CHAPTER - II

THE BHAÑJAS OF KHIÑJALI-MANDALA

(DHRTIPURA BRANCH)
A) **Origin of the Bhanjas**

The early Bhanjas were powerful feudatory rulers of some independent sovereign principalities of early medieval Orissa. Satrubhanja of the Asanpat stone inscription, Netrabhanja of Banatumba Copper Plates (8th century A.D.) and another Netrabhanja of Baud Copper plates were known to be the earliest Bhanja rulers of probably independent status. The later Bhanjas became the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas of Tosali and ruled over the Manjala States, namely, the Khijjala-Manjala and the Khijjings-Manjala. Before the establishment of the Bhauma-Kara hegemony over Tosali, the history of the Bhanjas was shrouded in obscurity and there are many views about the origin of this ancient race.

Some legendary accounts are found in the Copper plate grants of the Bhanja rulers. It is said that a beautiful prince was born out of a pea-hen's egg and was brought up in the

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1. A lot of controversies are advanced on the date of king Satrubhanjadeva, the donor of this inscription. Late Sri A. Dash says that this king flourished in the 4th century A.D. (O.H.R.J.,XII,pp.1ff). His view is supported by K.S.Behera (J.N.S.I.,XXXVII,pp.76ff) and S.C.Behera (J.N.S.I.,XXXII,pp.25-34.)
2. B.I.,XXVII,pp.259ff.
hermitage of Kotṭāsrama by sage Vaśiṣṭha. The eponymous prince was taken as the progenitor of the Bhaṅjas. This prince is known as Ādibhaṅja alias Birabhadra or Gaṇadanda. In early Bhaṅja records of Khijjāli-Maṇḍala Bhaṅja rulers are declared as Anḍaja-Vaṁsa-Prabhava (born of the family that came out of the egg). The mention of pea-hen, Vaśiṣṭha and Kotṭāsrama are found in the later inscriptions of the Bhaṅjas of Khijjėga-Kotta. This story has been further developed in the Kesari grant of Satrubhaṅja where it has been described that Birabhadra was the lord of 88,000 villages and that 88,000 sages were made to perform meditation in order to please Rāmadeva and obtain boon from him in favour of Birabhadra. Pt. B. Misra states that Virabhadra was surrounded by 88,000 Rsis or sages whereas according to the interpretation of Dr. N.K. Sahu Virabhadra was the lord of 88,000 villages and a devotee of Rāmadeva. This account of the Kesari grant is mythological in character and as suggested by Dr. A. Joshi it only indicates the original power and status of the early Bhaṅja kings.

3. Quoted A. Joshi in History and Culture of Khijjėga-Kotta, p. 18.
Mr. Beglar\(^1\) and Pt. Misra\(^2\) hold that the Bhanjas were the Maurya descendants of Magadha. In the Tibetan work Pak San Jon Zang it is described that the founder of the Maurya dynasty belonged to the solar race and he came out of an egg hatched by the rays of the Sun\(^3\). On the basis of this tradition Beglar and Misra are of the opinion that the Bhanjas of Orissa are the descendants of the Mauryas of Magadha. Pt. Misra further identifies Virabhadra with Chandragupta Maurya and refers to the Pali work Mahabhdgagga which describes Bimbisara as ruling over an empire comprising 88,000 towns. The equal number of towns must have been under the possession of Chandragupta Maurya. Virabhadra, who is known as the lord of 88,000 villages in the Kesari grant, has been identified with Chandragupta Maurya. The modern scholars have not accepted the view of Pt. Misra on the ground that a late tradition of Kesari grant can not be connected with an ancient work like Mahabhdgagga.

Some scholars have tried to trace the origin of the Bhanjas from the Rajput family of Jaipur in Rajasthan. According to them one Jaisingh son of Raja Man Singh of Jaipur came to pay a visit to Lord Jagannath of Puri. It is he who

with the tacit permission of the Gajapati founded the Bhañja ruling dynasty in Mayurbhanj. This view is, however, apparently wrong because the Jaipur State of Rājputānā is of recent origin whereas the Bhañjas were an ancient race. In their records the Bhañja kings have described themselves as Angaja-Vahā-Prabhava till 18th century A.D. So the theory of Rajput origin can be comfortably discarded.

The early mythological tradition which describes the progenitor of the Bhañjas as born of a pea-hen's egg indicates tribal character of totemism and it leads us to believe that they might have belonged to some indigenous tribes. Some scholars sought to connect them with the Bhuñyas on the ground of the similarity of the name Bhuñyas and Bhañjas. But there is no concrete evidence to establish the theory. In this connection our attention is drawn to the Asanpat stone inscription of Šatrubhānjadava who according to many scholars belonged to the 4th century A.D. This is the earliest inscription of a king bearing the name of the Bhañjas. In the opening line of the inscription, Šatrubhānja has been described as belonging to the Nāga dynasty (Nāgātvayya) and in the 4th-5th line as uplifter of the Nāga dynasty (Nāgavārvavaraśana). Šatrubhānja is a very

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2. Maharājā Vikramāditya Bhañja of Mayurbhanj issued a charter in the year 1713-14 A.D. and there he has described his progenitor as a prince born out of pea-hen's egg. This charter has been preserved in the Museum at Baripada.

3. O.H.R.J., XII, pp. 1ff.
common name in the Bhañja families of Dhrtipura, Vaiñjulvaka and Khijjinga-Kotta. It appears that the Nāgas in Orissa assumed the surname Bhañja and they tried to give them a separate identity by establishing a mythological origin of their progenitor. Subsequently they came to be regarded as belonging to the Bhañja race.

3) Khinjali-Mandala

A systematic history of the Bhañjas can only be constructed with the establishment of Khinjali-Mandala in about 8th century A.D. According to R.D. Banerjee¹ this principality was located in the Baud-Sonepur region on the bank of the river Mahanadi. Many places and rivers mentioned in the Bhañja charters have been identified with the places and rivers of their locality. Places like Royarā, Jaintāmurā, Śivirā, Kumurakela, Champānallī and Āmbarasarāra are identified with Rohila, Jamura, Subalaya, Kumarkeli, Champānāl and Āmbarahata respectively in Sonepur and places like Gandhaṭapāti, Urjākhand, Valaśrīga, Tulaśrīga are identified with Gandharādi, Marjakud, Balasinga, Tulasingi near Baud. The rivers like Tel, Byāghra and Sālahāki mentioned in the charters still bear the same name in the modern time. Hiralal² has suggested that this area is located in the

2. E.I., XVIII, p.300.
Keonjhar region. This view has not been supported by any evidence. So the suggestion of Hiralal does not hold good. The Khinjali-Mandala is also called Ubhaya-Khinjali in the Copper Plates. The territory perhaps extended on both the sides of river Mahanadi. The Angapara Charter\(^1\) of Ranabhañjadeva mentions Handapā-Mandala which is identified with Handapa in the Dhenkanal district. The Khinjali fort has been identified with the village named Injali in the Dhenkanal district by B. Mishra\(^2\). It indicates that Khinjali-Mandala was extended to Dhenkanal region. Nettabhañja of Baud charter\(^3\) was the ruler of this kingdom who ruled from the capital Āṅgulaka Pattaṇa near Āngul. R. D. Banerjee\(^4\) and R. C. Majumdar\(^5\) have regarded Nettabhañja to be the earliest king of the medieval Bhanja dynasty. There is of course, no direct evidence in the charter to support this view.

It appears that Kukils of Kodalaka-Mandala drove the Bhanjas to the Baud-Sonepur region. The capital of the Bhanjas was Dhrti-pura located in the Baud town. Dr. N. K. Sahu\(^6\) observes that "the rich antiquities of Baud town warrant a strong supposition that this place was the headquarters of the Bhañja kings of Khinjali-Mandala before it assumed its Buddhistic significance". In the

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1. The Plates are with Prof. S. C. Behera, Department of History, Sambalpur University.
2. Dynasties of Medieval Oriissa, P. 43.
4. Ibid., pp. 163-65, 189-90.
6. Utkal University: History of Oriissa, Vol. I, p. 120.

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9th century A.D. Dhṛtipura was destroyed by the Somavānsīs and the Bhañjas fled away to Ganjam region where they established their capital at Vañjulvaka.

C) Dynastic History

Śilabhañjadeva

Śilabhañjadeva is perhaps the earliest known ruler of the Bhañja dynasty who founded the village Śilabhañja-pati. This has been referred to in the Cuttack Plates\(^1\) of Mahāśīvagupta Yayāti I, the Somavānsī ruler. The Madras Museum charter\(^2\) records that a person named Sada purchased the village Taḍeśvara-grāma from Śilabhañjadeva. This village was situated in the Gowaṅda Maṅgala of Khiṇḍariśūnga (Khiṇḍariśūnga) the kingdom of Narendradhānava. The details of the ownership of this village is not known. It might be that Śilabhañjadeva got the village as dowry.

Śatrubhañjadeva

Śatrubhañjadeva was the son and successor of Śilabhañjadeva as revealed from the Somapur Copper Plate grant\(^3\) issued by him. Scholars have identified this Śatrubhañja with

the Śatrubhaṅja of Kumurkela charter. But a close study of the two grants reveals that this view is untenable. Śatrubhaṅja of Sonepur grant is the son of Śilabhaṅja whereas Śatrubhaṅja of Kumurkela grant is the son of Āṅgadi. If it is assumed that Śilabhaṅja deva and Āṅgadi represent the same person there are other factors which do not hold good the above assumption. Pandi's son Śivanāga, the engraver of Sonepur grant also engraved earlier Charters of Raṇabhaṅja deva till at least his 26th regnal year. But the Kumurkela charter was engraved by Śuvarṇakāra Devala who also engraved the last known Baud charter of Raṇabhaṅja deva issued in his 58th regnal year. This indicates that Śatrubhaṅja of Kumurkela charter succeeded Raṇabhaṅja deva and not preceded him. The post of sandhivigrahika was not known till the Sambalpur University Museum plates were issued by Raṇabhaṅja deva in his 22nd regnal year. The name Savaradatta as Sandhivigrahika in the Kumurkela charter indicates that its donor Śatrubhaṅja flourished after Raṇabhaṅja deva. The names like Āṅgadi, the father of the king, Śuvarṇakāra Devala, the engraver, were absent in the Sonepur grant. There is little doubt that Śatrubhaṅja of Sonepur charter was not the same person with Śatrubhaṅja of Kumurkela charter. The former, who may be called Śatrubhaṅja I, was very likely the grand father of the latter.


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namely, Satrubhañja II. S.N. Rajguru identifies Satrubhañja of Dhṛtipura branch with Satrubhañja Mahgalarāja of the Tekkali plates. Satrubhañja of Tekkali grant used the sobriquet Mahgalarāja which is not in vogue in the charters of Dhṛtipura house. The conventional form and style of its writing indicate that Satrubhañja Mahgalarāja belongs to the Bhañja family of Vanjulavaka. Hence the identification of Rajguru is not tenable.

Satrubhañja is known as Nettabhañja in the Sambalpur University Museum plates of Ranabhañjadēva and as Gandhañṭa in the Baud charter of regnal year 54 of the same king. He is, most probably, the founder of the village of Gandhañṭapati identified with Gandharadi near Baud town in the modern time. Satrubhañja-deva was a Paramavaishñava but all his invocatory verses were composed in praise of Natarāja Śiva. It appears that all his predecessors were Śaiva rulers and used Śaivite verses which became conventional during the succeeding generations.

Satrubhañja-deva did not use any feudatory title which is an indication that he was a sovereign ruler. He is described as the lord of Ubhaya-Khiñjalis and belonging to spotless Bhañja dynasty.


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the Ranabhāñjadēva appears to be most prolific Shāńja ruler in issuing charters. He was the son of Satrubhańja and issued about twelve charters within a period of about 60 years dating them in his own regnal year. These charters are:

- Tasapāikera charter<sup>1</sup> (R.Y.16)
- Dasapalla charter<sup>2</sup> (R.Y.24)
- Baud charter<sup>3</sup> (R.Y.26)
- Angapada charter<sup>4</sup> (R.Y.26)
- Patna Museum plates<sup>5</sup>
- The undated Baud charter<sup>6</sup>
- Phulbani plates<sup>7</sup>
- Singhara plates<sup>8</sup> (Regnal year)
- Orissa Museum plates<sup>9</sup> (Name = 50)
- Sambalpur University Museum plates<sup>10</sup> (R.Y.52)
- Baud copper plates<sup>11</sup> (R.Y.54)
- Baud copper plates<sup>12</sup> (R.Y.58)

3. E.I., XII, pp.325-23.
4. To be edited by Prof.K.S.Behera.
5. E.I., Vol.XX, pp.100-04.

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In the earlier charters Raṇabhaṇaja-deva calls himself Paramavaśiṣṭhava which he inherited from his father Śatrubhaṇaja-deva. In the Singhara Charter I and Orissa Museum Plates, issued in Namame or 50th regnal year, he is described as Paramānāheśvara. Many scholars are of the opinion that the word Namame was a mistake of the engraver and it should be Navame which means regnal year nine. This Namame has been mentioned in the Phulbandi Plates and Singhara plates and Orissa Museum plates of Raṇabhaṇaja-deva. These charters have also been engraved by three different persons. It is hardly possible that all of the engravers committed the same mistake in writing Namame in place of Navame. Besides the word Navami is correctly incised in some other charters of the same king. It makes us believe that the word Namame is not a mistake committed by the engraver. It seems to have been used here in the Katapayadi system of reckoning the year. According to this system the letters 'Ka' to 'Jha' represent the numbers one to nine and the next letter 'Na' stands for zero; again the nine letters from 'Ta' to 'Dha' represent the numbers one to nine and the next letter 'Na' stands for zero and at last the letters from 'Pa' to 'ma' stand for one to five respectively. The principle of turning round the sum from the

4. This view was first put forth by P.R. Srinivasan in E.I., Vol. XXXVII, pp. 257ff.
left to the right as in the case of chronogram is also followed in this system⁠¹. The word 'Namae' in Katapayadi Chronogram will represent 50 me (Ma = 0, Na = 5) meaning in the 50th regnal year of the king Ranabhāṇja-deva. Both Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism flourished under his patronage. The twin temples of Nilaṁādhava Viṣṇu and Śīcheśvara Śiva at Gandharāḍi constructed by him is a sign of devotion to both the cults. It is also evident that Ranabhāṇja-deva came under the influence of Viḷayā Mahādevī, his chief queen, and was converted to Śaivism. This queen is described as Parama-māheśvarī in the Patna Museum plates².

Ranabhāṇja-deva also used a religious epithet Stambheśvarī-Lavāha-Vara-Prasādāh which means one who has obtained the favour of goddess Stambheśvarī. Stambheśvarī was the tutelary deity of the Śulkis of Kodālaka-Mandala, located in the modern district of Dhenkanal on the border of Khiṅjali-Mandala, Kāñchana-stambha, the earliest known Śulki ruler flourished in the last part of 3rd century A.D. on the consideration that his grandson Ranastambha was ruling in Samvat 103 which is taken as Bhauma Samvat corresponding to A.D.839³. The Śulkis were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas and used the feudatory titles Rāṇaka, Saṁācigata-Paṁchamahāśavda and Stambheśvarī-Lavāha-Vara-Prasādāh. Ranabhāṇja-deva was the first Bhaūja ruler who used the above titles.

2. E.I.,XX, pp.100-104.
This Bhañja king Ranabhañjadeva was perhaps humbled down by the Sulkis and as a result he acknowledged the sovereignty of the Bhauma-Karas of Tōsālí. Subsequently both Sulkis and the Bhañjas entered into an amicable settlement and ruled over their respective territories peacefully. A matrimonial relation was also established between them. Kalahastambha, the son of Kāñchanaśambha married the daughter of Ranabhañjadeva. Ranaśambhadeva the most outstanding Sulkī ruler was born out of this marriage.

It is significant that Ranabhañjadeva discarded the feudatory titles towards the last part of his reign and assumed the titles like Mahārañja. This indicates that he grew more powerful and severed his relation with the Bhauma-Karas of Tōsālí and the Sulkis of Koḍālaka-Maṇḍala. During this time the Somavahās of Koṣala emerged as a prominent power in the western border of Khiṃjali and threatened the position and power of the Bhauma-Karas. Ranabhañjadeva tried to take advantage of such a situation and made himself almost an independent ruler. This is revealed from Sambalpur University Museum charter in which he described himself with high sounding epithets like Somavahā king Tivaradeva in his Copper plate grants. The office of Mahāśandhivigrahika was also instituted by him. This added extra-power to his authority. The first minister of war and peace Bhayaka, son of Śrī Sāmanta has been

mentioned in the Sambalpur University Plate. Bhayaka was succeeded by his son Savaradatta. A branch of the Datta family was occupying the position of Sandhivigrahika hereditarily in Kosala under the Somavamsis. It is presumed that Ranabhanjadeva appointed Hiradatta as Sandhivigrahika by the instruction of his Somavamsi suzerain.

Copper Plate Grants of Ranabhanjadeva

The Tasapaikera charter\(^1\) which is the earliest known grant of Ranabhanjadeva was issued from the capital Dhrti-pura whose donation of the village Tasapaikera was made in favour of Bhatta Šrī Sridhara belonging to Bhāradvāja gotra. The donee migrated from Bhatta Mirola and was a resident of Kamari. Tasapaikera is a village situated on the bank of Mahanadi in the Uttarapalli Viśaya of Khinjali-Mandala.

The Dasapalla charter\(^2\) of Ranabhanjadeva was issued on 24th regnal year. This charter registers the grant of the village Tulenda (Hastilenda) along with Pańchapallī in Tullasigā (Tullasinga) viśaya in favour of Bhatta Šrī Paduśakara belonging to Krishnatreyā gotra. The donee's family migrated from Pańchapaṭaka of Varendra-Mandala and resided at Burallā.

The Baud grant\(^3\) issued in his regnal year 26th, records the grant of the village Vallasrīṇa in the Khatia

2. Ibid. VI. pp.266-75
Viṣaya. The recipient was Bhaṭṭaputra Dāmodara who was an immigrant from Bhaṭṭa-grāma. Village Ballasrīga is identified with the modern Balasrīga, situated to the south of the river Mahanadi and east of the river Sālanki. After the death of Dāmodara the village was handed over to his son Chhadoka.

The Angapada Charter¹ was issued in the same regnal year of the previous Band charter. This charter registers the grant of the village Tūmasrīga, situated in the Sanjamura Khanda of Haṇḍapā-Mandala in favour of the Brāhmaṇa Dakura Śrīya. The donee was the resident of the village Gandharadī. It is significant from this charter that Raṇabhāṇja's territory extended into Dhenkanal up to the river Brahmani.

Śrī Viṣaya or Viṣaya Mahādevī, the Chief queen of Raṇabhāṇja and daughter of Miyānāma issued the Patna Museum plates². As per the charter, village Vaḥirabāda was donated for the worship of God Siddheśvara. The village was situated in Daksinapalli Viṣaya and its outskirt was washed away by the water of river Mahanadi. Evidently Viṣaya Mahādevī was a devout worshipper of Śiva and thus her record contains the invocatory verses to the God. She also declares her husband as the devotee of Viṣṇu and who has got the blessing of goddess Stambheśvarī. It is revealed from this charter that though Viṣaya Mahādevī was a worshipper of Śiva, her husband Raṇabhāṇja was a Vaiṣṇava. The regnal year of Patna Museum plates according to R. D. Banerjee is 22nd.

¹ To be edited by Prof. K. S. Behera of Utkal University.
² E.I., Vol. XX, pp. 100-04.
Niyārṇāma, the father of Mahādevī Vijayā, most probably belonged to Eastern Kādamba family of Kalinga. Scholars are inclined to identify him with the Kādamba chief Niyārṇāba, the grand father of Dharmakheḍi, because of the similarity of name. But similarity of name may not be taken as the only ground on which identification can be justified. Dharmakheḍi is known from his two records, namely, the Mandasa plates\(^1\) of the Saka year 917 (A.D.\,995) and the Santa-Bomali plates\(^2\) of the Gaṅga year 520 (A.D.\,1018). The name of Bhimakheḍi, who is the father of Dharmakheḍi, is known from the records of the latter. A complete genealogy of Eastern Kādambas is yet to be made as more than one Dharmakheḍi and Bhimakheḍi are found out in the records and the Mirakarpur Copper plates\(^3\) mention the name of one Dharmakheḍi who flourished a century before Dharmakheḍi of Mandasa plates\(^4\). It is, therefore, possible that there might be more than one king bearing the name of Niyārṇāba in that family. Niyārṇāba, grandson of Dharmakheḍi of Mandasa plates-flourished long after 1018 A.D. On the other hand Ranaabhāṇjadeva is supposed to have been ruling towards the last quarter of 8th century A.D. So it is improper to identify Niyārṇāba as the father-in-law of Ranaabhāṇjadeva. Niyārṇāma,


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The father of Vijayamahadevi who may be flourishing in the later part of 8th century A.D. probably be a remote predecessor of his name sake.

The Patna Museum plates are dated in chronogram as "Indu-Vak visanti-Varishe". In the Chronogram the words Indu and Vak each stand for 1(One). According to R.D. Banerjee the Visanti in the plate is Vimsati which means 20(twenty). In this way the Chronogram comes to 2011 (Indu=1, Vak=1, Vimsati=20 (Twenty)). But Banerjee without making proper adjustment of the date comments that the Chronogram rule (turning the figure from right to left) is not followed here and that it should be said as 22(1+1+20) which is the regnal year of the king. Hirananda Sastri, while accepting the interpretation of Banerjee, holds that Vak is four and, therefore, the date comes to twentyfive (1+4+20). This difference of calculations of these two scholars is insignificant. But this interpretation is subjected to doubt as the half chronogram is not seen in any other epigraphical records. It is also suggested that the word Visanti may be corrected and read as Visveti. Srimati S. Tripathy interpreted the word Visva as fourteen (Chaturdasa Bhuvana) and the date of the plate in the Vikram Samvat as 1411 which corresponds to A.D.1353. She, later on, describes her own calculation untenable on the ground that the Vikram era was not in vogue in

1. E.I., Vol.XX, pp. 100 ff.
2. I.O., Vol.VI, pp. 34.

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any of the Orissan epigraphy during the time under reference. Further she dismisses the word Visanti being unintelligible or spurious and read it as eleven which she says to be the king's regnal year. In our view, however, the word Vilveti would be three (Tri-Bhuvana) against fourteen as suggested by Srimati Tripathy. Accordingly, the date should be 311. If taken to be the date of Ganga Era would correspond to A.D.609. This is possible because the donor of the Patna Museum plates, Vijayamahadevi belonged to the Western Kadamba family whose rulers used Ganga Era which sometimes is known as Ganga-Kadamba Samvat. It is possible that Vijayamahadevi used Ganga-Kadamba Samvat to maintain the family tradition. Pandi's son Sivanaga, the merchant and goldsmith, engraved this charter. He was a man who engraved the undated Sonepur grant of Satrubhanjadeva and all the charters of Rana Bhakmittadeva up to his 26th regnal year. Sivanaga was appointed by Satrubhanjadeva and continued in the first part of the reign of Rana Bhakmittadeva. The date of Patna Museum plates engraved by this engraver can be ascribed to the first part of the reign of Rana Bhakmittadeva. It may be within or immediately after the 26th regnal year of the king.

The undated Baud grant of Rana Bhakmittadeva was issued sometimes after his 26th regnal year. The village Ambasari, located in the Sivira Khanda of Dakshinapalli Visha of Khinjali-Mandala was donated to Devahara belonging to Kanva gotra. He had migrated from the middle country and was

an inhabitant of the village Mahisipadraka. The plates were written by Padmakara, son of Pandi and an inhabitant of Gandhatapati. He also engraved the Singhara plates of king Ranabhānja in his 50th regnal year. This indicates that the dates of the undated Baud charter and the Singhara plates were not far apart from each other. Pandi, the father of Śivanāga, seems to be the grand father of Pandi, the father of Padmakara.

The three copper plate charters, namely, the Phulbani charter¹, the Singhara plates² and the Orissa Museum plates³ were issued in Namne or 50th regnal year of the king. In all the above charters he is described as the son of Śatrubhañjadeva. He is decorated with all the feudatory and royal titles, obtaining of the boon and favour of Sabaheśvari. The Phulbani plates record the grant of the village Kakati in the Tulasigadā Viśaya on the bank of the river Amboda. The donee was Damuni ghosa and an emigrant from Varendra-Mandala to Pundra Vardhana and then to Droniarla Pundara.

In the Singhara plates he donated the village Singhara Mahallopi situated in Bhogikhandha of Dakshinapalli. This was in favour of Brāhmaṇa Vohe (Vihe) who belonged to Kaśyapa gotra. The donee was an immigrant from Bhadrapalāśi in Madhyadesa (Magadhadesa) and came to reside in Gandhatapati of Khiṇjali. Vohe was probably the priest of God Narayanabhaṭṭāraka, who appears to be the presiding deity in the name of Milanādhava

1. Yet to be published.
2. J.B.O.R.S., VI, pp. 481-496.

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enshrined in Gandharādi Viṣṇu temple. It is notable that for the first time in his life Ranabhānja assumed the title of Pāramāhēśvara and donated in the name of Viṣṇu.

The Orissa Museum charter was the last one issued in the 50th regnal year of Ranabhānja. The grant of the village Barisamaa, on the bank of the river Mora in Royrā Viṣaya, is recorded here. Brāhmaṇa Pandit Varadā who was of Vatsa gotra received the donation from the grant. The donee migrated from Talashtaka and lived in Varl.

The Sambalpur University Museum charter is a unique one as the convention followed in the earlier charters is different from this. All the charters of Bhaṅja rulers of Bhartipura are written in a set form where invocatory verses in praise of Nāṭarājaśiva, in the opening lines, are mentioned. In the subsequent lines, description of the capital and monarch are presented. But this convention was totally discarded in the Sambalpur University Museum charter. No invocatory verse is found in it. The first plate which sings the prasasti of Ranabhānja is a carbon copy of the preamble portion of the charters of Pāṇḍuvahāli alias Somavahāli king Tivaradeva who flourished about 150 years before the Bhaṅja chief. This is an indication which shows that he might have emulated Tivaradeva who

2. Ibid, XXXIV, pp.111ff.

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was a feudatory chief under Sarabhapuriyas and subsequently became a sovereign ruler of Kośala. For the first time in this charter he assumed the title Mahārāja. The father of Ranabhanja-deva, given here, is Nettabhaṇja.

The grant of the village Champānalli in Uttarapalli Viṣaya is recorded in this charter. This was in favour of Brāhmaṇa Baladeva of Bhāradvāja gotra. He was an emigrant from Pundravarāhana Mahāstāna of Varindra-Mandala. Champānalli is identified with modern village Champānāl near Birmaharajapur in the ex-state of Sonepur. This is an ancient village famous for folk-paintings and for the temple of Champēśvara Siva. Champānalli is also referred to in a Telugu choda charter of late eleventh century.

The last two grants of Ranabhanja-deva were the two Baud charters issued respectively in the 54th and 58th regnal years. The ruler is described here as the son of Gandhaṭa. The first Baud grant\(^1\) donated to Brāhmaṇa Apilo was a resident of Āmbasarasarā, identified with Ambasarabhotta near Subalaya at a distance of about 15 K.Ms from Birmaharajapur. The donated village was Kontātinthi situated in Khatiyā-Viṣaya. The second Baud Charter\(^2\) records the grant of the village Turallā in Tullasrīga Viṣaya to Suđhodana belonging to Bhāradvāja gotra.

He migrated from Takāri and resided in Bhatta Taralā situated in

Odra-Viṣaya. This is the last known record of Ranabhānja-deva.

At the time of issue of two Baud charters Ranabhānja was at the height of his power and with the advancement of time his inclination was more towards Śaivism than Vaishnavism.

Śatrubhaṇja-deva II

Śatrubhaṇja-deva II, was probably the eldest son of Ranabhānja-deva and assumed the throne of Khiṅjali-Mandala after his father's death. The Kumurkela charter¹ was issued by him where he describes himself as the son of Āṅgadī, the second name of Ranabhānja-deva. Scholars generally identify Śatrubhaṇja-deva of Kumurkela grant with the donor of Sonepur grant and hold the opinion that he was the father and predecessor of Ranabhānja-deva. This has been already refuted above.

Śatrubhaṇja-deva II was an independent and an ambitious ruler. The semi-independent titles of Mahārāja was not even used by him. The Brahmaś varā temple inscription² of Kolāvatidevi mentions that the chief of Odre-Desa was killed by Janamejaya I, the Somavamsī king who was the ruler of South Kośala, in an open fight. This Odre-Desa was located in the Baud regions as indicated by Copper plate charters of the Somavamsī. This Baud region is without doubt Khiṅjali-Mandala. After this victory, the Somavamsī drove away the Bhanjas and annexed the Baud region into their territory. The Somavamsīs destroyed the capital Dhṛtī pura and built their own capital Yayātinagara. They

1. J.B.O.R.S., Vol.II, pp.429-435...

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organised the territory as a separate administrative unit and named it Odra-deśa. Satrubhaṇjadeva II, the last known Bhājja ruler, perhaps lost his life in this conflict with Somavānśī Janamejaya. The clash between Satrubhaṇjadeva II and Janamejaya I took place soon after the former assumed the throne of Khīṇja-Mandala. The earliest known charter, namely, the Vakratanatuli grant of Janamejaya was issued on his third regnal year. In his 8th regnal year the Nagpur Museum Copper plate charter which reveals some important facts, was issued. The name Odra-deśa which was given to Khīṇja-Mandala after it was conquered by the Somavānśīs, has occurred in this charter. The writer of Nagpur Museum charter was Dharadatta, the Sandhivigrahika under Janamejaya I. The name of their Minister is mentioned without the military title of Rāṇaka in the three known copper plate charters issued in the 6th regnal year of Janamejaya. In the sixth regnal year he issued three copper plate charters where the name Dharadatta has been mentioned without the title of Rāṇaka. The conferring of title Rāṇaka in the 8th regnal year gives some idea of a military success against the enemy of Somavānśīs. This enemy was perhaps Satrubhaṇja II who refused to accept the overlordship of the Somavānśīs. Another name mentioned in the Nagpur Museum charter is Dutaka Sādhāraṇa, son of Sobhanda and in subsequent charters he is described as belonging to the Bhāradvāj gotra and an emigrant from Takāri. The donee of last Baud grant

2. ibid., Vol.VIII, pp.132-43.
3. I.H.Q.,XX, pp.238-50
   E.I., III, pp.340-44.
of Ranabhaṇḍajadeva was Śubhādāma, son of Bṛhabhādāma who belonged to Bhāradvāja gotra and an immigrant from Takāri. These similarities lead us to believe that Sādhāraṇa belonged to the family of Śubhādāma in the kingdom of the Bhāṇjas. It is significant that immediately after the downfall of the Bhāṇjas, Janamejaya conferred on Sādhāraṇa great honours and distinctions and made him Prime Minister. Sādhāraṇa might have played an important role in the subjugation of the Bhāṇja power in the Odra-ḍesa. After this debacle, the Bhāṇjas left Baud-sonapur region and migrated to Ganjam region to establish themselves with renewed strength and vigour.

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