Placename reflected in the inscriptions of Nalas dynasty of Odisha

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The Nalas were an ancient dynasty that can be traced to its lineage from the Nisada king Nala of epic fame. In the 5th century A.D. they were very powerful and engaged in a constant ‘tug of war’ with their contemporary, the Vakataka. In the war the Vakataka destroyed the power of Nalas, as a result of which the Nalas migrated to Upper Mahanadi valley of Odisha and from there they shifted to Khindingi region of Ganjam district, where they founded the Khindirāśranga-mandala in 9th-10th century A.D. so far as their inscriptions are concerned.

Khindirāśranga has been mentioned in Madras plate\(^1\) and Orissa Museum\(^2\) plate of Narendradhavalas and Panḍiāpathar copper plate of Bhimasena\(^3\) and Dirhasi inscriptions\(^4\) of Ganga. Of these the first plate was a sale deed issued by one ‘Rānakā’ Chonghaka from Dharanimpha, the capital of Gomuṇḍa-mandala (probably Gomuṇḍa-mandala was a sub feudal lords under the Nalas). It speaks that Gomunda-mandala was a sub feudal lords under the Nalas. It speaks that Gomunda-mandala of Nagas, situated within Khindirāśranga-mandala of the Narendradhavalas\(^5\). The latter two inscriptions have been issued from Bhimapura which was the capital of Khindirāśranga named after the King Bhimasena of Nala dynasty. Besides that the last but not the least the Dirghasi inscription of Ganga also mentioned the principalities Gidirisingi which identified with Khindirasiṣranga by S.N. Rajguru. He further holds the view that Khindirāśranga-mandala of Nala comprised of the ex-zamindaries of Dharakot, Sorada, Badagada, and Seraṣa of Ganjam district of Odisha\(^6\). On the North of Khṇḍiṣraṅga was located, the Khniṃjali-mandala of the Bhaṅja in the South, Śvetaka-mandala of Ganga was situated.

Inscriptions

During period of study (736-1568 A.D.) we have got three sets of copper plates grants of Khindirāśranga discovered from Ganjam district do not provide any concrete information about origin of Nalas dynasty. However on the basis of these three grants we try to reconstructed the history of Nalas. The list of inscriptions is given below.
Thus all the copper plates have been discovered in the Aska region and Sadar Ganjam area of Ganjam district of Odisha which speaks that the Khndiraśranga was located in this area.

Chronology

The Madras Museum plates\textsuperscript{6} and Orissa Museum plates\textsuperscript{7} of Narendra dhavala informs us to fix the chronology of Nalas of Khndiraśranga. The Madras Museum plates inform about KingŚilābhañja-I of Dhripura house of the Bhañja of Khiñjali from whom an individual Sesā by name had originally purchased village Talesvara (situated in Gomunda-mandala) which is now being sold away to Thakura Konvi, Umva and Domvi. The engraver of the charter, Padmanābha son of gold smith and trader pandi, a resident of Gandhadi-pati, also appears as engraver, in some charters of Ranabhañja deva of Dhripura. Therefore, the ruler of Khndiraśranga and Gomunda as mentioned in the present charter was contemporaries of KingRanabhañja of Khiñjali-mandala which is placed in between 8\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. to 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.\textsuperscript{8}. Orissa Museum plate\textsuperscript{9} dated 189 = 925 A.D. and Pandiāpathar plates\textsuperscript{10} dated 89=825 of Narendradhavala and Bhīmasena respectively also help us to fix the tentative time of Nalas of Khndiraśranga. It provided that these rulers were the contemporaries of Bhauma queen, Dandimahādevī and Vakulamahādevī and may acknowledged the over lordship of the Bhaumakara. Thus the above observation speaking that the Nalas of Khndiraśranga can be placed between cir A.D. 800 and cir A.D. 930.

Kingdom

The three sets of copper plates of Khindinriśraga-mandala have been discovered in Aska of Ganjam district which led the scholars to locate the mandala in Ganjam district. According to S.N. Rajguru\textsuperscript{11} and V.Rangacharya\textsuperscript{12} Khindiraśranga consisted of the present four ex-zamindaris in Ganjam namely Dharakota, Seragada, Badagada and Sorada. But D.C. Sircar\textsuperscript{13} identified this mandala with present Dandārsingha in Bihar (India map sheet No. 7311/5). The view of D.C. Sircar is not acceptable on the ground that Khindirśrnga is far beyond the north of the river Brāhmaṇi cannot be thought of. Possibly the view of Rajguru and V.Rangacharya is correct and the Khindiraśranga-mandala bounded on the north Khiñjali-mandala of Bhañjas, on the South Śvetakadhiraṇya of the Ganga. Many rulers like Narendradhavala, Bhīmasena were ruling feudatories of

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. N.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Find Spot</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ganjam</td>
<td>Somewhere in Ganjam</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhere in Aska-Ganjam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bhaumakara of Tosala. The capital of *mandala* was Bhimapura which was probably named after the name of King Bhīmasena.

**Historical geography**

It is a matter of controversy among the scholars about the historical geography of Khindiraśranga-mandala. D.C. Sircar wants to take the place Khindiraśranga as equivalent to a place Kandarśiṅgha shown in S.I. sheet map 73 H/5 in Bihar. B.Mishra inclined to take Khindiraśranga as identical with a place Hidsingi in Angul district scholars like S.N. Rajguru, N.K. Sahu and V.Rangacharya suggested the ex-zamindaris of Dharakota, Badagada Sorada and Seragada in Ganjam collectively known as early mediaeval Khindinraśrnga. This view seems to be tenable and majority of scholars have been accepting this view. As we have started earlier that, on the north of this *mandala* the Bhañja of Khiñjali-mandala and on the south the Śvetakadhirajya were situated. Thus the Khindiraśranga- mandala of Nalas included large portion of Ganjam district probably having its capital Bhimapura.

**Political head quarter/capital**

The Pandiāpathar plate and Orissa State Museum plates of Kings Bhīmasena and Narendradhavalla respectively issued from its capital Bhimapura. The head quarter has been identified with present town Bhimapura¹⁴ surrounded by hills and forest on all sides in Ganjam district. It also shown in the Survey of India map (sheet No. 74 A/11) possibly the capital was named after King Bhīmasena. On the other side scholar like S.Tripathy identified the capital of Khindiraśranga with a place name Dharakote¹⁵ in Ganjam district.

**Kingdom territorial**

As has been stated earlier the three copper plates of Nalas and Dirghasi copper plates of Ganga mentioned the Khindiraśranga-mandala over which the rulers of Nalas family held their sway. The *mandala* has two *viṣayos* namely Kamandulapatta-visaya and Heṭṭhāpata-visaya which constituted many villages like Karmatala-grāma, and Śaucapura. Beside this the Madras Museum plates also informs us about some place names like Tadesvara-grāma and Gomunda-mandala situated within Khindiraśranga.

**Khinḍiraśrṇga-maṇḍala**

All the charters of Nalas in between (736 to 1568)¹⁶ and Dirghasi copper plate of Ganga referred to the Khindiraśranga-mandala. Scholars have different opinions regarding the identification of Khindiraśranga-
mandala. D.C. Sircar identified it with present Kandarsingha in Bihar shown in S-I sheet map 73H/50-2. B. Mishra located it with Hidsingi in Angul district. On the other side some scholars suggested the ex-zamindaris of Dharakota, Badagada, Seragada, and Sorada in Ganjam district collectively known as Khindiraśranga.

Gomuṇḍa-maṇḍala

The Madras Museum plates of Narendra Dhabala reflected the Gomunda-mandala within the Khindiraśsanga-mandala. N.K. Sahu deciphers it as Somunda and identified it with the present village Sumanda in Ganjam district. S. Tripathy holds the view that, Gomunda-mandala was a part of Khindiraśranga-mandala.

Viṣaya

There are only two viṣayas found in the inscriptions viz. Kamandula-patta-visaya and Hethapata-visaya in the Khindiraśranga-mandala.

Table-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of inscription</th>
<th>viṣaya</th>
<th>khanda</th>
<th>villages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Orissa Museum plate of Narendra Dhabala</td>
<td>Hethāpata- viṣaya</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Śaucapura, Hastipada(R.D.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pandipather copper plate of Bhīmasena</td>
<td>Kamaṇḍula Paṭṭa- visaya</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Kūrmatalā-grāma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Madras Museum plate of Narendra Dhabala</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Tadesvara-grāma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Village

The epigraphs record of the Nalas informs us about four villages known as Śaucapura, Kūrmatalā, Hastipada, and Tadeśvarā-grāma. The village was the lowest unit of Nalas administration which is known from their inscriptions.
Table-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>viṣaya</th>
<th>khanda</th>
<th>villages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hetṭhāpata</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kamaṇḍula</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identification

1. Hetṭhāpata-viṣaya and village Śaucapura.

The Orissa Museum copper plate\(^1\) of Narendradhavala mentioned the donated village Śaucapurain Hetṭhāpata-viṣaya in Khindiraśranga-mandala. The charter also informs us about donee migrated village Hastipada. None of the above place name identified still today.

2. Kamaṇḍula-Paṭṭa-viṣaya and village Kūrmatalā-grāma.

The Pandiapather copper plate\(^2\) of King Bhīmasena referred to Kūrmatalā-grāma in Kamandula-viṣaya within the Khindiraśranga-mandala. All the place names remained unidentified.

3. Tedeśvara-grāma.

The Madras Museum copper plate\(^3\) of King Narendra Dhavala mentioned the village Tedeśvara-grāma situated within the Khindiraśranga-mandala. The charter also informs us about another place name Dharanimpha. The place names are not yet identified satisfactory.

Place names Analysis

Place names suffixes

The suffixes -grāma, -śrāṅga, -mandala, -pura, -tāla and -pata found in the Nalas inscription have already been discussed in earlier chapters.

Prefix place names

Prefix denoting society

bhimapura

The place name Bhimapura has been reflected in all the charters of Nalas with its capital and issued place. Probably the place was named after King Bhīmasena.
The prefix *kūrma* has occurred in the Pandiāpathar copper plate grant of Bhīmasena with the place name Kūrmatalā-grāma. The place name may be Karmatala i.e. a work place. Possibly the village was a working place at the time of Nalas rule.

**Prefix denoting fauna**

*gomuṇḍala*

The place name Gomundala occurs in the Madras Museum copper plate of King Narendradhavala with place name Gomunda-mandala within the Khindiraśranga. The place Gomundala seems to be named after cowherds.

**hettha**

The Orissa State Museum copper plates of King Narendradhabala mentioned the prefix *hettha* with the place name ‘Hetthāpata’. The place name denoted wild animal ‘Hetabag’ i.e. Hyenna. Probably the village was named after this wild animal.

**sauca**

The above inscription of same king of same dynasty mentioned the prefix *sauca* with the place name Saucapura. The village probably was named after ‘Sukari’ i.e. pig.

**NOTE & REFERENCES**

17. From 736-1568 is ours period of study.