

The Confirmation and Regrant of Agrahāras in Ancient and Early Medieval India

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From the Gupta period the grant of villages and lands in favour of the brahmins became frequent. These grants were usually recorded on the copper plates and the granted villages and lands were called agrahāras. The grantee brahmins and their successors had the privilege of permanent enjoyment of the agrahāras subject to royal regulation, such as the śāsanasthiti in the Chammak grant of Pravarasena II of the Vākātakas.

However we find several cases of royal confirmation and regrant among the copper plate records from the fourth to the twelfth century. As notable examples we may mention two regrants made by Bhoja I of the Pratihāras. The present writer collected these cases and examined the political circumstance behind the confirmation and regrant. One of his observations is as follows: During times of disorder and confusion, such as the fall of a ruler or external aggression, the privileges of many agrahāras were destroyed and many copper plates were taken away. After the restoration of political order, new rulers made confirmation of the agrahāras and, in cases of destruction, regranted the agrahāras to the brāhmins and restored their former privileges based up on the evidence derived from the copper plate records.