



## UNDERSTANDING THE RISE OF FEUDAL POWERS AT SANJAN MANDALA THROUGH KAUTUKA MATHIKA

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### ABSTRACT

To understand the rise of powerful feudal centre at Chinchani, we need to understand its history in brief. These feudal lords emerged under the Imperial Rashtrakuta dynasty and also served the Shilaharas of North Konkan. The rise and growth of the Modha chiefs will be studied with the help of Nine copper plates that were discovered in 1955 at Chinchani that contained set of five different records.

**KEYWORDS:** Shilahara, Sanjan, Chhittaraja.

### INTRODUCTION :

Nine copper plates that were discovered in 1955 at Chinchani contained set of five different records, that D C Sircar has published in two different articles.<sup>1</sup>

1. Set of three copper plates belonged to the reign of Rashtrakuta King Indra III (Shaka Era 848/926 CE)
2. Single Undated Plate from the reign of Krishna III (Shaka Era 939-967 CE)
3. Inscription of Chamundaraja (feudatory of Chhittaraja) (Shaka Era 956/1048 CE)
4. Inscription of Modha Mahamandaleshvara Vijjaladeva (Shaka Era 969/21 January 1048 CE)
5. Inscription of Vija-ranaka (Vijjaladeva) of Modha family (Shaka Era 975/1053 CE)

Spanned over a period of 127 years and ranging during and after the downfall of the Rashtrakuta empire, the grants have a common thread that bind all. All grants are related to a particular religious establishment called 'kautuka mathika' that was built by a person called Kautuka. Essentially all grants record various donations for maintenance and upkeep of the kautuka mathika.

However, it is not only about the patronage given to the mathikas, but we also get to know the changing political conditions in the Sanjan Mandala and their effect on the Shilaharas of North Konkan through these five inscriptions.

### 1. Inscription of Madhumati during the reign of King Indra III (Shaka Era 848/17<sup>th</sup> April 926 CE)

It records that Madhumati Sugatipa<sup>ii</sup> (Arabic version Muhammad Subukta), son of Sahiyarahara was the Tajik governor of Samyana (Sanjan). King Indra's father King Krishna II entrusted him with this responsibility. Madhumati established ferry service on two streams perhaps on the Sanjan river and arranged for the feeding house at Sanjan where Sali rice, curry and ghee was served free of cost. Madhumati possibly well administered Sanjan Mandal and served two Rashtrakuta kings namely,

Krishna II (878 CE-915 CE) and Indra III (915 CE – 928 CE). He conquered the chiefs of all neighbouring ports (velakula) and placed his own officers there.

**The record further states the construction of a mathika by Annaiya, friend of Puvvaiyya, the minister of Madhumati.** Madhumati also donated village **Kanduka** situated in the Sanjan mandala for the repairs of this mathika and for provision of naivedya of **Goddess Dashami, a form of Durga or Parvati.**

**D C Sircar states that Goddess Dashami was probably consecrated in the mathika constructed by Annaiya/Annamaiyya.** However, these are two separate references in the inscription and there is nothing that proves with certainty that the goddess was housed in this mathika.

By then the Shilaharas were laying the foundation of their rule in North Konkan as the feudatories of the Rashtrakutas. The earliest of inscription during the rule of Pullashakti can be located at Kanheri caves (843 CE). At this time, King Amoghavarsha was the ruling king.<sup>iii</sup>

## 2. Single plate grant of reign of king Krishna III

After Indra III, three Rashtrakuta rulers came to power in a short span of 10 years. They were Amoghavarsha II (929 - 930), Govinda IV (930 – 936) and Amoghavarsha III (936 – 939).

**It is an undated record.** But a clear reference to the rule of Krishna III helps us to place the record between 939-967 CE.<sup>iv</sup> **The record mentions Tajikas among others as the subordinates of the king. So, probably the Tajiks continued as governors of Sanjan Mandala.** However, we do not have any specific epigraphical proof it.

We also don't have any epigraphical records of the Shilaharas of this period. Probably King Chadvaideva ruled at this time. These facts suggest that though the early Shilahara Kings like Pullashakti and Kapardi II adorned themselves with titles like 'अशेषकोकणवल्लभ', the area north of North Thane district (Palghar District) as well as Sanjan (Valsad District) in Gujarat was under the rule of Governors who were directly appointed by the Rashtrakuta Kings.

Also, there is a paucity of records from Kanheri Inscription of Kapardi II (Shaka era 765 / 878 CE) to the Janjira inscription of Aparajita (Shaka Era 915 / 993 CE) barring a solitary undated inscription of Chadvaideva. As Krishna III (939-967 CE) is last Rashtrakuta King eulogised in this record, we can assume that he was the overlord of Chaivaideva.

**The inscription further states that a person called Kautuka built a mathika at the gate of which Goddess Bhagavati had been installed at Sanyan Mandala.** D C Sircar states that 'Kautuka's mathika enshrining Goddess Bhagavati was the religious institution built by Annaiyya and Revana at Sanjan and the Goddess mentioned was Goddess Dashami installed in it.' This statement needs to be reviewed.

Both the inscriptions are separated by at least a decade. There is also a mention of a temple of Bhillamaladeva<sup>v</sup> (Madhusudana or Vishnu) near which the mathika built by Kautuka was situated. So, probably it was a cluster of mathas built by people like Annamaiya and Kautuka in the vicinity of temples of Goddess Dashami, Goddess Bhagavati and Bhillamaladeva. We do not find reference to anyone known as Revana in the earlier inscriptions.

## 3. Single Plate Grant of Chamundaraja (15<sup>th</sup> September 1034 CE)

The downfall of the Rashtrakuta dynasty brought about a change in the balance of power in the Sanjan Mandala as well as North Konkan. **The present inscription was issued at least eight decades after the issue of the earlier grant.** The Shilaharas of North Konkan since King Aparajita never acknowledged the suzerainty of the Western Chalukyas, for which they had to face punitive expeditions. The Shilaharas ruling from Thane now made a successful northward expansion. A verse that is repeated in Janjira I and Janjira II inscriptions of Aparajita states that his power extended over Sanjan (सिद्धां सयानभूमि) apart from Lata desha, Punaka desha and the land of the Bhillama (Yadava).<sup>vi</sup>

This inscription speaks of donation of ghanaka (oil mill) by Chamundaraja for the Kautuka mathika, mentioned in the earlier inscription. The purpose of the grant was to burn lamp in the temple

of Bhagavati (कौतुक मठिकार्थ श्रीभगवत्या (अ) ग्रे दीपप्रज्वलनार्थ) and for besmearing oil on the feet of the svadhyayikas (scholars) belonging to the mahaparishad attached to the Mathika and the Brahmana visitors. This inscription clearly suggests that the temples of goddesses Dashami and Bhagavati along with the mathika establishments were being constructed and the governors of Sanjan cared for their upkeep and maintenance over a period of a century despite the religious affiliation and changing overlords.

Chamundaraja acknowledges the overlordship of King Chhiraraja and 'महासामंताधिपति तगरपुरपरमेश्वर महामंडलेश्वर' are the usual titles used for the king. Whereas very high-sounding titles are used to eulogise Chamundaraja. (महासामंताधिपति निजभुजविक्रमादित्य साहसचक्रवर्ति अ(त्य)रिमंडलीकाधिका भुजंगलाडा(ट) प्र(पा)कारराज्यधसकविक्षपरायभूत्यर्गलऽभयकुलधवलवैरिगजअंकुसत्(त्रि)भुवननीलप्रभृतिमस्ताराजावली समलंकृत महामंडलेश्वर) He was the son of Mahamandaleshvara Vijjaranaka. (श्रीविज्जराणकसुत). The inscription does not mention their family name. Also, we have no proof to ascertain whether the same family ruled over Sanjan Mandala since King Arikesari brought it under the Shilahara rule.

#### 4. Grant of Modha Mahamandaleshvara Vijjaladeva (Shaka Era969/26<sup>th</sup> January 1048 CE):

This grant was given by **Mahamandaleshvara Vijjaladeva of the Modha family.** (श्री मोढकुलकमलकलिकाविकाशभास्करः) This inscription does not tell us the name of suzerain of Mahamandaleshvara Vijjaladeva.

On Magha Sankranti, grant of siridirka (perhaps a tax) accruing of a village called Kanadda grama. This village was in the possession of Kavatika Mathika. The revenue generated out of these taxes was made over to householders (गृहस्थ) Bahudhara and Kankua as well as Swadhyayaka Mahadeva and Lakshmidhara. All the four recipients were attached to the Kavatika Mathika. It is certain that Kavatika Mathika mentioned in the present inscription is the same mentioned in the inscriptions of Krishna III and Chamundaraja as the mathika built by Kautuka.

#### 5. Grant of Vija-ranaka of Modha family (Shaka Era975 /13<sup>th</sup> November 1053):

The name of the king is variously spelled in this inscription as Vija, Vijja and Vijala. Mahamandaleshvara, Mahasamntadhipati, Tagarapura Parameshvara and Was also adorned with the Panchamahashabdas. Both the grants are separated by merely five years. Mummuni was the ruling Shilahara king at this time. With the fall of the Rashtrakuta and the troubled fortunes of the Shilaharas, the Governors of Sanjan, though retained the high-sounding feudal titles, refrained from accepting any suzerain, just like the Shilaharas.

The inscription records donation of three drammas received by the government as shiridika (a tax) accruing from the village of Kenasa grama that was in the possession of Kautuka mathika. This grant was used for feeding twenty-five Brahmanas (भोजन आक्षयानी).

No	King	Date	Details
1	Rashtrakuta King Indra III	Shaka Era848/ 926 CE	Construction of a mathika by Annaiya, friend of Puvvaiyya, the minister of Madhumati Donation of village Kanduka for the repairs of this mathika and for provision of naivedya of Goddess Dashami Provision of ferry free feeding arrangements at Sanjan where Sali rice, curry and ghee was served
2	Reign of Krishna III	Shaka Era939/ 967 CE	Kautuka built a mathika at the gate of which Goddess Bhagavati was consecrated
3	Chamundaraja (feudatory of Chhittaraja)	Shaka Era 956/1048 CE	donation of ghanaka (oil mill) for the Kautuka mathika
4	Modha Mahamandaleshvara Vijjaladeva	Shaka Era956/1048 CE	grant of siridirka (perhaps a tax) accruing of Kanadda grama in the possession of Kavatika Mathika
5	Modha Vija-ranaka (Vijjaladeva) of Modha	Shaka Era975/1053 CE	donation of three drammas received by the government as shiridika (a tax) accruing from the village of Kenasa grama that was in the possession of Kautuka mathika for feeding twenty-five Brahmanas (भोजन आक्षयानी)

Thus, the findings from the above by inscriptions can be summarised as below

- There existed a cluster of mathas and temples in a certain area (that cannot be ascertained in the absence of details) in Sanjan Mandala for not less than 127 years.
- As suggested earlier Governors of Sanjan, irrespective of their religious inclinations supported for the maintenance, daily upkeep and repairs of these institutions. Villages like Kenasa Grama and Kanduka were donated for
- Some Grihasthas and Swadhyayakas were permanently associated with these institutions while learn it brahmanas often visited them.
- While mathika built by Annaiya is mentioned only in the first inscription, the Kautuka or Kavatika mathika built by Kautuka not only finds mentioned in all four inscriptions but also received consistent and ample patronage for over eighty-six years.
- The inscription of Chamundaraja suggest that he acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of Chittaraja while he claimed for himself titles that were almost at par with that of Chittaraja. Inscriptions Modha Vijjaranaka suggest that they ruled independently.

<sup>i</sup> Sircar D C, Rashtrakuta Charters from Chinchani, in No. 4 in Epigraphia Indica-XXXII and Three Grants from Chinchani, No. 5 in Epigraphia Indica -XXXII

<sup>ii</sup> D C Sircar states that as per verse 19 Madhumati's other name was Sugatipa and verse 19 states that he was the son of Sahiyarahara.

<sup>iii</sup> Mirashi, V. V., ed. (1977), Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, No. 1

<sup>iv</sup> After Indra III, three Rashtrakuta rulers came to power in a short span of 10 years. They were Amoghavarsha II (929 - 930), Govinda IV (930 - 936) and Amoghavarsha III (936 - 939)

<sup>v</sup> This deity was installed by descendants of merchants of Bhillamala (Bhimnal, Jodhpur)

<sup>vi</sup> Mirashi, V. V., ed. (1977), Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, No. 4, verse 31 and No. 5, verse 26