

## "Utkaladesa" in Orissan Inscriptions

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Orissa was famous as *Kalinga*, *Kosala*, *Odra* and *Utkala* during ancient days. All these independent regions came under one administrative control which was known as Utkala and subsequently Orissa. The name of Utkala has been mentioned in *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and *Puranas*. The existence of *Utkala* as a kingdom is found in Kalidas's *Raghuvamsa*.<sup>1</sup> It is stated that king Raghu after having crossed the river *Kapisa* reached the Utkala country and finally went to *Kalinga*.

The earliest epigraphic evidence to *Utkaladesa* is found from the Midnapur plate<sup>2</sup> of Somdatta which includes *Dandabhukti* within its jurisdiction. The plates record that while *Sasanka* was ruling the earth, his feudatory *Maharaja Somadatta* was governing the province of *Dandabhukti* adjoining the *Utkaladesa*. The object of the epigraph is to register the gift of the village *Kumbharapadraka* to a *Brahmana* named *Bhattesvara*. The localities mentioned in the inscription *Dandabhukti* are well known during this period. Pragiter distinguished the Utkala country from *Odra*. According to him, the former comprised the Southern portion of Chotanagpur, the Northern Tributary states of Orissa and the Balasore district.

The *Chaurasi* grant<sup>3</sup> of *Sivakara* of *Bhaumakara* describes *Subhakaradeva* as

"*Mahan-Utkalendra*" or the great lord of Utkala and states that the *Bhaumas* belonging to the *Utkala* rulers or *Utkala-Kula*.

The *Brahma Purana* uses the term *Utkala* in the sense of the extensive coastal region of Orissa, which is extolled as a holy country which could boast of the sacred cities of *Virajakshetra* and *Purushottama Kshetra*.<sup>4</sup> *Viraja Kshetra* is undoubtedly modern Jajpur, the capital of the *Bhaumakara* kings and *Purushottama Kshetra* is Puri.

The *Dirghasi*<sup>5</sup> stone inscription dated 1075 A.D. uses the term *Utkala* in Sanskrit and *Odda* or *Odra* in the Telgu portion in the list of the countries conquered by *Vanapati*.

The *Ratnagiri* plate<sup>6</sup> of *Somavamsi Karna* which was issued from *Yayatinagara*, describes the grant of the village of *Kona* which was within the *Brahmo-Atthavisa Khanda* (Sub-division) of *Uttara Tosali* to *Ranikarpurasri*. She hailed from the *Mahavihara* of *Solanapura* in *Utkaladesa* which seems to have been a Buddhist monastery.

The *Somavamsi* king *Yayati*,<sup>7</sup> who was the father of the *Udyota Kesari* established his rule over *Kosala* and *Utkala* countries, although his predecessors were probably the rulers of *Kosala* only. When the early *Somavamsis* were ruling over

Kosala, Utkala was under the rulers of the Bhaumakaras. The Bhaumakara queen Dandi-Mahadevi was ruling over *Utkala* in 923 A.D. and she is known to have been succeeded the throne by two other rulers, her step mother *Vakula-Mahadevi* and aunt *Dharmamahadevi*, one of the predecessors of *Dandi-Mahadevi* was *Prithivi-Mahadevi* who was the daughter of the Somavamsi king *Svabhavatunga* of Kosala.

The *Kelga* plate<sup>8</sup> indicates that Udyotakesari's son and successors of Yayati ruled about the 3rd quarter of eleventh century, made over Kosala to prince named Abhimanyu and was himself ruling over *Utkala*, while the inscriptions of the *Telgu-Chodas* indicate that the successors of Udyatokesari in *Utkala* had nothing to do with Kosala which passed into the possession of the rulers of the Telgu-Choda dynasty. Karna, the grandson of Udyotakesari seems to have ended his rule over Utkala before the conquest of that country by the Ganga king Anantavarma Chodagangadeva. The issue of the present charter from *Yayatinagara* is interesting. The city of *Yayatinagara* built by and named after Yayati I was originally the capital of the Somavamsis of Kosala. It appears that after the expansion of Somavamsi power over Utkala, their capital in Utkala was also given the name *Yayatinagara* or *Yayatipura*. This new city of *Yayatinagara* seems to be Jajpur which was previously the capital of the Bhaumakaras, the predecessors of the Somavamsis in Utkala.

Besides these epigraphs, many other records of different dynasties, we find the name of *Utkala*. In the Gaharwa plate<sup>9</sup> of Karnadeva records that Gangeyadeva, the Kalachuri ruler conqueror of the kings of *Kira*, *Anga*, *Kuntala* and *Utkala*.

The *Madalapanji* or the Jagannath temple chronicle states that Chodaganga defeated the last

king of the Kesari dynasty named *Suvarna Kesari* with the help of his minister *Vasudeva Bahinipati*, succeeded the Utkala kingdom and transferred his capital to Kataka.

The emperor Korn<sup>10</sup> and Vizag plate states that he first replaced the fallen Lord of *Utkala* in the Eastern region and then warned the Lord of Vengi of the western region and restored their fortunes.

In another grants of Chodaganga, he decorated himself with the rank of the entire sovereignty over the whole of Utkala. Verse 26 of the *Nagari* plates<sup>11</sup> of Anangabhima describes Gangesvara (Chodaganga) victory over the king of Utkala. The Utkala king defeated by Chodaganga was probably a successor of the Somavamsi ruler Uddyotakesari. According to this epigraphs that Chodaganga built a temple for the great god *Purushottama* on the sea shore. Earlier this Ganga king like his predecessors was at first a Saiva, but later became a Vaishnava and the annexation of the Puri region to his empire may have had some impact to change his religious faith. The identification of this deity with the Brahmanical god Vishnu is however apparently earlier than the beginning of the twelfth century when Chodaganga conquered the *Utkala* country.

The Chattesvara temple inscription<sup>12</sup> states that Anangabhima III, the great warrior defeated the king of *Tumana* and kept his kingdom in constant vigilance and war-preparedness, for ensuring safety and security to the empire *Utkala*.

The Bhubaneswar<sup>13</sup> temple inscription of Chandrikadevi describes that Chodaganga, whose empire extended from the Godavari to the Ganges and his descendant Anangabhima, who defeated a *Yavana* enemy, followed by praises of Anagabhima's daughter Chandrika and of the valiant Haihaya prince Paramadideva who

married her. The land of *Utkala* comprising the sanctuary of *Ekamra*, the modern Bhubaneswar with a description of the lake *Bindusaras*.

The warrangal inscription<sup>14</sup> of Raghudeva states that Kapilesvara became the lord of *Utkala* country at the command of the illustrious *Purushottama*.

#### References:

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6. Epi, Indica - Vol.XXXIII - p.264ff
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8. Epi, Indica - Vol.XXVIII - p.323 - 24ff
9. Epi, Indica - Vol.XI - p.141
10. JAHRS - Vol.VII - p.57
11. Epi, Indica - Vol.XXVIII - p.211ff
12. Epi, Indica - Vol.XXIX - p.121ff
13. Epi, Indica - Vol.XIII - p.150ff
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