
Location of Place Names in Gahadawala Inscriptions: An Overview

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Abstract: The places referred to in the Gahadawal inscriptions have not all been identified but some of the identifications which have been suggested may be used to fix the limits of the Gahadawala dominion in different periods of history. Sometimes although interesting evidence may be found it cannot be proceeded upon on account of uncertainty regarding the identification of the associated groups of places mentioned. The present paper is an attempt to corroborate the location of place names in the recent perspective based on Gahadawal inscriptions.

Keywords: Gahadawala, Inscription, Chandravati, Madanapala, Gadhipura, Kusika, Uttara-Kosala

Introduction

The Gahadawala inscriptions refer to some important name of places which is important for providing a valuable means of ascertaining the extent of their dominion under different reigns. The places referred to in these inscriptions (Figure 1) have not all been identified but some of the identifications which have been suggested may be used in an attempt to fix the limits of the Gahadawala dominion in different periods of history.

Chandradeva Inscriptions

The first reign is that of Chandradeva and the Chandravati inscription of 1148 V.S./1090 CE issued by him is the first inscription of the Gahadawala dynasty (Kenow 1984: 302). This was discovered along with some other Gahadawala inscriptions from the vicinity of modern Chandravati near Varanasi. This very first grant refers to Chandradeva's conquest of the imperial city of Gadhipura or Kanyakubja and claims that Chandradeva protected the sacred places of Kashi. Two other inscriptions of Chandradeva were found along with the one mentioned above but the provenance of the fourth inscription Bengal Asiatic Society Grant of V.S. 1154 (Figure 2) is not known (Sircar 1956a: 228). The grants of V.S. 1148, 1154 and 1156 were made from Varanasi

while the Chandravati inscription of V.S. 1150 from the confluence of the Sarayu and the Gharghara also called Uttara-Kosala: *Uttara-Kosala abhidhanayam-Ayodhyayam*.

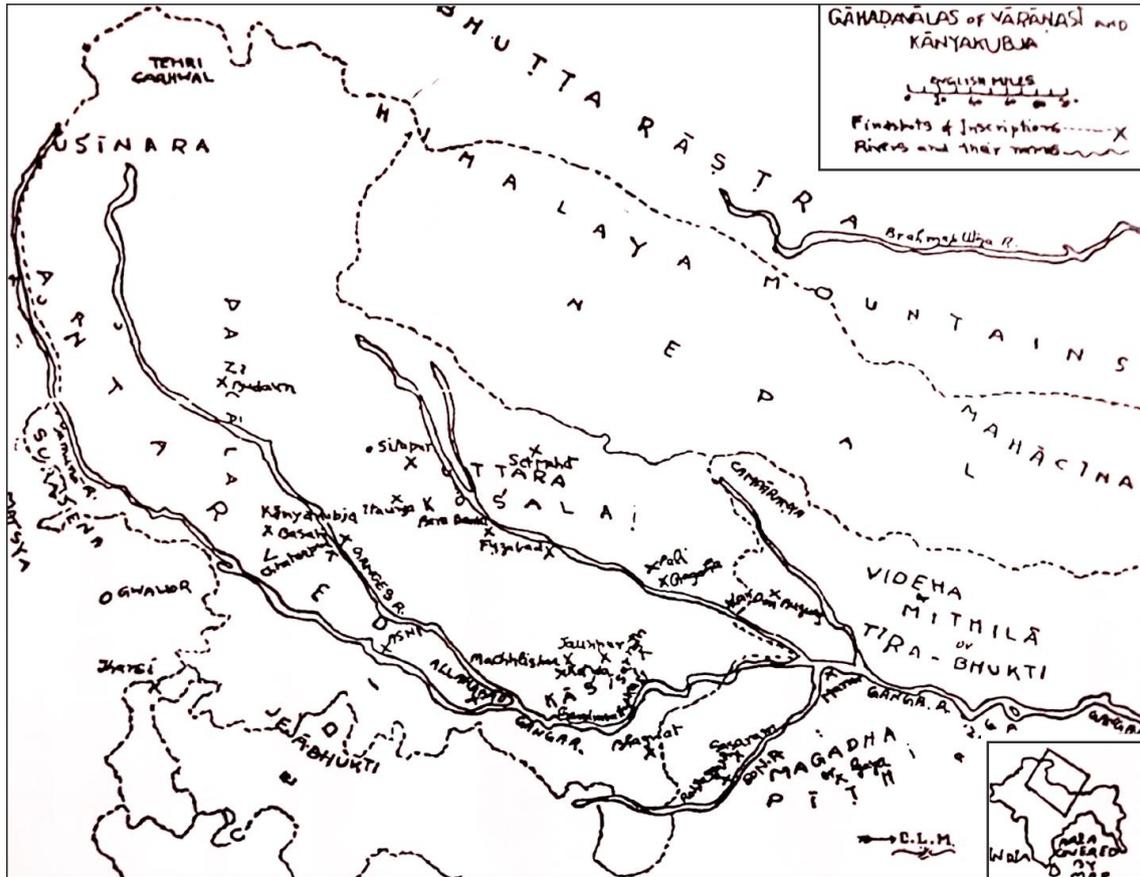


Figure 1: Location of Places in Gahadawala Inscriptions

Many of the places mentioned in these grants have been identified. Badagava village in Bavana Pattala granted in V.S. 1148 is present in Baragaon is 14 miles to the north-west of Varanasi. Kathehali Pattala mentioned in two other inscriptions has been identified with Katehir the largest *pargana* of Varanasi. The Sarnath stone inscription (Kenow 1984: 302) of Kumaradevi, a queen of Govindachandra refers to the battles which Chandradeva fought and won on the bank of the river Yamuna.

These geographical references give us a rough idea of the extent of Chandradeva's dominion. On the south and southwest it is bounded by the two rivers Ganga and the Yamuna. On the west it probably extended up to Indrasthaniyaka or Delhi. On the north Chandradeva's dominion appears to have been bounded by the river Ghaghara. Not including the Gonda district to the north of Ayodhya where the political influence of the Gahadawala king may have extended across the Ghaghara. A Lucknow Museum plate of V.S. 1177/1120 CE issued by Sri Kirttipaladeva (*Paramabhattacharaka-Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara Parama Mahesvara*) indicates that the north and northeastern portions of the Gorakhpur district lay outside the limits of the Gahadawala dominion in 1111 CE. This inscription records the grant of two villages

(unidentified) in the Darada-Gandaki-desa by the ruler of Saumya-sindhu (Uttara-samudra). Kirttipala by name whose independent status is evidenced by the full imperial titles used in the record (Kenow 1983: 93; Sircar 1985c: 72). It is suggested that Darada- Gandaki or (Darad-Gandaki) desa was probably the name given to the land which lay contiguous to a 'darat' or mountain. The north-eastern part of the Gorakhpur district fulfils these requirements, and the plate also was found at Bhatpar - Gorakhpur. To the east the Gahadawala dominion under Chandra may have extended up to the confluence of the Ganga and the Ghaghara and thus may have included the modern Ballia district. On the south-east the dominion of Chandradeva appears to have touched the river Karmanasa. As some of the villages mentioned in the Chandravati grants of V.S. 1150 and 1156 have been located in Chandauli pargana between the Ganga and the Karmanasa; these are Chadavali (Chandauli), Majauda (Majwar) and Vudharamauji (Mavai?).

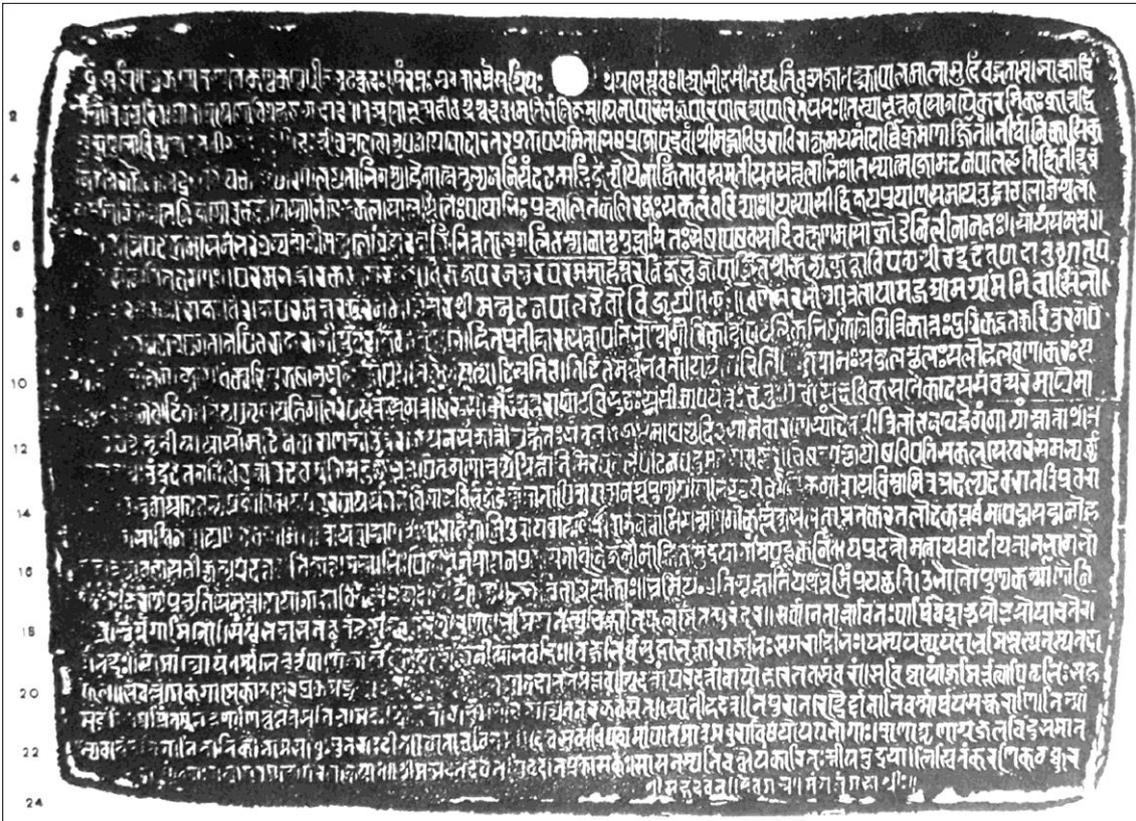


Figure 2: Land Grant of Chandradeva and His Son Madanpal (Courtesy: The Asiatic Society of Bengal)

Madanapala or Madanachandra Inscriptions

Five inscriptions were issued during the reign of Madanapala or Madanachandra. Of these two were found in the Etawah district. One from Pratapgarh and another from Kamauli (Figure 3) in Varanasi; the find spot of the Bahuwara plate is not known. The localities mentioned in the Basahi inscription of V. S. 1161/1104 CE (Sircar 1956 b: 314) and the Kamauli inscription of V. S. 1162/1105 CE (Venis 1977: 358) have been placed in

the Etawah district. The village granted by the first inscription was Vasabhi in the *Jiavati pattala* bounded on the east by *Vandhamaua*, on the west by *Vadathala*, on the south by *Pusauli*, on the north by *Savabhada*. These villages except *Vadathala* have been identified respectively with modern Basahi, Bndhmau, Pusauli, and Sabhad in the Etawah district; in the second inscription *Jiavati pattala* is said to have been situated in the *Panchaladesa*. *Aruresa pattala* mentioned in the *Badera* grant of Madanpala of V. S. 1164/1107 CE (Sircar 1985 d: 67) made from Varanasi was probably the same as the district of *Pratapgarh* whose old name was *Aror*. The localities referred to in the other two inscriptions are still unidentified (Kielhorh 1983a: 14). These identifications indicate that Madanapala may have ruled over very much the same area as his father. It is to be noted that while Candradeva granted land as the identifications prove in the eastern portion of his kingdom. Inscriptions issued during Madanapala's reign record grant of land both in the east in Benares region and in the west in *Panchaladesa* near *Kanyakubja*.



Figure 3: Govindchandra Kamauli Copper Plate Inscription (Venis 1977: 358)

Govindchandra Inscription

The accession of Govindchandra to the *Gahadawala* throne ushered in an era of expansion. His earliest inscription issued in V.S. 1171/ 1114 CE (Benarjee 1928: 233) was found at *Pali* in the *Gorakhpur* district to the north of the river *Ghaghara*. Some more of his inscription were discovered at *Gagaha*, *Lar*, *Don-Buzurg* in *Gorakhpur*

district at Sahet Mahet in Gonda district all to the north of that river; the Pali inscriptions of V.S. 1171 and 1189 refer to Onavala (situated in Saruvara of Saruvare-Onavala-Pathake) which has been identified with modern Unaula in Gorakhpur (Shastry 1980b: 113). The Lar inscription of V.S. 1202/1146 CE (Kielhorn 1983b: 113) refers to Saruvra which is mentioned in the earlier Pali inscription along with Onavala. Most of the villages referred to in *Vadacnaturasiti Pattala* granted by the Sahet-Mahet Inscription of V.S. 1186/1129 CE (Sahani 1986: 20) have been identified. Thus, the internal and external evidence of the inscriptions clearly proves that Govindachandra extended his dominion to the north beyond the river Ghaghara most probably up to the foot of the Himalayas as early as V.S. 1711/ 1114 C.E. The Munger Grant of 1183 V.S./1127 CE (Bernet 1952: 83), which records the gift of two villages in Maniari (modern Munger in Bihar) *Pattala*, shows that Govindachandra had annexed that region and the Lar plates indicate that Govindachandra's army marched upto Mudgagiri or Munger where from the king's camp. The grant was announced in V.S. 1202/1146 CE. The Bengal Asiatic Society grant of V.S. 1177/1120 CE (Sircar 1956 a: 47) records the transfer of *Karandagrama* and *Karandatalla* in the *Antaralapattala* which once belonged to the Rajaguru of Yasah-Karna, obviously the expansion of Govindachandra's dominion towards the south was carried out at the expense of the Kalachuri dynasty. Unfortunately, the find spot of the inscription is not known and the localities mentioned have not yet been identified. We can only conjecture that as Chandradeva who fought many battles on the banks of the Yamuna must have annexed the region up to that river. The Kalachuri region occupied by Govindachandra lay somewhere to the south of the Ganga or the Yamuna and to the north of or in modern Bundelkhand. On the west, however Govinda's policy was not of expansion but of defense against the invasions of the Yamini Sultans of Ghazni and their Indian governors. Thus, we see that Govindachandra certainly ruled over an area extending from Delhi to Patna and for some time also occupied Munger. His kingdom on the north was bounded by the Himalayas and included the towns of Badaun. On the north-east probably the river Gandak was its natural boundary; further east some areas beyond Varanasi to the south of the Ganga upto Munger were annexed; from Delhi to the region about the river Tons. The Yamuna and the Ganga appear to have formed the southern boundary, but near the Tons. Govindachandra may have annexed a portion of the Kalchuri kingdom to the south of the Yamuna and the Ganga.

During the next reign, the Ghadavala Empire suffered a great loss. The Delhi-Siwahik pillar inscription of Chahamana Vigharaja IV dated 1164 CE (Bernet 1952: 215) records that Delhi was already occupied by him. On the other hand, the Tarachandi Rock Inscription of Mahanayaka Pratpadhavala of Japila dated in V.S. 1225/1169 CE (Hall 1916: 248) shows that Rohtasgarh region in the Shahabad district of Bihar acknowledged the Gahadawala suzerainty. Evidently the land between the Karmanasa and the Son to the south-east of the Ganga was occupied and consolidated by the Gahadawalas by this time. We have already seen that Govindachandra granted two villages in the vicinity of Munger. One of Jayachandra's grants refers to *Manara Pattala* (Bernet 1951: 142) (to be identified with Maniari Pattals or Munger) while another was

found at Bodh Gaya (Venis 1928: 14). Though no inscription of these two kings have been found to the west of Faizabad. The *Somnatbpattan Prasasti* of *Bhava* Brhaspati dated in 1169 CE refers to the *Kanyakubja Visaya* as including Varanasi (Venis 1977: 133). The statements of the Muslim historians also indicate that Kanauj and the surrounding regions were under the suzerainty of the Gahadawala during Jayachandra's reign. It seems that both these kings ruled over the territory which roughly extended from *Kanyakubja* region to the Patna, the capital of modern Bihar. On the north, the Gahadawala dominion reached up to the Himalayas and on the south. It probably embraced the greater portion of the Uttar Pradesh to the south of the Ganga.

After the defeat and death of Jayachandra at the hands of Muhammad Gori at Chandawar in 1193 CE, the Gahadawala empire collapsed but the whole of the area occupied by the dynasty was not immediately annexed by the Ghori Sultan and the dynasty itself represented by Harischandra. The young son of Jayachandra continued to rule for some time. The only grant made by this king in V.S. 1253/1197 CE was found in a village in Machchhlishar (Shastri 1980b: 93); the village granted was *Pamahai* not yet identified and the name of the pattala in which it was situated could not be read. Another inscription discovered at Belkhara (Velasara) a few miles to the south-west of Chunar in the Mirzapur district refers to: *Srimat-Knyakubja-vijayarajya*.

This inscription issued by Ranaka Vijayakarna in V.S. 1253/1197 CE shows that portions of south Bihar also acknowledged the suzerainty of the Kanyakubja king. It has been already pointed out that the Islamic invasion of 1193 CE beyond Delhi was more or less in the nature of a raid; though the Gahadawala Empire collapsed, and it was not immediately annexed by the Muslims. The greater portion of the Gahadawala dominion including Kanyakubja, Badaun, Jaunpur, Chunar, Rohtasgarh, Varanasi, and most probably also Ayodhya continued to be outside the sphere of the Islamic political influence. Some of these appear to have nominally acknowledged the suzerainty of the Gahadawala dynasty but possibly most of them continued for a short period as small independent Brahmanical States.

Conclusion

The geographical denominations in the Gahadawala grants included visaya, pathaka, pattala, grama, and pataka. The first two denominations are but rarely mentioned. The villages granted were generally located in respective Pattalas and sometimes they are granted with *pataka* (*sapataka*). Pataka has been explained by Kielhorn as an outlying hamlet. Laksmidhara (1941) explains it as the family living in one part of the village: *kulam gramaika-dasah patakakhyah*.

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