The territory of Kaliṅga probably was no longer a compact one, capable of offering a formidable resistance to the invader. This territory was then divided into not less than four principalities namely Kotṭura, Eranḍapalla, Devarāṣṭra and Piṣṭhapura, each being under the rule of a petty chieftain.
The expression Paistapuraka Mahendragiri Kautturaka Svāmidutta' in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription has been variously interpreted by scholars. Fleet interprets it as 'Mahendragiri of Piṣṭapura and Svāmidutta of Kuṭṭura' and Bhandarkar as 'Mahendragiri the king of Piṣṭapura and Svāmidutta the king of Koṭṭura'. Koṭṭura has been identified with modern Kothoor about 12 miles to the South of Mahendra hill. G. Ramdas has given an altogether different interpretation. He has suggested Svāmidutta as the lord of Piṣṭapura, Mahendragiri and Kuṭṭura, and has emphasized the importance of Mahendragiri.

The Mahendra mountain range of the Eastern Ghats formed an important geographical feature of Kalinga as it was regarded by many royal dynasties in the past as their cradle land. It was important as a seat of political activities and became famous as a centre of religious and cultural life of Kalinga. The Mahendra region was originally inhabited by the aboriginal Savara and Pulindas but about the early Christian era civilized races began their settlement in that area. Gautamiputra Satakarni is known to have extended his empire in the 2nd century A.D. in the east up to the Mahendra hill.
The Mahābhārata declares this mountain as an important seat of Aryan culture where Parasurāma, the champion of Brahmanism is said to have performed penance. In the Rāghuvamsa of Kālidāsa the Mahendra mountain finds prominent mention and it is regarded there as the very heart of Kālīṅga. Rāghu, in the course of his 'digvijaya', is said to have conquered Kālīṅga. According to the poet Rāghu inflicted a crushing defeat upon the King of Kālīṅga at the summit of Mahendragiri. The poet refers to the king of Kālīṅga as the 'Lord of Mahendra' and there-by suggests that the political headquarters of Kālīṅga was located in Mahendra region. The palace of Hemāṅgada, the king of Kālīṅga, as indicated by the poet in the same work, was located on the sea shore not far from the Mahendra hill.

The southern expedition of Samudragupta as described by Harisena in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription echoes the invasion of Rāghu. We presume from this inscription that the king of Kālīṅga, whose headquarters was at Piśṭhapura,

32. Mahābhārata - I, 64.
33. Rāghuvamsa, Canto IV, Vr.43.
   griñāta pratimuktashya sadharma vijayeenṛpah
   sriyam Mahendranāthasya jahāranatu medinim.
34. Rāghuvamsa, Canto IV, Verse 40-43.
35. ibid, Verse 56.
was probably named as Mahendragiri after his famous hill. 'Koṭṭura' of Mahendrabhoga visaya mentioned in the same inscription also finds mention in the Dhavalapetta grant of Umāvarman of the Māṭhara dynasty. This suggests that when, even after the invasion of Samudragupta, Kaliṅga became a powerful state under the Māṭharas, a district named Mahendrabhoga was formed centering round the Mahendra hill.

KUVERA OF DEVARĀŚHTRA:

R.C. Majumdar and J. Dubreuil have located Devarāśtra in the Vizagapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. We are inclined to identify Devarāśtra of the Allahabad Pillar Inscription with Devapura mentioned in the Sripuram grant of Anantavarman.


* The importance of the Mahendragiri as the religious and cultural centre of Kaliṅga was further enhanced with the advent of the Eastern Gaṅgas, who installed their family deity Lord Gokarneswar on the crest of this mountain. The Gaṅga kings salute Gokarneswar-swāmi of Mahendra in the preamble of their charters (JAHRS, vol. II, pp. 185-189). Like the Eastern Gaṅgas the Sailodbhavas of Kongodamandala had great reverence for this hill and they regarded it as a Kulagiri (Cuttack Museum Charter of Māḍhavarma, EI, vol. XXIV, p. 184).


DAMANA OF ERANḌAPALLA:

Errandapalla has been identified with modern Erandapalli near Chicacole. The name 'Damana' suggests that this king was probably an ancestor of Maharāja Satrudāmana known to us from the Peddāduggam copper plate charters as the ruler of Girikaliṅga or Trikaliṅga. The tutelary deity of this royal family, Damaneswar, seems to have been installed by king Damana and from this consideration Damaneswara may be regarded the earliest known Śaivite God in Kaliṅga.

After the subjugation of these territories the campaign of Samudragupta in Kaliṅga was successfully over; and the victor triumphantly crossed the river Goḍavari and proceeded towards Vengi over which king Hastivarman was ruling. The southern kings, claimed to have been defeated by Samudragupta were Hastivarman, the Sālankāyana king of Vengi, Viṣṇugopa, the Pallava king of Kaṇchi, Nilarāja of Avamukta, Ugrasena of Palaka and Dharmarāja of Kusthalapura. These kings and their kingdoms have not been satisfactorily identified, though it is believed that Hastivarman and

40. EI vol. XXXI, pp. 89-93.
Viṣṇugopa, belonging to Sālankāyana and Pallava dynasties respectively, were famous kings in the south. Hastivarman is also known from the Peḍḍāveśi Grant of Nandivarman II.

J.Dubreuil has suggested that Samudragupta, advancing as far as river Krishnā was opposed by a confederacy of kings of the Eastern Deccan, and being repulsed, abandoned his conquests in the Orissan coast and returned to Magadha. K.P. Jayaswal is of the opinion that the southern potentates were grouped under two chief leaders, Manṭarāja of Korāla and Viṣṇugopa of Kaṇchi, and that Samudragupta fought his decisive battle in the Colair lake region. Such suggestions are, however, speculative in nature. Notwithstanding his overwhelming success Samudragupta was not destined to alter the political structure of these states. The Allahabad Pillar Inscription makes us believe that instead of annexing their territories to his growing empire, he liberated and reinstated the defeated kings in their respective kingdoms. Samudragupta's act of re-installing the South-Indian kings has led some scholars to speculate that the Gupta emperor was forced to adopt such a course of action owing to his discomfiture at the hands of his southern contemporaries

41. Bhārati - August 1924.
42. AHD, pp.60-61.
43. History of India, pp.135-39.
who fought shoulder to shoulder under the stewardship of two kings Manṭarāja and Vishṇugopa. But such speculation is far fetched and untenable as there is no internal evidences to support it. H.C.Raychoudhury\textsuperscript{44} is of the opinion that Samudragupta's unwillingness to annex the southern states was due to his realization of the utter absurdity of maintaining permanent control over these kingdoms which lay far away from his base. But the more probable reason why Samudragupta reinstated this southern potentates after having defeated them seems to be a different one. A close study of the Allahabad Pillar Inscription reveals that when the Gupta monarch was engaged in the south, several kings of Āryāvarta rose united to fight against him. It is no wonder, therefore, that Samudragupta had to give up the idea of annexing the southern states in order to prepare for a great struggle in the Āryāvarta war. The defeated kings of Orissa acknowledged the submission of the retreating emperor on the political gimmick; but in reality this submission was far from being meaningful, and they continued to rule over their principalities as independent sovereigns.

\textsuperscript{44} PHAI, p.538.