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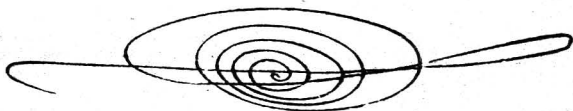
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Dates of Skandagupta and his Successors,

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23-2-18.

Mr. PANNA LALL, M.A., B.Sc., LL.B., (Cantab.) I.C.S.



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The Dates of Skandagupta and his Successors.

By Mr. PANNA LALL, M.A., B. Sc., LL. B., (Cantab.) I. C. S.

Abbreviations.

- A. GC. ... *Allan's catalogue of the Gupta coins in the British Museum* 1914.
 F. GI. ... *Fleet's Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Volume III, *Gupta Inscriptions*.
 G. E. ... *Gupta Era*.
 I. A. ... *Indian Antiquary*.
 J. A. S. B. ... *Journal of Asiatic Society Bengal*.
 J. R. A. S. ... *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.
 K. G. ... *Kumāra Gupta*.
 M. E. ... *Mālava Era*.
 VS. EHI. ... *Vincent Smith's Early History of India*, 1914 Edition.

REFERENCE

AMONGST the early Gupta Emperors there were two of the name of Kumāragupta; according to the accepted genealogies one the son of Chandragupta Vikramāditya, the other of Narasimhagupta Bālāditya; their dates being 414 A. D.—455 A. D. for the first, and 530 A. D.—c. 550 A. D. for the second. The existence of a third is however conjectured now by scholars. In his presidential address at the 1917 annual meeting of the Numismatic Society of India, Mr. R. Burn said that evidence was accumulating pointing possibly to the existence of a third Kumāra. This view seems to be definitely accepted by Professor K. B. Pathak of Poona who, writing on the Gupta Era in the *Sir Ram Krishna Gopal Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume**, gives on page 213 a genealogical table in which three Kumāraguptas are shown.

The chief reason for thinking that there were three early emperors of this name is the discovery†, two or three years ago, of some Buddha images at Sārṇāth (4 miles from Benares). They have dated inscriptions and mention Kumāragupta and Budhagupta as rulers of the time, giving their dates as 154 and 157 Gupta Era (expired, corresponding to 474 and 477 A. D.). Portions of these inscriptions have

* Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1917.

† Report of the Supdt. Buddhist monuments, Northern Circle for 1914-15, pages 6-7.

been given in the article by Professor Pathak referred to above. The complete reading is

Sārnāth Kumāragupta inscription.

- l.1. वर्षशते गुप्तानां सचतुःपंचाशदुत्तरे भूमिं (I)
रक्षति कुमारगुप्ते मासे ज्येष्ठे द्वितीयायाम् ॥
- l.2. भक्त्यावर्जितमनसा यतिना पूजार्थमभयमित्रेण (I)
प्रतिमाप्रतिमस्य गुणैरपरेयम् कारिता शास्तुः ॥
- l.3. मातापितृगूरुपूर्वैः पूजयेनानेन सत्त्वकायोयम् (I)
लभतामभिमतामुपशाममहरहर..... (II)

Translation.

1. When one hundred and fifty-four years of the Guptas had passed, when Kumāragupta was protecting the Earth, during the month of *Jyeshtha* on the second day.

2. The ascetic Abhayamitra, with his mind full of devotion, caused to be made this other image of the Lord (Buddha) of unparalleled merits for the purpose of worship.

3. By virtue of this merit, may this person, *i. e.*, myself with my body composed of *Satva* together with mother, father, teachers and others acquire from day to day the esteemed virtue of tranquillity.

Sārnāth Budhagupta inscription.

- l.1. गुप्तानां समतिक्रान्ते सप्तपंचाशदुत्तरे (I)
शते समानां पृथिवीं बुधगुप्ते प्रशासति (II)
वैशाखमाससप्तम्या मूले श्या (मगते)
- l.2. मया (I)
कारिताभयमित्रेण प्रतिमा शाक्यभिचुला (II)
इमामुद्धस्तसच्छत्रपद्मासनविभूशितां (I)
देवपुत्रवतो
- l.3. चित्रविन्यासचित्रितां (II)
यदत्र पुण्यं प्रतिमाकारयित्रा ममास्तु तत् (I)
मातापित्रोर्गुरुणां च लोकस्य च शमार्थ.....

Translation.

l.1—2. When one hundred and fifty-seven years of the Guptas had passed away, when Budhagupta was ruling over the Earth, on the seventh of the month of *Vaishakh*, in the dark half, on *Mūla* nakshatra, I, Abhayamitra, a monk of (the order of) *Sākya* (*i. e.*, the Buddha) caused this image to be made—this image of one to whom the gods were sons (*i. e.*, the Buddha), with an uplifted hand, and a lotus seat, and embellished by various designs.

l.3. Whatever merit accrues to me as the endower of the image, may it tend to the eternal tranquillity of my mother, father, and preceptors, and the whole world.

The date 157 G. E. for Budhagupta fits in sufficiently well with the previously known dates 165 G. E*. and 175 G. E†. of that monarch, and from its script also the inscription should be assigned to that period. There is no reason therefore to doubt its genuineness. As the images with Kumāragupta inscriptions were found in the same place and very near those with Budhagupta inscriptions, relate to the same period and have similar script, the accuracy of their record is equally probable. It follows then that a Kumāragupta was ruling at or near Sārnāth in Northern India in 154 G. E. = 474 A. D. (For the sake of brevity this Kumāragupta will be called in the rest of this paper the Sārnāth Kumāragupta).

The genealogy of the early emperors based on the inscriptions on the Bhitri pillar, and the Bhitri seal, and the dates assigned to them are :—

Gupta 275—300 A. D.

Ghatotkacha 300—320 A. D.

Chandragupta I 320—325 A. D.

Samudragupta 335—380 A. D.

Chandragupta II Vikramāditya 380—414 A. D.

Kumāragupta I, 414—455 A. D.

Skandagupta
455—480 A. D.

Puragupta
480—485 A. D.

Narasimhagupta Bālāditya
485 - c. 535 A. D.

Kumārāgupta II
c. 535—c. 550 A. D.

If the above given dates be correct, the Sārnāth Kumāragupta must be a third emperor of that name; but there are difficulties in accepting this suggestion. (1) It would make him not only a contemporary of Skandagupta, but also acknowledged as king in the heart of his empire. Knowing as we do from his many and widely

* * Eran inscription F. GI., p. 88.

* Coins, vide A. G. O., p. lxii.

found inscriptions the nature and the extent of Skandagupta's rule, this is not probable. (2) It would also follow that a powerful ruler like Budhagupta (477-494 A. D.) whose inscriptions are found at Eran in the Saugor district of the Central Provinces in the west, and at Dinājpur in Bengal in the east, and at Sārnāth, had in the centre of his empire two other kings like Puragupta and Narasimha ruling at the same time as himself. (3) It would further put Kumāragupta son of Narasimhagupta Bālāditya more than half a century later than the Sārnāth Kumāragupta, whereas a comparison of the script of the former's seal in the Lucknow Museum with that of the Sārnāth inscriptions gives a contrary indication. (4) Moreover there is no other evidence whatever (coins, inscriptions*, or references in contemporary writings) of any king of this name besides the two hitherto known and described.

Before therefore deciding that the Sārnāth Kumāragupta is a new king, it appears reasonable to examine the possibility of his being identical with either of the known monarchs of that name.

Can the Sārnāth Kumāragupta be Kumāragupta son of Chandra Gupta II Vikramāditya?—This question is easily answered. In the Junāgaḍh inscription (F. GI. page 56) of Skandagupta of the year 136 Gupta Era (=455 A. D.) we have the following passage:—

पितरि सुर सखित्वं प्राप्तवत्यात्म शक्त्या

Trans. When his father by his own power had attained the position of being a friend of the gods, i. e., "had died".

This establishes conclusively that Skanda's father Kumāragupta was already dead in 455 Gupta Era and he therefore cannot be identical with the Sārnāth Kumāragupta who is described in the inscription as ruling in 474 A. D.

Can the Sārnāth Kumāragupta be Kumāragupta son of Narasimhagupta Bālāditya? This is what the present writer proposes to establish.

The date of accession of Kumāragupta son of Narasimhagupta Bālāditya is supposed to be c. 535 A. D. (VS. EHI. page 312) and

* A Kumāragupta is named as a ruler in Magadha in the Aṣṣad inscription (F. GI. page 200) but he is obviously quite different. He ruled much later, was only a local chieftain, and was followed by Damodargupta while the Sārnāth Kumāragupta (judging from the fact that Abhayamitra was alive at the time of both the Sārnāth inscriptions) seems to have been succeeded by Budhagupta. See also Hoernle J. A. S. B., 1889, p. 92.

his rule to have lasted till about 550 A. D. (Hoernle, J. A. S. B., 1889, page 95). If these dates be correct the two cannot be identical, but as is well known there are no inscriptions or dated coins to establish these dates. So far as one can ascertain, the date of accession of Kumāragupta son of Narasimhagupta Bālāditya is based upon the identification of his father Narasimhagupta with a king named Bālāditya of Magadha of whom the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang related a tradition which he had heard more than a hundred years afterwards in the Punjab. As an inscription of Yashodharman's found at Mandasor is irreconcilable with this account of Hiuen Tsang, experts have begun to disbelieve Hiuen Tsang. * Now that a definite inscription has been found giving an undoubted date for Kumāragupta, which date is reconcilable with the rest of the known evidence, no apology is needed for suggesting that the dates for the Kumāragupta son of Narasimhagupta Bālāditya based upon the identification of his father with Hiuen Tsang's hero need modification. The present writer has come to the conclusion that the Sārnāth Kumāragupta cannot be any other than Kumāragupta son of Narasimhagupta Bālāditya and that therefore the dates of his reign are not 535—550 A. D. but c. 474. This would involve alterations in the dates of his predecessors which are at present believed to be

Chandragupta II Vikramāditya	...	380—414
Kumāragupta	... ..	414—455
Skandagupta	... ..	455— $\begin{cases} 470 \dagger \\ 480 \ddagger \end{cases}$
Puragupta	... ..	$\begin{cases} 470 \\ 480 \end{cases}$ } —485
Narasimhagupta	... ..	485—535
Kumāragupta	... ..	535—550

If the hypothesis now put forward, *viz.* that Kumāragupta son of Narsimhagupta Bālāditya is identical with the Sārnāth Kumāragupta and therefore ruled about 474, is to be accepted, it must be shown (i) that there is no positive evidence of the existence of Skandagupta, Pura, or Narasimha after the year 474 and (ii) that the available evidence points to these three kings having lived and died before 474.

* A.G.C., page lx. Also Hoernle in the J. R. A. S. 1909 pages, 90—103.

† Hoernle J. A. S. B. 1889, page 96.

‡ VS, EHI, page 311.

The original documents on which the chronology of these kings is based are mentioned below. Only the earliest and the latest records naming a particular ruler are given, the intermediate ones being omitted.

<i>Name of document.</i>	<i>Year.</i>	<i>King named.</i>
Junagadh stone inscription ...	136 G. E. = 455 A.D.	Skanda.
Kauham " " ...	141 G. E. = 460. "	"
Coins " " ...	148 " = 467 "	"
Bhitri seal 	<i>Nil</i>	Pauragupta.
Bhitri seal 	<i>Nil</i>	Narasimhagupta.
Sarnāth stone inscription ...	154 G.E. = 474 A.D.	Kumāra.
Mandasor " " ...	529 M.E. = 473 "	" (?)
Sarnāth " " ...	157 G. E. = 477 "	Budhagupta.
Eran " " ...	165 " = 484 "	"
Coins " " ...	175 " = 494 "	"
Eran stone inscription ...	191 G. E. — 510 "	Bhānugupta.

(N. B.—The Mandasor inscription is No. 18 in F. GI. and is interpreted by Fleet incorrectly, it is submitted. It is examined and discussed at length in a note at the end of this paper.)

It will be seen at once that so far as coins and inscriptions go there is no evidence that Skanda, Pura or Narasimha were in existence after the year 474. Let us take each king separately and examine the whole of the evidence available about him.

Skandagupta's dates.—There can be no doubt, as we have already shown, that he had come to the throne by 455, but about the end of his reign we can only say with certainty that he lived up to 467. Hoernle originally proposed 470 as the date of Skanda's death, but gave no reasons for his opinion. (J. A. S. B. 1889, page 96.)

The date 480 seems to have been fixed upon afterwards because a coin of his was read, doubtfully, as being of the year 160 G. E. * (=479-480 A. D.) This reading has now, however, been definitely rejected and the coin which is in the British Museum is assigned by Mr. Allan in his recent catalogue of Gupta coins, p. 133, to the year 145 G. E. Thus the only piece of evidence in

The latest recorded date of Skanda is 467 A.D.

* V, Smith in J. R., A. S. 1889, page 133, The coin is figured in Pl. IV. 4,

support of the date 480 A. D. disappears. On the other hand we have reasons for thinking that the date 480 A. D. is wrong. The three Sārnāth inscriptions hold undoubtable proof that other kings (Kumārāgupta and Budhagupta) were ruling there—the very heart of the Gupta Empire—in the years 474 and 477 A. D. The coins of the latter had been found only at Benares (which practically adjoins Sārnāth). This fact had been explained away at the time * by saying that they had been carried there by pilgrims—he being supposed to be only a minor ruler in the West (Mālva). But thirty years have elapsed, and still it cannot be said that Budhagupta's coins are found more abundantly elsewhere. And we have now stone images with inscriptions also found there. These obviously cannot be explained away as easily as the numismatic evidence. Further, Budhagupta's inscriptions have now been found very far East, viz. at Dinājpur in Bengal. So far then from being a petty chief in the Western regions of the Gupta Empire, Budhagupta appears to have been acknowledged as ruler from Eran in the West to Sārnāth and Benares in the centre and on to Dinājpur in Bengal. It seems unbelievable that Skandagupta should have been ruling the same territories at the same time. As we have already shown there is nothing to suggest to us the adoption of such an improbable theory. It can therefore be asserted with some confidence that Skandagupta's rule came to an end about 467 A. D.

Puragupta and Narasimhagupta's dates.—Positive evidence of the existence of these monarchs after 474 is *nil*. There are no contemporary inscriptions or dated coins. † Their dates seem to have been fixed with reference to the supposed defeat of the Hun ruler Mihirakula by Narasimhagupta, which event is conjectured to have occurred about 530 A. D. This would give these two rulers a sway of at least 50 years. But this conflicts with the numismatic evidence. The number of their known coins is particularly small when compared with those of others who ruled a shorter time. Allan's catalogue describes only four coins of Pura and twelve of Narasimha. This by itself would indicate that they had short rules. And when we remember that it was at about this time (c. 475 A. D.) that the Gupta Empire was weakening in its hold; when rulers

Reasons for believing that they had short reigns.

* V. Smith in J. R. A. S. 1889, page 135, *Vide* also A.G.O., p. lxii,

† I. A., 1902, page 266.

of Magadha * were establishing a separate dynasty in the east; and another dynasty in the south of the Empire was strong enough to make grants†; and the Barbaric Huns were beating at the western ‡ gates, it would be surprising if these two monarchs of circumscribed powers § managed to keep their crowns intact for more than half a century (480—c. 535), as contemporaries and rivals of the Sārnāth Kumāragupta and Budhagupta, who seems to have been the most powerful Gupta Emperor after Skandagupta, having had a long and widely extended rule. These considerations together with the numismatic evidence seem to show that these two kings can hardly have ruled for very long after Skanda's death, which as we have shown occurred about 467. ||

This would be compatible with the Mandasor inscription (F. GI. No. 18) which recording the restoration in 473 A. D. of a temple built in 436 A. D. describes the interval in the following words:—

बहुनासमतीतेन कालेनान्यैश्चपार्थिवैः

Translation.—After a long time having been passed by many a king.....

As both the local kings of Mandasor and their overiords the Gupta Emperors are mentioned in the record it is not quite clear which of the above two is referred to in this passage, if the former then it is irrelevant to our enquiry; but if the latter are intended then its meaning can only be intelligible if we accept as is now suggested that five kings

Kumāragupta I,
Skandagupta,
Puragupta,
Narasimhagupta,
Kumāragupta,

held sway in this period 436—473. It would be meaningless if we had the second king Skanda going up to and beyond 473.

Against all these arguments there is but one in support of the dates accepted now *viz.*, that Narasimhagupta is supposed to have defeated Mihirakula about 530 A.D., and that therefore the long interval between Skanda's last

Hsien Tsang's
testimony.

* F. GI. int. p. 14, puts the first Magadha ruler about 475.

† The *Pravrajak mahārājās*, F. GI., page 93. The first grant is dated 475.

‡ VS. EHL, p.

§ VS. EHL., page 312.

|| Even if Puragupta did not come to the throne before Skanda's death as there is some reason for thinking that he may have done, A. GC., p. lv.

known date and 530 must be filled up by the two rulers Pura and Narasimha. It is submitted that this date 530 has been assigned to Narasimha son of Pura an insufficient data. It is in fact based upon the following three assumptions :—

- i. That Narasimhagupta, son of Puragupta, mentioned in the genealogy given in the Bhitri seal is identical with Narsimha Bālāditya of the coins.
- ii. That they are identical with Bālāditya Rājā of Magadha who is mentioned by Hiuen Tsang.
- iii. That this latter Bālāditya defeated Mihirakula the Hun chief (c. 530 A. D.)

There is little that can be said against the first supposition but the other two are highly improbable as will now be shown.

To start with, there is no evidence of this Emperor Narasimha, son of Pura, being Bālāditya the Rājā of Magadha mentioned by Hiuen Tsang. None of the many undoubted rājās of Magadha had coins of the imperial type whereas Narasimhagupta's coins are like those of the other Emperors. One cannot help thinking that this supposition has no foundation beyond the mere coincidence of the name Bālāditya.

Next, the supposition that Mihirakula was ever defeated by any Bālāditya, (son of Pura, or Hiuen Tsang's raja of Magadha) has even less to recommend itself. There are several Buddhist and, as Professor Pathak has shown, Jaina accounts of the tyrant Mihirakula. It is strange that none except that of Hiuen Tsang ascribes his defeat to Bālāditya. There are many reasons for believing that Hiuen Tsang made a mistake. Hoernle who originally put forward the suggestion that Narasimha Bālāditya defeated Mihirakula (J. A. S. B. 1889, page 96) later on withdrew it completely. In J. R. A. S. 1909 he discusses this theory at great length and rejects it. It is unnecessary to repeat those arguments here ; but certain other considerations numismatic as well as inscriptional which conflict with Hiuen Tsang will now be put forward.

Numismatically.—(1) Narasimha Bālāditya's defeating Mihirakula would bring him to c. 530 A. D. and thus give him and his father Pura a reign of about 70 years. On the other hand, as already mentioned, the number of known coins of Pura and Narasimha is exceptionally small. This would be difficult to explain if they had ruled down to 530.

(2) If Narasimha ruled up to 530 A. D. his son Kumāra must come later, and therefore must be different from the Sārnāth Kumāragupta. We should thus have three Kumāras. Now the early emperors up to Skandagupta had their coins of a weight fluctuating near 124 grains. Skanda introduced a heavier standard of about 144 grains. His successors kept to this type. The known coins ascribable to the Kumāraguptas fall into these two types and not more. The lighter ones have so far, naturally, been assigned to Kumāragupta I, father of Skanda; the heavier type, of which there are only a few known, must belong to the later Kumāras. In these not more than one type can be distinguished.

The evidence of coins is thus if anything in favour of identifying the Sārnāth Kumāragupta with Kumāragupta son of Narasimhagupta Bālāditya, though of course it cannot be said to be conclusive.

Inscriptionally.—The Apsad inscription* gives in great details the genealogy of the rulers of Magadha for nine generations ranging from c. 475 to 672 A. D. Bālāditya is not mentioned. Had he been one of this lineage and a powerful king such as could defeat and afford to set free a dreaded Hun warrior like Mihirakula, it is hardly likely that he would have been left unnamed and his exploits unrecorded.

Next, Hiuen Tsang's account is irreconcilable with the Mandasor inscription mentioned already which makes it probable that there had been several kings between 436 and 473 A. D.

Then, there is another ruler named Yashodharman who in his inscriptions claims to have done what is attributed to Bālāditya by Hiuen Tsang. Obviously both these men could not have done the same thing. Hoernle therefore first† propounded the hypothesis that Yashodharman might be a lieutenant of Bālāditya, and Vincent Smith‡ suggested that these princes had formed a confederacy against the Huns. For neither supposition is there the slightest evidence. Had Yashodharman defeated Mihirakula only as a general or an ally of Bālāditya, it is inconceivable that Bālāditya would have left no record of his own achievements, even if Yashodharman was selfish enough to omit

* F. GI., page 200.

† J. A. S. B. 1889, page 96.

‡ VS. EHI, page 318.

all reference to him in his version of the story. In J. R. A. S. 1909 Hoernle gives up the theory first suggested by him and shows that Hiuen Tsang must be wrong.

There is nothing to show that Mihirakula (or any other of the Hun chiefs) ever penetrated as far east as Magadha. Their kingdom was in the North-West of India; and their ravages seem to have extended only to the western portions of the Gupta Empire. Their known inscriptions in this part of India are found in the following places:—

Eran, Saugor District, Central Provinces (F. G. I., page 158).

Gwalior (F. G. I., page 151).

Mandasor (F. G. I., pages 148—150)

all in the west, none in the centre or the east of the Gupta kingdom.

Again, Hiuen Tsang is admittedly wrong in some of his facts, *e. g.*, he puts Mihirakula several centuries before his time (630 A. D.). This conflicts with the accounts given by Yashodharman by Jaina writers* and others.

Lastly there are palaeographic considerations. We have in the Lucknow Museum a seal of Narasimha's son Kumāra. If it was Narasimha who defeated Mihirakula about 530—535, this seal must necessarily be of a later date. But the nature of the script indicates the contrary.

Even in the very first paper† describing this seal which gave to the world the name of Kumāragupta son of Narasimhagupta, Hoernle said that the script of the seal was almost identical with that of the Bhitri pillar inscription of Skandagupta whose reign was supposed to have commenced about (c. 535 minus 455) eighty years before. This must have attracted some notice, for in 1902 Vincent Smith writing in the *Indian Antiquary*‡ after discussing the accepted date of this Kumāragupta son of Narasimhagupta felt it necessary to add that the characters of the inscription on the seal looked rather earlier.

The above considerations would seem to be enough to dispose of any pretensions of the story related by Hiuen Tsang to historical accuracy. It is probably an incorrect version of

* Prof. Pathak in the Bhandarkar Com. Vol., p. 217.

† J. A. S. B. 1889.

‡ I. A. 1902, page 264.

the defeat of Mihirakula by Yashodarman. It is not surprising that the account should be inaccurate ; Hiuen Tsang was given this story when he was in the Punjab ; and it is understandable that the men there did not remember the exact names and territories of kings in distant lands with whom their forefathers had fought. The surprising thing, on the other hand, is that for so many years scholars should have pinned their faith to this story, the reason doubtless being that up till now no other record had come to light to give us a different date for the later emperors. In 1900, however, Hoernle refused to accept any longer " the late hearsay account of a foreigner against the direct testimony of a contemporary Indian " (J. R. A. S. 1909, page 96). Again, Allan in his catalogue * says " When there appears to be a discrepancy between contemporary inscrip-^{tional} evidence and that of a writer a century later with strong Buddhistic bias it is clearly the latter's statement that must be doubted."

As has been shown above there is not one but many inscriptions, (besides the Sārnāth ones), and much other matter, which are difficult to reconcile with Hiuen Tsang.

Hiuen Tsang's story has been examined at some length because that is the only record on which scholars have based the dates of Pura, Narasimha and Kumāra II.

Kumāra's date.—There are no inscriptions or dated coins known. We have only the palaeographic evidence of his seal. As has been stated above (1) its script is identical with that of Skanda's pillar (455—467) ; (2) it also does not appear to be later than that of the Sārnāth Inscriptions (474—477 A. D.) ; (3) Budhagupta certainly commenced his reign in 477. We have seen that he had an extensive kingdom ; it is not likely that he would have rival kings in his territories like Pura, Narasimha or Kumārā ; (4) Mandasor inscriptions (F. GI. No. 18) mention the Emperor Kumāragupta. Fleet construes the document so as to get the date 493 M. E. for him. It is submitted that his interpretation is wrong and the document gives the date 529 M. E. (= 473 A. D.) for Kumāragupta. Full reasons are given in a separate note at the end of this paper for this view. Kumārā son of Narasimha, therefore, seems to have reigned between the years 467 and 477

The conclusions at which we have arrived so far may be
 Recapitulation. summed up thus.

(1) The date c. 530 for Narasiṃha (based upon Hiuen Tsang) should be discarded.

(2) No other certain dates are available for Pura, Narasiṃha or Kumārā son of Narasiṃha.

(3) Numismatic, inscriptional, and palaeographic evidence indicates that

(a) The reigns of Pura and Narasiṃha were short.

(b) Narasiṃha's son Kumārā was not far removed from Skanda who died c. 467 A. D., and that he must have ruled just before Budhagupta, 477 A. D.

It follows then that this Kumārāgupta son of Narasiṃhagupta Bālāditya was ruling the same country, and at the same time as the Sārnāth Kumārāgupta whose inscription of 474 has been discovered by Hargreaves; and the question whether they were different or identical is not difficult to answer. It is improbable that they should be different. It has been shown that known genealogies describe only two Kumāras. Coins also give only two distinct kinds. It seems probable therefore that the Sārnāth Kumārāgupta and Kumārāgupta son of Narasiṃhagupta Bālāditya are identical, a conclusion which is also supported by a comparison of the script of the Bhitri record and the Sārnāth inscriptions.

We are now able to give the limits of the reigns of these three kings. Skanda died in 467, and was followed successively by Pura and Narasiṃha and Kumārā. The last named was ruling in 474 and Budhagupta in 477.

The proximity of these two dates renders it likely that Budha succeeded Kumārā. He therefore falls in the more natural place of a successor of the Imperial Guptas, than that of a contemporary and a rival of theirs *. Before the Bhitri seal was discovered and the names of Pura and his descendents known, Fleet † suspected that Budhagupta and Bhānugupta were of the same lineage as the Gupta emperors though perhaps not in direct descent and accordingly he showed them in the genealogi-

* The three emperors Prakāśaditya, Dvādasāditya and Ghatotkoṣhagupta mentioned in A.G.O., pp. l. lv., must have lived and died before Budhagupta,

† F. G.I., page 1.

cal table on page 17 just below Skandagupta. It was the discovery of the Bhitri seal that upset everything. Three new Emperors Pura, Narasimha and Kumāra were discovered and dates had to be found for them. There was no data. In the circumstances Hiuen Tsang's story was accepted and the year c. 530 assigned to Narasimha and the intervening period apportioned among his predecessors. Budhagupta's dates however had been fixed by undoubtable inscriptions and could not be modified. He and his successor Bhānugupta had thus to be relegated to the secondary position of minor contemporary chiefs in Mālva and the presence of his coins at Benares explained away by saying that pilgrims might have taken them there. Now his inscriptions are found at Sārnāth and in Bengal. It cannot be said that they also were taken there by pilgrims. It seems more reasonable to reject Hiuen Tsang and the date 530 obtained from him.

Budhagupta comes in then as a successor of Kumāragupta son of Narasimhagupta Bālāditya. His earliest date is 477 A. D. (Sārnāth) and the latest known from coins 494 A. D.

Allan discusses the case of three other Gupta kings—Prākāshāditya, Dvādashāditya, and Ghatotkocho Gupta—on pages 1—lv of his catalogue and concludes that they were contemporaries of Pura and Narasimha and that therefore perhaps the (hitherto unknown) descendants of Skanda. There is similarly the case of Viṣṇugupta, who is supposed to be a successor of Kumāra son of Narasimha. Unfortunately we have* no materials yet for establishing their dates with any certainty, but from what has been shown above it follows that they can only lie between Skanda and Buddha. They cannot have co-existed with either of these.

Bhānugupta's date.—After Budhagupta we come across Bhānugupta waging mighty wars* in the west in the year 510 A. D.—perhaps against the Huns†. It cannot be said how he stood towards Budhagupta.

Toramāṇa and Mihirakula.—Toramāṇa has left an inscription at Eran ‡ of the first year of his reign. It is not dated, but is supposed to be not much later than 484 A. D. because in Budha-

* F. GI., p. 91.

† A. GC., p. lxii.

‡ F. GI., p. 158.

gupta's inscription* of that year two brothers Mātriviṣṇu and Dhyāniviṣṇu are mentioned, and in Toramāṇa's the former is said to have been dead while the latter was still alive. This, however, would not tell us how soon after 484 Toramāṇa reckoned his first year, and whether he ruled simultaneously with or after Bhānugupta. Prof. Pathak† relying upon some Jaina authorities assigns Toramāṇa's first year in Malva to 500 A. D. and Mihirakula's accession to 502 A. D. It would seem as if the Huns had established themselves in Malva even during Bhānugupta's lifetime and it was in the attempt to oust them that he lost his life and the Gupta empire came to an end. Mihirakula then became the sole lord only to be crushed in his turn by Yashodharman.

As there are more coins found of Narasiṃha than of Pura,
Suggested chronology. it seems likely that he ruled a little longer. We may therefore suggest tentatively the following dates :—

Kumāragupta	...	414—455 A.D.
Skandagupta	...	455—467
Puragupta	...	467—469
Narasimhagupta	...	469—473
Kumāragupta‡	...	473—477
Prākāśhāditya	...	...
Dvādashāditya	...	...
Ghatotkochagupta	...	...
Viṣṇugupta	...	} Between 467 and 477.
Budhagupta	...	
Bhānugupta	...	
Toramāṇa	...	
Mihirakula	...	c. 502—530 (in Mālva).

NOTE ON THE MANDASOR INSCRIPTION OF KUMARAGUPTA.

The Mālava years 493 and 529.

This inscription was discovered by some copyists of Dr. Fleet and was published by him first in the *Indian Antiquary* and

* F. GI., p. 88.

† Bhand. comm. vol., p. 217.

‡ It might be asked if Kumāragupta's great grandson Kumāra II could come to the throne within 18 years of the former. There is nothing improbable in this. The reigns of Kumāra I and his predecessors had been all unusually long so that he must have been fairly aged when he died. If parallel were needed, I would mention Aurangzeb whose great grandson Farukhsiyar came to the throne within six years of his death.

later in his *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. III, page 79. He interprets it to mean that Kumāragupta was ruling in the first mentioned year (493 M. E). But it seems more probable that it is with the date 529 M. E. that the context connects this king.

The eulogy begins with an account of a guild of silk weavers who migrated from Lāta to Dashapur having been attracted by the virtues of the kings of the latter country. It describes how this place became the "forehead-decoration" of the Earth, (lines 3-8).

These men on settling down in Dashapur adopted various professions in which they excelled, but the old occupation of silk weaving seems to have remained their *forte*. In spite of their worldly prosperity, however, they realised that the world was transitory and became possessed of a virtuous and stable understanding, (lines 9-12).

विद्याधरीरुचिरपल्लवकर्णपूरवातेरितास्थिरतरं प्रविचिन्त्यलोकम् ।
मानुष्यमर्थनिचयांश्च तथा विशालांस्तेषां शुभा मतिरभूदचला ततस्तु ॥ २१ ॥
चतुस्समुद्रान्तविलोलमेखलां सुमेरुकैलासवृहत्पयोधराम् ।
वनान्तवान्तस्फुटपुष्पहासिनीं कुमारगुप्ते पृथिवीं प्रशासति ॥ २३ ॥
समानधोःशुकवृहस्पतिभ्यां ललामभूतो भुवि पार्थिवानाम् ।
रणेषुयः पार्थसमानकर्मा बभूव गोप्ता नृपविश्ववर्मा ॥ २४ ॥
दीनानुकम्पनपरः कृपणात्तवर्गसन्ध्यापूदोऽधिकदयालुरनाथनाथः ।
कल्पद्रुमः प्रणयिनामभयं प्रदश्च भीतस्य योजनपदस्य घबन्धुराससात् ॥ २५ ॥
तस्यात्मजः स्थैर्य्यनयोपपन्नो बन्धुप्रियो बन्धुरिव प्रजानाम् ।
बध्वर्त्तिहर्ता नृपबन्धुवर्मा द्विद्वृष्टपक्षक्षपणैकदक्षः ॥ २६ ॥
कान्तोयुवारणपटुर्विनयान्वितश्च राजापिसन्नुपसृतो नमदैस्मयाद्यैः ।
शङ्कारमुर्त्तिरभिमात्यनलंकृतोऽपिरूपेणयः कुसुमचाप इव द्वितीयः २७
वैधव्यतीव्रव्यसनक्षतानां स्मृत्वा यमद्याप्यरिसुन्दरीणाम् ।
भयाद्भवत्यायतलोचनानां घनस्तनायासकरः प्रकम्पः ॥ २८ ॥
तस्मिन्नेव क्षितिपतिवृषे बन्धुवर्म्मण्युदारे
सम्यक्स्फीतं दशपुरमिदं पालयत्युन्नतांसे ।
शिल्पावाप्तैर्धनसमुदयैः पटुवायैरुदारम्
श्रेणीभूतैर्भवनमतुलं कारितं दीप्तरश्मेः ॥ २९ ॥
विस्तीर्णतुङ्गशिखरं शिखरिप्रकाशमभ्युद्वतेन्द्रमलरश्मिकलापगौरम् ।
यद्भाति पश्चिमपुरस्य निविष्टकान्तचूडामणिप्रतिसमन्नयनाभिरामम् ॥ ३० ॥
(रा) माननाथरचने दरभास्करांशुवह्निप्रतापसुभगे जललीनमीने ।
चन्द्रांशुहर्म्यतलचन्दनतालवृन्तहारोपभोगरहिते हिमदग्धपद्मे ३१

रोध्रप्रियङ्गतरुकुन्दलताविकोशपुष्पासवप्रमुदितालिकलाभिरामे ।
 कालेतुषारकर्णककशशीतवातवेगप्रनृत्तलवलनिगणैकशाखे ॥ ३२ ॥
 स्मरवशगतरुणजनवल्लभांगना विपुलकान्तपीनोरुस्तनजघनघनालिङ्गान-
 निर्भत्सिततुहिनहिमपाते ३३
 मालवानां गणस्थित्या याते शतचतुष्टये ।
 त्रिनवत्यधिकेब्दानां ऋतौ सेव्यघनस्वने ३४
 सहस्यमासशुक्लस्य प्रशस्तेह्नित्रयोदशे ।
 मङ्गलाचारविधिना प्रासादोयंनिवेशितः ३५
 बहुनासमतीतेन कालेनान्यैश्च पार्थिवैः ।
 व्यशीर्यतैकदेशोऽस्यभवनस्यततोऽधुना ३६
 स्वयशोवृद्धयेसर्वमत्युदारमुदारया ।
 संस्कारितमिदं भूयः श्रेण्यां भानुमतो गृहम् ३७
 अत्युन्नतमवदातनभःस्पृशन्निव मनोहरैश्शिखरैः ।
 शशिभान्वोरभ्युदये स्वमलमयूखायतनभूतम् ३८
 वत्सरशतेषु पञ्चसु विशंत्यधिकेषुनवसु चाब्देषु ।
 यातेष्वभिरम्यतपस्यमासशुक्लद्वितीयायाम् ३९
 स्पष्टैरशोकतरुकेतकसिन्दुवारलोलातिमुक्तकलतामदयन्तिकानाम् ।
 पुष्पोद्गमैरभिनवैरधिगम्यनूनमैक्यं विजृम्भितशरेहरपू (धू) तदेहे ४०
 मधुपानमुदितमधुकरकुलोपगीतनगणैकपृथुशाखे ।
 कालेनवकुसुमोद्गमदन्तुरकान्तप्रचुररोध्रे ४१
 शशिनेवनभो विमलं कौस्तुभमणिनेवशाङ्गिणोवत्तः ।
 भवनवरेणतथेदं परमखिलमलंकृतमुदारम् ४२
 अमलिनशशिलखा दन्तुरीपङ्गलानां
 स्परिवहति समूहं यावदीशो जटानाम् ।
 विकटकमलमालामंससक्तांचशाङ्गीं
 भवनमिदमुदारंशाश्वतंतावदस्तु ॥ ४३ ॥
 श्रेण्यादेशेनभक्त्या च कारितंभवनंरवेः ।
 पूर्वाच्यंप्रयत्नेन रचितावत्सभट्टिनां ॥ ४४ ॥
 स्वस्तिकर्तुंलेखकवाचकश्रोतुभ्यः सिद्धिरस्तु ॥

Partial Translation.

Having reflected that the world is very unsteady being blown about by the wind like the charming ear ornaments (made of sprigs) of the women of the Vidya-dharas, and similarly the estate of man and accumulations of wealth, large though they may be they became possessed of a virtuous and stable understanding.

In the time of Kumāragupta's rule over the (whole) Earth (having the verge of the four oceans for its girdle, and Sumera and Kailas mountains for its large breasts)—

There was a ruler Vishvayarman who was equal in intellect to Shukra and Brihaspati who became the most eminent of princes on the Earth ; whose deeds in

war were equal to those of Partha ; His son (was) King Bandhuvarman possessed of firmness and statesmanship.....

In the time of the rule of this very Bandhuvarman the high shouldered one and the best among kings, over Dashapura which had been brought to a state of great prosperity, a noble (and) unequalled temple of the bright rayed (sun) was caused to be built by the silk-cloth weavers, as a guild, with the stores of wealth acquired by the exercise of their craft ;.....

In that season which unites men with (their) lovely mistresses.....when, by (the reckoning from) the tribal constitution of the Mālavas, four centuries of years increased by ninety-three had elapsed ; in that season when the low thunder of the muttering of the clouds is to be welcomed, on the excellent thirteenth day of the bright fortnight of the month Sahasya,—this temple was established, with the ceremony of auspicious benediction.

In the course of a long time, passed by many kings, a part of this temple fell into decay.

So now, in order to increase their own glory, the whole of this most noble house of the sun has been repaired again by the munificent guild.....Thus when five centuries of years increased by twenty and nine years had elapsed on the charming second lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month Tapasya...the whole of this city was decorated with (this) best of temples.....

By command of the guild and from devotion this temple of the Sun was caused to be built, and this (Eulogy) that precedes, was with particular care, composed by Vatsabhatti. Hail to the composer and the writer and those who read or listen to it. Let there be success.

This inscription therefore was composed and set up on the occasion of the repair of the temple which had been built previously and had fallen into disrepair. For the sake of clearness the chief stages in the description may be set forth again.

- (i) The guild is prosperous and inclined to virtue.
- (ii) In the reign of Kumāragupta over the whole of the Earth.
- (iii) There was a raja named Vishvavarman at Dashapur.
- (iv) His son Bandhuvarman excels in all good qualities and in the time of this very king the guild built the temple in 493 M. E.
- (v) The temple having fallen down, now therefore the guild repairs it in 529 M. E.

The construction which strikes one first is

- (A) That during the suzerainty of Kumāragupta, there was a local ruler named Vishvavarman. That the latter's son was Bandhu in whose time the temple was built (493 M. E.)

This will give no date for Kumāragupta.

(B) But Fleet does not interpret the inscription in this way. He says that a parenthesis begins at (ii) *In the reign of K. G...* and that a second parenthesis begins at (iii) about Visvarman. Thus according to him the context of (ii) Kumāragupta is with (iv) the passage about Bandhuvarman. He therefore gets the date 493 M. E. for Kumāragupta.

[It might be mentioned that Fleet was anxious to find the date of a known Gupta king in some era other than the Gupta era in order to establish the date of its commencement. Till the time of his writing only one Kumāragupta (son of Chandra II) was known and the date 529 M. E. would not have fitted him at all. On the other hand the date 493 M. E. fell in the middle of the reign of Kumāra, son of Chandra, and was thus suitable in every way. Fleet therefore does not appear to have taken the trouble of discussing any alternative interpretation.]

Both these constructions are open to the grave objection that the eulogy does not give the name of the ruler at the time when it was composed, inscribed, and set up; whereas it gives the name of a king (Bandhuvarman) who ruled 36 years before, and also of his father, and of their overlord (Kumāragupta). This seems so strange and is so opposed to general practice that the following analysis of the inscriptions in Fleet's book will not be out of place.

Leaving this inscription (No. 18), there are in this book eighty others, of which no less than 65 record the name of the king. Of these sixty-five, 2 are posthumous, 2 fragmentary, 9 have no incident narrated being merely seals and the like. The remaining 52 gave the name of the king ruling at the time when the main incident recorded took place: there is not a single inscription similar to what Fleet would have us believe this one, viz:—naming past kings but omitting the name of the reigning monarch.

It seems therefore permissible to try and find out if some other valid interpretation free from this objection is not possible.

(C.) It is suggested that it is unnecessary to suppose that there is a parenthesis within parenthesis as Fleet did; and that the passage (ii) *In the reign of Kumāragupta* is the usual form of giving the name of the ruler of the time at the head of the inscription; and that the passages (iii) and (iv) that follow form

a single parenthesis describing the origin of the temple, and leading to the main statement in passage (v) about its repair in 529 M. E. The context of Kumāragupta is thus with this latter statement about the repair in 529 M. E.

I submitted this interpretation first to Mr. R. Burn and then at his suggestion to Dr. A. Venis, who gave a great deal of his time and attention to the subject and finally said that the interpretation offered did not offend any rule or usage of Sanskrit composition, and was not less probable than the others. One of Dr. Venis' pupils who was also consulted gave his opinion in favour of the interpretation put forward by me. Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Ganga Nath Jha, Professor of Sanskrit at the Muir Central College, Allahabad, also prefers my interpretation to Fleet's. He says "I am not a trained epigraphist and so cannot express any opinion on the historical aspect of the matter. Speaking as a grammarian, I consider construction A to be the most natural. Of the other two, (C) is preferable to (B), which to me seems forced. If there is to be a break in the continuity of the composition, it seems better grammatically to connect कुमार गुप्ते पृथिवीम् प्रशासति with संस्कारितम् than with anything in between."

The only criticism that can be made against my reading is that there is दूरान्वय i. e., a rather long parenthesis. But it is submitted (1) that this objection applies doubly to Fleet's reading which assumes a longer parenthesis and one parenthesis within another. (2) That there are other examples in which the name of the ruling king is given at the beginning, and is followed by a piece of old history leading up to the statement of the main event e. g. F. GI. No. 15 :—

सिद्धम् ।

यस्योपस्थानभूमिर्नृपतिशतशिरःपातवातावधूता

गुप्तानां वंशजस्य प्रविसृतयशसस्तस्य सर्वोत्तमर्द्धे : ।

राज्ये शकोपमस्य क्षितिपशतपतेः स्कन्दगुप्तस्य शान्ते

वर्षे त्रिंशदशैकोत्तरकशततमे ज्येष्ठमासि प्रपन्ने ॥ १ ॥

ख्यातेऽस्मिन् ग्रामरत्ने ककुभ इतिजनैः साधुसंसर्गपूते

पुत्रो यस्तोमिलस्य प्रचुरगुणनिधेर्भट्टिसोमो महात्मा ।

तत्सूनूर्द्धसोमः पृथुलमतियशाव्याघ्रइत्यान्यसंज्ञो

मदस्तस्यात्मजोऽभूद्द्विजगुरुयतिषप्रायशःप्रीतिमानयः ॥ २ ॥

पुण्यस्कन्धं सचक्रे जगदिदमखिलं संसरद्वीक्ष्य भीतो
 श्रेयोऽर्थभूतभूत्यै पथि नियमवतामहंतामादिकर्तृन् ।
 पंचेन्द्रांस्थापयित्वा धरणिधरमयान् सन्निखातस्ततोऽयम्
 शैलस्तम्भःसुचारुगर्गिवरशिखराग्रोपमः कीर्त्तिकर्त्ता ॥ ३ ॥

Translation.

Perfection has been attained ! *In the tranquil reign of Skandagupta* whose hall of audience is shaken by the wind caused by the falling down (in the act of performing obeisance) of the heads of a hundred kings, who is born in the lineage of the Guptas; whose fame, is spread far and wide; who excels all others in prosperity ; who resembles the good Sakra; and who is the lord of a hundred kings ; in the one hundredth year, increased by thirty and ten and one, the month of Jyeshtha having arrived.

In this jewel of a village which is known by people under the name of Kakubha which is pure from association with holy men, there was the highminded Bhattisoma who was the son of Somila the receptacle of many good qualities.

His son (was) Rudrasoma of great intellect and fame, and who had the other appellation of Vyāghra.

His son was Madra who was specially full of affection for Brahmans and religious preceptors and ascetics. He being alarmed when he observed the whole of this world passing through a succession of changes acquired himself a large mass of religious merit. (And by him), - having set up for the sake of final beatitude, and for the welfare of all existing being, five excellent images made of stone, of these who led the way in the path of the Arhats who practice religious observances,—*there was then planted in the ground this most beautiful pillar of stone which resemble the tip of the summit of the best mountains, and which confers fame (upon him.)*

It will be seen that the context of the first line "*In the reign of Skandagupta*" is with the passage in the last line "*there was planted this pillar, et.*"—the intervening passages being one long parenthesis. Our inscription (No. 18) should, it is submitted, be construed similarly.

Rules of syntax being thus at least equally in favour of the constructions (A) (B) and (C) given above, the consideration about the extreme improbability of putting up an inscription

without naming the ruling king should incline us to accept the last interpretation.*

Had it been the building of the temple that was the main event recorded, and the repair only shortly afterwards and in the reign of the same king, one could have imagined the kind of construction (A) or (B). But here there is an express statement that after the building of the temple there was a distinct interval in which many kings ruled; and the temple fell into decay and "now therefore the guild restores it." There can thus be no doubt that it was the restoration that was the occasion of the setting up of this inscription, its *raison d'être*, and the king ruling at the time was several degrees removed from the one reigning when it was built.

The inscription thus gives us two facts :—

(i) Kumāragupta was ruling in 529 M. E. = 473 A. D.

(ii) There were several kings between 437 and 473 A. D.

The date 473 A. D. for Kumāragupta agrees surprisingly with 474 A. D. given by the Sārnāth inscriptions. The two records thus support each other, and strengthen the case for believing that Kumāragupta, son of Narasimhagupta, ruled c. 473 and not c. 530-550.

* Assuming this conclusion to be true, if we go back to the inscription and try to imagine the poet composing it we see that he would naturally write in the order given in the text. He had to describe (1) the glory of the guild (2) the restoration by it of a temple. Before describing the repairs he should of course give an account of how the temple came to be at all. Hence, when he came to the passage कुमार गुप्ते पृथिवीम् प्रशासति he had to check himself and to say 'now I must go back and state how in the time of such and such king this temple came into being and subsequently decayed.' Having done that he would take up the thread of his previous narrative and go on ततोऽधुना the guild repairs it. It is difficult to imagine the working of the mind of the composer of Fleet's version of this inscription.

REFERENCE