

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	1123	Press Mis.
Dated	7.2.57	18

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
3rd August 1869.*

Read the following papers :—

No. 24. From J. H. MASTER, Esq., Acting Collector of Vizagapatam, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Vizagapatam, 30th October 1867, No. 886.

I have the honour to forward, by banghy, three sets of copper sasanams. They were found by a man while digging in Cheepurupilli of the Vizianagram Zemindary. Specimens of the pot are enclosed.

2. I have tried every means of deciphering the characters by sending them to some of the learned Pundits in the Maharaja of Vizianagram's service, but without success.

3. The Reverend J. Hay, M.A., of the London Missionary Society, has also had the sasanams to compare with certain alphabets of Nepal proper in his possession, but can make nothing of them. It is suggested that if photographs and their lithographs be taken, it might be practicable to decipher the characters.

4. I enclose the alphabets from Mr. Hay, which I beg may be returned when no longer required.

No. 25. From J. A. C. BOSWELL, Esq., Acting Collector of Nellore, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Nellore, 6th June 1868, No. 1696.

With reference to my letter, dated 21st March 1868, No. 842, in reply to G. O., dated 29th October 1867, No. 1348, I beg to forward, herewith, copy of the impression of a sasanam or series of copper-plates which I have had printed at the District press as a specimen. Mr. Burnell, the Sub-Collector, has found some of the sasanams in the district to be of great antiquity, some in Sanscrit and Tamil. I request the instructions of Government as to whether they would wish a number of copies, and if so, how many to be struck off each, as these form the most interesting and genuine antiquities of the district. To facilitate deciphering the impressions have been taken both in obverse and reverse.

No. 26. From the Reverend T. FOULKES, Chaplain of Vepery, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Landon's Garden, 29th May 1869.

I have the honour to refer you to the Official Memorandum of Mr. Lilly, Acting Under Secretary to Government, of the 2nd February last, No. 35, Public Department.

2. I have also the honour to return the three sets of copper-plates and the package of printed impressions, together with the letters of the Collectors of Vizagapatam and Nellore, which were sent to me with that memorandum.

3. In the course of a few days I will send by post from the Shervaroy Hills a translation and description to accompany the copper-plates, which I hope you will be good enough to regard as supplementary to this letter.

No. 27. From the Reverend T. FOULKES, Chaplain of Vepery, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Salem, 26th June 1869.

In continuation of my letter of the 29th ultimo I have now the honour to send, herewith, a translation, marked A, of the oldest of the three copper-plate inscriptions which accompanied that letter.

2. In referring to these copper-plate sets in this letter, I will call them No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3, in the order of their date.

3. No. 1, which may be distinguished by its thinner plates, and the greater boldness of the characters inscribed on them, is a grant of a village called Kalvakonda, in the district of Dinila, made by Vishnu Vardhana Maharaja to two Brahmin brothers, Vishnu Sharmma and Madhava Sharmma, to be converted into a Brahmin settlement, in commemoration of an eclipse of the moon.

4. Several princes of the name of Vishnu Vardhana have reigned in Southern India; but the present grantor is identified in these plates as the younger brother of Satyashraya of the Chalukya dynasty.

This dynasty was founded by Jaya Simha, who invaded the Deccan about the beginning of the fifth century, A.D., but was defeated by Trilochana, king of the Pallavas, who were then the dominant race in those parts. Jaya Simha's posthumous son, Vishnu Vardhana, subsequently reversed his father's misfortune, and established himself in the kingdom of Kuntala, the capital of which was Kalyan, which still exists in the neighbourhood of Beder in the Nizam's territory, where his descendants reigned down to the close of the twelfth century, A.D. His great grandson, Kirtti Varmma, had two sons, Satyashraya, who succeeded to the throne of Kalyan, and Vishnu Vardhana, the donor of inscription No. 1.

On the death of Kirtti Varmma there appears to have been some political disorder at Kalyan; for Satyashraya did not succeed his father until after his uncle, Mangalisa, had reigned for some time. It was probably in consequence of this usurpation that the younger son, the grantor of No. 1, was induced to push his own fortunes at a distance from the scene of the family troubles. Whatever may have been the cause of the emigration, this Vishnu Vardhana, who is surnamed Kubja, or little, went eastwards into the Telugu districts below the ghauts, and conquered Vengipuram, the capital of the country, between the rivers Godavery and Kistna, and founded the dynasty of the Western Chalukyas, whose capital was subsequently fixed at Rajahmundry, and whose territory ultimately extended from Ganjam to Nellore, over which they reigned down to the latter half of the eleventh century A.D.

5. The Agraharam of Kalavakonda, which was bestowed by grant No. 1, appears to have been swept away during this long interval, or its name has been changed. I have made several inquiries about it from persons acquainted with the neighbourhood of its probable site unsuccessfully.

My search for Dimila, the district in which this village was situated, has been more successful. The Collector of Vizagapatam has been kind enough to make inquiries for me in his district, and I have received the following letter from him:—

“VIZAGAPATAM, 12th May 1869.

“DEAR SIR,

“After making all inquiries on the subject of your letter of the 4th March, I regret to be unable to assist you in your researches. The sasanam in question was found near the village of Cheepurupilli, but there are no traces in the neighbourhood of any Agraharam called Kalvakondah.

“There is a village called Dimila in the taluq of Sarvassiddy, about five miles from the coast, and about eighty-five miles to the south of Cheepurupilli, which at one time was of more importance than now, and may have been the head-quarters of a district.”

6. The present grant is not dated, but the period of Vishnu Vardhana's conquests is ascertainable from other sources. A grant made by his grandfather Pulakesi, which is in the British Museum, bears the date 411 of Salivahana's era, corresponding with 489 A.D., and a similar grant by his own brother, Satyashraya, is in the possession of a Jaina Guru at Hyderabad, and bears the date 534 of Salivahana, or A.D. 612. The date of No. 1 may thus be fixed about the beginning of the 7th century A.D., and this set of copper-plates will, therefore, be about twelve hundred years old.

7. The language of this grant is Sanscrit: and the character in which it is written is a developed form of that which is found in the inscriptions on the topes and caves of Central and Western India.

I have the honour to annex to this letter a table, marked B., of such of the letters of this alphabet as occur in this grant with their Roman equivalents.

It appears from Mr. Master's letter to Government of the 30th October 1867, forwarding these copper-plates, that he had “tried every means of deciphering the characters by sending them to some of the learned Pundits in the Maharaja of Vizianagram's service, but without success.” Before attempting to decipher the plates myself, I also similarly tried to find some one in Madras or the neighbourhood who could read this character; and I have been equally unsuccessful. It is much to be regretted that this and other cognate ancient alphabets of India should have become so generally a dead letter, and that consequently the inscriptions or grants like the present one, and on the walls of temples, &c., should be incapable of being read by learned natives, who could most readily turn these almost solitary memorials of the ancient history of their country to proper account.

8. Plates No. 2 and No. 3 are similar grants of villages to Brahmins. Both of them are written in the Sanscrit language, and the mixed characters used in them are of two somewhat later forms of that in which No. 1 is written; but the engraving of No. 2 and No. 3 is of an inferior kind and carelessly done, and, therefore, the forms of some of the letters cannot always be fixed with certainty. Several of the letters are also partially or wholly obliterated. Some of the letters of the Devanagari character are introduced in these two grants, while the corresponding letters of the “cave alphabet” seem to be quite familiar to the engraver. This seems to show that, at the time when these grants were made, the Devanagari alphabet was growing into use, but had not yet superseded the older characters.

9. No. 2, which is the shorter of the two inscriptions on the thicker plates, having only three sides of writing, is a grant of a village, the name of which I have not been able to make out, by Shri Ananta Varmma Deva, the son of Shri Jaya Varmma Deva, to a Brahmin named Vishnu Sharmma of the Gantama Jotra, to commemorate an eclipse of the moon.

10. No. 3 is a similar grant of the village of Pankipachri to Ajyashthamayya Sharmma, the son of Susugaya Sharmma, of the Solita Gotra, by Shri Rajendra Varmma Deva Raja, the son of Ananta Varmma Deva, (the donor of No. 2,) the son of Jaya Varmma Deva, to commemorate an eclipse of the sun.

11. I have not been able to identify the series of princes here named. A king of the name of Jaya Varmma Deva, the only one of this name which I can find, reigned in Malwa in A.D. 1143; but his pedigree does not correspond with that of

3rd August 1869.

these grants. "Deva Raja" was a common title of one of the dynasties of the Orissa princes; but the donors of these grants are not amongst them.

A.

TRANSLATION OF INSCRIPTION NO. 1.

Prosperity. The royal moon risen above the ocean of the glorious Chalukya race, whose two lotus-like feet glitter with the radiance of the gems of the crown of rival kings bowing down before him like creeping plants, defeated by his frowns, is the illustrious Satyashraya Vollabha Maharaja.

His beloved younger brother, the surmounter of difficulties, who has succeeded in penetrating inaccessible fortresses situated in the midst of plains, lakes, forests, and mountains; the cow of plenty, raining down showers of wealth upon distressed and poverty-stricken Brahmins; the crocodile bannered one, [the Hindoo Cupid,] who by his beautiful form inspires young maidens with love; the destroyer of the spirit of misery, [Kali,] drowning it in the whirlpools of the ocean of his benefactions; adorned with unsullied and highly distinguished glory arising out of his many wars and conquests; revered throughout the world like Manu, full of renown like Prithu and accounted wise as Vrihaspati; an orthodox worshipper of Supreme Brahma; the illustrious Vishnu Vardhana Maha raja issues his commands in this present matter to the assembled heads of families inhabiting the village of Kalvakonda, in the district of Dimila, as follows:—

In order to promote his own religious merit, length of days, good health, and fame, on account of the eclipse of the moon which took place in the month of July, the abovenamed village has been granted to Vishnu Sharmma and Madhava Sharmma of the Gantama tribe and the Jaittiriya sect, of the village of Chejuplura in the district of Riaki, learned in the Vedas, Vedangas, Itikasas, Puranas, Dharma Shastras, and many other technical books, the sons of Durgga Sharmma, zealous in the performance of the rites of his order as prescribed in his own section of the Veda which he has thoroughly studied, and the grandsons of Brahma Sharmma, a successful student of the Vedas and Vedangas, to be converted into a Brahmin settlement (agrahara) free of all taxes.

Let no one molest them in the enjoyment of it; in accordance with the following two verses of the Jyana Gita:—

1st.—Lands have been bestowed by many persons;
By many also they have continued to be protected;
Whosoever and whatsoever those lands may have been,
He has obtained a corresponding reward.

2nd.—The bestower of land shall be happy in heaven
For sixty thousand years:
And both he who resumes it, and he who concurs in the act,
Must dwell in hell for the same number of years.

(Signed) T. FOULKES.

No. 28. ORDER THEREON, 3rd August 1869, No. 1033.

The Government are much indebted to the Reverend Mr. Foulkes for his interesting letter, and for the translation which he has been good enough to make of the Sasanam No. 1. The Public Works Department is requested to have the key to the character in which the inscription is written, which has been furnished by Mr. Foulkes, lithographed at the Government Lithographic Press.

2. The Government direct that the Sasanams, together with copies of these proceedings, and of the key to the character of Sasanam No. 1, and the printed copies

of a Sasanam found in the Nellore district, forwarded with the Collector's letter of the 6th June 1868, No. 1696, be deposited in the Library of Oriental MSS.

(True Extract).

R. A. DALYELL,
Actg. Secy. to Govt.

To the Reverend T. Foulkes.

„ Collector of Vizagapatam.

„ Do. of Nellore.

„ Public Works Department, with the key.

„ Director of Public Instruction, with Sasanams, &c.

Ed. J. Wright.

No. 1696-

Collector (D. & Free)
6th June 1868.

From

J. & C. Burnell Esqrs.
Selling Collector of Bellary.

To

The Honorable R. L. Ellis Esq.
Chief Secretary to Government Public Dept.
Fort Saint George.

Sir

With reference to my letter dated 21st
March 1868 & 8.842, in reply to G. O. dated
29th October 1867, N. 1348 I beg to forward
herewith copy of the impression of a Sashanam
or series of copper plates which have had
printed at the District Press as a specimen.
Mr. Burnell the Sub Collector has found some
of the Sashanams in the District to be of
great antiquity some in Sanscrit & Tamil.
I request the instructions of Government as
to whether they would wish a number
of copies and if so how many to be struck
off each, as these form the most in-
teresting and genuine antiquities of
the

Govt. of 1868 Madras.

PUBLIC.

THE REVEREND F. FOLGERS.

Rev. Secy. Secy.

Dated August, 3rd.

Recd.

Encl.

G. O., 3rd August 1868, N. 1083.

AUGUST.

Nos. 24-28

Nothing at present reference to the printing
the translation furnished by the Reverend Mr.
Folgers of a Sashanam discovered in the Vizag-
apatnam district.

Direct. To facilitate deciphering
the impressions have been taken both
in obverse and reverse.

I have the honor to be

Sir,

Your most obed^t Serv^t

John M. Smith

Acting Collector

11x22

The Father

[illegible]

229/2

[illegible]

Read the following letters from the
 Acting collector of Tirayapatam / Here enter 30th October 1867, No 886
 Collector of Bellare — / Here enter 6th June 1868, No 1696
 Reverend J. Faulkes — / Here enter 29th May + 26th June/69

Order Bureau 3rd Aug. 184. R. 1083.

The Government
are much indebted to the
Reverend Mr. Faulkes for
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Sasanian, No. 1. The
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is requested to have the
key to the character in
which the inscription
is written, which has
been furnished by
Mr. Faulkes, lithographed
at the Government Lithograph
Press.

A. D.
 I spent last a
 day of the
 week a
 with the 6 men in the
 way to the
 A. D.

229/82

2. The Government direct that the *Sasanams* together with copies of these *Proceedings*, and of the key to the character of *Sasanam*, No. 1, and the printed copies of *Sasanam* found in the Kellore district, ~~be~~ forwarded with the Collector's letter of the 6th June 1868, No. 1690, ~~and~~ be deposited in the Library of Oriental M.S.S.

Reverend J. Foulkes.
Collector of Vijayanapuram.
— " — Kellore.

Public Works Dept. ~~with the~~
Director P. Instructions. — ~~with the~~ *Sasanams*

Comptroller of the Public Works Dept. 17/10/69

18/10/69
Lithographic Office of the Reg. Secy. to the Govt. 16/10/69
Prints Office of the Reg. Secy. to the Govt.
do. Kellore *Sasanams*

