

PACHRAHI EXCAVATION – NEW INSIGHTS ON EARLY MEDIEVAL HISTORY OF CHHATTISGARH

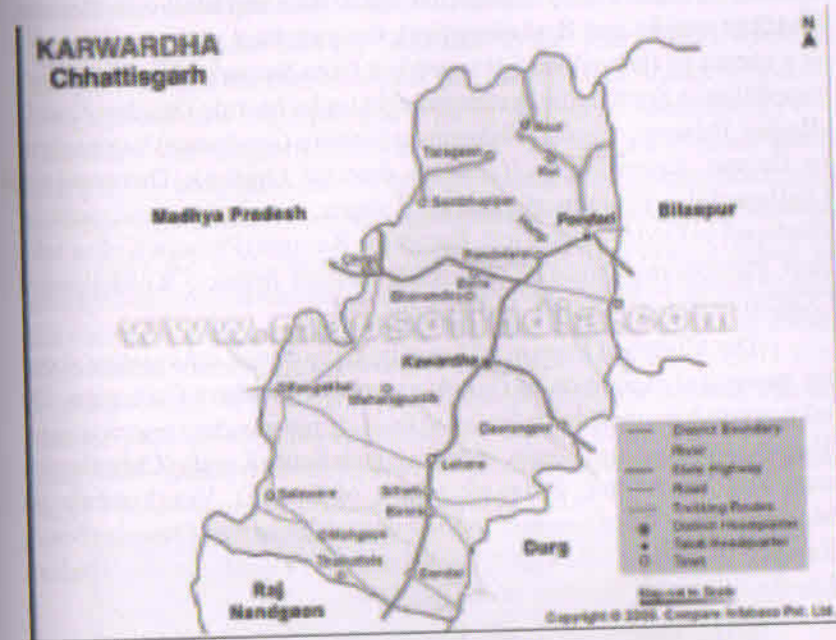
– Dr. Anil Kumar Pandey

After division of Madhya Pradesh into Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, most of the important historical sites went into the side of mother state. The Department of Culture and Archaeology, Government of Chhattisgarh started a project to excavate at many potential sites of Chhattisgarh like Sirpur, Tala, Dipadih etc. With the encouragement of outstanding discoveries of these sites, the Department again launched a project of explorations and excavations in 2007-08. Under this project three sites are selected for major excavation work i.e. Mallhar, Sirpur and Pachrahi. Now excavation has also started in Tarri- Ghat near Patan. Excavation works at Mallahar gives chronological sequences from Proto- Historic period to medieval times. Excavations at Sirpur unearthed rich cultural heritage of Chhattisgarh. Sirpur, situated on the bank of Mahanadi, served a capital of Panduvamsis rulers. Besides Buddhist monasteries and stupas, many temples of Saivism, Vaishnavism and Jainism are found there. Settlement pattern throw light on a very rich economic and cultural life of the area. Like these two sites, excavation at Pachrahi also gives new insights on the medieval history of Chhattisgarh.

Historical Geography

Among the medieval sites of Chhattisgarh, Pachrahi happens to be one of the largest settlements situated on the western bank of the river Haup. Pachrahi¹ is located in the Kabirdham district of Chhattisgarh. It is about 45 Kms from Kawardha and 17 km, from Bodla. The site is situated on the right bank of river Haup, which originates from Banki village situated on the border of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Two rivers- Haup and Haupnin originate from the village, river Haupnin flows towards Madhya Pradesh and joins river Narmada. But the river Haup flows in the districts of Kabirdham and

Durg and joins Seonath river.² The area is densely forested and surrounded by Maikal hill range.



History

The excavation at Pachrahi reveals many unknown facts of early medieval history of Chhattisgarh earlier known as South Kosala. The territory of South Kosala has been attributed to epic origin. It is mentioned in the journal of Royal Asiatic society of Great Britain and Ireland that Ram, the prince of Kosala being banished with his wife and brother travelled south from Ayodhya up to Prayaga, then south west to the Narmada valley, after which he came towards the region which may be identified with the state Chhattisgarh.³ He dwelt there or a period of ten years and Ram's long stay in that region gave to the name of South Kosala after his original homeland Kosala.⁴ Exactly the same tradition has been recorded in the Padma Purana.⁵

Emerging from the legendary period we reach the dawn of history in the middle of the 4th century A.D., when the great Emperor Samudra Gupta directed his attention to the conquest of the South, and the kingdom of the South Kosala, the old name of Chhattisgarh, was the first country he conquered in his ' kingdom taking 'expedition.'⁶

The Gupta period is regarded as the golden period of Indian history in the sense that Indian culture after crossing the Indian boundaries made a deep impact on Central Asia and Malaysia. Besides Buddhist monks and Brahmin priest, the merchant played a vital role as a carrier of this culture.⁷ It is evident from Samudra Gupta military expedition in South India that he brought under his rule Dakshin Kosala (Raipur, Bilaspur, Sripur), Mahakantar (eastern Gondwana) Sambhalpur in Orissa, Erandapalli (Ganjam district Orissa), Devarashtra (Yellamchili), Vizagapattan, Giri Kottura, Avamukta (old port of Neelapali in Godavari district), Pistapura, Kaurala (Perhaps Kollur lake near Pistapuram, Pallakka (Palakada Nellore district) Kusthalppura (Kuttalura in north Arcot) and Kanchi.⁸

The Allahabad Prasasti of Samudragupta carries information about his successful expedition of *Dakshinapatha* or Southern Campaign. He is known to have defeated rulers of at least six independent principalities. They are Mahendra of Kosala, identified with South Kosala, (Chhattisgarh state and Sambalpur, Bolangir region of Orissa), Vyaghararaja of Mahakantara (Part of Ganjam and Koraput), Mantaraja of Kurala (South Kosala), Mahendra of Pishtapura, Daman of Erandapalla (the modern Erandapalli near Chicacole in Andhra Pradesh).⁹

In the history of South Kosala, we find references of some dynasties who ruled in the region - Rajashitulya, Panduvamsi, Saravpuriyas, Nala and Somavamsi. In the medieval period, Kalachuris also ruled over the region. Phani Nagvamsis dynasty rose in the Kawardha region as a feudatory of Kalachuris and later became independent ruler after division of Kalachuris into two branches- Ratanpur and Raipur. But we have little information about this dynasty.

Phaninagvamsi of Kawardha established their power in 9th Century A.D. and continued their rule till middle 14th century as feudatories of Kalchuris of Ratanpur. Pachrahi is homeland of Phani- Nagvamsis dynasty. The discovery of Gold coin of Pratapmal Dev of Kalchuri dynasty is really unique and first time discovered in the South Kosala region. For the first time this excavations open a new chapter in the history of Chhattisgarh with the discovery of Phani-Nagvamsis traces in the form of gold coin of Nakkad Dev, silver coin of Sridhar Dev and Yasaraj Dev. Earlier no coins of this period are found in Chhattisgarh.

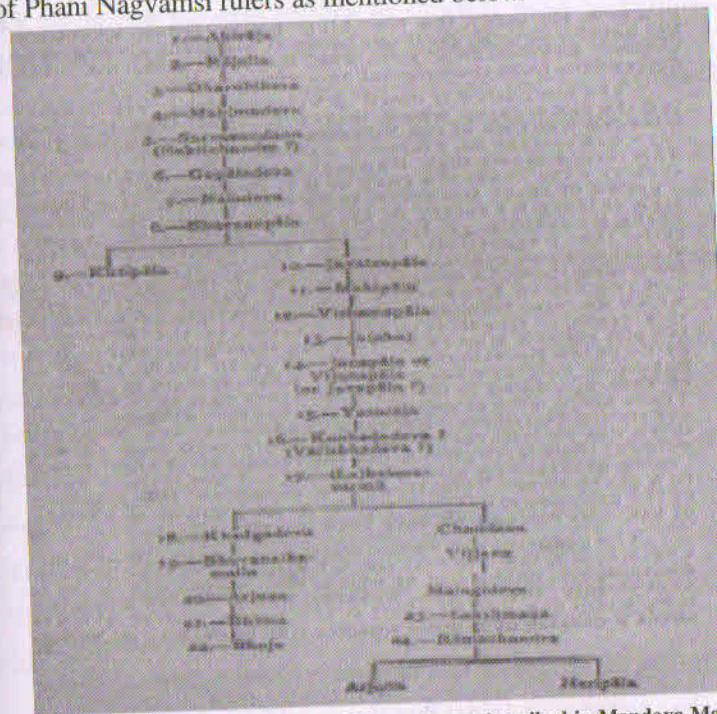
Earlier Information

Before excavation at Pachrahi, we have some information about

Phani Nagvamsis Dynasty of Kawardha region from the inscriptions found at Chaura (Mandava Mahal inscription), Chhapri (Bhoramdeo inscription), Sahaspur, Boria, Pujarilali etc.¹⁰

Pachrahi came into the limelight in the year 1880's when R. Jenkins surveyed the site, his report was published in Asiatic Research, it mentioned two inscriptions.¹¹ Father of Indian Archaeology Sir Alexander Cunningham also visited the site and has written about inscriptions, sculptures etc.¹² The after a long gap Sitaram Sharma in his work 'Bhoramdeo Kshetra', highlighted the art heritage of Pachrahi.

Here we will discuss history of Phani Nagvamsis based of inscriptions found at various places in Chhattisgarh like Mandava Mahal, Bhoramdeo, Sahaspur and Boria. We find an inscription of Phani Nagavanmsi rulers in a temple known as Mandava Mahal, about 11 Km. from Kawardha in a village Chaura. The inscriptions is dated Vikram Samvat 1406 (1349 A.D.) containing 37 lines, it gives description of a King Ramchandra who built a Siva temple. This inscription gives a detail list of Phani Nagvamsi rulers as mentioned below.¹³

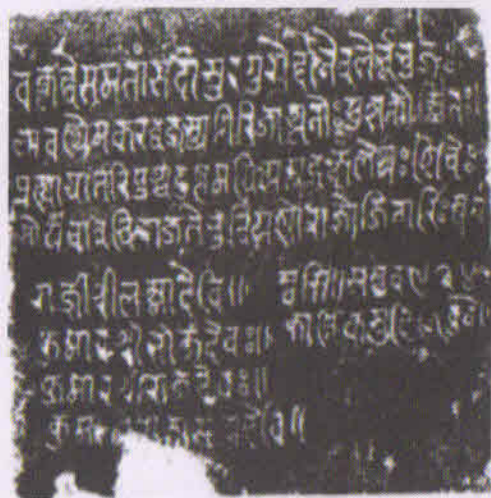


Family tree of Nagavamsi Rulers of Kawardha as described in Mandava Mahal Inscription (Chaura) of Ramchandra of Phani Nagvamsi Kings

From the lists of Kings given above, we find names of King Gopala Dev in Chhapri inscription (Bhoramdeo Temple) and Yasoraj in the Sahaspur inscription. According to list Gopal Dev and Yasoraj were 6th and 15th rulers of the dynasty. It is also apparent from the record that for about 500 years starting from 9th century A.D., Kawardha and its neighbouring areas were under direct control of Phani Nagvamsi rulers.

Another important inscription is of Chhapri, popularly known as Bhoramdeo inscription. (1088A.D.).¹⁴ we find important information about Phani Nagvamsi dynasty as the name of King Gopal Dev and date 840, apparently Kalachuri era (1088 A.D.) appeared in the inscription. Gopal Dev was supposed to be feudatory of Kalchuri rulers of Ratanpur.

Sahaspur inscription gives us detail description of king Yasoraja, 15th King in list given in Chaura (Mandava Mahal) inscription. The inscription dates 934 Kalachuri era (1182 A.D.). The inscription narrates the qualities of King Yasoraja as well as name of the queen, Lakshi Devi, his two sons- Bhoja Dev and Raja Dev and one daughter JaisailDevi.¹⁵



Source:- Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum , Vol. IV Part, 2, 1905, P. 595.

Translation of Sahaspur Inscription is given below.

Here on the earth shines that Yasoraja himself, who has conquered his enemies, who has always attained equality with the preceptor of

gods in eloquence. With the Bali in charity, with the crocodile- bannered (god of love) in beauty (and) with (Kartikeya) the son of Girija in great strength , who is Sibi in protecting even a wicked foe who comes back to him (for shelter). From fifth line, it gives name of the queen LakshmiDevi, Princes- BhojaDeva and Raja Deva and Princess- Jasaila Devi in the year 934 on the 15th day of Kartikeya, on Wednesday.

Boria statue Inscriptions of Jasaraja Deva of Kalachuri ruler was first discovered by Sir Alexander Cunningham in the year 1881-82 near the ruins of a Goddess Kankali. Later, Rai Bahadur Hiralal has given description of this inscription in his work, "Inscriptions in the Central provinces and Berar". In one of inscription (Dated 910 Chalukya Samvat or 1158-59 A.D.), we find the name of Thakura Maltu, Chief -Minister of King Jasaraja Deva, seems to be Yasoraj Dev of Sahaspur inscription (Chalukya Samvat 934) who built a temple for goddess Kankali. In Undated second inscription but of same period also mentioned the name of King Jasaraja Deva.¹⁶

New Evidences from excavations

Thus we have few references of some rulers of the early medieval of Kawardha region through these inscriptions. But we have very little information of their cultural, economic life and settlement pattern. But discovery of coins of Pratapmal Dev of Kalchuri dynasty and Sridhar Dev, Nakkad Dev and Yasoraj Dev from the recent excavation, added a new chapter in the history of the region. Coins of Gold, Silver and Copper materials are found there. No coins of this period are found in Chhattisgarh before excavations.

According to the report of excavation of this site published by Department of Culture and Archaeology, Government of Chhattisgarh, revealed five cultural phases.¹⁷

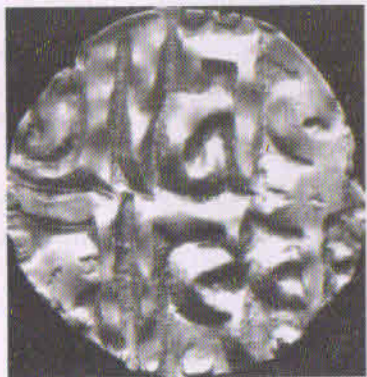
Period I	:	Pre-Historic
Period II	:	Post - Gupta period (Panduvamsi)
Period III	:	Kalchuri
Period IV	:	Phani-Nagvamsi
Period V	:	Islamic

This classification of the cultural sequences are determined on the basis of findings of tools, coins, potteries, structures, art motifs,

antiquities and other associated excavated materials.¹⁸ Before excavation of this site we have very little information about Phani-Nagvansa dynasty through some stone inscriptions found earlier. Period I comprised tools of both Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic. Period II contained fine red ware with appliqué design potsherds. In this phase, many brick structures are found at the mound of Kankalin Tila. Many plaques of Parvati, Kartikeya and other unidentified figure are revealed from this phase. Period III that is assigned to Kalachuri period, coins and some artistic motifs are found. The inhabitants of this period continued to live in brick built structures. Large numbers of iron and copper objects as well as antiquities comprising beads of terracotta and semi-precious stones are found. The cultural phase of period IV is marked by the findings of both gold and silver coins and other sculptural and architectural motifs and structures. We find a rich settlement pattern. The excavation has yielded a room with two fortification walls.¹⁹

Coins of Kalchuri Rulers

Three gold coins of Kalchuri period are found - one coin of Ratan Dev and two coins of Pratapmal Dev. Besides, these gold coins, more than 20 copper coins are also found from the site.



Obverse of Gold Coin of Kalachuri King Ratan Dev



Reverse of Gold Coin of Kalachuri King Ratan Dev

Picture of the coin is taken from Report "Excavations at Pachrahi (2007-09)" by Directorate of Culture Archaeology, Government of Chhattisgarh.

Golden coin of Kalachuri king Ratan Dev is in Devnagari script. On the obverse of the coin, we find the name of the king "Sri Ratan Dev and on the reverse there are some object and dots.



Obverse of Gold Coin of Kalachuri King Pratapmal Dev



Reverse of Gold Coin of Kalachuri King Pratapmal Dev

Picture of the coin is taken from Report "Excavations at Pachrahi (2007-09)" by Directorate of Culture Archaeology, Government of Chhattisgarh.

Two gold coins of Pratapmal Dev have been found from the site. On the obverse of the coin the name of the King "Sri Pratapmal Dev" has been written in Devnagari script and on the reverse, a figure is inscribed. Some scholars identified this figure with God Hanuman.

Coins of Phani- Nagvamsi Rulers.

Before excavation of this site we have very little information about Phani- Nagvansa dynasty. Earlier information came from some stone inscriptions that have already been discussed. Excavations at Pachrahi revealed five coins of Phani- Nagvamsi dynasty of Kawardha. Excavations at Pachrahi revealed five coins of Phani- Nagvamsi dynasty of Kawardha. Among these coins, one gold coin of Nakkad Dev, three silver coins of Shridhar Dev and one silver coin of Yasaraj Dev and Jaytrapal are traced out,²⁰ besides coins; this site is dotted with many temples and religious shrines. From the iconographic point of view, this sculpture belonged to 11th -12th century. These temples might have contained their sanctity during the time of Phani- Nagvamsi.²¹



Obverse of Gold Coin of Phani-Nagvamsi Ruler Nakkad Dev



Reverse of Gold Coin of Phani-Nagvamsi Ruler Nakkad Dev

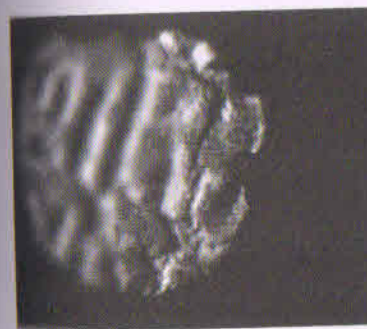
Picture of the coin is taken from Report "Excavations at Pachrahi (2007-09)" by Directorate of Culture Archaeology, Government of Chhattisgarh.



Obverse of Gold Coin of Phani-Nagvamsi Sridhar Dev



Reverse of Gold Coin of Phani-Nagvamsi Sridhar Dev



Silver coins of Phani Nagvamsi Dynasty

Picture of the coin is taken from Report "Excavations at Pachrahi (2007-09)" by Directorate of Culture Archaeology, Government of Chhattisgarh.

The coins found from Pachrahi throw new lights on political, economic and cultural history of Chhattisgarh. Gold coin of Nakkad Dev was found from the layer three, just above the Kalachuri level of area I.²² On the obverse of the gold coin inscriptions deciphered as "Shri Nakkad Deva" On the reverse, the king is shown as virasan mudra with a danda and a bull is depicted on the upper left corner of the coin. The headgear of the king is well decorated and he wears a dhoti. The other three silver small coins are of "Shri Dhar Deva" of Phani-Nagvamsi of Kawardha. On the obverse, the name "Shri Dhar Deva" in Devnagari script and on reverse some symbols are depicted. So far genealogy is concerned; Dharnidhar was the third ruler of this dynasty and Nakkad Dev probably 16th ruler of this dynasty.²³ According to Mandava Mahal inscription, there is a name KanhaDev or Vallabha Dev as 16th ruler of the dynasty. It seems that Kanha Dev may be also known as Nakkad Dev. Another silver coin of Yasoraj Dev of this dynasty was also found out. On the obverse "Yasoraj Dev" in Devnagari, and on the reverse some symbols are marked.

Thus, on the basis of the material, terracotta figures, statues of gods and Goddess, settlement pattern that are known to public through excavation at Pachrahi open a new chapter in the history of South Kosala. Coins of Gold, Silver and copper found from excavation helps to understand the history of Kalchuri and Phani-Nagvamsis rulers. Evidence of Kalachuri and Phani Nagvamsi coins from the same site proves that Phani Nagvamsis were feudatory rulers of Kalchuri Kings, but when Kalchuri rulers became weak, they acted as independent rulers.

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पूर्व मध्यकालीन मध्य गंगा-यमुना दोआब का पुरातत्व “अलीगढ़ के विशेष संदर्भ में”

- डॉ. अशोक कुमार

अलीगढ़ जनपद मध्य गंगा-यमुना दोआब में 27°54' उत्तरी अक्षांश एवं 78°5' पूर्वी देशान्तर के मध्य दिल्ली-हावड़ा रेलमार्ग एवं ग्रांट ट्रक रोड पर स्थित है। इसका विस्तार पूर्व से पश्चिम दिशा में लगभग 120 किमी. तथा उत्तर से दक्षिण दिशा में लगभग 72 किमी. है। इसका आकार षड् भुजाकार है।¹ अलीगढ़ जनपद का गंगा-यमुना दोआब के मध्य में स्थित होना जनपद को ऐतिहासिक दृष्टिकोण से अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण बनाता है। अलीगढ़ जनपद के विभिन्न स्थानों से प्रागैतिहासिक कालीन अवशेष प्राप्त हुये है। अन्वेषण के आधार पर यह ज्ञात होता है कि यहाँ पर सभ्यता का उद्भव लगभग 1500 ई. पू. के आसपास हुआ होगा। जनपद के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों से OCP, BRW, PGW, NBPW संस्कृति से संबंधित अनेक पुरातात्विक अवशेष मिले हैं।² इसी प्रकार यहाँ से मौर्य-कुषाण काल, गुप्तकाल एवं गुप्तोत्तर काल से संबंधित अनेक पुरातात्विक साक्ष्य मिले है, जिनमें ईंट, मूर्ति, मन्दिरों एवं मकानों के अवशेष इत्यादि मुख्य है। हर्षवर्धन की मृत्यु से उत्पन्न राजनैतिक उथल-पुथल का प्रभाव अलीगढ़ जनपद पर भी पड़ा। यशोवर्धन के पश्चात यहाँ पर गुर्जर-प्रतिहारों, तोमरों एवं डोर राजपूतों का शासन रहा। पूर्वमध्य काल पुरातत्व के दृष्टिकोण से अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है एवं मध्यगंगा दोआब में जिला अलीगढ़ से इस काल के विभिन्न पुरातात्विक अवशेष प्राप्त हुये है। यह शोध पत्र पूर्व मध्यकालीन मध्य गंगा-यमुना दोआब में सभ्यताओं के विकास को जानने के उद्देश्य से अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। यह शोध पत्र पुरातात्विक सर्वेक्षण एवं अध्ययन पर आधारित है। अलीगढ़ जनपद के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों से प्राप्त पूर्व मध्यकालीन पुरातात्विक अवशेषों का क्रमवार वर्णन निम्नलिखित है -

(i) गजलक्ष्मी की मूर्ति (An Image of Gaja-Lakshmi)³

अलीगढ़ जनपद से एक गजलक्ष्मी की मूर्ति मिली है, इस मूर्ति के पुरातात्विक अध्ययन से ज्ञात होता है कि इस मूर्ति का निर्माण 8वीं एवं 9वीं शताब्दी के मध्य गुप्तोत्तर काल में हुआ। गजलक्ष्मी की यह मूर्ति अलीगढ़ मुस्लिम विश्वविद्यालय के पुरातात्विक संग्रहालय में रखी हुयी है, जिसका आक्सेशन नं. 36 (Accession No. 36) है। इस मूर्ति