



GENEALOGY AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE EARLY PALLAVAS OF KANCHI AS GLEANED FROM THE INSCRIPTIONS

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The Pallavas kings ruled over the whole of the kingdom of Kanchi. It is however probable that some one of the princes of the Pallava house of Kanchi, who was originally made a viceroy of the northern part of the Pallava kingdom by the king of Kanchi, carved out a separate principality in that part, independent of his overlord. If this suggestion is to be believed, the kings of the main line of the Pallava appear to have been ruling at Kanchi side by side with the branch line that was ruling in the northern part of the old kingdom of Kanchi. Here shall the researcher try to see what we know about the history of Kanchi after the time of the Pallava kings of the Prakrit grants.

We have seen that Kanchi was under a Pallava king about the fourth quarter of the third century C.E., That king was succeeded by his son Sivaskandavarman who ruled about the first quarter of the fourth century C.E., He was possibly succeeded by a king named Sivaskandavarman. In the British Museum grant of the time of this king, there is mention of the Pallava Yuva Maharaja Buddhavarman and of the Yuva Maharaja's son whose name has been doubtfully read as Buddhayankura. It is not known whether this crown- prince Buddhavarman and his son ever ascended the Pallava throne of Kanchi.

In an attempt to fix the date of the early Pallava kings of Kanchi, we are fortunate to have at least three points whereon we can stand with confidence.

(i)The first of these points is supplied by the Jain work, *Lokavibhaga* where the precise date of the completion of the work is given as the 22nd year of Simhavarman, lord of the Pallavas, as 80 beyond 300 years of the Saka era. The 22nd year of a Pallava king named Simhavarman therefore comes to be equivalent to Saka 380, i.e. C.E., 458. According to S. Jha the date given in the *Lokavibhaga* corresponds to the 1st of March; but another record says that the 25th of August, 485. Anyway, the 22nd year of the Pallava king Simhavarman corresponds to 485 C.E. He therefore began to reign in $(458-22=)$, 436 C.E.¹

(ii)The second point of importance is furnished by the Penukonda plates of the Ganga king Madhava² which, are to be assigned, on paleographical grounds, to about 475 C.E. It may be noticed here that the characters of this epigraph are remarkably similar to that of the epigraphs of the Salankayana king Nandivarman II. The Penukonda grant was issued by the Ganga king Madhava Simhavarman, son of Ayyavarman, grandson of Madhava and great grandson of Konkanivarman. But the greatest point of historical importance in this inscription is that it tells us of Madhava Simhavarman being installed on the throne by the Pallava king Skandavarman and of his father Ayyavarman being installed by the Pallava king Simhavarman. We have seen that Fleet ascribes the Penukonda plates to circa 475 C.E.; it is therefore almost certain that Pallava king Simhavarman who installed Ayyavarman, father of the Ganga king Madhava Simhavarman of the Penukonda plates, is identical with the Pallava king Simhavarman who began to rule in C.E., 436.

(iii)The third point of importance is supplied by the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta, which refers to the Gupta king's conflict with a certain *Kanceyaka Vishnugopa*. This " Vishnugopa of Kanchi " has been taken by all scholars to have belonged to the family of the Pallavas. Samudra Gupta is believed to have reigned from circa 330 to 375 C.E., This dating appears possible from the facts that his father Chandragupta I began to rule in C.E., 320 and that the earliest date of his son Chandragupta II, according to the Mathura inscription⁵ is $(\text{Gupta } 61+320=)$ 381 C.E., Since it is proved from the Prakrit records that Pallavas were master of the kingdom of Kanchi during the first half of the fourth century C.E., it is almost certain that the *Kanceyaka Vishnugopa* of the Allahabad pillar inscription was a Pallava king who ruled in the middle of that century which is the time of Samudra Gupta's South India campaign.

Let us now see whether these three Pallavakings – Simhavarman, Skandavarman and Vishnugopa, whose date is fairly correct- which can be found in the epigraphs of the Pallavas themselves. The evidence of the Penukonda plates recording the installation of two consecutive Ganga kings- Ayyavarman, and his son Madhava

Simhavarman who seems to have named after his fathers' overlord by the Pallava king, Simhavarman and Skandavarman, renders it most likely that the Pallava king Simhavarman was the father and immediate predecessor of Skandavarman. It is very interesting in this connection to note that the Udayendiran grant (no. 1) of Nandivarman⁶ issued from Kanchipura, is the only known Pallava record, where we find a Pallava king named Singhavarman (Simhavarman) succeeded by his son Skandavarman. The genealogy given in this record is:

1. Skandavarman I; his son
2. Singhavarman; his son
3. Skandavarman II, his son
4. Nandivarman

These four kings are mentioned erectly in the same order in the Vyalor of Rajasimha⁷ though the relation of the others is not specified there we are therefore inclined to identify the Prakrit king Simhavarman of the *Logavibhaga* and the *Penukonda plates* and Skandavarman of the latter, with respectively the second and third king of the above list.

Beside the Udayandran plates there is another Sanskrit grant belonging early Pallava rulers of Kanchi. This is the **Chendalur grant of Kumaravishnu II God VII, 233ff** issued from Kanchipura in the king's second regnal year.

The grant plies us with the following line of kings:

1. Maharaja Skandavarman; his son
2. Maharaja Kumaravishnu I'; his son
3. Maharaja Buddhavarman; his son
4. Maharaja Kumaravishnu; 2nd year.

The ' ' alphabet of the Chendalur plates more archaic than those of the Kuram and Kasakudi plates, but resembles those of the Pikira, Mangalur and Uruvupalli grants, from which it differs chiefly in the omission of horizontal strokes at the top of letters. But a point which stamps it as more modern is the fact that *r.k*, and subscribed *u* consist of two vertical lines of nearly equal length, while in the Pikira, Mangalur and Uruvupalli grants the line is still considerably shorter. Hence we may conclude that the four Pallava kings of the Chendalur plates ruled in the interval between Simhavarman and Simhavishnu.

We have already seen that Simhavishnu, the second of the four kings mentioned in the Udayendiram grant, ruled from C.E.,436 to not earlier than C.E., 458. Thus his father Skandavarman I appears to have ruled at Kanchi about the first quarter of the fifth century, and his grandson Nandivarman seems to have ended his about the beginning of the sixth century C.E., The accession of Mahendravarman I to the throne of Kanchi is supposed to have taken place about the end of the same century, owing to his being an older contemporary of the Western Chalukya king Pulakesin II (C.E., 608-642). Mahendravarman I was preceded by his father Simhavishnu and grandfather Simhavarman⁹ between Nandivarman, the issuer of the Udayendiram grant, who seems to have ruled up to the beginning of the sixth century and Simhavarman, grandfather of Mahendravarman I, the Vayalur record place three kings named (1) Simhavarman, (2) Simhavarman and (3) Vishnugopa . The Vayalur grant thus places five kings between Nandivarman and MahendravarmanI, i.e. in the sixth century C.E., roughly. Since the rule of the five kings covering about a century does not appear impossible, since the existence of four earlier kings (Nos. 41-44 of the Vayalur list) has been proved by the Udayendiram grant and since it is possible that the greater Pallavas of the line of Mahendravarman I did not forget even their immediate predecessors, the three kings placed by the Vayalur record between Nandivarman and Mahendravarman grandfather may be historical persons, though we have as yet no corroborative proof of their existence. We therefore think that the four kings of Kanchi mentioned in the Chendalur record however appear to have ruled before kings of the Udayendiram grant. The kings of the Chandler record however appear to have ruled after Vishnugopa who came in conflict with Samudargupta in the middle of the fourth century C.E., We have already seen that in the first half of the fourth century Kanchi was occupied by the Pallava kings who issued the Prakrit charters.

There are some references to Pallava rulers of Kanchi in the inscriptions of the Kadambas. An epigraph of the Kadamba king Ravivarman¹⁰ mentions Candadanda, the lord of Kanchi. Who was defeated by the Kadambamonarch? We do not definitely know whether Candadanda is the name or *abiruda* of the ruler of Kanchi who fought with Ravivarman. He cannot be satisfactorily identified with any king of the traditional list of early Pallava kings. His contemporary, the Kadamba king Ravivarman appears to have ruled about the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century (497-557 C.E., according to *Kadamba – kula* by Moraes). According to Moraes, Krisnavarman I ruled from 475 to 480. C.E., Another Pallava king named Santivarman or Santivaravarman has been mentioned in the Hebbata plates¹² of the Kadamba king Vishuvarman. This Pallava king is possibly also mentioned in the Birur plates¹³. But he cannot be satisfactorily identified with any of the

Pallava kings known from the traditional list. It must also be noticed that excepting Candadanda none of these kings is expressly said to have ruled at Kanchi¹⁴.

We thus come to know of the early Pallava kings who appear to have ruled at Kanchi before the rise of the Greater Pallava of Mahendarvarman's line:¹⁵

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