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MAHASTHAN AND ITS ENVIRONS
(WITH A MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS)

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NOTE.

This monograph has grown out of a short paper on 'the antiquity of Mahasthan,' read by the author, Mr. Prabhas Chandra Sen, B.L. of Bogra, on 22nd April, 1926, at a literary conference of the Society. The delay in its publication has enabled Mr. Sen to develop his original theme and add a chapter describing Mahasthan and its environs, making his account of this famous but little explored site a complete and up-to-date one. Written with local knowledge and observation, the monograph has further gained in value by the addition of appendices, illustrations and a map. The Society is much obliged to Mr. Sen who has helped us to add some valuable antiquities to our museum, for contributing this useful monograph in spite of his engagements as a busy lawyer and the handicap of having to carry on his researches in a small mofussil town where few archaeological or historical books are available. With only the limited resources of a private individual he has prepared the map which tells more eloquently than any words can do, of the archaeological importance of the locality and the need for its exploration.

The Society is obliged to the authorities of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for the loan of their block of the Mahasthan inscription and permission to print the extracts from their Journal which form appendices II and IV of this monograph.

We are also very glad to acknowledge that the cost of this publication has been kindly contributed by the two branches of the zamindar family of Talanda, Rajshahi District, viz., that of the text by Rai Sahib Kunjamohan Maitra and that of the illustrations by Messrs. Brajendramohan Maitra, M.A., B.L. and Gopikulamohan Maitra.

Varendra Research Society,
August, 1929.

Bijaynath Sarkar,
Hon. Secretary.
MAHASTHAN AND ITS ENVIRONS.

I. DESCRIPTION.

The Situation of Mahasthan

The archaeological excavations at Paharpur, begun in 1922 and resumed after a break of two years in 1925, have revealed some remarkable antiquarian remains, such as a copper-plate of the Gupta period, clay seals of the Pāla period, a stone inscription pointing to the rule in North Bengal of the Gurjara-Pratihāra king Mahendrapāla of Kanauj, besides the remains of a huge terraced temple, decorated with terra-cotta plaques and stone sculptures and of a type of building unknown before in Indian architecture (London News, Jan. 29, 1927, p. 160; Modern Review, April, 1928, p. 502). The north-east corner of the Rajshahi District in which Paharpur is situated juts into the Bogra and Dinajpur Districts; and for considerable distances on both sides of this frontier in all the three districts, there are numerous sites, from which ancient inscriptions, coins, sculptures and other antiquities have been recovered from time to time. Roughly speaking, this tract extends from Damodarpur in the north to Dhanaidah in the south, a distance of about 100 miles, and from Bangarh in the west to Mahasthan in the east, a distance of about 60 miles.

In this wide tract the ruins of Mahasthan-garh, on the west bank of the Karatoya river, some 8 miles north of Bogra town and some 30 miles east of Paharpur, are a prominent landmark. They consist of the ruins of a huge fortress, or city about a mile square, with brick mounds, old tanks, high embankments and other relics of antiquity clustered round them for some miles south, west and north, as is shown in the accompanying map.

Its present importance

The place is still held sacred by the Hindus and is visited by thousands of pilgrims for a bath in the Karatoya at a certain conjunction of the planets, known as the Nārāyaṇī-yoga, which occurs in the month of Pausha or December once in about twelve years. A fair is also held here every year, on the last day of the Bengali year, about the middle of April.

It is also held sacred by the Muslims, as it contains the tomb of their saint, Sultan Balkhi, and a mosque dating from the Mughal time.
Sir Alexander Cunningham visited Mahasthan in 1879 and identified it with the site of Paundravarddhana, the capital city of the ancient bhukti or province of that name, frequently mentioned in the records of pre-Muslim days.

The Scope of this Monograph

I propose to describe first the principal ruins and antiquities found at Mahasthan-garh and the neighbourhood which apparently formed its suburb in olden days and then discuss such historical data as are now available along with the question of the identity of the site with Paundravarddhana city.

The ruins generally stand out as brick mounds, called ‘dvîp’ or ‘dhāp’ with some fanciful names attached to them, and are interspersed with innumerable tanks which invariably have a north and south direction and some of which are now dried up and turned into fields.

Much of the matter presented here was collected by me some years ago and then incorporated in my Bengali work, Bagurār Itihāsa, published in 1912 (of which a second edition is now in the press). I have now revised the old account in the light of further studies and brought it up-to-date. In this account (as in my Itihāsa) I have drawn on the contributions of my predecessors, notably, O'Donnell, Beveridge and Cunningham. My map is based on the Revenue Survey maps in the Bogra Collectorate office.

Origin of the Name

The earliest mention of the name Mahasthan occurs in verse 59 of a small Sanskrit work called the Karatoiyā-mahātmyam ascribed to Paraśurāma, (see Appendix I). In this work Paundravardhanapura and Mahāsthān are treated as synonymous terms (verses 9, 24 and 59) and it is said that the place received the latter name because of the nineteen specialities with which it was endowed by Paraśurāma (v. 59). In this work, Śiladvīpa (v. 34), the Nārāyanī-yoga (v. 37) and the Skanda and Govinda shrines (v. 56) are mentioned.

The name next occurs in the form of ‘Mastangarh’ in a sanad dated 1096 H. =1685 A.D., re-affirming the settlement of the service at the shrine of ‘Mir Syed Sultan Mahmud Māhisawar,’ together with the income from ‘Mastangarh and the land comprised within the bend of the river,’ on certain persons, (see Appendix II).

The historical significance of these two records will be discussed later.
The Garh

The ruins of the garh are described by O'Donnell (J.A.S.B., 1875, p. 183), Beveridge (J.A.S.B., 1878, p. 89) and Cunningham (Archaeological Survey Report, Vol. XV, 1879-80, p. 104).

From the District Gazetteer of Bogra we learn that the late Mr. Umesh Chandra Batabyal, who was the Collector from 1894 to 1896, left an account of the garh in the Collectorate office, and that an exploration of the site with excavations was carried out by the District Engineer, Mr. Nandi, in 1907.

The ruins consist of a nearly oblong terrace about 15 ft. in general elevation above the country, surrounded by brick ramparts, with corner bastions, (see Fig. 1). The terrace is about 5000 ft. in length from north to south, and 4000 ft. in breadth, and is studded with isolated mounds. It appears to have been originally protected on the east by the river Karatoya and on the other three sides by a moat, the remains of which are still visible. The moat on the south is now known as the Bārānasī khāl, that on the west as the Gilātalā khāl, and that on the north as the Kālidaha sāgar, the last being an off-shoot of an extensive bil of that name.

Entrances to the Garh

The rampart being dilapidated, the present entrances are mere openings in it. The main one is on the west and is known as the Tāmradvāra, or 'Copper gate.' There is another entrance of probably a later date on this side, south of the Tāmradvāra, through which the present road to Bihar passes.

On the east side there are at present three entrances, viz.—

(1) A flight of stairs at the south-east corner leading to Shah Sultan's shrine and the mosque, apparently built in Muhammadan times.

(2) The ‘Dorab Shah gate,’ a little north of it and connected with a brick-paved road which passes through the west rampart towards Bihar.

(3) An opening further north, leading out to ‘Silādevīr ghāt’ on the Karatoya.

On the north side there are two openings, one called ‘Sanātan sāheber gali’ leading out to Govinda dẖāp and Pātharghātā on the Karatoya river, and the other to Ghāgarduār village across the Kālidaha bil.

On the south side the entrance is known as ‘Būrir darwaza,’ which leads to the Bārānasī Khāl.
Roads in the Garh

There is at present one regular path in the fort, that which leads westwards from the Dorab Shah gate and goes on to Bihar village. A branch from it runs northwards for a short distance and then bifurcates, one arm going westwards to the Tāmradvāra and the other eastwards to Śilādevī ghat. A network of roads connects the garh with the country around.

Mosque of Farrukh Siyar's time

From the few stone sculptures that have been found so far, the surface of the garh appears to consist of the ruins of Hindu or Buddhist structures, except at the south-east corner which was subsequently occupied and built over by the Muslims. Coming up by the steps at this corner we pass by a tomb which is called 'Harpāler samādhi,' and reach the top where there is a number of tombs of the Muslim zemindars of Selbarsa Pargana, and of the khadims of the mosque. West of these tombs there is a small mosque with a single elegant dome surmounted by a pinnacle of glazed terra-cotta. There are similar but smaller pinnacles in the parapet.

Over the entrance there is a rectangular tablet of black stone bearing an inscription in Persian which gives the date of the mosque as 1130 H. corresponding to A.D. 1718, the year 7 of Farrukh Siyar's reign, (see Appendix III). The tablet measures 18" × 9".

Shah Sultan Balkhi's dargah.

North-east of the mosque is the enclosure containing the tomb of the saint. The two stone jambs of the entrance are carved in a Hindu style and are inscribed with the words 'Śrī Narasimhadāsasya' (or the gift of Narasimhadāsa) in Bengali characters of the 17th century. The name has not yet been identified. The tomb itself is a large-sized white-washed mound situated in the centre of the yard with no dome over it. Near the quadrangle there is a white-washed rectangular masonry platform which is said to mark the site where the saint offered his first prayer. Outside the entrance is a large circular 'gaurīpaṭṭa' of black stone, with the usual spout but without the lingam. From this and other stones (mostly black basalt) which occur here, the site appears to have been occupied by a Hindu temple, before the Muslim shrine was built.

The Legend of Shah Sultan and Śilādevī.

The current legend of the overthrow of the Hindu rule at Mahasthan by the Muslims is thus narrated by O'Donnell (J.A.S.B., 1875, p. 185) :—

'Mahasthan became a seat of orthodox Hinduism, and the worship of Siva
was celebrated with much fervour. Within a radius of a mile, a hundred thousand lingas are said to have been set up in honour of that god. About the end of the thirteenth century, according to the most generally accepted traditions, Mahasthan was the capital of a minor Kshatriya prince, named Paraśurāma. At that time the Muhammadans had conquered Gaur, and driven the last Hindu dynasty out of Nadiyā, and their arms were beginning to be pushed to Eastern Bengal. It was then that a humble fakir or religious mendicant appeared before Paraśurāma, and begged for as much ground as he might cover with his chāmrā, or skin, kneeling on which he might say his prayers. The Hindu prince granted his request, and the fakir, turning towards the west, began to pray. Scarcely had he done so when the skin began to expand, and before he had done, it covered nearly the whole principality. Paraśurāma called his troops together and attacked the fakir, but to no purpose, as he and they perished in the battle. Paraśurāma had one daughter, the beautiful Śilā Devī, whom the conqueror, who bore the name of Shah Sultan Hazrat Auliya, now claimed as his prize. The Hindu princess pretending to accept her fate, found an opportunity of stabbing him, and then threw herself into the Karatoya. A steep part of the bank, where there is now a flight of stairs, still bears the name of Śilā Devī's Ghāt, and in Hindu hymns the favourite name for Mahasthan is Śilā Dwipa' or the Island of Śilā. The word 'island' draws attention to a change which has taken place in the river Karatoya. It at one time divided into two branches near Mahasthan, reuniting again about a mile north of the present town of Bagurā. The western branch is now the little stream Subil.'

The 'Jiyat-kund' well near Paraśurāmer Bāri figures in this legend. It is said that the water of that well resusciated the fallen soldiers of Paraśurāma until it was polluted by the Muslim invaders. The story was put in verse about 1890 by the late Mr. Taylor of the Bogra District Board. A similar story is current in connection with the Muslim conquest of Pandua, near Hugli, (Proc. A. S. B., 1870, pp. 183ff) and of some other ancient cities, e.g., Paithan on the Godavari.

The legend is narrated in a latter day Bengali ballad named Sultan Balkhi published in 1285 B.S. (=1881 A.D.), in which with some puzzling historical details it is stated that Shah Sultan hailed from Balkh in Central Asia and came to Paraśurāma's court at Mahasthan from the court of Nawab Shaista Khan at Hisya Sandvipa.

The ballad will be discussed later along with evidence of a more reliable character furnished by the sanad of 1685 granting Mahasthan village for the
service of the shrine (Appendix II) and the establishment about the same time of a Muhamadan zamindari in Selbarsa, in which the pirpal of Mahasthan subsequently merged. The Selbarsa zamindars are still the mutwalis of the shrine, though they are now split up into three branches, viz. the Chaudhuris of Kundgram, the Chaudhuris of Sibganj, and the Khan-Panis of Karatia in Mymensing District (representing the Paikar branch).

Finds of Pathan Coins at Mahasthan

Though from the above as well as other evidence it appears that Muslim predominance was not established at Mahasthan till about the end of the Mughal rule, the coins found in the garh itself (and recently in the Govinda mound close to it) all belong to an earlier period viz. the Pathan. The earliest of these is a silver coin of Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (A.D. 1339-58) which was found in 1874 along with a number of coins of Mahmud Shah I (1442-1459) (see Appendix IV). In 1879, Cunningham found one coin of Jalaluddin Muhammad (1418-1431) and two of Mahmud I.

Regarding the first find, Mr. Beveridge notes (J.A.S.B. 1878, p. 95):—

'In 1874, a pot of old rupees was found in the village of Mahasthan by a labourer who was digging a ditch in a pan garden. The owners of the pan garden wrested the coins from him, and were convicted, rather harshly I think, of robbery and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. On appeal, their sentence was reduced to three months. Some of the coins were bought from the owners by Major Hume and were afterwards sent to the Asiatic Society. One coin was lying in the Magistrate's Mālkhanāh, and has been sent by me to Professor H. Blochmann. I have also sent down two other silver coins which are said to have been found at Mahasthan.' In a footnote, Beveridge adds, 'The three silver coins are—(1) a silver taṅkāh of Shams-uddin Ilyas Shah of Bengal, as published by Thomas in his 'Initial Coinage of Bengal.'

'(2) A silver taṅkāh, struck in 862 H, by Mahmud Shah I, of Bengal as figured in this Journal, for 1875, Pl. XI, No. 7. The reverse is the same as in Nos. 5 and 8 but the reading is still doubtful.

'(3) A silver taṅkāh by the same king, of coarse manufacture, similar to Nos. 2 and 3, of Pl. XI, loc. cit.'

Regarding a later find Cunningham notes (A.S.R. XV., p. 117): 'I also obtained three of these rupees found in Mahasthan. One of them belonged to Jalaluddin Muhammad, and the other two to Mahmud I. One of them is dated in A. H. 846, and the other in A. H. 848. The first coin is in very fine order.'
After some fifty years, a few more coins of Ilyas Shah and Mahmud Shah have been found close to Mahasthan, in the course of the recent excavation of the Govinda mound, by the Archaeological Department.

**Khudār-pathar Dhāp**

About 200 yards to the north-west of the dargāh is a mound which is named after an enormous door-sill of granite stone which lies on it. The stone measures about $10' \times 2\frac{1}{2}' \times 2\frac{1}{2}'$ and has a floral design on its face, while the top is recessed and provided with two socket holes for the door shutters, 6 ft. apart. According to the *Gazetteer*, all round this stone excavations were made in 1907 to a depth of 5 ft. when a stone pavement was reached. During this excavation several carved stones were obtained, one of which measuring 2' 3" by 8" by 7" (Fig. 4) is now in the Museum at Rajshahi. It contains ‘three seated Buddha figures in a line, of which the middle one is in the meditative pose and those on the two sides in the earth-touching pose. Each figure is placed within an arched niche. At the left end is a devotee seated with folded hands.’ *(V.R.S. Annual Report 1926-27, Museum Notes, p. 2).* This points to the temple being Buddhistic, though Cunningham *(A.S.R., XV, p. 105)* classed the ‘massive door sill’ as that ‘of a Hindu temple.’

**Mānkhalir Dhāp and Kund**

About 400 ft. further north is another mound with a *kund* or deep pit lying at its foot. From this mound Cunningham obtained ‘a considerable number of carved bricks, such as are always found in the ruins of temples, and which still exist *in situ* in the fine brick temple of Bhitaragon. There were mouldings of cornices of many varieties, portions of undulated eaves, and of āmalaka fruits of pinnacles of a temple.’ He got also ‘twelve square terra-cotta alto-relievs, and one small pilaster or baluster, which formed the upright of two of these panels of a long frieze.’ They were all of coarse workmanship and of soft red brick, but of much variety in the designs—including men in various positions, a wheel, a ram, a bull, a tiger, a caparisoned horse, a parrot, an unknown bird, a lion sitting to front, a circular lotus flower. Along with these he obtained ‘two old bronze figures of Gaṇeśa and Garuḍa, and a fragment of blue stone pedestal with the end of an inscription in medieval Nāgāri characters reading *nāgrahāra*’ *(Cunningham, loc. cit., pp. 106, 108-9, Pl. xxxi).*

Cunningham derived the name of the mound from a ‘Rājā Mān Singh’ who was said to have preceded ‘Rājā Paraśurāma.’ Some persons suggest that the
mound is named after the Muslim Māṅkālis of Ghoraghat, who were such a power in North Bengal at the close of the Pathān rule. (Blochmann, *Ain-i-Akbari*). A more probable derivation of the name is from the Jaina apostle Goshala who was called Māmkhali-putra (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, June, 1927, p. 236). In 1912, I collected at this mound the torso of a crude and unfinished Jaina image, which Cunnigham also appears to have noticed and which is now in the Museum at Rajshahi, and the prevalence of the Jaina faith at Pauṇḍravaradhdhana is attested by the *Avadāna-kalpa-latikā* as well as Hiuen Tsang’s *Travels*.

**The Mahasthan Sanskrit Inscription**

East of the mound and outside the fort-wall there is a tank (Fig. 1) in re-excavating which in 1919, a fragment of a stone inscription was found, which is now in the Museum at Rajshahi (Fig. 7). A great part of the inscription including its date and the name of its original site is missing. The script is of the ninth century A.D.

All that we learn from the remnant are the names of some members of a Nandi family, one of whom is said to have attained prosperity at Gopagriha, which may possibly be identified with the present village of Gokul.

The fragment was first published by me in the Bengali monthly *Bhāratavarsha*, Srāvan, 1326 B.S. and later by Mr. Haridas Mitra in *J.A.S.B.*, 1922, pp. 439 et seq.

**Parasuramer Bāri**

This mound is situated some 600 ft. north of Māṅkhāli dhāp, with the ‘Jiyat-kund’ or ‘Well of Life’ near it. According to the *Gazetteer*, p. 157, two rooms of modern date were found inside the mound in the excavations of 1907.

The ‘Jiyat-kund’ well has a diameter of 14 ft. at the top, diminishing on account of offsets as it goes deeper. ‘The descent to the water was made by isolated stones projecting from the wall.’ Near it lies a huge granite stone carved with the ‘elephant trunk’ design probably of the Gupta age.

**Bairāgīr Dhāp**

This mound is situated at some distance north of Paraśurāmer bāri and not far from the northern rampart wall. Recent excavations (made here by the Archaeological Department) have revealed the remains of a group of brick-built temples, in one of which two massive stone pilasters of the Gupta age were apparently used afterwards to form a drain, and in another, a little south-east of the former, was found a massive stone pillar probably of the Pāla age.
Narasimher Dhāp

A little to the north-east and close to the rampart there is an elevated ground, with this name. The inscriptions on the door-jambs of Shah Sultan’s dargah may possibly have been connected with it.

Silādevīr Ghāt

This ghat is situated some 200 yards east of the garh, opposite the Bāirāgīr dhāp, and on the Karatoya river. Cunningham, following O’Donnell, placed this ghat higher up the stream, near the Govinda mound. But this is contrary to the opinion of the Hindus, who always resort to the lower site for their Pausha-Nārāyaṇī bath.

As O’Donnell hints and Beveridge clearly puts it, ‘the legend of the beautiful Śilā Devī has its origin in a mispronunciation. The original name of the place is Siladwip’ (J.A.S.B., 1878, p. 91). That this is so is evident from verses 37 and 30 of the Karatoya-māhātmyam and the sankaḷpa or vow for the Pausha-Nārāyaṇī bath, which are said to be prescribed in the Kritya-chintāmani of Vāchaspati Miśra:—

That is, Śilādvipa is the place for the bath at the Nārāyaṇī-yoga or the conjunction of the Sun in the Dhanu rāśi (Archer) with the Moon in the Amāvasya tithi and the Mūlā nakshatra on a Monday.

The name Śilā-dvīpa was probably derived from the ‘hundred thousand’ Śiva lingas which, as O’Donnell observes, were said to have been set up within ‘a radius of a mile,’ at Mahasthan (J.A.S.B. 1875, p. 185). V. 16 of the Karatoya-māhātmyam refers to this in the words—Paṇḍre Koṭi-śilā-dvīpe.

Skander Dhāp

This mound stands in mauza Bāghhopāra about two miles south of Mahasthangarh and east of the road from Bogra town. It probably marks the site of the Skanda temple referred to in the Karatoya-māhātmyam as one of the limits of the sacred ground of Mahasthan, the temple of Kārtikeya of Paṇḍra-
vardhana city mentioned in the Rājatarangini, and the Skanda-nagara of the Rāmcharitam (III. 9.).

Gokul

Between Skander dhāp and Mahasthan-garh lies the village of Gokul, which may be identified with Gopagriha of the Mahasthan inscription mentioned before. Through it a road leads westwards joining the Khetlal road at Chandnia hāt. There are several mounds and tanks in this village pointing to its ancient importance. The two bigger mounds are now-a-days connected with the legend of Manasā (as related in the local ballad of Padmapurāna) and called respectively ‘Lakhindarer Merh’ and ‘Netai Dhopani Pāṭ.’ The Merh (Fig. 5), which still retains a great height, appears to have been surrounded by cells arranged in terraces. On the top of the mound there are the remains of a floor.

Rāmsahar

South and west of Gokul is the village of Ramsahar in which there is a low mound called Khāmār.

Palāsāri

West of Gokul and touching the south-west corner of the garh, is the village of Palāsāri. From the number of old tanks and other ruins as well as its proximity to Mahasthangarh, the place may very well be identified with Palāśavinda and the Damodarpur copper-plate of Budhagupta’s time is purported to have been issued (Ep. Ind., XV, p. 136).

Chāndnia-Haripur

Proceeding west along the road and crossing the dried up Āto nālā, we enter the eastern arm of Haripur village, in which there is a big mound, called Dhanvantari (referring no doubt to the Manasā legend). In the western arm of the village, lying west of the hāt and the Bogra-Khetlal road, is an elevated ground, which extends westwards into Rojakpur. It contains several mounds now called Rāstalā, Shasṭhitalā etc. The elevated ground borders on the Somrāi bil. Some people connect the name of the village with Hari who, according to the Rāmcharitam, helped the Kaivartta chief Bhīma in his struggle with Rāmapāla.

Saralpur and Ātovala

Between the two arms of Haripur is the village of Saralpur, the eastern section of which bordering on the Āto is called Ātovala. In this section there is a small mound which is considerably encroached upon by fields on its north.
Here probably once stood a temple of much beauty and importance, as in its neighbourhood have been found a fine gilt bronze image of Mañjuśrī of about the 5th century A.D. (Fig. 2, also Annual Report, V.R. Society, 1926-27, Notes, p. 5; and 1928-29, p. 19) and an ingeniously perforated terracotta moulding for a cornice (Annual Report, V.R. Society, 1928-29, p. 20). It is said that until recently a road could be traced connecting this mound with Mahasthan-garh. Another bronze image of a Bodhisattva from near about Mahasthan is now in the Museum at Rajshahi (Fig. 3; also Annual Report, V. R. Society, 1927-28, Notes, p. 4).

Besides the Balāi dhāp there are other mounds in Saralpur village, e.g., Dalu-mājhīr bhitā, between the road and the bil near Chandnia hāt.

Bāmanpārā

About half a mile north of Balāi dhāp, at the south end of Bāmanpārā village near the point where its boundary meets those of the Ātovalā (Saralpur) and Palāśbārī villages, there is a considerable mound called Kānai dhāp. Recently a school house has been erected on its top, and in digging for earth for it some granite blocks have been exposed to view.

A road from Mahasthan passes through Bāmanpārā westwards to Hukmāpur where it meets the Teghar-Bihār road. Bāmanpārā is being linked up southwards, through Saralpur, with the Khetlāl road and northwards, through Chingāspur, with the Sikandrbād-Bihār road, which is being extended eastwards to meet the Sibganj road in Ghāgarduār village.

It was in Bāmanpārā that about the year 1862 a number of gold coins was found, out of which Mr. Beveridge obtained two, which he forwarded to the Asiatic Society in Calcutta for identification (J.A.S.B., 1878, p. 95). They were both Gupta coins, one of Chandragupta II and the other of Kumāragupta (Cunningham, A.S.I. R. XV, p. 116).

Three more coins of Chandragupta II obtained from Dāmāi, a village under police station Kuhloo and 8 miles south-west of Mahasthan, are in the Museum at Rajshahi (Annual Report, V. R. Society, 1927-28, List of coins, p. 3).

Mathurā

East of Bāmanpārā and extending up to the garh on the east and the Kālidāhā bil on the north, is the village of Mathurā, in which there are several tanks, and on a ridge overlooking the Gilātalā moat, two mounds called Paraśurāmer Sabhābāṭi and Yogīr Dhāp.
Rojakpur

Proceeding westward along the road from Gokul to Haripur, we pass into the western arm of the latter village, already referred to, and meet the Bogra-Khetlal road near the Chändniā hāt. West of Haripur and south of the Somrāi bil is the village of Rojakpur, into which, as already stated, the elevated ground from Chändniā hāt extends. On this ground are two mounds called respectively Chāndbhīṭā (probably referring to the Manasā legend) and Dhanbhāṇḍār. A little further west is another mound called Śīṅghināṭh Dhāp.

Baghahāli

West of Rojakpur, on the south-west end of the bil, in the village of Bāghahāli, there is a big mound called ‘Śālban Rājār kāchāri,’ while about a mile and a half south-west of it, in the village of Arora (as will be described later), there is a big mound called ‘Śālban Rājār bāri.’ The identity of this Śālban will be discussed in connection with the latter ruins.

Yogīr-bhavan

South west of Bāghahāli (beyond Chak Bariāpārā) and some 3 miles west of the Khetlal road is a settlement of the Nātha sect of Śaiva sannyāsīs, known as Yogīr-bhavan, forming the eastern section of Arora village. An account of this settlement is given by Beveridge, J.A.S.B., 1878, p. 94. It occupies about 80 bighas of land and forms the headquarters of the sect, of which there are branches at Yogīgopāh and Gorakh-kui, both in the Dinajpur District, the former in its south-west part some 5 miles west of Pāhārpur, J.A.S.B., 1875, p. 189, and the latter in its north-west part some 4 miles west of Nekmardan.

The mantra of the sect is as follows:—

ॐ गुरुः। क्रोडारे भादिताय। उदयनाथ पार्वती। सवनाय व्रजा। सवनाय वाक्ष्या। गजवेणगजक्षणनाथ। पचले प्रचमनाथ। शान्तपार्य सिद्धरक्षीनाथ। मायाक्ष्ये

The origin of the sect is referred to by MM. Haraprasad Sastri (Rāmacharitam p. 12) thus:—

'A class of men who attained success in their austerities and yoga-practices were regarded as superhuman beings or Nāthas. They were objects of veneration and they had a large number of disciples. Ādinātha, Matsyendranātha, Mīna-nātha and others stuck to their Buddhism. But Gorakshanātha, who was
originally a Buddhist under the name Ramaṇavajra, became a Śaiva, and was hated by the Buddhists as a renegade. These introduced a form of secret and mystic worship, which, with political changes in eastern India, brought about the downfall of Buddhism in this country.'

The shrines at Yogir-bhavan are situated in the south-west corner of an enclosure or math. One of them called Dharmma-dungi, bears a brick inscription, reading sarvva-siddha sana 1148 Śrī Suphala . . . . (the year =1741 A.D.). In front of it is another shrine called ‘Gadighar,’ where a fire is kept burning at all hours.

Outside the enclosure are four temples, dedicated respectively to Kālabhairava, Sarvamaṅgalā Durgā, and Gorakshanātha. The Kālabhairava temple contains a Śiva linga and bears a brick inscription reading śrī Rāmaśiddha sana 1173 sāla (=1766 A.D.) amale Śrī Jayanātha Nara-Nārāyaṇa. The Sarvamaṅgalā temple contains three images of Hara-Gaurī, one of Mahishamardinī, a fragment of an Ashta-mātrikā slab, a fragment of a three-faced female figure probably Ushnīshavijaya (Sādhana-malā, II. pl. XIV) and a four-armed female figure playing on a vinā (evidently Sarasvatī, but worshipped here as Sarvamaṅgalā). Over the entrance is a brick inscription reading 1089 Meher Nātha sadaka śrī Abhirāma Mehetara (the year=1681 A.D.). In the Durgā temple is a stone image of Chāmundā, and in the Gorakshanātha one, a Śiva linga. There are three brick built samādhis near the latter temple.

There are several tanks, of which the Phuldīghi and the Dadhisāgar lying south are the largest.

Arorā

South-west of the Dadhisāgar and standing on the Masándighi, in Arorā village, is Sālvan Rājār bāri referred to under Bāghahālī. This Sālvan may possibly be the same as king Sālavāhan, son of Sāhila-deva of the Chamba inscription who won the title of Kari-ghaṭa-varsha (=Kuṇjara-ghaṭa-varsha ?) (R. C. Majumdar, ‘Vaṅge Kāmbojādhikāra,’ Vaṅga-vāni, Chaitra, 1330 B.S. p. 251, Ind. Ant., XVII. pp. 7-13). Beveridge refers to this mound in J.A.S.B., 1878, p. 95.

This name of Sāhila seems to occur again in Sāhilādītya lakshman in v. 10 of the Silimpur inscription (Ep. Ind., XIII, p. 291).

If this identification is correct, then the word Kuṇjaraghāṭāvarṣhena in the Bangarh stone inscription (Gauḍa-rāja-mālā, p. 35) is really the title or virudha of the Gauḍapati of the Kāmboja family and not the date of the inscription.
Teghar

North of Chândniā hāt the road skirts the bil and comes to Teghar village which juts out into the bil. Near about here are several mounds, such as Narapatir dhāp, Kācher āṅginā (or glazed courtyard, a term applied to many ruins in these parts) etc. The biggest of these mounds, Maṅgal-nāther dhāp, (Fig. 6) is situated close to the point, from which a road branches off to Bihar. It is said that terra-cotta plaques as well as stone images were found at this site, but were all consigned to the neighbouring dighi.

Bihār and Bhāsu-Bihār

Following the road from Teghar and passing through Hukmāpur, where the road from Mahasthan meets it, and crossing the Nāgar river, we came to the village of Bihār, where there is a kātchāri of the Kundgram Chaudhuris of Bogra, who along with the Chaudhuris of Sibganj and the Khan Panis of Karatia are mutwalis of the Mahasthangarh shrine. Here, near the river bank, is a mound, where the monastery which has given its name to the village probably stood. There is a road from Bihār to Sikandrābād, which is being extended to Ghāgarduār on the Sibganj road.

About a mile north, are the ruins known as Bhāsu-Bihār, consisting of two extensive mounds close together, with a smaller mound a little to their west. Cunningham, who visited the ruins in 1879, identified them as those of the Poski-po monastery and its neighbouring monuments described by Hiuen Tsang (A.S.R., XV, p. 103). This will be discussed later.

Bhīmer Jāngāl

This well-known embankment starts from the north-east corner of Bogra town and proceeds northwards for about 30 miles to a marshy place called Dāmukdaher bil, under police station Govindaganj (Rangpur District), and, it is said, goes on to Ghorahat. It is made of the red earth of the locality and retains at places even now a height of 20 feet above the level of the country.

There is a break in it of over three miles from Daulatpur (north west of Mahasthan-garh) to Hāzradīghi (south-west of it). About a mile south of Hāzradīghi, the stream Subil approaches the jāngāl and runs alongside it down to Bogra town.

Some people think that the Subil is a moat formed by digging the earth for the jāngāl, but as there is no embankment on the northern reach of the Subil (now called the Āto nālā, which merges in the Kālidaha bil, north of Mahas-
than-garh), O'Donnell was probably right in saying that the Subil represents the western of the two branches into which the Karatoya divided above Mahasthan.

On the Bogra-Hazradighi section of the jāngāl, there are two cross embankments running down to the Karatoya, about 2 miles and 4 miles respectively north of Bogra town, and there is a diagonal embankment connecting these cross bunds and then running along the Karatoya until it meets the main embankment near Bogra.

This jāngāl or embankment appears to have been of a military character, thrown up to protect the country on its east. The break near Mahasthan may be due to the embankment having been washed away or to the existence of natural protection by the bil.

The Bhīma to whom the embankment is ascribed may be the Kaivarta chief of the eleventh century, who, according to the Rāmcharitam, ruled over Varendra in succession to his father Rudraka and uncle Divyoka, who had ousted king Mahipāla II of the Pāla dynasty. Bhīma in his turn was defeated in battle and killed by Rāmapāla, Mahipāla’s son.

**Govinda Dhāp**

Higher up the Karatoya and separated from the north-eastern corner of the garh by the road, stands this mound, which according to the Karatoya-māhātmyam marks a limit of the sacred ground of Mahasthan. According to the Gazetteer, pp. 158-59, at the foot of the mound on its northern side and facing the river, there was a long stone wall submerged under water, which was examined in 1907 by making excavations all round it. It was then found that the wall was semicircular in shape, evidently built to protect the buildings on the mound from erosion by the Karatoya, and that there was a ghāṭ quite separate from it on the east side. The wall was some 150 feet long and 4 feet high. The wall and the ghāṭ were washed away by the North Bengal flood of 1922.

The river side below the mound was strewn over, before the flood, with blocks of stone, some of them beautifully carved, and it is still called Pāthar-ghāṭā.

The recent excavation of the mound by the Archaeological Department has revealed the remains of two terraced temples of considerable size and antiquity and at one spot a few coins of Ilyas Shah and Mahmud Shah, Pathan rulers of Bengal, in the 14th and 15th centuries.
Ghāgarduār

North of the garh, on the Sibganj road, is the village of Ghāgarduār, which contains a number of old tanks, but few mounds of note.

Chingāspur

North-west of the garh across the Kālidahā bil, and south-west of Ghāgarduār, is the large village of Chingāspur. Through its middle a road is being made running northwards through Sikandra bād to Ghāgarduār on the Sibganj road and southwards through Bāmanpārā and Saralpur to Chāndniā hāt on the Khetlaī road. In the eastern part of Chingāspur village bordering on the Kalidahā bil are several mounds,—Dhaniker dhāp, Mādārigarh, Padmā-bāṭī and Vishamardan. (See J.A.S.B., 1878 p. 94.)

Palibāri

West of Chingāspur is the small, low-lying village of Palibāri which contains a Vishnū temple, of modern age.

Dhanmohani

West of Palibāri, stretching along the north boundary of Saralpur, is the village of Dhanmohani which is not known to contain any site of antiquarian interest. The Mahasthan-Bihār road passes through it.

Sachiāni, Jath-Ponaratikā and Daulatpur

The north-east corner of Dhanmohani is occupied by a bil. North of this bil, near the southern boundary of Daulatpur village, begins the northern section of Bhīmer Jāngāl, which meeting the Nāgar river between Bhāsu-Bihār and Sabdaldīghi, runs northwards along its eastern bank.

Between the jāngāl and the river lie the villages of Sachiāni and Jāth-Ponaratikā, which are not known to contain any remarkable ruins. On the east side of the jāngāl is a long strip of the village Daulatpur, of which another section lies north of Sikandra bād. The Sikandra bād-Bihār road passes through Sachiāni.

Syāmpur

East of Daulatpur is the small village of Syāmpur which contains a big old tank called 'Do-satina Pukur,' south-east of which stands a big mound called Yoginī Dhāp.
Sikandrābād

North of Syāmpur, stretching from Sabdaldīghi to Ghāgarduar, is the village of Sikandrābād which contains several tanks and a walled mound called Prāchir and other mounds, called Kājir-hāri, Suradīghir dhāp etc. There is a road to it from Bihar, which is being extended eastwards to Ghāgarduār, with a branch going south to Bāmanpārā.

Daulatpur, Hazrā-bāti and Sabdal-dīghi

To the north of Sikandrabad are the villages of Daulatpur (north section) and Hāzra-bāti, both of which are full of old tanks and mounds. A mound in the former village is called Khojār dhāp, close to which is the Sabdal-dīghi, a huge tank after which the village is named.
II. DISCUSSION.

Now let us discuss the literary and historical evidence bearing on Mahasthan and the question of its identity with the ancient city of Paunḍravarddhana.

Mention of Paundravaradhhana in Literature

This name occurs in the ancient literature of North India as well as in several ancient inscriptions of Bengal.

In the Jaina work Kalpasūtra (vide Viśvakosha, under ‘Puṇḍra-varddhana’) Godāsa, a disciple of Bhadrabāhu, the reputed spiritual guide of the Maurya Emperor Chandragupta, is said to have classified the Jainas of Eastern India into four classes, one of which was called ‘Paunḍravarddhana.’

The name frequently occurs in Buddhist literature. In the story of ‘Sumagadha-vadhana’ in the Avadāna-kalpalata of Kshemendra (11th century A.D., vide Sāhitya-Parishat edition, ch. 93) it is related how Buddha travelled from Jetavana to Paundravaradhhana-nagara. In the story of ‘Kotikārṇavadhana’ in the Divyavādāna (Ed. by Cowell and Neil, p. 21) Paunḍravarddhana is described as situated in the east.

The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang who during his stay in India from 639 to 645 A.D. visited Paunḍravarddhana, has left a record of his observations on which Cunningham (A.S.R., XV, p. 112) comments as follows:—

‘He (Hiuen Tsang) simply notes that there were about twenty Buddhist monasteries containing some 3000 monks, who studied the Hinayāna, or the lesser means of advancement, and about one hundred Brahmanical temples; but the greater number of the heretics were Nirgranthas who went about naked.

‘In my description of the ruins I have already noticed the traces of the Brahmanical worship of Vishnu and Siva, and to these I may add a temple of Kārtikeya, which Jayāpīḍa is said to have visited on his arrival at Paunḍravarddhana. The pilgrim mentions no king, and his silence on this point may be taken as evidence that Varendra was in this time one of the dependent provinces of the vast dominions of Harsha Varadhan of Kanauj. The king of the neighbouring country of Kāmarūpa, or Assam, named Bhāskara Varma, is duly noticed, but as he was certainly tributary to Harsha Varadhan, I conclude that the intervening province of Varendra had been annexed to the kingdom of Kanauj.’

Regarding the last conclusion of Cunningham’s, it may be mentioned here that from Hiuen Tsang’s own observations (Beal’s life of Hiuen Tsang, p. 188) and the Nidhanpur Copper-plates of Bhaskaravarmā (Ep. Ind., XII, p. 73, XIX, p. 115,) which are purported to have been issued from Karnasuvarna,
which Bhaskaravarman had wrested from Śašānka, it is more probable that ‘Varendra’ was annexed to the kingdom of Kāmarūpa at this time.

Pauṇḍravarddhana is referred to thus in a picture in a manuscript of the Pala period now in the Cambridge University library: Pundaravardhana Trisaraṇa-Buddha-Bhaṭṭarakaḥ devīya-ārīṣṭasthāna, Foucher, Iconographie Bouddhique de l’Inde, Paris, 1900, p. 190 and Pl. III fig. 4. § The name occurs in Sanskrit works, e.g. the Devi bhāgavata, the Padma, Matsya, Brahmāṇḍa and Mārkandeya Purāṇas and the Jñānārṇava Tantra. In the lexicon of Purushottama (11th century) (vide "Trikāṇḍāśesa," p. 9, Abhidhāna-samgraha, Nīrṇaya-sagar Press), we have: Pundrāh syur-Varendra Gauda nivṛiti, that is, ‘the Pundras are Varendra and Gauda countries.’ The name occurs in the Rājatarangini and the Rāmācharitam, both works of the 11th century, which will be referred to again.

Mention in Inscriptions

In the Sāngli copper-plates (dated 855 Saka year) of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda Suvarna-varsha, Pauṇḍravarddhana-nagara is mentioned as the place from which the donee, Keśava Dikshita is said to have come (Ind. Ant., XII, p. 251 or 254).

Naturally, it is in the inscriptions of Bengal that the name frequently occurs. The recently found Paharpur copperplate (478-79 A.D.) is purporting to have been issued from Pundravardhana city itself, but elsewhere the term occurs as the name of a bhūkti or province, which appears to have been a vast one, embracing the three present divisions of Rajshahi, Presidency and Dacca, and divided, so far as can be gathered from the Gupta, Pāla and Sena inscriptions, into at least five maṇḍalas or vishayas, viz.:

1. Vyāghrataṭī maṇḍala in the Khalimpur grant of Dharmmapāla, the Nālandā grant of Devapāla and the Ānulīṣa grant of Lakṣmanasena.

2. Khāḍī maṇḍala in the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena and the Sundarban grant of Lakṣmanasena.

3. The Koṭivarsa vishaya in the Damodarpur grants of Kumaragupta I (443 A.D.), Budhagupta (533 A.D.) and a later Gupta king (543 A.D.) and the Bangarh grant of Mahipāla, the Āṅgāči grant of Vigrāhāpāla III and the Manahali grant of Madanapāla.

4. Varendra in the Silimpur stone inscription of Prahāsa, and the Tarpan-dīghi and Mādhāinagar grants of Lakṣmanasena; and

5. Vanga in the grants of Keśavasena and Viśvarūpasena.

§ I owe this reference to Mr. Nanigopal Majumdar.
Paundravaraddhana-pura as Mahasthan

The inscriptions give no indication of the exact spot in this wide area where the capital city was situated. But literary evidence points to its having been situated in Varendra, for instance, verse 1 of the ‘kavi-praśasti’ in the Rāma-charitam of Sandhyākar Nandi (contemporary of king Kumārapāla, 11th century) says:

Vasudhā-śiro Varendra-maṇḍala chūḍāmaṇिः kulasthānam |
ŚrīPaundravaraddhanapura-pratibaddha-punyabhūḥ bṛihadbaṭuḥ ||
that is, ‘Varendra is the foremost place of the earth and Paundravaraddhana-pura is its crest-jewel.’ Again, according to the Rājatarāṅginī of Kalhana (11th century), Paundravaraddhana-pura was the residence of king Jayanta of Gauḍa when Jayāpiḍa, king of Kashmir (in the 8th century), visited it.

For some centuries after the eleventh, during which the place ceased to be the capital and was probably deserted, we hear no more of it till it emerges as a sacred place of the Hindus, with the name of Mahāsthān.

The authority for this revival as a sacred place are the following verses of the Karatoya-māhātmyam (a work probably not of a later date than the 15th century, vide Ap. 1):

(Verse 16) In Koṭi-śilā-dvīpa, in Paundra . . . . .

(V. 17) Paraśurāma, the son of Bhṛigu caused the land between the temples of Skanda and Govinda to be reclaimed in a period of three days. It was wonderful, a golden creation.

(V. 24) I bow my head to Śrī-Paundravaraddhana-pura, which is the foremost place on the earth, being sanctified by the water of the Karatoya and inhabited by one and a quarter lakh of Brahmins and Skanda, Vishnu, Balabhadra, Śiva and other gods.

(V. 53) A merit is multiplied a koti times at Paundranaagara. Here the feeding of a single Brāhmaṇa yields the merit of the performance of all the sacrifices.

(V. 57) The holy land is five kos in circuit, in which again, a circuit of one kos encloses the most secret spot, where Bhārgava resides.

(Verses 58 and 59) Rāma created this spot, which became the Mahāsthāna of the whole world, on account of its nineteen specialities, viz., (1) Bhārgava Muni resides there; (2) Guha (i.e. Kartikeya) imparts knowledge to animals; (3) it is full of dīghis (?); (4) of gold; (5) of sweet scent; (6) Sticks grow bigger; (7) bone turns into stone; (8) snakes do not raise their hoods; (9) the breath is equal in the two nostrils; (10) it has wonderful wells; (11) islands; (12) and
showers of gold; (13) its ground is elevated; (14) a bath in the Kāmya kunda rejuvenates men; (15) it is a place of enjoyment; (16) of yajña or worship; (17) of wandering; (18) and of dancing, and (19) here men's utterances are as the Vedas.

It was probably after this rehabilitation that the ancient name of Paundra-varddhana-pura was entirely superseded and the place came to be known as Mahāsthān, to be resorted to for a bath (in the Karatoya) by thousands of Hindus when the Pausha-Nárāyaṇī yoga occurs.

It is significant that the authorship of this work—as well as of the reclamation of Mahāsthān, is ascribed to a Paraṣurāma, which is also the name of the Hindu king who, according to the current legend, was overthrown by the Muslim saint Shah Sultan.

**Muslim Occupation of Mahāsthān**

The next vicissitude in the fortunes of Mahāsthān, *viz.*, the establishment there of Muslim predominance attended with the legend of Shah Sultan and Silādevī, appears to be an event of the second half of the seventeenth century, though all the Muslim coins found there relate to the Pathan rulers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This inference is drawn from the *sanad* of 1685, the record of the acquisition of the Selbarsa zamindari by a Muslim landlord, the version of the advent of Shah Sultan in the Bengali ballad named *Sultan Balkhi*, the inscription on the mosque at Mahāsthān, and the probable age of the Sanskrit inscriptions on the door-jambs of the shrine at Mahāsthān.

The *sanad* (Ap. II) tells us that at its date, *viz.* 1685 A.D., Syed Muhammad Tahir with two others was in possession of the *pirpal* of Mahāsthān, from some time before. It was also about this time (*i.e.* 1076 H. or 1664 A.D.) that the great Selbarsa zamindari in which Mahāsthān is situated passed from a Hindu landlord, Dunichand Khatri (whose headquarters were at Kundgram, 3 miles south-west of Talora Railway Station) to a Muslim land-lord Syed Ahmad, one of whose wives Duni Syedni was the daughter of Syed Muhammad Tahir. On Syed Ahmad's death in 1700 A.D., Muhammad Tahir's son Abu Turab, who had meanwhile succeeded his father in the *pirpal* of Mahāsthān, was given the Taraf Bihar portion of the Selbarsa zamindari, through the intervention of his sister Duni Syedni.

It was after this that the mosque was erected, for the inscription on it gives its date as the seventh year of Farrukh Siyar's reign, that is A.D. 1718.

Then we have the ballad of *Sultan Balkhi* or 'the Saint from Balkh', which is said to be a Bengali version of a Persian poem rendered by Abdul Majid Khond-
kar and published by Ghulam Maola from the Habibi press first in 1288 B.S. (1881 A.D.) and again in 1303 B.S. It relates how Shah Sultan, who bore the curious title of Māhi-sawar or 'rider of a fish,' came from Balkh in Central Asia to the court of Nawab Shaista Khan at Hisya Sandvipa and from there to Mahasthan for spreading Islam, riding on a fish. It is further related that when (as noted before) his prayer-skin began to expand miraculously, the affrighted king of Mahasthan, Parasurama called to his aid the Rājā of Birāt, Rājā Balarām of Hāṇḍīāl, the Rājā of Gokul, Rājā Rāmakṛishna, Manrājā, and Rāmdayāl Gosvāmī, but to no avail.

Whatever may be said of the authenticity of these potentates, the ballad appears to give the correct date of the advent of Shah Sultan at Mahasthan and the establishment there of Muslim predominance, for Shaista Khan was Governor of Bengal from 1664 to 1689 the period during which the sanad of 1685 was issued and the Selbarsa zamindari passed from a Hindu to a Muslim landlord (1664), and prior to which is the probable date of the 'Narasimhadāsasya' inscriptions on the door-jambs of the shrine.

The Hisya Sandvipa mentioned above is probably the island of Sandvipa, south of Noakhali, which Shaista Khan made the base of his naval operations against the Magh pirates.

**Corrupt form of the Name**

The sanad of 1685, which is preserved in the record room at Bogra, was published by Mr. Beveridge in 1878 (vide Appendix II). In it the words 'astanah' and 'roza' are used indiscriminately to mean the shrine. The former suggested to Mr. Beveridge 'the idea that Mahasthan may after all be a Muhammadan name meaning the 'Great Astan.' He adds 'The Hindu name perhaps was Siladvip.' Siladvip was, and, according to the mantra for the bath, even now is, the name of the sacred bathing place, though corrupted into 'Silādevi' in common parlance. But mahasthan also is a Sanskrit word cf. aṣṭa-mahāsthāna sailagandhakutīm, in the Sarnath inscription of Mahīpāla (Gauḍa–Lekhamālā, p. 108) or mahasthan Satgaon in the Kavi-kankan Chaṇḍi, 1557 A.D. (Indian Press edition, p. 122). It was applied to this place for its reputed nineteen specialities (Ap. I, v. 59). Moreover, 'māhā' nowhere means 'great' in Persian, and in the sanad itself as transcribed by Mr. Beveridge the name is clearly 'Mastangarh' evidently a corrupt form of the Sanskrit name.

**The identity of Mahasthan with Paundravarddhana-pura**

This identification is due to Cunningham, whose chief authority is the Chinese
pilgrim Hiuen Tsang's Travels in which Paundravarddhana is referred to as follows:—

'Going from this country (Kie-chu-hoh-khi-lo, i.e. Kajangala) eastward and crossing the Ganges after about 600 li, we come to the kingdom of Pun-na-fa-ta-na (Paundravarddhana). This country is about 4000 li in circuit. Its capital is about 30 li (=5 miles) round. The Panasa fruit though plentiful is highly esteemed. To the west of the capital, 20 li or so, is the Po-shi-po Sanghārāma. Not far from this is a stupa built by Aśoka on the site where Buddha had explained his law to the Devas. By the side of this again is a place where the four past Buddhas had walked for exercise and sat down. Not far from this is a Vihāra in which is a statue of Kwan-toz-tsai Bodhisattva. From this going east 900 li or so crossing a great river we come to the country of Kia-mo-lu-po (Kāmarūpa).

Cunningham identifies Kie-chu-hoh-khi-lo with modern Kankjole, 16 miles south of Rajmahal and about the same distance south-west of the Ganges (A.S.R., XV, pp. 37-38). About the other places he observes (ibid, p. 110), 'In my account of Bhāsu Bihār, 4 miles to the west of Mahāsthāna, I mentioned that the Buddhist remains at that place corresponded both in description and position with those noted by Hiuen Tsang at the Po-shi-po monastery, which was situated just 4 miles to the west of the capital city of Paundravarddhana. This city the pilgrim places at 600 li, or 100 miles to the east of the Ganges, near Rajmahal. Now this description corresponds exactly with the relative positions of Rajmahal and Mahāsthāna, the latter being just 100 miles to the east of the former. The natives of the country are unanimous in their opinion that Mahāsthāna was the ancient capital of Varendra or Eastern Gauḍa.'

He adds (p. 111), 'The earliest mention that I have found of the city of Paundravarddhana refers to the end of the eighth century A.D., when Jayāpiḍa Rāja of Kashmir (A.D. 779 to 813) visited Gauḍa. At that time the king of Paundravarddhana was named Jayanta, but there were no less than five other 'Kings of Gauḍa' whom Jayāpiḍa is said to have conquered. Now this is exactly the state of the country which is described by Taranath immediately preceding the establishment of the Pāla dynasty, Vassilief's Taranath, translated by La Comme, p. 54, note.'

Mahāsthāna fits in with the position of Kāmarūpa as noted by Hiuen Tsang, the latter place being some 150 miles north-east across a great river, which may be either the Karatoya or the Brahmaputra. It also fits in with the account of Muḥammad-i-Bakhtīyar's ill-fated expedition to Tibet in the Tabaq̣at-i-Nāsirī.
The temple of Kārtikeya, which Jayāpiḍa is said to have visited, may be identified with the Skanda mound, south-east of Mahasthangarh (Cunningham, A.S.R., XV, p. 112), while the other monuments noticed by Hiuen Tsang, viz., the Po-shi-po monastery, the stupa of Aśoka on the site where Buddha preached, the monument on the site where the last four Buddhas took exercise and rested, and the temple of Avalokiteśvara, may be identified with one or other of the mounds at or near Bhāsu-Bihār (cf. Cunningham, A.S.R., XV, p. 103).

Indeed, as a glance at the map will show, the ruins at and around Mahasthan are so numerous and significant and so much evidence of the antiquity and lost prosperity of this area has come to light in the shape of coins, images and literary references, that there can be little doubt that they mark the site of ancient Paundravaruddhana-pura. The only notable site which contests this claim is Pandua near Gaur, of which the name was once taken to be an abbreviation of Paundravarudhana. But this claim is untenable, as the coins of Danujamardana-deva (Kans or Ganeśa) and his son Mahendradeva (Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah,) found near Pandua show the mint-town as Pāṇḍu-nagara, which has evidently been abbreviated into Pāṇḍua (Bhattasali, Independent Sultans of Bengal, p. 117). Further, from the Khālimpur grant of Dharmmapāla and the Ānulia grant of Lakshmīnasena, Pāṇḍua as well as Gaur seems to fall within the Vyāghrataṭīmanḍala; also very few antiquities of the pre-Muslim period and none whatsoever of the Gupta period have come to light in this tract.

It is therefore a welcome move of the Archaeological Department to have commenced the exploration of Mahasthan, and though one season's operations have revealed nothing of a startling or definite character, enough has come to light to indicate that the exploration, if persevered in, is sure to unravel the mystery of the vast and numerous ruins of Mahasthan, and light up a dark chapter of North Bengal history.

Prabhas Chandra Sen.
APPENDIX I.

The Karatoya-mahatmyam

This work which is said to be included in a larger work the Uttara-Paundrakhaṇḍa, was first published in 1298 B.S. (1891 A.D.) with a Bengali translation, by Pandit Rajachandra Nyayapanchanan. It consists of two parts: verses 1 to 60, Paundra-kshestra-māhātmyam and verses 61 to 85, Karatoya-māhātmyam. The text is printed here from that edition.

Verse 41 of this work is quoted in Sarvānanda's Tikā sarvasva (1159 A.D.) in the tikā of sloka 32 in vārivarga; verses 41 and 63, in the Smritichandrikā of Devanabhāṣṭa who is quoted by Hemādri (12th century); verse 41, in the Vyākhyaśūdha of Bhanuji Dikshit son of Bhattoji Dikshit; verse 63, in the Smritiratnakar of Vedāchārya who quotes Bhavadeva and Jimutavahana and is quoted by Raghunandana. Verse 63 is quoted in the Tithi-viveka of Sulapāṇi (first quarter of the 15th century); verses 30 and 37 in the Kritya-chintāmani of Vāchaspati Mīśra of Mithila (second half of 15th century) and verses 33, and 63 in the Amāvasyā-prakārāṇa of the Tithitattva of Raghunandana (first half of 16th century).

प्रथम कङ्गिया माहात्म्यम् ॥ श्रीपाल्लेखयुवाच ॥

प्रपेतः कथयां देव नदीमात्र विषयतः। पौश्चेतुज्ञाता माहात्म्यम् न ज्ञातः विस्तरात् प्रमोऽ ॥ १ ॥

वर्षोत्पति: कथां तथा: कामालेव विषयतः। श्रीतमाचार्य भृत्य यदि यास्माय सुप्रहः ॥ २ ॥

बेन प्रकाशिता सा च नदी करज्जा सुभव ॥ कथां वा प्राविष्टं चैवं श्रम पौश्चेतुज्ञातमम् ॥ ३ ॥

देशकर उवाच॥

पारिग्राह्यकाली ते देव। हिमवता जलं। संप्रदातां महत्कराचिं निष्टे न करज्जा सुभव ॥ ४ ॥

पुरैव कार्यं सञ्चयं पौश्चेतु च सुहृबि ॥ तदेव कार्यं तुम्हां कर्तीयापालं यथा ॥ ५ ॥

वधुनामध्य पुण्यां नदीमात्र। विशिष्टाम्बारेन प्रकाशि ॥ ६ ॥

वधुनामध्य गुहस्तत तिहलाये। महिमावरवे यह सर्वेदा ्॥ ॥ ७ ॥

सर्वेदा संमेडवीशiren पौश्चेतु नारायणी चर्ची ॥ पुर्वकरं न लकौत्त्रो नायः वाराणसीं लक्षे ॥ ८ ॥

श्रीपाल्लेखयुवेन चैवनं नैव सुनुस्त हेरेव। धरिता नामिकम् पुटं करज्जायिष्म ॥ ९ ॥

सुभव उवाच॥

श्रुण्यम् सुनय: सञ्चयं यदुमात्रान्त भागवते ॥ ्सुस्का भर्तोरो वाक्यं संवर्दसुभोययप ॥ १० ॥

पुर्ववात्स्यभविन्न भागवतयेव प्रकाशित। स एव भागवः श्रीमार्यमिःशय्यप्रकाशयत ॥ ११ ॥

नमस्त्रां मुनोन्मत्र दानवेष्टनिन्दितानि। श्रीकर्पणयं तुभं व्रजाविशुद्धिवाचन ॥ १२ ॥

§ For the above information I am indebted to Mr. Subodh Chandra Banerji M. A. of the Dacca University Manuscript Library which is in possession of manuscripts of the Karatoya-mahatmyam and the other works referred to. No copy of the Uttara-Paundra-khaṇḍa has come to light yet.
एकः परशुमार्तेश निहंत चतुर्यानून श्रुति। चरै विन चतुयां प्रेक्षार्थकार्यं विनिवेशतिवर्ततः। II ११।
ततः परशुरामिति प्रृथियां व्यावहारिकम्। जामद्गणी महाविद्यायेतां यथा संहितिः। II १४।
संबंधः सुनवः महाविद्याविधायः। कौशिकाज्ञानदयः पुष्पां परमस्व चरिः। II १५।
वीर्येऽकत्वशिलाधिपि मनसापुर्क निहंति। कर्तोयासर्वत्रीर्षरैराधिकालपावन।
भक्तिमुखिकार्य वेनाकारक विधापेयः। II १६।
श्रुद्धुता कारिता कृतः। कनकवस दिनकवार। स्नातेवद्विधं भूमिः। संहितवेदिक्का। II १७।
बैद्यध्रुवते पांडवेऽ देवान्तर्विहारिः। ताहिरणंपिप्ता देवी कोटिप्रेक्षार्थिः विखुता। II १८।
नैव तेन नित्य्वाणां वसन्तं भूषणापिप्ता। वासुविजय चतुर्वेद स्वरूपं भूषितस्वारं च। II १९।
तत्रकर्मणे नित्य्वाणम् स्वालं नरः पवात्र प्रसछति। भूषितकर्मस्वरूपं द्विग्रहणं सृष्टिमहापणं। II २०।
बैद्येऽर्थां स्विथ्वतं संस्क्रियात्व विद्याः। गोविन्दमहापातू गृहं कुष्ठं विषुविनिविनिष्ठं। II २१।
स्नातेवद्विधव्यावहिः सभा रामस्य चादुभा। सपादलभविशिर्व द्वावेरं चादुभाद्वेयां। II २२।
प्रभावातप्परी वैद्व सूनिद्रव्यम् महामन:। ततसम्बा वायुकोऽश कान्तीमहसूर-निहंतिः। II २३।
कार्यं भक्तिः भवनं लोकार्थपाविन:। स्नातेवदिविशारदभद्विनिविनिष्ठेद्विनः। II २४।
हथायिन्स करजायामुखिधवात्तारं श्रीपीयविवेकपर्णः ग्रहसा समामाः। II २५।
कर्तोयापिन्थमां भागी सदा वहितः चालवेः। पूवेर्माणूतु करारा पादभूमा जावेको जमाः। II २६।
कर्तोयापिन्थमां तौऽ तीर्य तीर्यनो यथा चतुश्व। सुखितेऽम कस्मात्रात् महापातकनाभाः। II २७।
कर्तोयान्द्रिः प्राप्य तिरात्तोप्पत्तिः नरः। प्रभावस्यस्वार्थिः श्राश्बास गच्चतिः। II २८।
प्रभावस्य समास्याः वेत्यजगति कलबिः। तेषां सुखितां संदेशं गाधिन्द्राधारतुः। II २९।
न मातुपासवे तेन देवा नदीकिर विविष्ठि ये। ढेविकां कर्तोयावात्विपशा पापाणिनः। II ३०।
स्नातेवद्विध्यादिनेयं सीवभारे कुष्ठितखिं। पूवेर्माण प्राम योऽ स्वालम् तुलकोनाः। समुद्राविरेत। II ३१।
किंचिदं नीवेयं ग्रृहम् चित्तानानायां निविविनिष्ठं। मालाक्षं कर्तोयायामधवं वर्णदेव छ्रीयइ। 
पूवेशभो महात्मोक्ताहिं श्रमनात्भवेऽ। कर्तोयाभस्य स्वालं तत्तु फलमार्गुयं यात्रं। II ३२।
कर्तोयाज्ञेऽपि प्राप्य वद्य सोमयुक्तु कुछुः। चक्राणोदयेशेऽर्यं सृष्टिवग्नयं। समाः। II ३३।
शिलाहिं समास्याः तर्क कोटिरुपुरुणेः विवेदिः। तदे विकोटिरुपुरुणं पीच्यं च ददेव सा। II ३४।
वाराणस्य कुष्ठिनिण्यंतु राधान्तरी। शिलाहिंयं समास्याः तर्क कोटिरुपुरुणेः विवेदिः। II ३५।
पौरं वा मातुमास्य या यदै सोमयुक्तु कुछुः। चित्तातिपूतनं योगिनं कोटिकोटिरुपुरुणं विवेदिः। II ३६।
चाकाः मूलसंबुद्धेऽवै सोमयुक्तु कुछुः। नारायणीयतं विख्यातं विकोटिकोटिमुर्दातिः। II ३७।
वाराणस्य कुष्ठायुज्यां गतै पूजा सम्मूर्णाल्पिनी। ततोपि विगुणं प्रोक्ता कर्तोयानदिष्टेऽजलेः। II ३८।
हरावाइः गाढ्यां प्रयोऽगे पुरेऽत्कथा। वदधाईं कुष्ठिवेदेः या पूजा विकुदिज्यनिः।

तत्रतत्तुर्गणः प्रोक्ता कर्तोयानदिष्टेऽजलेः। II ३९।
कार्त्याज्ञाले छत्रि विश्वामुक्ति विशेषतः।
ततोष्टि फलवार्युक्ति विश्वानि: प्रमृत्या तदुः ॥ ४० ॥
चाहै कार्त्याले छत्रि सहायता राजस्वः। सत्या राजस्वः नवः: कार्त्यायामकृत्या ॥ ४१ ॥
इत्य श्रीकृष्णो छत्रि सदानीरक्षनी मृत्यूः।
वे कुप्प्वति सदा स्रावं तपेष्यति च वे सदा।
किं भ्रमणेन देविष्णु सुविकास्य न उक्ता ॥ ४२ ॥
कार्त्याले जलस्वामता चमोली करस्यचन्द्रः।
पुर्णा पापपरं पुष्यं स्रावणमाचार सुविकरं ॥ ४३ ॥
कार्त्यानंदकी वाटो वा स्नायते यदिः।
वाराणिसीस्य वासः वात्साधुभाग्यं नरः ॥ ४४ ॥
कार्त्यानंदी की छत्री सुप्रात्यासाधिका।
मन्त्रं पुजयमाहि सन्देहं नास्ति सुन्दरः ॥ ४५ ॥
कार्त्याले तीर्थनीन उदासेन ये निःतः।
तेष्यां सुखं न सन्देहं यािद्द्रापाटुनः ॥ ४६ ॥
ततः भ्रान सामाय सुतिः। चातुर्य केरलामला ॥ ४७ ॥
गम्यः: कार्त्याले जलस्वामते सुन्दरः।
सम्महापापमहं पुष्यं स्रावणसुतमम् ॥ ४८ ॥
कार्त्यानंदते देि वीक्रियाभिषेकः।
पवतित सयं स्नायुः चायविन्ध्यार्यं ॥ ४९ ॥
कार्त्याले तीरसे सदा वदति जान्निः।
श्रीविषो लोहिनी यत्र ज्ञतिका सुमितार्यानीः ॥ ५० ॥
कार्त्याले तीरसे लोहिनी यत्र ज्ञतिका।
सुमितार्यान समाभासं तंदापात्यान्तः ॥ ५१ ॥
कार्त्याले पुष्यं पावनं सुभवं दुस्संभवं।
सम्पूर्णमाचारस्य स्रावं विश्वामुक्ति रतिः ॥ ५२ ॥
कार्त्याले देि देवपुजार्यायं।
विश्रान्तजनाष्टेश विष्णुमधवलं लभेतुः ॥ ५३ ॥
विश्रान्त: पौष्ठनगरे कॉन्दिकोर्गुणं भवेतुः।
विश्रान्तजनाष्टेश संत्यायमाणवलं लभेतुः ॥ ५४ ॥
जपणोमेष्या दानपुजायामेष्यादिः।
कॉन्दिकोर्गुणं तनू पौष्ठचैते च सुन्दरः ॥ ५५ ॥
कार्त्याले भारायूगे च तिलकं धारयन्ति वै।
विश्वामुक्तवे: पापमुष्टिनाय नात्र संघन: ॥ ५६ ॥
स्मृणोनिन्दित्येश्वरी गुसा वाराणिसे पुरुः।
तत्तारि हिमालाणें नारायणसे भवेतुः ॥ ५७ ॥
पादीश्रीमिर्द्वें में संम्पत्ति परिवर्तितं।
तद्धर्मगंभीरसु त्रूपमातं मेवेश्वरः ॥ ५८ ॥
प्रमोन्नानमं छत्रे यदासे भावार्यो सुनि: ॥ ५९ ॥
प्रमोन्नानमं कथयति गुरुर्मुद्धरं ताम्बूचूढः देवि: श्रीमा घटितसुरभिययाः।
श्रीमाः श्रीमाः न फलति फणि दिनवतो जीवलीक: कृपो दीप: कन्यपतन: नीरे दीपेदेाभुतानि ॥ ६० ॥
प्रोषा भूमिन्तं तरसि:। स्रानत: कामकुड़े भोगो यदी: भ्रमणमदनं तव वायुं श्री वै: देवः ॥
इत्यः रामो चत्यं रत्नं लचणायाम स्नायन्यायं।
स्वरत्र विद यथाय तय पापविनयः श्रीप्राणिनयः नदी: यथा संविकालसावत्यस्य सकलं वा सीतामातिचारस्य नित्यं प्राप्तिः
प्राप्ताः। कार्त्याले देखादुहृतं कौपं यतं पये एव
तेलेविपुलं वीरच्छ: पुर: पातु वः ॥ ६० ॥
भरत सर्वोपर्यार्यः पौष्ठचैते चालावः ॥
सुतवाचः

शुद्धं सुनयं सुर्यं माहांतं तद्विजयं बाहुधायां तीर्थं धिनकिं जलं स्वर्यमंगलं ॥ ६१ ॥

गाना वा करारिया वा विशेषाय नातं विचारं। चरसूक्तीं स्थिता गहा सापंरा करारिगंता ॥ ६२ ॥

करारियं ददानरी शरीक्रेण सुविनयं। पौष्णं प्रायम्यं निधं पार्यं चरं करारितवं ॥

अवलेखनीयं वे ब्यायात् करारियज्ञं शुभं ॥ ६३ ॥

तत्तत्त्वार्पास्ति नदीं न कांचुद्रोवेहिना तर्मचं यतोदसिः धनरासिः पुष्परासिः सरिलरासिः

शीक्षपापार्निम्ब्रेण समग्रं ॥ ६४ ॥

श्राबदिः करारियं ददारिता नित्यं नदिः ददारितं भगवानिः तारंलं ॥ ६५ ॥

वातावरणं बाहुधायाम नित्यतं सुमें पुरा। ददानरी महापुष्करा श्रीतवादिनिका शुभं ॥ ६६ ॥

विधियो सुमनं वेव मार्कंते यो महामुनिः। अर्जुनामा कविरो वापुत्तेव। सर्वं विषुं ॥ ६७ ॥

चतुर्वेद्यं पद्मेशु। चरित्वेद्यं पत्थरं। सर्वं ती पवित्रे भागि करारियासारं ॥ ६८ ॥

तियति तपसों इत्यं। सदानरीजालारिखं। रजसीना महापुष्करा विशेषं। मंडलमारेश सुतवाचः ॥

करारियासारं श्रीतवादिनिके। श्रावसीं तदापारं विषुं। ॥ ६९ ॥

श्रावना गच्छत । पार्यं वृष्टिकृत्यं भवेत। स्वामा पीला तवा नौरं पारावरे न दृश्येत ॥ ७० ॥

पौष्णं महापुष्करं श्रारं करारियं। तजालन्तायामात्रयं विषुं। प्रार्थीं विषुं ॥

पौष्णं श्रारं योजनियमनं । तदार्थं चित्तरं देवी लोहिती यथा शतिकं ॥ ७१ ॥

तदार्थं प्रार्थींमात्रं तुर्गान भवनानि च। तदार्थं चित्तरं देवीं करारियासारं ॥

चाभान्तास्वं साध्वं करारियां। प्रार्थींं ब्रह्मरं विषुं ॥ ७२ ॥

आभारनं ज्ञानं श्रारं साध्वं करारियं। प्रार्थींं ब्रह्मरं ब्रम्हरं विषुं ॥ ७३ ॥

विद्याम महाकालमात्रयं करारियं। तदार्थं चित्तरं ॥ ७४ ॥

रेत्रे विषुं ॥ ७५ ॥

काविरी लोमकं चन्द्रम्याचं चिरक्रं। स्वरं चयं वैदेशिते विषुं। ॥ ७६ ॥

वियापकं विषुं! चित्तरं चित्तरं ॥ ७७ ॥

विषुं ॥ ७८ ॥

रेत्रे विषुं। स्वरं चयं वैदेशिते विषुं। ॥ ७९ ॥

करारियासारं श्रावसीं यं पत्रणं। तियति श्रावसीं यं पत्रणं ॥ ८० ॥

काविरी लोमकं चन्द्रम्याचं चिरक्रं। स्वरं चयं वैदेशिते विषुं। ॥ ८१ ॥

वियापकं विषुं। चित्तरं चित्तरं ॥ ८२ ॥

रेत्रे विषुं। चित्तरं ॥ ८३ ॥

काविरी लोमकं चन्द्रम्याचं चिरक्रं। स्वरं चयं वैदेशिते विषुं। ॥ ८४ ॥

करारियासारं श्रारं ॥ ८५ ॥

तदेह भोगमा स्मरणं सुभासा तद्विजयं। प्रेलं वारं र्यं स्वरं चन्द्रम्याचं समां ॥ ८६ ॥
APPENDIX II.
(Beveridge, J. A. S. B. 1878, P. 92)

The Sanad of Mahasthangarh of 1096 H. or 1685 A.D.

עידר יבש סולטאן محمود מahiי סואור

مقترح שד 99 مقصدين مهمات حاول استقبال رجوعهم رضوان فرحان راشان ر استاد حکم سابق خانه ممکن

استاد محمد محمود العزاز شخصا حضرت ............. ز خارج جمع مستان کوه ر زمین در دیده

مشاهده پرتو مزكر بسيط محمد طاهر رضوان محمد الرحمان رضوان محمد رضا با فرماندا مشاركت

غيره مقترح است حکم البلد به مشار الهم را خادم رضا معرفه مستان کوه ر حاضر متطور

را دوما قبل الهم را خادم دوما در رفعه خودها رسيده نظر ر فضاء مستان مقدسه ر رواج انوا خرچ

خانه زادان و صدران و صرف معشيت خودها نمرده بعدا دوما درم درست اشغال ميداشته

باصد - درين باب قدس دانگ - تعزور بيتارم - شهر چندان اولم من جلس - مطالب

1096 هجري ثم شيء فقط

پادشاه

عالم كسر غازى

كوكلاس

مظفر جاه بھادر

Translation.

It has been ordered that the Mutasaddis of all present and future matters of government, and the Chaudhuris and Kanungos of Pargana Silbaris in Sirkar Bazuha should bear in mind that, inasmuch as it has come to the knowledge of government that according to the farmans and sanads, granted by former rulers, the service of the sacred shrine of the king of saints, Hazrat.................

and income of Mastangarh and the land comprised within the bend of the river, in the said Pargana, have been settled on Sayyid Muhammad Tahir and on Sayyid Abdur-rahman and on Sayyid Muhammad Raza and on their children, without anyone else being a partner, it is necessary that the above-mentioned persons should be looked upon as the servitors of the illuminated shrine, and that they should be left in possession of Mastangarh and of the above described lands, so that the lands may go down to their heirs; that they may perform the vows and prayers as usual at this holy shrine; that they may apply the income to defraying the expenditure of the religious house, on travellers, and on themselves
for their own livelihood, so that they may occupy themselves with loyal prayers for the continuance of the present government. Every care is to be taken in this matter.

Written on the 7th Jumada I, of the 30th year of the present reign, corresponding to the year of the Hijra 1096.

(Signed) Muzaffar Jang Bahadur, foster-brother (kokultash) of Alamgir Padshah-i-Ghazi.

Note.

It is impossible to reconcile the particulars given in the sanad copy with historical facts. First, the name should be Muzaffar Husain not Muzaffar Jang. It is possible that the copyist mistook Husain for جنگ. Secondly, Muzaffar Husain Kokultash (also called Fidai Khan A’zam Kokah, kokah being the same as kokultash) was governor of Bengal from the middle of 1088 A.H., (A.D. 1677) i.e. the 20th year of Alamgir, to the 9th (or 12th) Rabi II, 1089 (i.e. the 21st year of Alamgir), when he died at Dhaka.

But the 7th Jumada I, 1096 (1685 A.D.) falls in the 28th year of Alamgir, whose 30th year commences with the 1st Ramazan 1097 (A.D. 1685).

The name of the saint is written at the top instead of in its proper place in the body of the deed, in order to do him honour. This is in accordance with Hindu customs, as may be seen in sanads for lands dedicated to an idol.
APPENDIX III.

Inscription on the Mosque at Mahasthan of 1130 H. or 1718 A.D.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
لا إله إلا إلهة محمد رسول الله
جِلَّ وَفَضْلَهُ وَمنْبَرَ
ابْرَعَمْ عَسْدَان ُرَحْمَت
بِرَاحِ حَقَّ خَادِر دَلَّ مسجدي سِاقَت
مَهَى غُرْب وَخَوْشٍ عَيْدَتْ خَانَ يَدَاهِ
جِرَّ خُنْفُ جِسْلٍ ثَارِعُخ طَرِخْ كَفَت
جَزائِم يَعِدَ مَعْبَدِي دِيْبَكَمَ كَيْ فَرَاتَ
بَسَالُ هَفْقَةٍ عِيدِ شَأْةٍ مَرَحْ
بِرَزَ عِيدِ آبَامِش نَكْوُ عَلِمْت

Translation.

In the name of God, the Compassionate and the Compassionating. There is no deity but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.

The lamp, the mosque, the arch and the pulpit (of the faith are) Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Haidar (i.e. Ali). Khodadil (pious-hearted) built a mosque as an act of piety. What a beautiful and pleasant house of prayer did he build! When I sought its date, Wisdom said 'When did anyone adorn a better place of worship than this?' (i.e. 1130 H.). In the seventh year of the reign of Shah Farrukh (Siyar) on the day of Id, was its completion well made.
APPENDIX IV.

Coins and Inscription of Mahmud Shah I.

(H. 846 to 864; A.D. 1442 to 1459).
(Blochmann, J. A. S. B. 1875, p. 288).

The chronology of the reign of this king, which was hitherto one of the obscurest portions of Bengal History, has been further cleared up by a small but important trouvaille of eight silver coins struck by him. The coins were found by Major W. W. Hume at Mahasthan (Mostan) Garh, seven miles north of Bogra: four of them were sent to the Society by Mr. C. J. O'Donnell, C.S., who in the last number of the Journal gave a description of the place, and the other four were received from Mr. E. Vesey Westmacott, C.S. The eight coins have been figured on Pl. XI, Nos. 2 to 9. Five of them have years, so that the ascertained dates of Mahmud Shah's reign are now—846, 84*, 852, 858, 859, 861, 862, 863, 28th Zil Hajjah 863.

Nos. 2, 3, and 9 of the coins are very rude specimens of engraving; and if the last had not been found together with the others, I would be inclined to attribute it to Mahmud Shah II, as the kunya looks more like 'Abul Mujahid' than like 'Abul Muzaffar.' All the coins bear numerous shroff marks.§


Obverse .............................
Margin .......................... سنة 84

Reverse—

The legend is the same as on Col. Hyde's unique Mahmud Shah of 846, published by me in J.A.S.B., 1874, p. 295.

2. Vide Pl. XI, No. 3, Obverse as reverse of No. 1; Reverse illegible, probably the same as in Nos. 5, 7, 8, 9, weight, 165.65 grains.


Obverse—as in No. 3

§ The object of these marks, which are common even on early Bengal coins, was to depreciate the coins. The real commerce of the country was carried on in cowries, as no copper was issued; and it suited the bankers and money-changers, when coins bearing the new year were issued, arbitrarily to declare that the coins of the past year, and those of all previous years, were no longer kuldar (كُلْدَارَةً), from the Arabic kull, all) i.e., all-having, of full value. Hence they disfigured the coins, to the great loss of the public, by small circular stamps, or longitudinal notches so that it is a wonder that so many coins have come down to us with clear dates. Coins of former years, or coins thus marked by shroffs (شراف), were often called sanah, pl. of sanah, a year. Vide also Buchanan (Martin's Edition), II, p. 1006.
Margin—ضرب ........... في 252
Reverse—خان الله ملكه وسلطانه


Obverse—As in No. 3.
Reverse—نائب عصر الإسلام رجاء السعودية خان ملكه مهرومس إبراهيم


6. Vide Pl. XI, No. 7. Weight, 166.2 grains. A.H. 862. The obverse contains the lozenge and square, and the empty spaces of the corners are filled with little crosses, as on Col. Hyde’s coin. The reverse contains nine scollops along the margin.

Obverse and reverse as in coin No. 5, but no mint town.

7. Vide Pl. XI, No. 8. Weight, 164.28 grains. A.H. 862. The obverse and reverse have each ten scollops along the margin. Legend as in coin No. 5. The year is expressly 862.

8. Vide Pl. XI, No. 9. Weight 164.77 grains. Legend as in preceding, but no year.

The Mint town of Mahmudabad on coin No. 5 is new. If it does not refer to some place within the extensive walls of Gaur, it may have reference to Sirkar Mahmudabad (Western Faridpur and Northern Nadiya).

General Cunningham has sent me a rubbing of the following inscription belonging to Mahmud’s reign. The rubbing is taken from inside the Kotwali Gate in Gaur, and refers in all probability to the bridge of five arches near it.

بناء هذه القنطرة في زمان سلطان العادل ناصر الدين رضي الله عنه أبو المظفر محمود شاه السلطان

The building of this bridge (took place) in the time of the just king, Nasiruddunya waddin Abul Muzaaffar Mahmud Shah, the king. On the 5th day of Safar (may God allow the month to end with success and victory!) 862 [23rd December, 1457.]

The inscription measures 1½ ft. by 13 in. The usual phrase ‘May God perpetuate his rule and kingdom’! is left out.

This is the missing inscription No 37, alluded to on p. 19, Proceedings A. S. B., January, 1873.
Mahasthan and its Environs.

1. Southern part of East rampart, and tank of Inscription (p. 3 & p. 8)

2. Gilt bronze Manjusri (p. 11)

3. Bronze Bodhisattva (p. 11)