

**THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CENTRES IN
PRĀGJYOTIṢA-KĀMARŪPA**

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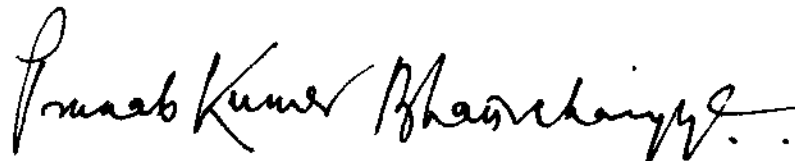


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regulation of this University. The thesis
embodies the result of his investigation
conducted during the period he worked as a
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(Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya)

P R E F A C E

I was born and brought up in South Bengal. When I was posted as a Lecturer in History in Falakata College, a remote area in North Bengal, I was little bit worried. But my posting at Falakata, however, proved to be a blessing in disguise. Soon, I became interested in the local history of the area, which ultimately widen my horizon, and this led me to take up a thorough and systematic probe in the history and culture of the territory of Kāmarūpa. At this juncture I was greatly encouraged by Professor Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya, Jadunath Sarkar Professor of History and Dean, Faculty Council of Arts, Commerce and Law of North Bengal University, in successive stages of investigation, during both as a student of the M.Phil. Classes and also as Ph.D. research candidate of North Bengal University. I take this opportunity of acknowledging my deep regard and indebtedness to Professor Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya who was kind enough to supervise my work and render all possible assistance to complete it.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chakradhar Das'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

(Chakradhar Das)

Dated, Falakata,

The 27th August, 1993.

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A map showing physical feature and distribution of tribes

A political map of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa A.D. 400 - 1200

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

- A-BR - Assam-Bengal Relations
- Brhaspati - Brhaspati Smṛti
- BS - Bengali Sāl
- CHA - The Comprehensive History of Assam
- CII - Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum
- EHK - Early History of Kāmarūpa
- EI - Epigraphia Indica
- HACA - Historical Archaeology of Central Assam
- HCPA - The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam
- IA - Indian Antiquary
- IAA - Inscriptions of Ancient Assam
- IEG - Indian Epigraphical Glossary
- IHQ - Indian Historical Quarterly
- JAIN - Journal of Ancient Indian History
- JARS - Journal of Assam Research Society
- JASB - Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
- JBORS - Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society
- JESI - Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India
- JRAS - Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
- KS - Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī by P.N. Bhattacharya
- Manu - Manu Smṛti

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū
ए	ऐ	रे	ओ	औ	
e	ai	o	au		

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅ
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
ca	cha	ja	jha	ña
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa
त	थ	द	ध	न
ta	tha	da	dha	na
प	फ	ब	भ	म
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma
य	र	ल	व	श
ya	ra	la	va	śa
ष	स	ह	ः	
ṣa	sa	ha	ḥ	
क्ष	ज्ञ			
kṣa	jña			

Introduction

In ancient times the practice of using copper plates to record the transactions of land was common throughout India. Sometimes, stone plates were also used for the same purpose. A large number of copper plates and fragmentary stone slabs recording the donation of land by the kings of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa have been discovered and it is beyond doubt that there are still many such records either hidden underneath the earth or in private hands. It is proved by the latest discoveries of the inscriptions and by the story behind the discovery of the Uttarbarbil Plate of Balavarman III. The inscription was recovered from Shri Prakash Chandra Acharya who used to worship the elephant of the seal, thinking that the image was of God Gaṇeśa.

The value of these inscriptions as an important Historical source has long been recognized. Historians, starting from Sir Edward Gait, K.L.Barua, D.C.Sircar, B.K.Barua, P.C.Choudhury, Mrs. S.L.Barua, N.D.Choudhury and others have extracted many information from these inscriptions, specially for writing the political and at times cultural history of the land. E.Gait's History of Assam, K.L.Barua's Early History of Kāmarūpa, B.K.Barua's A Cultural History of Assam, H.K.Barpujari's (ed) The Comprehensive History of Assam,

P.C.Choudhury's The History of Civilization of the People of Assam are important publications relating to the history and culture of Prāgijyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. Among more recent publications covering some important aspects of culture and civilization of the land under study S.L.Barua's A Comprehensive History of Assam, N.D. Choudhury's Historical Archaeology of Central Assam, N.Lahiri's Pre-Ahom Assam and I.Sarkar's Historical Geography of Prāgijyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa must be mentioned. But none of the works mentioned above have attempted to make a thorough analysis of the inscriptions as a document for which they were issued., i.e., for recording property transfer.

There is little doubt that as a result of close examinations of the inscriptions, plates etc. which undoubtedly constitutes the principal historical record for the period under study our understanding of the history of Prāgijyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa will be advanced further. With the help of archaeological and place name evidence it is possible to locate the principal administrative centres, delimit the areas over which the rulers exercised control and date the period of their activity. Several political and cultural regions have, as a result, been identified each of which had undoubtedly a distinct character of its own. The inscriptions also help us not to a mean extent to understand the evolution of the organizations of the Government. The actual function of the

Government markedly changed since the second half of the 6th Century A.D. (Cf. Dubi Copper Plate of Hiāskaravarman). "With knowledge of the changes in Government and changes in the typology of the inscriptions themselves" as observed by B.M.Morrison in connection with his studies of Bengal Delta, it is possible to establish an empirical basis for the periodizations of the history of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.

There are, however, several problems connected with the analysis and examinations of the copper plate inscriptions. Taking it into account the time span of more than seven centuries and the geographic area of 78,523 square kilometres, the inscriptions which are discovered do not provide us as large a corpus of data as might be expected. Again, the inscriptions are distributed unevenly through the centuries and the large number of inscriptions which may be published subsequently are likely to change the suggested typology and conclusions. Fortunately enough most of the recovered plates fall into clearly defined stylistic groups in a developmental relationship with the later plates based upon "the form, organization and terminology of the earlier ones." This may suggest that the recovered plates of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, are representative of all the inscriptions that were issued though perhaps this can be proved only by the discovery and analysis of many more plates.

Another problem is whether the Brahmaputra Valley

which has been described as Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa constitute a meaningful unit for historical investigation. There is a tendency of many scholars to equate modern Assam with the old kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. But the boundary of the old kingdom was larger than the modern one. Because from Yoginī Tantra it is known that the land was extended from Nepal in the north to the confluence of Brahmaputra in the south and from Karatoya in the west to the Dikṣu in the east. It indicates that Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa included not only the whole of Assam but the parts of North and East Bengal (at present Bangladesh) and the hill tracts upto the border of China. However, it appears while some parts of the regions interacted politically with one another more often than with kingdoms lying outside it the eastern part of the territory is more closely connected with Bengal than with the rest of the country.

The inscriptions throw some light on the socio-economic set up of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. R.S.Sharma in the light of European experience have observed some traces of feudalism in the socio-economic set up of Early-Medieval India. To complete the study a discussion ^{should be} made to decide whether the inscriptions of the land show some characteristics of feudal formation in the socio-economic structure of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.

The inscriptions which have been used for the study

were mostly published in Epigraphia Indica, The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. There is also old but very useful edition of the inscriptions of the rulers of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa compiled by P.N.Bhattacharya's Kāmarūpa-Śāsanāvalī, M.M.Sharma's Inscriptions of Ancient Assam, D.Sharma's Kāmarūpa-Śāsanāvalī, M.Neog's Prāchya-Śāsanāvalī and D.C.Sircar's Some Epigraphical Records of the Medieval Period from Eastern India. Further, it is desirable also to consult some contemporary epigraphs recovered from other parts of India like Allahabad, Pillar Prasasti of Samudragupta, Mandasor epigraph of Yaśodharman, Aḥsād epigraph of Ādityasena, Tipperah grant of Lokanātha, Paśupati inscription of the Nepal king Jayadeva II, Dacca Plate of Kalyānacandra, Bhāgalpur grant of Nārāyaṇapāla of Gauḍa, the grant of the Gaṅga king Anantavarman, Belāva grant of Bhojavarman, Deopārā inscription of Vijayasena, Mādhānagar grant of Lakṣmaṇasena etc.

The informations supplied by the epigraphs must be corroborated by other sources - literary, archaeological and numismatic. Among the literary sources mention may be made of Kauṭilya's Arthasāstra, Kālidāsa's Raghuvaṁśa, Daśakumāracarita of Daṇḍin, Harsacarita of Bānabhaṭṭa, Mūdrarākṣasa of Viśākhadatta, Gaḍovaho of Vākpati, Kāvya-mināṁsā of Rājasekhara, Bilhana's Vikramāṅkadevacarita, Sandhyākaranandī's Rāmacarita, Rājatarāṅgiṇī of Kalhana, Yuan Chwang's account etc.

The remains of the undated history of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa consists of neoliths, megaliths and pottery. They

are helpful for knowing the pre-Aryan and non-Aryan elements of the land. This study gives us an idea of the link of the people of ancient Assam with those of the other parts of India and the Oceanic world and helps us in understanding the origin and foundation of culture of the land.

We intend to make a thorough assessment of the problems mentioned above in several Chapters. In order to make the study more comprehensive and meaningful the first Chapter is devoted to the discussion of the geography of the region with which we are concerned. A historical background of the land with the help of recently discovered inscriptions is desideratum and hence it has been included in the second Chapter. A critical assessment of the dates and geographical provenance of the grants is the subject-matter of the third Chapter. The fourth Chapter deals with the physical appearances and organizations of the grants. The fifth Chapter deals with the donors and the donees of the inscriptions. In the sixth Chapter a discussion has been made on the socio-economic set-up of the kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. Concluding observation is the subject-matter of the last chapter.

The list of inscriptions discovered so far along with a brief summary to each has been given in the appendix. Lastly, I have incorporated some photo-copies of the seals, plates of the inscriptions and maps of the kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa for the correct understanding of the problem.

CHAPTER - I

Geographical Background

Name of the Land

Assam is known by different names in ancient period. Actually, the word Assam nowhere occurs prior to the Ahom occupation.¹ According to Gait the word is derived from the present designation of the Ahoms.² In the epics, purāṇas, early literatures and epigraphs, it is often called as Prāggyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa. The word Prāggyotiṣa is mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and the Harivaṃśa.³ There is no mention of Kāmarūpa in any of these works.⁴ It has been described in the Kālikā Purāṇa that when Naraka of Mithila became king of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa and was placed in charge of the Goddess Kāmākhyā, the name of the land was changed from Prāggyotiṣa to Kāmarūpa.⁵ The earliest epigraphic reference to Kāmarūpa, is, however, to be found in the wellknown Allāhābād inscription of Samudragupta where Kāmarūpa is mentioned as a frontier territory.⁶ In classical Sanskrit literature, we find the name Prāggyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa side by side. For example, in the story of Ragu's conquest as given in the Raghuvaṃśa, the hero first came to Prāggyotiṣa and then to Kāmarūpa after having crossed the Lauhitya.⁷ Yādevaprakāśa (C.1000 A.D.) in his Vaijayantī also mentions Prāggyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa.⁸

In fact, Prāggyotiṣa, Kāmarūpa and Kāmākhyā are the three geographical names given to the same kingdom.⁹ The name Prāggyotiṣa has been explained variously. From Kālikā Purāna it is known that the name of Naraka's city became Prāggyotiṣapura because the god Brahma created the eastern star at that place.¹⁰ R. M. Nath has suggested that the people called Chao Theius of China came to India and became known as 'Zuthis'.¹¹ A branch of that tribe settled in Assam and therefore, came to be known as 'Prag Zuthis' later modified to 'Prāggyotiṣa'.¹² B. K. Kākatī has suggested that the word Prāggyotiṣa is a Sanskritized form of Austric group of words like Pagar Juh-tic or Pagar-jo-tich meaning 'a region of extensive hills'.¹³ According to D. C. Sircar, 'Prāggyotiṣa' appears to mean 'the city or land of the eastern light'.¹⁴ Here, the suggestion of Gait seems to be the most right one. According to him 'Prāg' means former or eastern, and 'jyotiṣa' means a star, astrology, shining and therefore, Prāggyotiṣapura may be taken to mean the city of Eastern Astrology.¹⁵

The words Kāmarūpa and Kāmākhyā also suggest an Austric or Alpine origin.¹⁶ Kāmākhyā may be related with such words as Kamoi (demon) in old khmer; Kamoit (devil) in Cham, Kamet (corpse) in Santāli and Kāmarūpa may be derived from such words as Kamru or Kamrut which is the name of a lesser divinitī in Santāli.¹⁷ Regarding the origin of the

name Kamarupa, from Gopatha Brāhmana, it is known that "when Sati died of vexation at the discourtesy shown to her husband Siva by her father Daksha, Siva, overcome by grief, wandered about the world carrying her dead body on his head. In order to put a stop to his penance, Vishnu followed him and lopped away the body piecemeal with his discus. It fell to earth in fiftyone different pieces, and wherever each piece fell, the ground was held to be sacred. Her organs of generation fell on Kamagiri, i.e. the Nilachal hill near Gauhati, and the place was thenceforth held sacred to Kamakhya, the Goddess of sexual desire. As Siva still continued to do penance, the other Gods became afraid that he would thereby acquire universal power, and accordingly despatched Kamdeb, the Indian Cupid, to make him fall in love again, and thereby break his penance. He succeeded in his mission, but so enraged was Siva at the result, that he burnt him to ashes by a fiery glance from the eye in the centre of his forehead. Kamdeb eventually recovered his original form and the country where this took place became known as Kamarupa".¹⁸

Location and Extension of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa

There is a tendency of many scholars to equate modern Assam with the old kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. But the

boundary of the old kingdom was larger than the modern one. So far as the boundary of the former kingdom Yoginī Tantra says -

nepālasya kañchanādrim brahmaputrasya saṅgamam
karatoyāṃ samārabhya yāvad dikkaravāsinīm
uttarasyāṃ kañjagiriḥ karatoyā tu paścime
tirthaśrestha dikṣunadī pūrvasyāṃ girikanyake
dakṣiṇe Brahmaputrasya lākṣayaḥ saṅgamavadhi
kāmarūpa iti khyātaḥ sarvaśāstreṣu niścitaḥ.¹⁹

"From the mountain Kañchana in Nepal upto the confluence of the Brahmaputra, from the Karatoyā to Dikkaravāsinī, the northern limit is the mount Kañja, in the west the Karatoyā, in the east the Dikṣu, O daughter of the mountain 'in the south the confluence of the Lākṣa with the Brahmaputra, this is the territory which all treatises call by the name of Kāmarūpa."²⁰ Mount Kañja, the northern limit of the land signify Kanchajanga peak on the eastern border of Nepal, while the Karatoyā, the western border is the well-known river now flowing through the Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal and the Rangpur and Bogra Districts of Bangladesh.²¹ The southern limit of Prāgjyotiṣa-kāmarūpa - the confluence of the Brahmaputra and the Lākṣā at present stands near the border between Dacca and Mymensingh Districts of Bangladesh.²² Most probably, before 1000 or 1500 or 2000 years ago, the Bay of Bengal was closer to this area than it is to day.²³ The

eastern border of the land were the holy river Dikṣu and the temple of the goddess Dikkaravāsini.²⁴ The former may be identified with the modern Dikhu falling in the Brahmaputra near Sibsagar while the later may be identified with the temple of the goddess Tamreśvari now situated at Sadiya about one hundred miles to the north-east of Sibsagar.²⁵

Because, from an inscription of Śaka 1364, discovered in the Tamreśvari temple standing at lat. $27^{\circ}56'$, long. $96^{\circ}21'$ near Paya (in the present Arunachal Pradesh) about five miles from Tebangkhunti on the Sadiya-Teju route, it is known that Tamreśvari and Dikkaravāsini are identical.²⁶ The inscription records the construction of a wall for the goddess Digaravāsini (Dikkaravāsini).²⁷

Thus we see, that Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa included not only the whole of Assam but the parts of North and East Bengal (at present Bangladesh)^{27a} and the hill tracts upto the border of China. At present Assam lies in the extreme north-east frontier of India, in between 28° - 24° North latitudes and $89^{\circ}36'$ - 96° East longitudes covering an area of 78, 523 square kilometres.²⁸

The boundary of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa changes from time to time in accordance with the political situation in Eastern India. Under Bhagadatta of the Mahābhārata it extended

to the confines of China, Nepal or the Himalayan regions, otherwise his army could not have been consisted of the Cinas and the Kirātas.²⁹ On the otherhand, no definite mention of either Prāḡjyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa is made in the early Buddhist or Jaina records.³⁰ It is also not included among the sixteen Mahājanapadas of the Nikāyas.³¹ It indicates that during the 6th century B.C. or at a later time the land was included in the greater kingdom of Magadha.³¹ Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra has given reference to many places of Kāmarūpa, such as Suvarṇakuṇḍya, Paralauhitya etc., in connection with the economic products of Kāmarūpa.³² The classical writers from the 5th century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D. like Hecataeus of Miletus (500 B.C.), Herodotus, Megasthenes, Strabo, Pliny, Periplus of the Erythrean Sea of the 1st century A.D., Ptolemy's Geography of the 2nd century A.D., Pompinius Mela, Ammianus Mercellinus, Pausanius, Dyonysius, Aelian, Ctesias and others refer to the people and place names of the land but they are silent about its name.³³ Possibly at that time the land was either known by other names or included in the kingdom of the Prassi and the Gangaridae.³⁴ This extension and contraction of the area of Prāḡjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa is clear to us in the period of our study.

Physical Features

The physiography of a country has much to do in moulding the geographic base for human activities and settlements.³⁵ On the basis of the physical components Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa may be divided broadly into two physical units : the north-eastern and central hill tracts and the valleys of the Barak and the Brahmaputra.³⁶ On the north of the land lie the Eastern Himalayas reaching the highest altitude in the north-east at Namchu Burwa 7, 756 metres.³⁷ The different parts of the sub-Himalayan region are named after the semi-Mongoloid tribes who inhabit in these hills; the Bhutiyas, Akas, Duflas (Nishis), Abors (Adis), Miris (Mishings) and Mishmis.³⁸ The range continues towards the south-east and joins the Patkai (the natural boundary between Assam and Burma), Naga, Barail, Highlands of Manipur and Lushai hills.³⁹ The central hill tracts or the Assam range which includes Meghalaya and the outlying Mikir hills is a plateau or table-land.⁴⁰ The length of this hill is about 400 Kms. and the average width is about 40 Kms.⁴¹ This range is occupied by the various tribes of the Nagas, Jaintias, Khasis and Garos.⁴² They have Mon-Khmer or Tibeto Burma affinities and generally live by shifting subsistence agriculture; the village often shift with the field (Jhum).⁴³

The Assam range forms the watershed between the two

valleys - the Surma and the Brahmaputra. The major part of the Surma valley falls within the present Bangladesh. Only a small triangular part of it, known as the Barak plains, forming the district of Cachar, falls within the present State of Assam.⁴⁴

The Brahmaputra is one of the largest rivers of the world which flows majestically through the heart of the land. Its valleys consists of a wide alluvial plain, about 720 Km. in length with an average breadth of 36 Km.⁴⁵ The valley spreading flat and wide from east to west in the lower portions, tends to project northward in its upper portion where it tapers off.⁴⁶ This fertile plain is washed away by a number of tributaries of the Brahmaputra. The main tributaries of the north are the Suvansiri, the Burai, the Dikarai, the Bharali, the Dhansiri, the Baranadi, the Manas, the Gadadhar, the Sankosh and those of the south are the Dihing, the Dichang, the Dikhou, the Dhansiri, the Kapili, the Digaru, the Kulchi etc.⁴⁷

The word Brahmaputra means 'son of Brahmā'.⁴⁸ It is also known as 'Lauhitya' which gives a good meaning in Sanskrit as the 'Red River'.⁴⁹ It is seen that during the rainy season the water of the river takes red colour when it flows through the red soil in the adjoining embankments. There is another interpretation in legend also, given as to

the origin of the name.⁵⁰ Paraśurām, after killing his mother, washed off his bloody strains in the river and regained sainthood.⁵¹

The whole history and culture of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa are closely connected with this river. So that the history of the land is, in a sense, the history of the civilization of the Brahmaputra valley.⁵²

In this connection it is important to note that almost all the inscriptions of our period have been discovered in and around the valley of this river.⁵³

Influence of the Physical Features

From the above discussion, we see that the region under our study is consisted of hills and plains. This mountainous feature of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa was responsible for the growth of diverse cultures. The hilly regions of the land were inhabited by various tribes who had different cultures of their own.⁵⁴ In this connection Waddell remarks, "the relatively low rounded gneissic and limestone hills to the west of Dhansiri river and Barail range, and occupied by the Garos, Khasi, Jaintia, Mikir and Kachari, are more open to India, whilst the widely different geological formation to the east belongs to the rugged Burmese mountain

system and chiefly populated by the same tribes broadly classed as Naga.⁵⁵ "The wilder tribes inhabit especially the labyrinthine glens and ridges of the upper valleys, while the more civilised tribes are mostly restricted to the bottom of the tropical central valley fringing the great river, which connects them with the plains of India. The steep ridges and deep ravines in this area are exceptionally numerous and act as dividing barriers. On the south these ridges form a remarkable broad belt, running in almost parallel lines meridionally through Tippera, Manipur and the Kuki-Lushai land for several hundred miles between the Brahmaputra and Irrawaddy, and enclosing countless narrow valleys of great depth. The sides of several of these ridges are so cliffy as to effectively bar the progress of adjoining tribes."⁵⁶

These tribes came to Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa from different places. As the land is surrounded by hills, they came there most probably, through the routes with which the relation of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa with outside world were maintained. The oldest land route between India and China was through Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, upper Burma and Yunan through which Chinese cotton and bamboo were carried to Bactria.⁵⁷ There were three routes from Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa to Burma.⁵⁸ They were : (1) through the valley of Brahmaputra upto Patkai range and then through its passes upto upper Burma; (2) through

Manipur upto the Chindwin valley; (3) through the Arakan upto Irawady valley. There were another five routes leading to Tibet or China from Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.⁵⁹ They were : (1) the pass of Dihong; (2) the Mishmi route; (3) the Phungan pass to Munchee and China; (4) the route of Manipur to the Irawadi; and (5) the Patkai pass to Bhamo on the Irawadi. Besides these, numerous passes, known as Duars existed between Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa and Bhutan. There were 35 mountain passes between Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa and Tibet through which horses were brought to Lakṣnauti.⁶⁰ There were also route through river. The main route from Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa to Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was by the river Brahmputra and Gangā.⁶¹ Besides Yuan Chwang noticed a water route between Kāmarūpa and China via Southern Sea route. It is said that when Yuan Chwang told Bhāskaravarman that he would like to return to China, the king replied "But I know not, if you prefer to go, by what would you propose to return; if you select the Southern Sea route, then I will send some officials to accompany you."⁶²

As the land was enriched with an extensive river system, the soil of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa was exceedingly fertile and well adopted to almost all kinds of agricultural purposes. Only the Brahmputra flowing through the heart of the land, largely contributed to the material prosperity of the people.⁶³ Rural settlements like Abisuravāṭaka, Haposgrāma, Vaināmagrāma, Śāntibaḍa, Mandarāgrāma, Dosipāṭaka,

Piḍakagrāma etc. were spread over through this valley.⁶⁴

Along with those some important cities or administrative centres, as mentioned in the epigraphs, like Prāggyotiṣapura, Durjjayā, Haḍapeśvara etc. with its beautiful palaces, buildings, roads and other amenities had developed on the banks of the Brahmaputra.⁶⁵ The existence of buildings, mansions and different types of roads and streets in these cities offer a clear hint that as being urban centres these cities gave opportunities to the energetic elements of the surrounding areas. Thus, along with 'the economic surplus of the kingdom', architects, artisans, sculptors, painters, merchants etc. began to pour into these cities to build and decorate buildings, market places and temples. Why^{did} these cities grow up by the side of the river Brahmaputra? Perhaps, it was due to commercial consideration partly. These cities were not only administrative centres but emporium of trade also. Through the ports of these cities, Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa maintained her commercial relation not only with other parts of India but outside world. Its main articles of merchandice were both raw and manufactured silk, gold, tejpāt, lac, buffalo and rhinoceros, hide and horns, iron, aloe, musk, cloth, ivory, pearls, rice etc.⁶⁶

But a different picture is found in the relatively isolated and less fertile and less agriculturally productive region of forests, hills and mountains.⁶⁷ There^{the} people had been living for centuries, far away from the main stream.

nature forced them to practice jhuming or shifting cultivation. But as the produce was meagre as to their need, they supplemented it by hunting and fishing. Sometimes, the hillmen depended on the plainsmen for food and other necessaries. The latter used to buy the forbearance and good behaviour of the former by supplying them their requirements.⁶⁸ Hence, there had been a process of assimilation, "though small, racially, linguistically and culturally."⁶⁹

The fertility of the soil sometimes inspired the hillmen to attack the inhabitants of the valley. It may be that due to this reason during the 12th century A.D., by replacing the Hindu dynasty numerous petty kingdoms were established by tribal chiefs like those of the Manipuris, the Kāchāris, the Chutiās, the Khāsi-Jaintiās, the Koches and others.⁷⁰ As Waddell remarks, "On leaving the fastnesses of their hills, however, they exposed themselves more freely to attack and on the otherhand their more luxurious living inevitably resulted in their degeneration and absorption by the older settlers in the plains, eventually in their turn being conquered sooner or later by a more active horde of mountaineers who again in their turn succumbed in like manner to a fresher batch of invading hillmen. The process, which seems to have been going on from time immemorial, has resulted in a considerable

mixing of races in the central valley; whereas the mountain tribes appear to have retained their purity of stock to a much greater degree."⁷¹

There were other disadvantages of the physical condition of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa from which people suffered a lot. These were flood, earth-quakes, climate etc. Sometimes, the river system and fertility of the soil played their destructive role.⁷² In this regard Gait points out that "Some of the legends which have been mentioned suggest that in the distant past the inhabitants of the country which we now call Assam attained considerable power and a fair degree of civilisation; and this view is confirmed by the narrative of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang and by the copper-plate inscriptions... This being so, the question will doubtless be asked why so few memorials of their time come down to us. The reason is that nature has vied with man in destroying them. The Brahmaputra valley is an alluvial country, and impetuous, snow-fed rivers which debouch from the Himalayas find so little resistance in its friable soil that they are constantly carving out new channels and cutting away their banks; consequently no building erected in their neighbourhood can be expected to remain for more than a limited time... except at a few points like Gauhati where rock pierces through the alluvium."⁷³

So far as the climatic condition of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, we are almost in dark position due to lack of

evidence. Only the Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang remarks that the country was "low and damp."⁷⁴ Shihabuddin Talish, the historian of Mir Jumla, who conquered Assam in 1662, made a correct assessment of the climate of Assam, when he observed that "it rains for eight months in the year and even the four months of winter are not free from rains."⁷⁵ Such a climate of the land was largely responsible for the destruction of ancient temples, palaces, forts and other buildings.

Similarly, violent earthquakes in the region, though occurring at a distant intervals, were also responsible for the destruction of structural monuments.⁷⁶

Notes and References

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- 12 Loc. cit.
- 13 B. K. Kākati, The Mother Goddess Kāmākhya, Gauhati, 1948, p. 6
- 14 D. C. Sircar, CHA, p. 60
- 15 Edward Gait, op. cit., p. 15
- 16 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 35
- 17 Loc. cit.
- 18 Cited by Edward Gait, op. cit., pp. 11-12
- 19 Yogini Tantra, Ch. XI, 16-18
- 20 B. K. Barua, op. cit., pp. 14-15
- 21 D. C. Sircar, CHA, p. 63

22 Loc. cit.

23 Ibid., p. 67

24 Ibid., p. 63

25 Ibid., p. 63-64

26 Loc. cit.

27 Loc. cit.

27a It is important to note here that Maḍhasālmali in the Puṇḍravardhanabhukti, noticed in the Khālīmpur plate of Dharmapāla is regarded as identical with or situated near Mayūrasālmali of the Chandrapurī viṣaya mentioned in the Nidhanpur Plates. But the inclusion of Puṇḍravardhanabhukti in Prāḡjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa as suggested by K.L.Barua is hardly proved since "Certain border areas of Prāḡjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa may have been annexed to the Puṇḍravardhanabhukti by the Pāla empire." (D.C.Sircar, Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India, Delhi, 1971, p. 162).

Similarly, Tipperah was under the suzerainty of Lokanātha in the second half of the seventh century A.D. Lokanātha was a powerful feudatory of a paramount sovereign

(Cf. Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha) whose identification is a bone of contention among the scholars. Scholars like K.L.Barua, N.N.Vasu and P.C.Choudhury favour the idea of Tipperah's inclusion within the vassal territory under the suzerainty of the rulers of Kāmarūpa while others with

more justification consider the territory as defecto independent, but under the suzerainty of a ruler of Gauda. We have tried to explain the point further at the relevant places.

Since the territories, mentioned above were not merely adjacent to the kingdom of Prāgijyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, but because of their geographical situation and possibly also the interests of the rulers - ruling over the valleys of Brahmaputra, we want to put these territories as coming within the sphere of influence of Prāgijyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.

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- 58 Loc. cit.
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- 60 Ibid. pp. 24-25 .
- 61 Loc. cit.
- 62 S. Beal, Life of Yuan Chwang, London, 1914, p. 188 .
- 63 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 47 .
- 64 N. Lahiri, op. cit., p. 91 .
- 65 H. K. Barpujari, GHA, p. 4 .

- 66 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, pp. 359-61.
- 67 H. K. Barpujari, CHA, p. 3.
- 68 Loc. cit.
- 69 Loc. cit.
- 70 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 49.
- 71 Loc. cit.
- 72 Loc. cit.
- 73 Edward Gait, op. cit., p. 20-21.
- 74 Waiters, On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, II, London, 1904, p. 185.
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CHAPTER - II

Historical Background

Prehistory

The materials on which a reliable framework of the pre-historic period of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa can be formed are not very fertile. We are to remain content mainly with the surface findings, since very few excavations have been carried out here so far.

We are not sure whether the prehistoric man in Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa lived in caves but there are caves in Chera Syndai (Khāsi-Jaintiā Hills), in Mikir Hills and North Cachar.¹ There are traces of rudimentary paintings and carvings in these caves.² Besides caves, there is a large number of palaeolithic tools discovered in the Garo Hills, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.³ The palaeolithic tools of the Garo hills have been classified into three groups : (1) Handaxe, cleavers and choppers; (2) Flake tools and (3) Blade tools. The palaeolithic industry of Arunachal Pradesh is represented by choppers, proto-handaxes, ovates, cleavers, side-scrapers, points, flakes and cores.⁴ Typologically, the palaeolithic culture of Manipur represents the upper palaeolithic culture of the Late Pleistocene epoch

which is consisted of flake and blade tools and bone tools.

Microoliths or the small stone tools represented by blades, scrapers, points, arrowheads and broad - edged trapages have been found in the Bongram valley of the Garo hills.⁵ Here, the microlithic level lies above the virgin soil and below the neolithic level which signifies that the first group of prehistoric people settled on the virgin soil.

There is a large number of neolithic tools, found in the hilly region of Assam, such as in the Naga hills, the North Cachar hills and the Garo hills.⁶ They have also been found in the districts of Brahmaputra valley such as in Sonitpur, Kamrup, Goalpara, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur districts. The widespread neolithic culture of Ancient Assam had affinities with the culture of Eastern Asia.⁷ The neolithic specimens of the land have been classified by A. H. Dani into eight types; each type having a large number of varieties.⁸

In all the excavated sites of Assam, pottery has been discovered.⁹ From the Ambari finds we come to know about the universal use of these articles of clay for both domestic and religious purposes.¹⁰ Cord marked pots and jars have been found recently in the Dibrugarh area in Neolithic sites.¹¹ These have also been found in Daojali Hading in the North Cachar hills and in the Sarutaru in the Kamrup district.¹² But the pottery found in Selbalgiri in the Garo hills, is

'plain, handmade, dull red or grey in colour'...¹³ Here, it is important to note that the cord marked pottery occurs as the dominant type of ceramic ware over a wide region of eastern Asia comprising China and the countries of South East Asia.¹⁴ Thus, it can be said undoubtedly, that the cord marked pottery of Ancient Assam belongs to this eastern Asiatic Neolithic culture. Here, we may refer to the suggestion of R. Alchin who is of opinion that in the neolithic tools as is found in Assam there are some cultural traits which reflect the influences of neolithic culture of Burma and South China.^{14a} These cultural traits are also found in the neolithic culture of other parts of India which probably came there following western routes across Afghanistan, Central Asia and by the sea and not as in case of Assam through eastern direction.^{14b}

An archaeological characteristic of the region under our study is its wealth of Megaliths.¹⁵ This megalithic culture existed in the region not only in prehistoric time but still persists among the Khasis.¹⁶ A large number of megalithic structures is situated at Cherrapunji, Jowai, Maoflong, Daitlugkot, Nartiang and Laitkor in the Khasi and Jaintia hills.¹⁷ They are also found in the Garo hills, Kamrup, Karbi hills and Naga hills.¹⁸ In this connection we may also mention some sites of megalithic culture from north Cachar such as Nunglo Bolasan, Derebora, Kobak etc.¹⁹ The megalithic structures of Ancient Assam have been classi-

classified by C. B. Clarke into three groups - (1) funeral pyres, (2) kists and (3) monumental groups.²⁰

All the palaeolithic, neolithic and megalithic tools and structures are the conclusive proofs of human inhabitation in Ancient Assam long before the advent of the Aryans. The non-Aryans were consisted of the people of tribal groups who came to the region from different directions long before the advent of the Aryans. In fact, both the Aryans and the non-Aryans contributed to the composite culture of the region.

Regarding the racial types of the tribes of Assam it has been suggested that they contain in varying proportions Negrito, Austro-Asiatic, Alpine-Aryan and Mongolian elements.²¹ B. S. Guha, however, mentions that among the six main races among the people of India: Negrito, Proto-Australoid, Mongoloid, Mediterranean, Western Brachycephal and Nordic - the first three elements are found among the tribal populations of India.²²

Mills has suggested that the prehistoric "inhabitants of the mountains of Assam were almost certainly Negritos, little dark men with curly hair ... Traditions speak vaguely of them and their curly hair still survives. It was probably they who made little stone celts, which are frequently found in the hills".²³ According to others some physical features and other aspects of material culture signify the existence of Negrito strain, particularly among some Nagas.²⁴ But it

must be noted that the existence of Negrito strain in India has become a disputed subject. Recently, S. S. Sarkar and his colleagues have shown that the Kadar of Kerala, who were considered to possess an essentially Negrito character, belong to the Veddia of Australoid ethnic stock.²⁵

The Austric or Austro-Asiatics, in their primitive form are represented by the Khasis of Assam.²⁶ There are also certain Australoid ethnic traits among the various Bodo tribes.²⁷ The term Austric is a linguistic rather than an ethnic one.²⁸ Two main groups of Austric speech family are Austro-Asiatic and Austronesian.²⁹ In India, the Kols, Mundas of Central India, the Nicobarese of the Nicobar Islands and the Khasis of Meghalaya speak languages of the first group. The Austronesian group may be divided into three sub-groups - Indonesian, Malanesian and Polynesian. Interestingly enough, the Khasis are Austric so far as their language is concerned but they bear close resemblance with the Mongoloid people in physique.

The next group which came to Assam was the Mongoloid or the Tibeto-Burman family. The land between Yangtse Kiang and the Hoang-Ho in North-West China was their original home.³⁰ At one time these people migrated from their original home towards the head-waters of the Irrawaddy and of the Chindwin. From there, some of them following the upper course of the Brahmaputra reached Tibet and occupied it. Again, from Tibet some of them moved further and occupied the hills of the southern side of the Himalayan range, right from Assam

to the east to the Punjab in the West. In Assam they settled in different regions and came to be known by different names like the Rabha, Kachari, Bodo, Tiwa, Karbi, Dimasa etc.³¹

From the linguistic point of view, the Tibeto-Burmans are divided into two groups - North Assam and Assam - Burmese.³²

The first group includes the various Arunachal tribes - Abors, Akas, Daflas, Miris and Mishmis while the second group includes three group - the Bodos, Nagas and Kuki-chins.

Among the Bodo language speaking people we find such tribes as the Garo, Rabha, Kachari, Koch, Mech, Hajong, Laung etc.

After the Austric people, the Mediterranean race came to the region. They were called so as Mediterranean region was their original home. Haddon observes some of their ethnic and cultural traits among the Nagas.³³

Following the Mediterraneans, the Alpines or the Armenoids also penetrated to the land from the west or north-west. They played a very important role in the culture and civilization of the region before the advent of the vedic Aryans.³⁴ Some cultural traits relating to the disposal of dead, uncleanliness of a woman during menses etc. as found among the Assamese Hindus are of Alpine origin.³⁵ The Kalitās of Assam were supposed to have been of Alpine origin.³⁶

Following the Alpines, the Aryans came to the land at

a time which is not definitely known. Before their entry into India, these Aryan people were expert agriculturists and they included among themselves groups specialized in cattle-breeding-pastoral people.³⁷ S. K. Chatterjee has suggested that the Indo-Aryans reached in North Bihar by 700 B.C. and moved eastward in smaller group at different times.³⁸ But both in the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata, there are references of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa which indicate that the land had contact with the Aryan India from very early period.³⁹ Kauṭilya refers to an Aryan wave in the land in the Maurya period.⁴⁰ In the early centuries of the Christian era high class Brāhmaṇas began to settle in the region.⁴¹ From the Nidhanpur Copper Plate grant, it is known that king Bhūti-varman (6th cen. A.D.) donated a special Agrahāra to more than two hundred Brāhmaṇas of various gotras and Vedaśākhās for promotion of Vedic religion and culture.⁴² Such royal policy was largely responsible for the settlement of high class Aryans in Ancient Assam. According to some this might have led to the Aryanisation of the valley⁴³ and influenced the Tibeto-Burman rulers to adopt Brāhmanical culture.

The Political History

The earliest rulers of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa were

non-Aryan people. In the epics and Purāṇas they were called Dānavas and Asuras. They are often mentioned as Kirātas and Mlechchas. Mahiranga Dānava, the Kirāta chief, who had his capital of Mairāṅga, was the earliest known ruler of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.⁴⁴ He was succeeded by Hatakāsura, Sambarāsura, Ratnāsura and Ghatakāsura respectively.⁴⁵ The Asura dynasty of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa was put to an end by Naraka, a prince from Videha, who established a new dynasty.⁴⁶ This dynasty ruled in the region for a considerable period. Naraka has been mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata, the Kālikā Purāṇa, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and the Harivaṁśa.⁴⁷ According to the Kālikā Purāṇa, Naraka was born of the earth by Viṣṇu in his Boar Incarnation and was brought up by the childless king Janaka of Videha of North Bihar.⁴⁸ When he attained the age of sixteen he came to Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa and became the king of the land. At this time, he fell under the evil influence of his friend Bāṇa, who was the king of Sonitpura.⁴⁹ Finally, for his irreligious activities, Naraka was killed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, an avatāra or incarnation of Viṣṇu.⁵⁰

From Mahābhārata it is known that Naraka was succeeded by his son Bhagadatta.⁵¹ In the 'sabhā parva' it is said that Bhagadatta, the king of Prāgjyotiṣa resisted Arjuna.⁵² The battle lasted for eight days and finally Bhagadatta surrendered.

Bhagadatta was succeeded by his son Vajradatta.⁵³

In the Mahābhārata it is said that when Yudhiṣṭhira performed horse-sacrifice to prove his supremacy as a śamrāt, Vajradatta, after a decisive battle acknowledged the supremacy of Yudhiṣṭhira.⁵⁴ In the Harsacarita, it has been mentioned that Puṣpadatta and Vajradatta were the successors of Bhagadatta. But in the inscriptions of Bhagadatta's line, we do not find the name of Puṣpadatta.⁵⁵ It was most probably that Vajradatta was the younger brother of Puṣpadatta, but the writers of the inscriptions of Vanamāla, Balavarman III and Ratnapāla, erroneously mentioned him as brother of Bhagadatta.⁵⁶

The intervening period between Bhagadatta's successors and Puṣyavarman is dark.⁵⁷ The Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskara-varman mentions that three thousand years passed between the death of Vajradatta and the succession of Puṣyavarman, founder of a new dynasty.⁵⁸ From traditional accounts we get the names of a large number of rulers who ruled in the land after Vajradatta. According to one, the successors of Bhagadatta in direct line were Dharmapāla, Karmapāla, Pṛthvipāla and Subāhu.⁵⁹ After nineteen kings of the dynasty of Naraka, Subāhu has been placed.⁶⁰ He obstructed the sacrificial horse of Vikramāditya and was overthrown. After this, Jitāri, a Dravidian, became the king of Prāgyo-tiṣa-Kāmarūpa.⁶¹

The Varman Dynasty

The real political history of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa starts with the rule of Puṣyavarman, the founder of the Varman dynasty.⁶² The dynasty is so named as all the rulers of the line of Puṣyavarman had all their principal names ending in the word Varman.⁶³ In the Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskaravarman it is said that "when the kings of the Naraka family, having enjoyed the position of rulers for three thousand years, had all attained the conditions of Gods, Puṣyavarman became the lord of the world."⁶⁴ Since Puṣyavarman is said to have born in the family of Naraka, the dynasty founded by him is sometimes called Naraka or Bhauma (born of Earth).⁶⁵

A recent study on the Umāchal Rock Inscription by D. Chutia has shown that Mahārājādhirāja Surendravarman, a scion of the house of Bhagadatta ruling at Kāmarūpa with Prāggyotiṣa as his seat of administration, was the earliest historical king of Bhauma - Naraka origin.⁶⁶ Chutia has reasonably refuted the theory put forward by D. C. Sircar and P. D. Choudhury that Surendravarman of Umāchal Rock Inscription and Mahendrarvarman of the Bhauma-Naraka dynasty are the same person as both 'Surendra' and 'Mahendra' are synonymous, meaning Indra. His chief argument is that both the Dubi and the Nidhanpur Copper Plates of Bhāskaravarman

which supply the full geneological list of the Varman kings of the Bhauma-Naraka origin have not mentioned the name 'Suren-dra' anywhere.

Suren-dra-va-r-man has been placed sometime in the first half of the 4th century A.D. by the latest.⁶⁷ Therefore, he was a predecessor of Puṣya-va-r-man.⁶⁸ When the former died without leaving any heir, his throne passed on to Puṣya-va-r-man, a prince of the collateral branch founded by Vajra-datta of the Bhauma-Naraka origin, who ruled at the neighbouring kingdom of ḍavāka.⁶⁹ Most probably Puṣya-va-r-man either usurped the throne of Prā-g-ji-yo-ti-ṣa after the death of Suren-dra-va-r-man, or the former was chosen to the throne by the people of Prā-g-ji-yo-ti-ṣa when Suren-dra-va-r-man died sonless exactly in the manner Brahma-pā-la, the founder of the Pā-la dynasty of M Kā-mar-ū-pa in later times chosen by the people when Tyā-ga-si-m-ha, the 21st ruler of the Śā-la-stam-bha dynasty without leaving an heir.⁷⁰

The Allahabad Inscription of Samudra-gup-ta refers to a king of Kā-mar-ū-pa as pratyanta-nṛ-pati.⁷¹ But the name of the king is not mentioned. P. N. Bhattacharya identifies this king with Puṣya-va-r-man who out of loyalty and devotion to his overlord and patron named his son and daughter-in-law after the name of Samudra-gup-ta and his queen Datta-devi.⁷² Probably, the chequered career and achievements of Samudra-gup-ta might have encouraged him to do so.

As Puṣyavarman was contemporary of Samudragupta, he must ruled before 375 A.D., i.e., when the latter's political career came to an end. P.C.Choudhury has placed Puṣyavarman in the period between A.D. 355 - 380.⁷³

Puṣyavarman assumed the title of Mahārājādhirāja.⁷⁴ But it is not known how far he was successful in the extension of his kingdom. Because the Allahabad Inscription mentions, along with Kāmarūpa, the kingdom of Ḍavāka⁷⁵ which was Puṣyavarman's ancestral kingdom.⁷⁶ It may be that he lost his hold somehow on Ḍavāka after his occupation of the throne of Kāmarūpa.

Thus we see that Kāmarūpa became a feudatory state of the Guptas at the time of Puṣyavarman. Such a state of affairs continued upto the time of accession of Mahendravarman, the 7th king of the dynasty in C. 450 A.D. We know nothing beyond the names of the rulers who ruled after Puṣyavarman and Mahendravarman. They are Samudravarmān, Balavarman, Kalyāṇavarman and Ganapativarman. Nothing important is recorded about them neither in the literatures nor in the epigraphs.

Ganapativarman abdicated the throne in favour of his son Mahendravarman due to old age or disease.⁷⁷ The reign⁷⁸ of Mahendravarman has been placed between A.D. 450 - 485. In the seal attached to the Dubi Grant he has been described as the performer of two horse sacrifices.⁷⁹ These sacrifices

suggest that when the Gupta empire declined, Kāmarūpa kingdom began to flourish.⁸⁰ By his brilliant career of conquest and glory, Mahendravarman paved the way for the greatness which Kāmarūpa attained under Bhāskaravarman.⁸¹ He was contemporary of four Gupta rulers - Kumāragupta I, Skandagupta, Purugupta and Budhagupta. Possibly after Kumāragupta I, when the Gupta empire was on the way of decline, Mahendravarman extended his sway to south-east Bengal where there is no evidence of Gupta rule until the time of Vainyagupta.⁸²

Mahendravarman was succeeded by his son Nārāyaṇavarman.⁸³ Nothing particular is known about his reign. He was succeeded by his son Bhūtiavarman.⁸⁴ The importance which Kāmarūpa gained at the time of Mahendravarman increased at the time of Bhūtiavarman. From his Bargaigā Rock Inscription it is known that he performed one Aśvamedha sacrifice.⁸⁵ Not only the old kingdom of Davāka, but also the Surma valley was now included within his kingdom.⁸⁶ His conquests in Puṇḍravardhana lying to the west of the river Teestā and to the east of Kośi or Kauśikā, the region where he donated land to 205 families, is proved by the Nidhanpur Copper Plate of Bhāskaravarman originally issued by the former.⁸⁷ His reign has been placed between C.A.D. 510 - 555.⁸⁸ If it was so then he most probably acknowledged the supremacy of Yaśodharman at least for a short period. Because Mandasor Inscription of A.D. 532 - 533 of Yaśodharman demands that "He, before whose feet,

chieftains having (their) courage removed by the strength of his arms, bowed down, from the neighbourhood of the (river) Lauhitya upto (the mountain) Mahendra ... (and from Himalaya ... upto the western ocean..."⁸⁹

Bhūti-varman was followed by his son Candramukha-varman who in turn was succeeded by his son Sthitavarman.⁹⁰ He performed two horse sacrifices. Probably these were due to the celebrations of his victories over his feudal lords in north and south-east Bengal. From the Dubi grant of Śhāskaravarman it is known that the coronation ceremony of Sthitavarman was performed by the Brāhmiṇs according to the Śāstras.⁹¹ It is the first recorded example of the Vedic coronation ceremony of a Kāmarūpa king.⁹²

Sthitavarman was succeeded by his son Susthitavarman or Mrigaśka.⁹³ He took the title of Mahārājādhirāja.⁹⁴ In the Harṣacarita it is said that he "took away the conchshells of the lords of the armies, not their jewels; grasped the stability of the earth, not its tribute; seized the majesty of monarchs, not their hardness."⁹⁵ The performance of horse-sacrifices by Mahendrarvarman, Bhūti-varman, Sthitavarman and assumption of the title Mahārājādhirāja by Susthitavarman signify the growing power of the kings of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa which alarmed Mahāsenagupta of Gauḍa who out of fear attacked Kāmarūpa. In the Apsnad Inscription it is recorded that Susthitavarman was defeated by Mahāsenagupta.⁹⁶

The Dubi Copper Plates of Bhāskaravarman indicates that Susthitavarman was succeeded by his elder son Supratisthitavarman. He died a premature death leaving the throne to his younger brother Bhāskaravarman.⁹⁷

Bhāskaravarman was not only the greatest monarch of this family but also a remarkable ruler of ancient India. His accession was probably a little earlier than that of Harṣavardhan (A.D. 606). This may be gathered from his position as an aged king, dressed as Brahmā, while Harṣa himself took the place of Śakra (Indra) in the religious ceremonies described by Yuan Chwang.⁹⁸ An early Assamese work called Kāmarūpar Purābṛita refers to a date to mark an era starting from 594 A.D.⁹⁹ No other event important enough to be commemorated as the reckoning of an era took place during this time except the accession of Bhāskara.¹⁰⁰ It is therefore clear that Bhāskaravarman after his accession in 594 A.D. started this local era. He ruled for at least few years after Harṣa's death (A.D. 647 - 48), as he was associated with the Chinese Mission of Wang heuen tse that became involved in the usurpation of Arjuna after Harṣa's death.¹⁰¹ In view of the above, the long reign of Bhāskaravarman may be placed between C.A.D. 594-650.

Bhāskaravarman ascended the throne of Kāmarūpa at a time when the reputation of his family was at a low ebb. He

not only restored but lifted it to a height that even Harṣa - the Sakolottara - Patiśvara welcomed his alliance.

The most remarkable event in the career of Bhāskara-varman was the diplomatic alliance with Harṣavardhan. It took place at a time when the latter succeeded his brother Rājya-vardhana, who was, supposed to have been treacherously murdered by Śaśānka, the lord of Gauḍa. To take revenge on Śaśānka, when Harṣa was on a day's journey towards Gauḍa, Hāmsavega, Bhāskara's ambassador meet Harṣa with valuable presents and proposed to form an 'imperishable alliance'.¹⁰² Harṣavardhan received Hāmsavega most cordially and sent him back with valuable presents. Thus, an alliance between Harṣa and Bhāskara was formed which was the outcome of a reciprocal 'longing'.¹⁰³ Though some scholars think that the nature of the alliance indicated the subordinate position of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa to Harṣa, the contemporary sources like the Harṣacarita and the account of Yuan Chwang and the special honour which Harṣa showed to Bhāskara in the religious assemblies of Prayāg and Kanauj prove that Harṣa treated the Kāmarūpa king as a respected ally and esteemed friend and not as vassal king.¹⁰⁴

The new alliance proved to be a source of concern to the Gauḍas. But unfortunately there is no record to show that either Bhāskaravarman or Harṣavardhan was successful in conquering Gauḍa during the life time of Śaśānka.¹⁰⁵ We shall discuss it in detail in next chapter.

Till now two copper plate grants of Bhāskaravarman have been discovered - the Dubi Copper Plates and the Nidhanpur Copper Plates. The latter mentions a number of feudatories of Bhāskaravarman. On the basis of the Nidhanpur grant K.L.Barua suggests that the area of south-east Bengal, including Sylhet, Tripurā and parts of Samatā were included in the kingdom of Bhāskaravarman.¹⁰⁶ According to P.C. Choudhury the Tipperah Grant of the feudatory Lokanātha throws a new light on Bhāskara's sway over Sylhet and Tripurā.¹⁰⁷

But it must be noted that there is no reference to the name of Bhāskaravarman in the Tipperah Grant. There is a good deal of controversy among the scholars with regard to the date and the identification of Jayatuṅgavarṣa of the Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha. R.G.Basak thinks him to be Ādityasena, the Later Gupta king of Magadha.¹⁰⁸ But, there is no evidence to suggest that Ādityasena extended his authority as far as the easternmost part of Bengal. The testimony of the Āryamañju-Śrī-mūla-kalpa, the Aḥsad and the Vaidyanātha Temple Inscription may suggest at best the inclusion of central and south-west Bengal bordering on the sea in Ādityasena's kingdom.¹⁰⁹

B.C.Sen identifies Jayatuṅgavarṣa of the Tipperah Grant as Dharmapāla of Gauḍa.¹¹⁰ P.L.Paul thinks Jayatuṅgavarṣa as a local chief like Lokanātha.¹¹¹ N.N.Vasu identifies him

with some successor of Bhāskaravarman.¹¹² K.L.Barua thinks him as a title of Śālastambha.¹¹³ P.C.Choudhury holds that Jayatuṅgavarṣa of the Tipperah Grant was none but Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa.¹¹⁴ R. C. Mazumdar thinks Jayatuṅgavarṣa as the Parameśvara of the Tipperah Grant and takes him to be a Khaḍga ruler.¹¹⁵ According to D.C.Sircar, the verses 7-9 of the Tipperah Grant indicate that Jayatuṅgavarṣa and Jīvadhāraṇa were two refractory feudatories of the Parameśvara who was probably the ruler of Gauḍa of whom Lokanātha was a faithful subordinate.¹¹⁶ Lokanātha defeated Jayatuṅgavarṣa on behalf of his master who next sent him against Jīvadhāraṇa of the Rāta family.¹¹⁷ Jīvadhāraṇa placated Lokanātha and also the Parameśvara possibly by an offer of his acceptance of a subsidiary alliance.¹¹⁸

Another important event in the period of Bhāskaravarman is the visit of Chinese Pilgrim Yuan Chwang to Kāmarūpa in C. 642 - 43 A.D., when Yuan Chwang was at Nālandā for the second time in 642 A.D., Bhāskaravarman sent a messenger to Nālandā to invite the pilgrim. But Śīlabhadra, the head of the monastery, did not comply with it or even with a second request.¹¹⁹ Bhāskaravarman grew angry and threatened Śīlabhadra "If necessary then I will equip my army and elephants and like the clouds sweep down on and trample to the very dust that monastery of Nālandā".¹²⁰ The treat had the desired result. Yuan Chwang visited Kāmarūpa and stayed there for a month.¹²¹

After returning from the Kongoda campaign, Harṣa heard of it and sent a messenger to Bhāskara to send Yuan Chwang immediately.¹²² Bhāskara replied that "He (Harṣa) can take my head, but he can not take the Master of the law yet."¹²³ Harṣa replied "send the head" With this Bhāskaravarman became submissive and proceeded to meet Harṣa with the pilgrim and with a vast army.¹²⁴ He met Harṣa at Kaṣāṅgala near Rājmaḥal, and the latter received him courteously.¹²⁵

After the death of Harṣa, his throne was usurped by his minister Arjuna.¹²⁶ At this time a Chinese mission led by Wang-Hiuen-tse arrived Kanauj. Arjuna not only ill-treated but put some of them to death. Wang-hiuen-tse fled to Nepal and sought help of Tibet and Kāmarūpa. It appears from the Chinese account that the kings of Nepal and Tibet assisted him with forces. With these aids Wang-hiuen-tse defeated Arjuna and took him as a prisoner to China. Bhāskara probably died soon after this incident.

It may be noted here that being a devotee of Śiva, Bhāskara was respectful to other religions - specially to Buddhism. It is proved by his letter to Śīlabhadra, the head of the Nālandā monastery to send the Chinese pilgrim to his court with a view to learning more about the teachings of Tathāgata. Under his rule Kāmarūpa became a seat of learning. Students from all parts of India came here and received

education in various śāstras.¹²⁷ He was a good administrator. With a vast and well-organized administrative machinery, Bhāskaravarman gave a good example of truth and justice, holding before his subjects the idea of a paternal king in the proper organization of the state.¹²⁸

None of the contemporary records refers to any wife of Bhāskaravarman. Further, he was often mentioned as Kumāra-rājā.¹²⁹ Bāṇa in his Harṣacarita mentions him as Kumāra alias Bhāskaravarman with Bhīṣma and thereby suggest that Bhāskaravarman was called kumāra as he was a bachelor like the epic hero.¹³⁰ It is possible that he died without any immediate successor.

The Śālastambha Dynasty

It is not definitely known who was the immediate successor of Bhāskaravarman. Gait is of opinion that after the death of Bhāskaravarman there appeared an anarchy which brought to an end to the line of kings which owed its origin to Naraka.¹³¹ The kingdom was taken possession of a new Bhagadatta line of kings headed by Śālastambha.¹³² But D. R. Bhandarkar suggests the name of Devavarman as the successor of Bhāskaravarman on the light of Chinese source.¹³³ Besides K.L.Barua suggests the name of Avantivarman between

Bhāskaravarman and Śālastambha.¹³⁴ He further adds that Avantivarman, the direct successor of Bhāskaravarman did not reign for more than five years at the longest and that Śālastambha occupied the throne of Kāmarūpa about 655 A.D. after dethroning and probably killing him."¹³⁵ Observing similarity in the names of Bhāskaravarman and Avantivarman and epithet 'Pārthiva' before the name of the latter (meaning both 'a king' and 'the son of Pārthiv'), M. M. Sharma rightly supports the view of K. L. Barua.¹³⁶

The Bargāon copper plate grant of Ratnapāla records the passing of the kingdom of the Naraka kings (i.e. of Puṣyavarman's dynasty) into the hands of the Mleccha king named Śālastambha owing to a turn of adverse fortune.¹³⁷ According to Hoernle the word 'Mleccha' means a foreigner.¹³⁸ K. L. Barua explains the word as the non-Hindu Mongoloid people.¹³⁹ According to D. C. Sircar 'Mleccha' may be the Sanskritised form of the tribal name Mech.¹⁴⁰ Here, the suggestion of K. N. Dutta seems to be right in concluding that the Varman dynasty, which was probably the first Indo-Aryan dynasty in Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, was overthrown by Śālastambha, of Mongoloid origin, who then made himself the king of the land.¹⁴¹ Śālastambha transferred his capital from Prāggyotiṣapura to Hārupeśvara, which his successors continued to rule.

The Hāyunthal Copper Plates of Harjjaravarman describes Vijaya,¹⁴² Palaka,¹⁴³ Kumāra,¹⁴⁴ Vajradatta,¹⁴⁵ Harṣa,¹⁴⁶ Balavarman,¹⁴⁷ Cakra,¹⁴⁸ Arathi,¹⁴⁹ and Harjjara,¹⁵⁰ as coming after Śālastambha one after the other. But the Tezpur Copper Plates of Vanamāla places the name of Śālabha (not Prālabha¹⁵¹) after Harṣa.¹⁵² K.L. Barua held that after Balavarman(II) and before Śālabha, there were probably two kings whose names have yet to be recovered.¹⁵³ M. M. Sharma suggests that these two unnamed kings were Śrī Jīvarā(j) of the Saṅkara - Nārāyaṇa Stone Image Inscription and Diglekhavarmā of Hari-Hara Stone image Inscription.¹⁵⁴ Mahārājādhirāja Śrī-Jīvarāja of the recently discovered fragmentary copper plate inscription from Nagāon was most probably Śrī Jīvarā(j) of the Saṅkara - Nārāyaṇa Stone Image Inscription. They have been placed between A.D. 765 - 790.¹⁵⁵ From the Uttarbarbil Copper Plates of Balavarman III we get the name of Vanamāladeva,¹⁵⁶ Jayamāla or Virabāhu¹⁵⁷ and Balavarman (III)¹⁵⁸ who ruled after Harjjara. The last king of the dynasty established by Śālastambha was Tyāgasīmha.¹⁵⁹ He was the 21st king of the dynasty.¹⁶⁰

The rule of Vijaya, Palaka, Kumāra and Vajradeva was not of any consequence.¹⁶¹ In view of this P.C.Choudhury places them during the short period of A.D. 675 - 725. Harṣadeva became king after Vajradeva. The Paśupati epigraph of the Nepal king Jayadeva II mentions one Śrī Harṣadeva,

lord of Udra, Kalinga, Kosala and other lands who gave his daughter Rājyamati (Hragadattarāja - Kulajī) married with Jayadeva II.¹⁶² But R.C.Mazumdar rightly expresses his doubt to the identification of Harṣadeva of Paśupati epigraph with Harṣadeva of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa owing to the fact that many dynasties of India claimed their descent from Hragadatta e.g., the Kara dynasty of Orissa.¹⁶³

According to the Hāyuntial Copper Plate Inscription, Śrī Harṣa was succeeded by his son Balavarman (II).¹⁶⁴ But we do not find the name of the latter in the Dīghalīgāḥ Copper Plate of Vanamālarman. Most probably Balavarman (II) had a very short and insignificant rule for which he has been ignored in the epigraphs of Vanamāla under reference.¹⁶⁵ It may not be unlikely that it was Balavarman (II) and not Śrī Harṣa, as presumed by K.K.Barua who has been defeated by Yaśovarman of Kanauj in around A.D. 750 and most probably soon after Śrī Harṣa's death.¹⁶⁶ It is thus apparent that Śālabha (alias Cakra) was the immediate successor of Balavarman (II)¹⁶⁷

The Dīghalīgāḥ, Tezpur and Parbatīyā Copper Plates of Vanamāla speak highly of Śālabha. His reign has been placed between A.D. 790 - 810.¹⁶⁸ It is true that Śālabha tried to revive the lost prestige of the kingdom and he succeeded in establishing a comparatively peaceful reign after a few decades of disorder that overwhelmed Kāmarūpa under the weak rule of his predecessor.¹⁶⁹

Śālabha was succeeded by his brother Arathi who in turn was followed by his son Harjjaravarman.¹⁷⁰ We get four epigraphs of the time of Harjjaravarman viz. the Hāyuntal Copper Plate Inscription, the Kuruvābāhi Copper Plate Inscription, the Tezpur Rock Inscription of G.E. 510 = A.D. 829 - 30 and an image inscription. From the Tezpur Rock Inscription it is known that he took the imperial titles Mahārājādhirāja Paramēśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka,¹⁷¹ which signifies his great and extensive power. From the Bhāgalpur plate of Nārāyaṇapāla we know that at the command of Devapāla, his younger brother Jayapāla launched upon a career of conquest.¹⁷² Hearing of his very name from a distance the ruler of Utkala left his capital and the king of Prāggyotiṣa accepted the suzerainty of Devapāla and was left 'unmolested'.¹⁷³ From this it appears that the king of Kāmarūpa had either made a treaty with the Pālas of Magadha or was their ally.¹⁷⁴ P.C.Choudhury identifies this king of Prāggyotiṣa of the Bhāgalpur Copper Plate of Nārāyaṇapāla with Harjjaravarman.¹⁷⁵

Harjjara was followed by his son Vanamāla alias Vīravāhu. His rule has been placed between A.D. 835 - 865.¹⁷⁶ With his accession Kāmarūpa entered into a new phase of development. An image inscription and three copper plate grants viz., the Dīghalīgāḥ, the Tezpur and the Parbatīyā Copper Plate Inscriptions have been discovered

of his time till now. The Tezpur Grant was issued in the 19th year of his reign¹⁷⁷ while the two other grants are not dated. He, like his father, assumed the high sounding titles like Mahārājādhirāja Paramēśvara Paramabhāṭṭāraka which is known to us from his records.¹⁷⁸ By his Tezpur Grant he donated a village on the bank of Trisrotā (modern Teestā) which signifies the extension of Māmarūpa kingdom in the North Bengal under him.

Vanamāla abdicated in favour of his son Jayamāla. Nothing is known to him. He was followed by his son Balavarman III. Three Copper Plate Inscriptions are derived of his time viz. the Uttarbarbil, Nowgong and Ulubārī - issued in the 5th,¹⁷⁹ 8th¹⁸⁰ and 13th¹⁸¹ regnal years of Balavarman III respectively. His reign has been fixed between A.D. 835 - 910.¹⁸² Like his predecessors Balavarman III also took the imperial titles Mahārājādhirāja Paramēśvara Paramabhāṭṭāraka.¹⁸³ By his Nowgong Grant Balavarman III granted land in the west of Teestā or Karatoyā in North Bengal which indicates his hold over the area.

We know nothing of the immediate successor of Balavarman III. The last king of the dynasty was Tyāgasimha who died without leaving an heir.¹⁸⁴ Thus we see that with Tyāgasimha the dynasty established by Śālastambha came to an end.

The Pāla Line

Brahmapāla was the founder of the Pāla line. He was elected as the king of Kāmarūpa by his subjects is evident by the Bargāon Grant of Ratnapāla.¹⁸⁵ This is an incident which finds a parallel in the history of Bengal.¹⁸⁶ The said grant proves his descent from Naraka.

Bhramapāla abdicated in favour of his son Ratnapāla,¹⁸⁷ whose accession witnessed another period of prosperity of Kāmarūpa. There are three grants of his time viz. Coratbārī, Bargāon and Suālkuchi - issued in the 12th¹⁸⁸ 25th¹⁸⁹ and 26th¹⁹⁰ year of his reign respectively. He ruled for about 30 years from A.D. 1010 to 1040.¹⁹¹ The epigraphs of his time give the hints that he saved his kingdom from the Śakas, the kings of the Gurjara, Gauḍa, Kerala and the chief of the Vāhikas, the Tāis and the ruler of the Deccan who hold a covetous eye on the country.¹⁹² But his defeat in the hands of Śricandra of East Bengal is proved by the Dacca Plates of Kalyānacandra which states that Śricandra easily defeated Ratnapāla and returned his queen to him in order to keep his promise.¹⁹³ Ratnapāla took the titles of Parameśvara Paramahattāraka Mahārājādhirāja while his predecessor simply depicted as Mahārājādhirāja.¹⁹⁴

Purandarapāla was the son of Ratnapāla who was a poet and died before his father.¹⁹⁵ So after Ratnapāla, Indrapāla, son of Purandarapāla ascended the throne.¹⁹⁶ He reigned probably between A.D. 1040 - 1065.¹⁹⁷ Two grants Gauhati and Guwākuchi have been discovered of his time. The former grant was issued in the 8th year of his reign.¹⁹⁸ While the latter one was issued in his 21st regnal year.¹⁹⁹ In the Gauhati Grant, Indrapāla has been described as a 'veritable lord of the eastern region.'²⁰⁰ His chief queen Rājyadevī was a Rāṣṭrakūṭa princess.²⁰¹ He defeated Kalyānacandra, son of Śrīcandra of East Bengal is proved by the Gachhal Grant of his son Gopāla. As the grant states "He (i.e. Indrapāla) once had an occasion to meet the king of Vaṅga, named Kalyānacandra who was the son of Śrīcandra and possessed undefeatable arms which earlier had the distinction of demolishing the strong king of Gauḍa. Indrapāla then took his place at the head of a Cluster of boats, covered by fluttering wheels and chowries and in no time defeated him i.e., (Kalyānacandra) and annihilated him along with his fame."²⁰²

Indrapāla was succeeded by his son Gopāla. His Gachhal Copper Plate speak highly of his various qualities.²⁰³ The Grant is not dated. He like his father took the titles of Parameśvara Paramabhāṭṭāraka Rājādhirāja.²⁰⁴ He reigned between A.D. 1065 - 1080.²⁰⁵

Gopāla was followed by his son Harṣapāla. Probably at his time occurred the invasion of the Cālukya Vikramāditya VI who is said to have overrun Magadha, Aṅga, Gauḍa and Kāmarūpa.²⁰⁶ The invasion probably had no any permanent result.²⁰⁷

Dharmapāla was the last important king of the Pāla dynasty. He was the great grandson of Indrapāla. Three Copper Plate inscriptions - Khanāmukh, ŚubhanKarapāṭaka and Puṣpabhadra have been discovered of his time. The first & two were issued in the 1st²⁰⁸ and 3rd²⁰⁹ year of his reign respectively while the last one is not dated. Dharmapāla has been placed between A.D. 1095 -1120.²¹⁰ Towards the close of his reign he shifted his capital from Prāgjyotiṣapura to Kāmarūpanagara.²¹¹ Kāmarūpanagara has generally been identified with Kāmatānagara, capital of Kāmatā-Koch kingdom in the western part of Brahmputra valley.²¹²

In the Śilimpur Stone Slab Inscription we get the name of one Jayapāla who is considered to be the son and successor of Dharmapāla.²¹³ The Rāmacerita of Sandhyākara Nandi refers to the fact that Mayana, the general of Rāmapāla of Gauḍa conquered Kāmarūpa.²¹⁴ This invasion of Mayana took place at the time of Jayapāla²¹⁵ - resulting in the occupation of only the south-western portion of Kāmarūpa, over which Rāmapāla placed his vassal Tiṅgyadeva.²¹⁶ The Kamauli Grant

of Vaidyadeva records that Kumārapāla, king of Gauḍa, having heard of the hostility of Tiṅgyadeva, appointed his minister Vaidyadeva as a ruler in place of the former.²¹⁷ After the death of his master, Vaidyadeva declared his independence and assumed the imperial titles of Mahārājādhirāja Paramāvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka.²¹⁸ He also overthrew Jayapāla and conquered the rest of Kāmarūpa. The defeat of Jayapāla in the hands of Vaidyadeva must occurred before the date of the Kamauli Grant. Arthur Venis has fixed the date of the grant as 1142 A.D.²¹⁹ With the defeat of Jayapāla, rule of the Brahmapāla dynasty ended and Vaidyadeva established a Brāhmaṇa dynasty in Kāmarūpa.²²⁰

We know nothing about the successors of Vaidyadeva. The Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva refers to a set of rulers—Bhāskara,²²¹ Rājārideva alias Trailokyasiṃha,²²² Udayakarna alias Nihśaṅkasimha,²²³ who were born in Candravamsa.²²⁴ The Grant was issued in the Śaka year 1107 = 1185 A.D.²²⁵ It does not mention that Vallabha was a king of Kāmarūpa. The seat of his government is also not mentioned. But the two references to the Boar - incarnation of Viṣṇu²²⁶ signify his touch with the Kāmarūpa kings. Rājārideva, predecessor of Vallabhadeva is said to have defeated the king of Vaṅga. Bhattasali identifies the king of Vaṅga with Vijayasena.²²⁷ But the Deopāra inscription credits Vijayasena as the vanquisher of the king of Kāmarūpa (apākṛta Kāmarūpa-bhūpaṃ)²²⁸

Ballabhadra was also a powerful ruler. The campaign led by Bakhtiyar in A.D. 1202 to Tibet was completely destroyed in Assam by Vallabhadra or his successor. P.C.Choudhury, however, rejects the view of Bhattasali. He offers a new suggestion that Viśvasundaradeva alias Pṛthu and Sandhya who were rulers of different dynasty, held responsible in repulsing successive Muslim invasions.²²⁹ Whatever be the matter, these invasions weakened the stability in the kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. It splited up into several independent principalities.²³⁰ At this time, the Ahoms entered into the Brahmputra valley and pushed back the successors of the old dynasty to the west who most probably shifted their capital to Kāntā to save themselves from the harassment of the Ahoms.²³¹ The Ahoms captured the kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa and started a new era in the history of the land.

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75. P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 135.

76. Wālandā Clay Seal, line 1.

77. R. C. Mazumdar, The Classical Age, Bombay, 1970, p. 90.

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He is of opinion that the two brothers Bhagadatta and Vajradatta ruled contemporaneously independent of each other in the two neighbouring kingdoms of Kāmarūpa and Davāka, respectively, and this state of affairs seems to have been continued perhaps in the days of their respective successors also. This implies that the two branches originating, respectively, from Bhagadatta and Vajradatta, of the same Bhauma-Naraka house ruled parallelly in the two neighbouring kingdoms of Kāmarūpa and Davāka.

79. D. C. Sircar, CHA, p. 99.

80. P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 485.

81. Seal attached to the Dubi C. P. of Bhāskaravarman, Line- 6.

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- 84 N. D. Choudhury, HACA, p. 72.
- 85 Bargangā Rock Inscription, Line 2.
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the Kānai Varasi Rock Inscription and confirmed by the Tabaqnāt-i-Nāsiri is S.E. 1127 = A.D. 1205-06. In that case the local era might have been started in 1206-612 = A.D.

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- 135 Loc. cit.
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- 144 Loc. cit.
- 145 Loc. cit.
- 146 Ibid. V.6.
- 147 Ibid. V.7.
- 148 Ibid. V.8.
- 149 Loc. cit.
- 150 Ibid. V.11, IAA. p. 91.
- 151 D. Chutia says that (JARS, Benudhar Sharma Commemoration Vol., Gauhati, 1987, p. 20) it was so long believed on the basis of the defective transcript of the Tezpur plates that the name of Harjjaravarman's father was Prālabha. But the clear reading of both the Parbatīyā and Dighaligāô Copper Plate Grants of Vanamāla shows that Prālabha is a wrong reading for Śālabha, and also that the name of Harjjara's father was not Śālabha (sic Prālabha) but Arathī, the younger brother of Śālabha.

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- 185 Bargāon Grant of Ratnapāla, V.10, IAA, p. 166 .
- 186 Loc. cit.
- 187 B. K. Barua, op. cit. p. 37 (Barua refers to the election
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CHAPTER - III

Dates, Find Spots, Locations and Issuing Centres of the Grants

Dates of the Grants

In the copper plate grants of the kings of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa the date appears either in the last portion or in the body of the inscription when it describes the occasion of the grant.

It is found either by writing in words or by using numbers. Generally, it mentions the regnal year of the king. In that case, we have to decide the date of the inscription by fixing the ruling period of the king from literary or other sources. This method is also applicable when the inscription is found undated. But when the undated inscription can not be dated by this method or from its internal evidence, an approximate date can be fixed on the basis of its palaeography. In this connection Ahmad Hasan Dani has suggested that the study of palaeography should rest on a study of techniques, materials and traditions of writing and not upon a narrow morphological analysis.¹

Among the undated grants of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, first mention may be made of the Nagājari-Khanikargāon Fragmentary Stone Inscription. It is much damaged. At present it contains

the five lines which supply nothing as to fix the date of the inscription. On palaeographic ground P.C.Choudhury assigns it to the end of the 6th or the beginning of the 7th century A.D.² According to D.C.Sircar the record is written in characters of about the 5th century A.D.³ But N.N.Sharma places it not later than the early part of the 5th century A.D.⁴ The Varman kings started their rule in the middle of the 4th century A.D. and ruled upto the middle of the 7th century A.D. As the date of the Nagājarī-Khanikargāon inscription fall within that period and as the style, language and script of the inscription is very close to the Umāchal and Sargāṅgā rock Inscriptions, we may consider it as an inscription of the Varman dynasty.

Another two undated inscriptions of the Varman dynasty have been discovered till now. They are the Dūbi Copper plate and the Nidhanpur Copper Plate Inscriptions of Bhāskaravarman. The former grant was issued much earlier than the latter which is clear from its writing style. The script of the Dūbi Plate is the eastern variety of the North Indian alphabet prevalent in the 6th and the 7th centuries with certain remarkable differences from the script of the Nidhanpur Copper Plate Grant of Bhāskaravarman. The former grant was issued and inscribed in Prāggyotiṣapura while the latter one was inscribed and issued from the royal residence situated at

Karṇasuvarṇa. When did Karṇasuvarṇa was included within the scope of Bhāskaravarman ? The fixation of the time will help us to assign a tentative date to the said grant.

P.N.Bhattacharya's opinion is that immediately after the joint victory of Harṣa and Bhāskara over Śaśānka in about 606 A.D., Bhāskara spent sometime in Karṇasuvarṇa celebrating the joint victory. At this time the donees met the king in his temporary camp and managed to have the edict reissued to them in place of one which was granted earlier by Bhāskara's great grand father Bhūti-varman.⁵

But the theory of joint victory put forward by P.N. Bhattacharya has been refuted by M.M.Sharma on the ground that the Harṣacarita does not give any indication that Harṣa took part in the fight.⁶

K.L.Barua is of opinion that Karṇasuvarṇa passed to Bhāskara before the coronation of Harṣa in 612 A.D.⁷

But Harṣavardhana took the role of conqueror after 612 A.D. is clear from the account of Yuan Chwang.⁸ The pilgrim said that Harṣa passed first six years of his reign through conquest and enjoyed a peaceful reign of 30 years after that. Here we get 36 years reign period of Harṣavardhana. Yuan Chwang completed his works in 648 A.D., in the year of the death of Harṣavardhana which is evident from the Chinese source. Then Harṣa started his political career 36 years

before 648 A.D. i.e., in 612 A.D. The pilgrim was totally in dark of the activities of Harṣa from 606 - 612 A.D. after becoming the ruler of both Kānyakubja and Thāneśvara Harṣa probably engaged in incessant wars with the rulers of Madyadeśa and annexed their territories.⁹ His war against Śaśānka was possibly a drawn affair. It would appear thus, that Bhāskaravarman's annexation of Karṇasuvarṇa was possible only after the demise of Śaśānka, the date of which ranges from 619 to 637 A.D.

R. D. Banerjee on the light on Ganjam Plates of 619 A.D. holds that Bhāskara conquered Gauḍa before 619 A.D. Because from the plates it appears that Śaśānka had already 'lost his possessions in Bengal and was master of Orissa only'.¹⁰

But it seems improbable that in 619 A.D., Śaśānka maintained his hold only over Orissa losing his original kingdom including capital. Besides, Magadha was under the kingdom of Śaśānka till his death is proved by the account of Yuan Chwang. From the account it is known that shortly before 637 A.D. Śaśānka eradicated the Bodhi tree at Gayā and ordered the removal of an image of Buddha from a temple near the tree.¹¹ In addition, the discovery of a number of gold and silver coins of Śaśānka from the deltaic regions of Bengal and Samatāṭa along with some so called imitation

gupta gold coins gives us impression that Śaśāṅka was not merely ruler of western part but the whole of the undivided Bengal.^{11a}

R. C. Mazumdar says that in 641 A.D. Harṣavardhana conquered Magadha and in the next year he occupied Orissa and Kongoda. At this time, Bhāskaravarman conquered Gauḍa and established his victorious camp in Karṇasuvarṇa.¹²

But the opinion of R. C. Mazumdar that Bhāskaravarman conquered Gauḍa in 642 A.D. can not be accepted. Because on receiving a letter from Harṣavardhan, Bhāskaravarman proceeded with a large troops of elephants and ships up the Ganges and reached the country of Kie-shu-ho-ki-lo (Kajāṅgala, near modern Rājmahal)¹³ Hence, it becomes clear that Gauḍa had already come under the jurisdiction of Bhāskara.¹⁴ Besides, in 642 A.D. Bhāskaravarman did not reside in Karṇasuvarṇa but in Prāggyotiṣapura. He used to reside in Karṇasuvarṇa for a few years after its occupation for giving the people the benefit of a well organized administration. During this very period the Nidhanpur grant must have been reissued to the decendants of the original donees as a part of his revenue settlement.¹⁵

On the basis of above observation it may reasonably be said that Bhāskaravarman conquered Gauḍa shortly after the death of Śaśāṅka, which probably took place in 637 A.D.

The Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha bears a date.¹⁶

Historians hold different opinions regarding its reading. Dr. Basak read it as 44 at first.¹⁷ Bhandarkar has suggested that the date is 144.¹⁸ Later on, R. G. Basak ^{reassigned} the date to 344 and refers it to the Gupta era.¹⁹ This opinion of R. G. Basak has been supported by P. L. Paul who has placed the grant in 663 - 64 A.D.²⁰

P. C. Choudhury says that the grant has been dated according to the Kāmarūpa era started by Bhāskaravarman in 639 A.D. and therefore the date of the grant is 44 + 620 = 664 A.D.²¹ But D. C. Sircar on the ground of palaeography supports the later opinion of R. G. Basak and assigns the Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha to 344 Gupta Era i.e., 664 A.D.^{21a} We have already seen as suggested by Sircar on the basis of the close study of the Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha that both Jayatungavarṣa and Jīvarājara of the Rātas were like him feudatories of the Paramaśvara who was a Gauḍa king.^{21b}

Due to the corroded form of the Copper Plate Inscription of Jīvarāja, the date of the grant is not known. On palaeographic ground Dr. Chutia thinks it of the 8th - 9th centuries A.D.²² But P. C. Choudhury has fixed the date of two unknown successors of Balavarman (II) in between A.D. 765 - 90. Jīvarāja may be one of them. If we

allow 15 years to the first successor (i.e. Diglekha-varman) then Jivarāja most probably ruled between A.D. 780 - 90. His grant was issued at that time.²³

The Kuruvābāhi Grant of Harjjaravarman, the ruler of the Śālastambha dynasty is undated. But on the basis of the Tezpur Rock Inscription of G.E. 510 -830 A.D. Dr. Chutia has fixed the date of the former grant round the date of the latter. The Hāyunthal Copper Plate of the same king is also not dated. Palaeographically, the grant is to be placed in or about 825 A.D.²⁴ Actually, the grant was issued by Harjjara's son Vanamāla, the Yuvarāja, on behalf of the king, who might have been old at that time and in a retiring stage.²⁵ Harjjara's ruling period has been fixed between A.D. 815 -835.²⁶ Therefore, we may say that the Hāyunthal Grant was issued towards the close of the reign of Harjjara i.e. in 835 A.D.

Both the Dīghalīgāḥ and Parbatīyā Copper Plates of Vanamāla, son of Harjjara, are not dated. His one inscription i.e., the Tezpur Copper Plate was issued in his 19th regnal year. Then the date of the inscription is $835 + 19 = 854$ A.D. The Dīghalīgāḥ record is earlier in date than both the Tezpur and Parbatīyā Grants of Vanamāla. Therefore, we may place the Dīghalīgāḥ Grant in between

835 and 854 A.D. we have no other way but to place the Parbatīyā Grant of Vanamāla within his ruling period. His period has been placed between A.D. 835 - 865.²⁷

The two undated inscription of the Pāla dynasty are the Wachtal Copper Plate of Gopāla and the Puṣpabhadra Copper Plate of Dharmapāla. We have to place these grants within the ruling periods of the respective kings. P. C. Moudhury has placed Gopāla between A.D. 1065 - 1080²⁸ and Dharmapāla between A.D. 1095 - 1120²⁹

The Kamauli Copper Plate of Vaidyadeva is dated in an way that its dating is too difficult without a knowledge on astronomy. It is recorded in the inscription³⁰ that the land has been donated on an ekādasī (i.e., Harivāsara) coinciding with a Viṣuva - Saṁkrānti. On the basis of this astronomical information and a consideration of the chronology of the Pāla and Sena dynasties of Bengal, Arthur Venis has fixed the date of the inscription as 1142 A.D.³¹

The Assam Copper Plates of Vallabhadeva was issued in the Śaka year 1107 = 1185 A.D.³² who most probably ruled between A.D. 780 - 90.

Copper Plate Grants issued by the rulers of Prāgijyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa and their dates

Name of the Grant	Name of the king who issued the grant	Ruling period of the king	Regnal year of issuing the grant	Approximate date
The Varman Dynasty				
Nagājari-Khanikargāon Fragmentary Stone Inscription	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	early part of the 5th Century A.D.
Dubi	Bhāskaravarman	A.D. 594-650	"	First quarter of the 7th Century A.D.
Nidhanpur	"	"	"	C. 638 A.D.
Tipperah	Lokanātha	Not known	344th	664 A.D.
The Śālastambha Dynasty				
Nagāon	Jīvarāja	A.D. 780-790	Not mentioned	780-790 A.D.
Hāyunthal	Harjjaravarman	A.D. 815-835	"	835 A.D.
Kuruvābāhi	"	"	"	815-835 A.D.
Dīghaliḡāō	Vanamāla	A.D. 835-865	"	835-854 A.D.
Tezpur	"	"	19th	854 A.D.
Parbatīyā	"	"	Not mentioned	Between 835-865 A.D.
Uttarbarbil	Balavarman III	A.D. 885-910	5th	889 A.D.
Nowgong	"	"	8th	892 A.D.
Ulubāri	"	"	13th	897 A.D.

Table - 1 (Contd.).

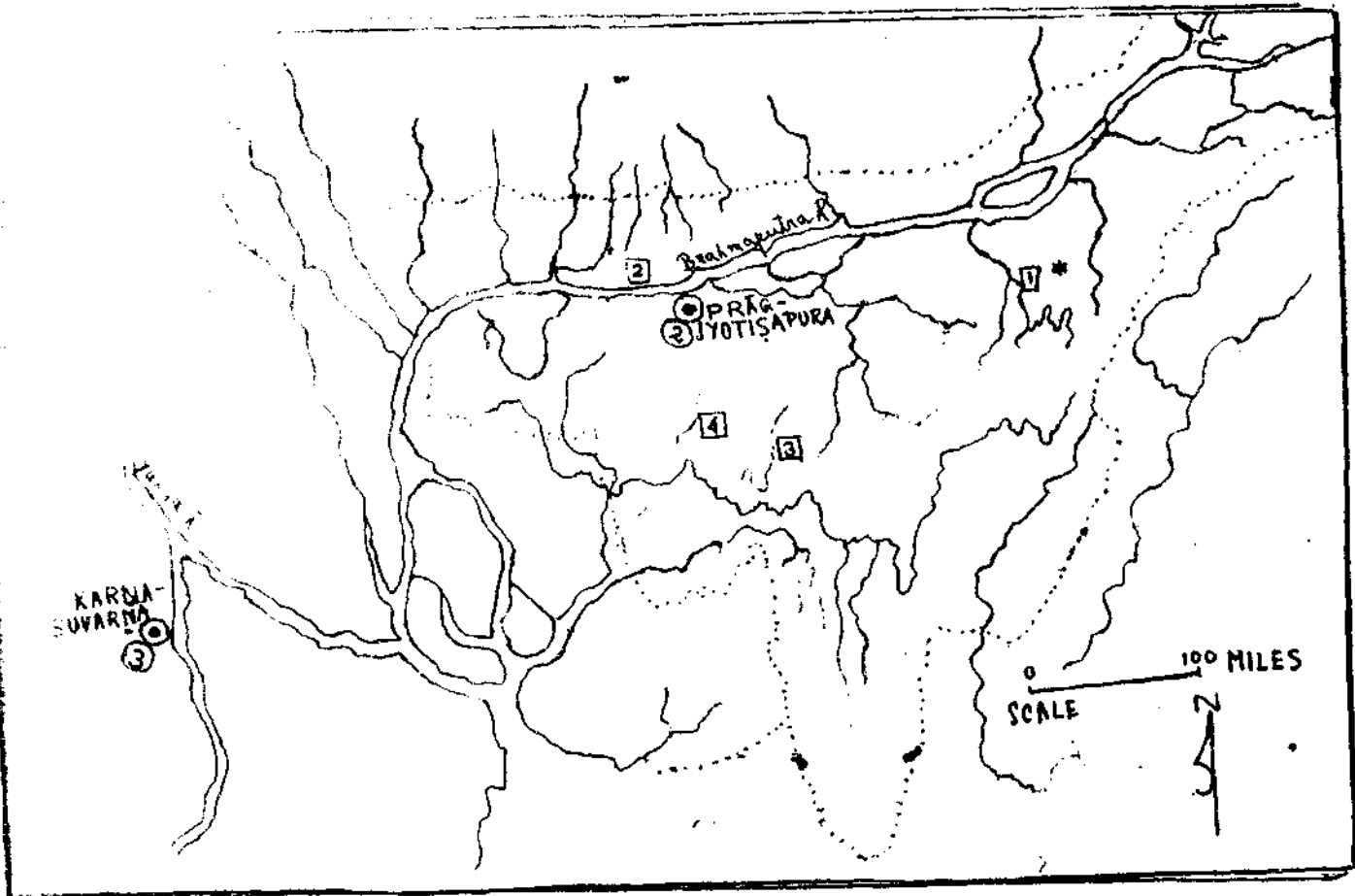
Name of the Grant	Name of the king who issued the Grant	Ruling period of the king	Regnal year of issuing the Grant	Approximate date
The Pāla Dynasty				
Corāṭbarī	Ratnapāla	A.D. 1010-1040	12th	1021 A.D.
Bargāon	"	"	25th	1034 A.D.
Suwālkuchi	"	"	26th	1035 A.D.
Gauhati	Indrapāla	A.D. 1040-1065	8th	1047 A.D.
Guākuchi	"	"	21st	1060 A.D.
Gachtal	Gopāla	A.D. 1065-1080	Not mentioned	Between 1065-1080 A.D.
Khanāmukh	Dharmapāla	A.D. 1095-1120	1st	1095 A.D.
Subhaṅkarapāṭaka	"	"	3rd	1097 A.D.
Puṣpabhadra	"	"	Not mentioned	Between 1095-1120 A.D.
After the Pāla Dynasty				
Kamanli	Vaidyadeva	A.D. 1138-1145	Not clear	1142 A.D.
Assam	Vallabhaddeva	A.D. 1175-1195	Śaka Era 1107	1185 A.D.

Geographical Provenance of the Inscriptions

The task of locating the place names, mentioned in the inscriptions is a difficult one. However, three sources of information can be applied for locating the geographic area associated with the inscriptions of the area under study. The reported find spot of the grant is the most helpful source. The find spots of the inscriptions are mentioned in many reports. They are identified in terms of well-known geographic division. The second source is the name as seen on the inscription of the division, district and sub-district within which the donated land lies. Whenever the area included in these administrative divisions is known, it is very helpful in locating the land. Finally, when the donation is of village or villages and when the inscription refers to a village describing the boundary of the granted land, then it is possible to locate these ancient villages through a careful searching on the political map of the land.

All these sources have been utilised in locating the geographical area associated with the inscriptions of the area under study. Still, there are some inscriptions whose geographical location could not be made.

In connection with locating the geographical area



PROVENANCE OF THE GRANTS ISSUED BY THE VARMAN KINGS

1. Nagājarī - Khanikargāon Fragmentary Stone inscription.
2. Dubī Copper Plate Inscription of Bhāskaravarman.
3. Nidhanpur Copper Plate Inscription of Bhāskaravarman.
4. Tipperah Copper Plate Inscription of Lokanātha.

* The square around the number indicates the find spot while the circle around the number indicates the location of the issuing centre of the inscription.

associated with the inscriptions, it is seen that the kings of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa donated lands to the Brāhmaṇas in the outskirts of the kingdom or in the territories generally inhabited by the tribal people. Most probably, the motive behind this settlement of the Brāhmaṇas among the tribal peoples was to enable the latter to get an opportunity of coming closer of executing themselves with Sanskrit culture, more important with the better technique of productions as better known as wed-cultivation instead of smirting cultivation which was the prevailing mode of agriculture in those areas. These Brāhmaṇa settlers had the knowledge of calender, seeds, crops and cattle breeding.³³ Thus, the Brāhmaṇas while on the one hand helped to increase the productivity of the soil, at the same time played no mean part in popularising the king of the country and thereby consolidating his kingdom.

Provenance of the Grants Issued by the Varman Kings

Among the Varman Inscriptions, first mention may be made of the Nagājari - Khanikargāon Fragmentary Stone Inscription. It has been reportedly collected from Nagājari area, near the village Khanikargāon of the Sarupathar area of the Golaghat Sub-Division of the Sibsagar District.³⁴ But due to the corroded form of the inscription we do not get the name of the village - where the grant

was made. But as it is a stone inscription, its shifting from a place to another distant place is not easy. Therefore, we may think that the land granted by this inscription was very near the find spot.

The land granted in the Dubi Copper Plate of Bhāskaravarman is not known as the last plate is not available. The inscriptions have been discovered at the village Dubi in the Kām̄rūp district, about three miles from the Pathsala Railway Station on the N. F. Railway.³⁵

The Nidhanpur Copper Plate of Bhāskaravarman have been recovered from almost on the eastern fringe of the Sylhet district of Bangladesh in the village of Nidhanpur (near Supatala village) of Pañcakhaṇḍa pargana, within Beanibazar thana.³⁶ The land donated by this grant was in the Mayūrasālmāla - agrahāra, belonging to the Candrapurī Viśaya, bounded by the river Śuṣka - Kauśikā in the eastern, south-eastern sides and a stream Gaṅgiṇikā to the west of it.³⁷ P. N. Bhattacharya conjectures that the donated land was situated by the side of the river Karatoṅā.³⁸ K. L. Barua holds the opinion that the donated land was situated within the present district of Purnea in Bihar.³⁹ M. M. Sharma supports the view of Barua.⁴⁰ But J. C. Ghosh⁴¹ and D. C. Sircar⁴² identifying Kauśika with Kuśiṅārā in the Sylhet region, suggested that the donated land of the Nidhanpur Grant of Bhāskaravarman was situated in the Sylhet district of Bangladesh.

The Tipperah Plate of Lokanātha reportedly found in the old Tippera district in the Presidency of Bengal (approximately the modern district of Comilla).⁴³ By this grant, Lokanātha donated a plot of land in the forest region (Āṣavi-bhūkhaṇḍa)⁴⁴ in the viṣaya of Suvvūṅga.⁴⁵ This viṣaya has been placed in the Cachar area, east of Sylhet by N.K.Ehattasali.⁴⁶ The donated land has not been identified.

Issuing centres of the Varman Grants

Due to the corroded form of the Nagājarī-Khanikargāon inscription, we know nothing about the issuing centre of the grant. The Dubi Copper Plate of Bhāskaravarman was issued from his capital Prāggyotiṣapura. From the Uttarbarbil⁴⁷ and the Nowgong Copper Plate⁴⁸ Grants of Balavarman, it is known that Prāggyotiṣa was situated in the kingdom of Kāmarūpa which was the capital city of Naraka. The Bargāon⁴⁹ and the Suwālkuchi⁵⁰ grants of Ratnapāla, the Gauhati⁵¹ and Guvākuchi⁵² Grants of Indrapāla, the Gachhal Grant⁵³ of Gopāla, the Khanāmukh⁵⁴ and Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka⁵⁵ Grants of Dharmapāla and the Kālikāpurāna⁵⁶ also described Prāggyotiṣa as the capital city of Naraka. The capital of Naraka seems to have been situated at the village Narakāsurgāon which is very near to the modern city of Gauhati. Because Kālikāpurāna describes Prāggyotiṣa as a Giridurga

and Jaladurga (surrounded by mountains and water). We find that Narakāsurgāon is also surrounded on three sides by the Narakāsur Hill. From the Dubi Grant of Bhāskaravarman⁵⁷ we come to know that Sthitavarman built a city on the bank of the river Brahmaputra. P.C.Choudhury suggests that the said city might have been an extension of Prāgjyotiṣa.⁵⁸ This lead us to conclude that Naraka's Prāgjyotiṣa which was originally located at and around the Narakasur hill now extended upto the bank of the river Brahmaputra, thus making Prāgjyotiṣa identical with the modern city of Gauhati, which is also surrounded by a semicircle of hills.⁵⁹

The Nidhanpur Grant of Bhāskaravarman was issued from Karṇasuvarna which was a second capital city of the king. The ruins of the city have recently been discovered at Rajbaridanga, six miles south-west of Berhampur, headquarter of the murshidabad district.⁶⁰ Now Karṇasuvarna is a station of the Eastern Railway at a distance of 192 Km. from Howrah.

The issuing centre of the Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha is not known.

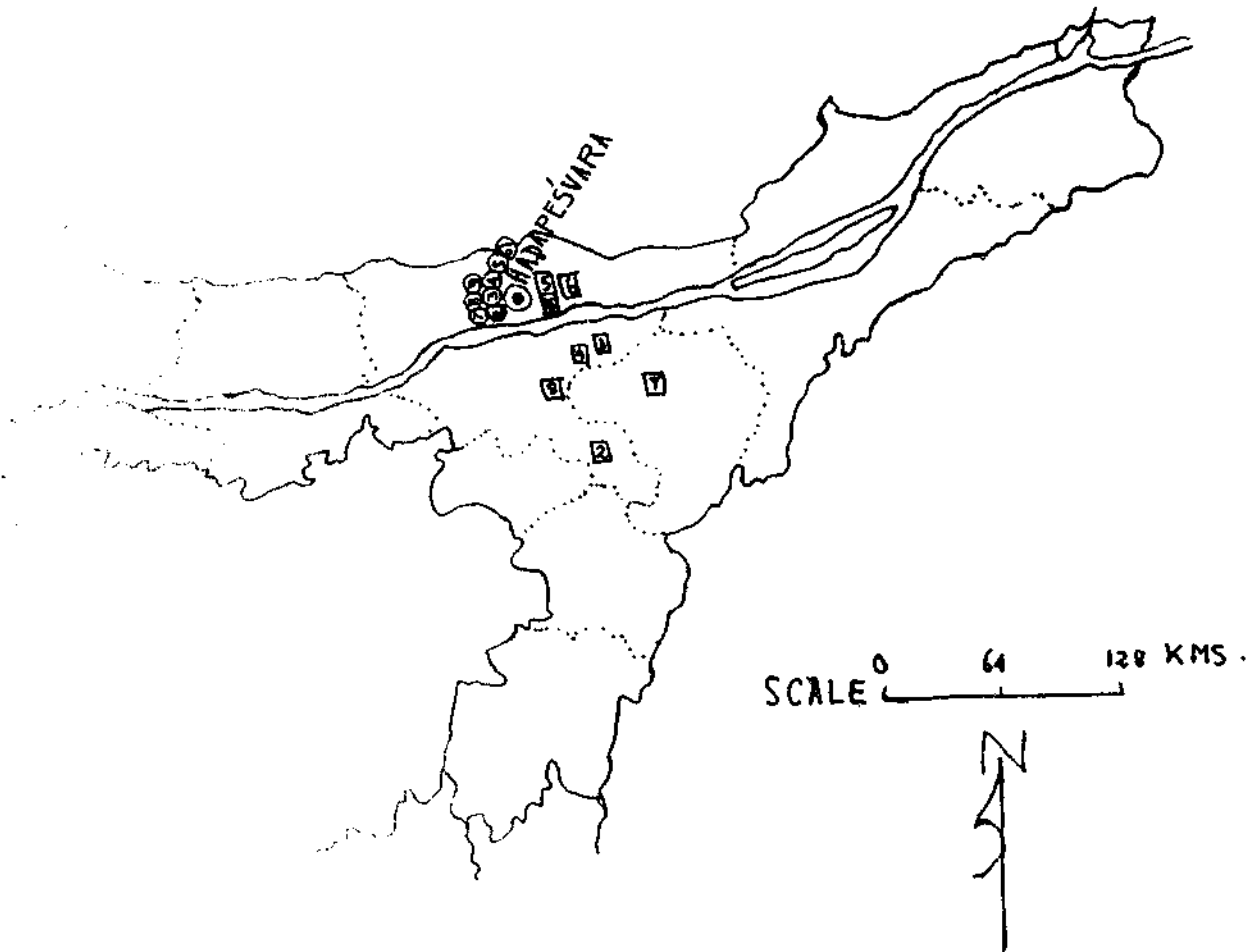
The find spots and locations of the plates of the Varman line are much more dispersed. From their geographical provenance we come to know that 1, The Varman kings were able to extend their hold almost on the whole of lower Assam Valley. At the time of Bhāskaravarman it was extended upto the present district of Murshidabad in West Bengal. 2, The

political centres under them were concentrated in the lower Assam valley area. 3, The feudal kings had also the authority to donate land by issuing copper plates which is evident by the Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha.

The Provenance of the Plates of the Śālastambha Line

Among the nine grants of the Śālastambha dynasty, the first one is the Fragmentary Copper Plate Inscription of Jivarāja. It was found at Karaiyani Bamungaon, Palasani under Itachali Police Station in Nagaon district.⁶¹ Nothing is known about the land donated by this grant due to the corroded form of the inscription.

The Kuruvābāhi Copper Plate of Harjjaravarman was found at the time of clearing the debris for the reconstruction of the nāmghar of the Kuruvābāhi sattrā of Lanka, a township in the Nagaon district of Assam.⁶² The donated land of the said grant is located in a certain field where a sacrifice was performed in the viṣaya called Dījjinnā. P. C. Choudhury takes Dījjinnā to be identical with modern Dinajpur of North Bengal (and partially of Bangladesh)⁶³ But this identification does not appear to be correct.⁶⁴ Recently D. Chutia has identified the viṣaya with the south-eastern region of the present Nowgong district including areas of the modern Karbi-Anglong district, washed by the



PROVENANCE OF THE GRANTS ISSUED BY THE KINGS OF THE ŚĀLASTAMBHA DYNASTY

1. Nagāon Fragmentary Copper Plate Inscription of Jivarāja
2. Hāyunthal Copper Plate Inscription of Harjjaravarman
3. Kuruvābāhi Copper Plate Inscription of Harjjaravarman
4. Dīghaligāô Copper Plate Inscription of Vanamāla
5. Tezpur Copper Plate Inscription of Vanamāla
6. Parbatīyā Copper Plate Inscription of Vanamāla
7. Uttarbarbil Copper Plate Inscription of Balavarman III
8. Nowgong Copper Plate Inscription of Balavarman III
9. Ulubārī Copper Plate Inscription of Balavarman III

river DiJo (u) or the DiJan/DiJen (Yamunā).⁶⁵ He is of opinion that Dījinnā is a Sanskritised form of a local name and is derived from Bodo origin.⁶⁶ Most probably the land donated by the Kuruvābāhi Grant was very near to the find spot.

The Hāyunthal Grant of Harjjaravarman was discovered at Hāyunthal, in the Nowgong district of Assam (now in the Mikir Hills district).⁶⁷ Among the three plates of the grant only the middle one is available. Due to the non-availability of the plates, the land granted by this charter is not known.

The Dīghalīgāô Copper Plate of Vanamāla-deva was found at village Dīghalī under Kaliabar revenue circle of Nagaon district in Assam.⁶⁸ By this grant Vanamāla donated a land in Purjjika Pradeśa, situated on the southern bank of Brahmaputra.⁶⁹ This pradeśa appears to be identical with Purujī viṣaya of Khanāmukh Copper Plates and Purajī-viṣaya of Puṣpa-bhadra Copper Plate of king Dharmapāla of the Brahmapāla dynasty.⁷⁰ Purjjika-viṣaya may be located in the southern part of the modern district of Nagaon, including parts of Karbi-Anglong district of Assam around the river Jamunā in the historically important Daboka region.⁷¹ In the Dīghalīgāô Grant there is a river named Dimara which forms the eastern boundary of the donated land. Chutia identified this river with the modern Dimaru, a tributary of the Jamunā in the present district of Karbi-Anglong in Assam.⁷² He thinks that Purjjika was a large province in the southern division of the

kingdom of Kāmarūpa which included both the viṣayas of Dijjī-
anā and kalaṅga within that territory.⁷³ Because both the
place and the rivulet named Dijamakka mentioned in connection
with the boundaries of the village Digdolo-Vṛddhagrāma of the
Puṣpabhadrā Grant are found mentioned in similar circumstan-
ces in the Dīghalligāô Copper Plate Inscription.⁷⁴

The Tezpur Grant of Vanamāla was found underneath the
earth near the town of Tezpur.⁷⁵ The land donated by this
grant was on the western side of river Trisrotā⁷⁶ whose
south-eastern boundary was Candrapuri. This Candrapuri may
be the Candrapuri viṣaya of the Nidhanpur Grant. It is alre-
ady noted that the said viṣaya was on the western bank of the
river Karatoyā.

The Parbatīyā Grant of Vanamāla have been recovered at
the village of Parbatīyā, three miles away from the Tezpur
town of Darrang district, Assam.⁷⁷ By this charter the land
was granted in the village called Haposagrāma belonging to
the Svalpamaṅgoka viṣaya of the uttar-kula.⁷⁸ The word
uttarakula means the northern part of the river Brahmaputra.
This word is also used in other land grants of Kāmarūpa such
as Ratnapāla's Bargāon Grant, Indrapāla's Gauhati Grant and
Indrapāla's Guwākuchi grant.⁷⁹ In the Gauhati Grant of
Indrapāla, we find Hapyoma as a name of a viṣaya.⁸⁰ Further
in the Assam Plate of Vallabha, Hāpyaccā is a name of a

mandala.⁸¹ M.M.Sharma thinks that Haposa, Hapyomā and Hāpyakā might roughly mean the same place, all of which are said to have been situated in the northern side of the river Brahmaputra.⁸² P.C.Choudhury suggests that the place can be located in the district of Darrang of Assam⁸³ which is very near to the find spot of the Parbatiyā Grant of Vanamāla.

At the Uttarbarbil village of the Howraghat area of the present Mikir Hills district a copper plate grant of Balavarman III has been discovered.⁸⁴ The grant is named according to the name of the village. The land donated by this grant was sliced off from the Vappadeva Pāṭaka, in the Vārasepaṭṭana viṣaya.⁸⁵ Paṭṭana means a city while viṣaya means a district. Then it is clear that Vārasepaṭṭana viṣaya derived its name from the city of Varase, which might have been the head-quarter of the entire viṣaya.⁸⁶ P.C.Choudhury thinks Vārasepaṭṭana to be identical with the Vādā viṣaya of Vaidyadeva's Kamali Grant.⁸⁷ At the time of the Mauryas, the term pāṭaka denoted a sub-division of a viṣaya.⁸⁸ But the term was not so used in Assam. Here Pāṭaka means to be a part of a village, or a kind of hamlet, having a name of its own, but belonging to a larger village.⁸⁹ Here the last meaning may be most appropriate and the land donated by the present charter seems to have been sliced off from the hamlet named Vappadeva. Most probably the land granted by the Uttarbarbil plate lay near about the present village of Sādā in Barpeta Sub-division.⁹⁰

Balavarman III's Nowgong Grant was found at the village Sutargāon by the side of the river kalang near the small town of Puranigudam, six miles to the east of Nowgong.⁹¹ The land donated by this grant was at Heṅsivā in Dījjinnā viṣaya on the Dakṣiṇakūla,⁹² i.e., the southern side of the river Brahmaputra.⁹³ We have already identified Dījjinnā viṣaya with the south-eastern region of the present Nowgong district including areas of modern Karbi-Anglong district of Assam, in connection with the location of the granted land of Kuruvābāhi Grant of Harjjaravarman. The identification of the place called Heṅsivā has not been made.

The Ulubārī Copper Plate of Balavarman III was found in a paddy field of the No.1 Ulubārī village of the Nāharpaṭī Maujā of the Darrang district of Assam.⁹⁴ The donated land of this grant was sliced off from the land known as Dikkura in the Manjai viṣaya, in the northern side of the river Brahmaputra.⁹⁵ The grant mentions the name of a river named Dindau while describing the eastern⁹⁶ and north-eastern⁹⁷ boundary of the donated land. Most probably, the identification of Manjai viṣaya and Dindau river has not been made till now.

Issuing Centre of the Copper Plates of the Śālastambha Dynasty.

Almost all the grants of the Śālastambha family were issued from the administrative centre of Haḍapeśvara. But

the name of the place has been read differently by different scholars such as Hārūppeśvara, Hāṭappeśvara, Haḍappeśvara, Haḍapeśvara, Haḍappośvara, Harayeśena etc.⁹⁸ It has been suggested that the city was definitely located at the site of the modern Tezpur town on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra.⁹⁹ During the reign of Vanamāla it was of considerable dimensions extending probably from the Bamuni Hill on the east to Dahparvatiya on the west with the modern town of Tezpur in the centre, where evidently the king's palace stood.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, we may say that Haḍapeśvara was located on the site of Dahparvatiya in the Darrang district of Assam.

From the above discussion it appears that all the known grants of the Śālastambha period were made by the rulers of the same dynasty. No trace can be found that their feudal kings issued any grant. As with the inscriptions of previous dynasty, find spots and locations of the granted land lie near the centre from where the inscriptions were issued. The issuing centre of the grants changed from the lower Assam valley to the upper Assam valley with Tezpur as the centre of power. The geographical provenance of the grants of the Śālastambha dynasty indicates that the Śālastambha administration was more firmly established in the Darrang - Nowgong area than anywhere else in Kāmarūpa.

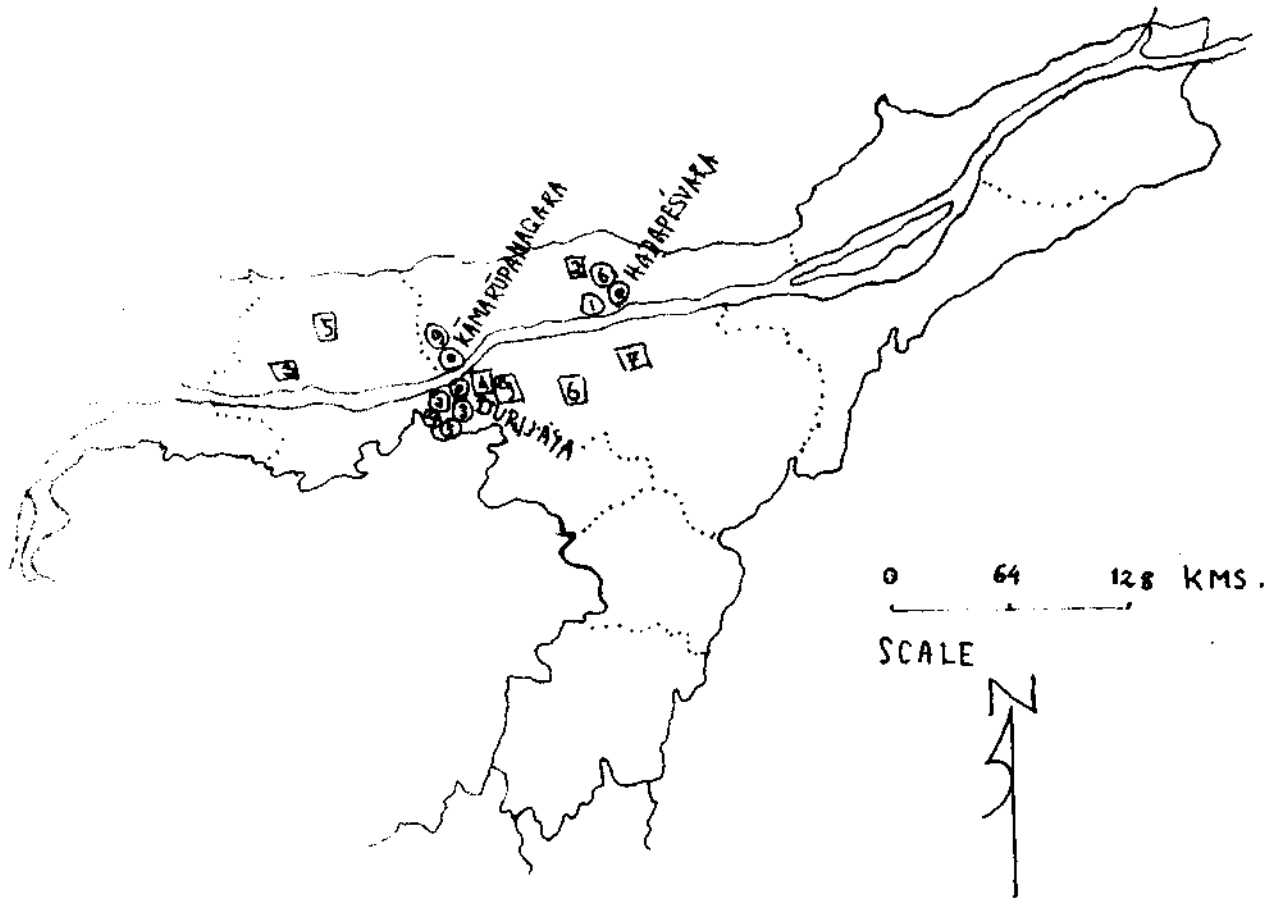
The Provenance of the Plates of the Pāla Line

Nine plates of the Pāla rulers have been discovered till now. Among them the first is the Corāṭbārī Copper Plate of Ratnapāla. The find spot of the plate is unknown. By this grant Ratnapāla donated a land sliced off from the Śāncidāsa Pāṭṭaka and Bhāṭṭayā Pāṭṭaka in the Havṛṅga viṣaya¹⁰¹ which is not identified.¹⁰²

The exact place where the Bargāon Grant of Ratnapāla was discovered is not known. But it has been recovered from a cultivator of Nāharbārī village of the Bargāon maujā of the Tezpur sub-division of the Darrang District, Assam. The grant has recorded the donation of a land sliced off from the Mahādevapāṭaka in the Trayodaśagrāma viṣaya in Uttarakūla i.e., the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra.¹⁰³ P.C. Choudhury in a map shows Trayodaśagrāma in North Lakhimpur above Majuli.¹⁰⁴

The Suwālkuchi Plate of Ratnapāla was discovered in the village Suwalkuchi of the district Kamrup.¹⁰⁵ The land donated by this grant is in the Kalāṅga viṣaya which has been located in the region near the modern Kalang river in the Nowgong district of Assam.¹⁰⁶

The Gauhati Grant of Indrapāla was found in the village



PROVENANCE OF THE GRANTS ISSUED BY THE PĀLA RULERS

1. Corāṭbārī Copper Plate Inscription of Ratnapāla
2. Bargāon Copper Plate Inscription of Ratnapāla
3. Suwālkuchi Copper Plate Inscription of Ratnapāla
4. Gauhati Copper Plate Inscription of Indrapāla
5. Guākuchi Copper Plate Inscription of Indrapāla
6. Gachtal Copper Plate Inscription of Gopāla
7. Khanāmukh Copper Plate Inscription of Dharmapāla
8. Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka Copper Plate Inscription Dharmapāla
9. Puṣpabhadra Copper Plate Inscription of Dharmapāla

sarpanārā of the Pātiddarrang Maujā of the Gauhati Sub-
 division of the Kamrup district.¹⁰⁷ By this Indrapāla gran-
 ted a land at the Kāsīpāṭaka belonging to the Hapyomā viṣaya
 in the Uttarakūla i.e. the northern bank of Brahmaputra.¹⁰⁸
 We also come to know the name of a mandala known as Hāpyacā
 and a village Haposa in the ^{Assam}plate of Vallabhadeva¹⁰⁹ and
 Parbatīyā plate of Vanamāla¹¹⁰ respectively. All the pla-
 ces Haposa, Hapyomā and Hāpyacā might roughly mean the same
 place as all the places belonged to the northern bank of
 Brahmaputra.¹¹¹ The Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva refers to
 a village named Saṁśrahikoñcikā which may be identical with
 modern Sāngsāri, at a distance of 10 k.m. to the north of
 the Brahmaputra, just opposite of Pandu.¹¹² Therefore, we
 may say that the land donated by the Gauhati Grant of Indra-
 pāla was very near the find spot of the grant.

The Guwākuchi Grant of Indrapāla was found at the
 village Guwākuchi, lying very near to the modern Nalbari town
 of the Kamrup district of Assam.¹¹³ The land transferred by
 this grant was in the Maṇḍi viṣaya in the north bank of
 Brahmaputra.¹¹⁴ The grant refers to a place known as the
 Paṇḍaribhūmi while describing the boundary of the donated
 land.¹¹⁵ Till now there is a maujā in the Kāmṛūp district,
 called as the Paṇḍuri maujā.¹¹⁷ The Rangia junction of the
 North-East Frontier Railway falls within the Paṇḍuri maujā.¹¹⁸
 Due to the similarity of the name and also because of the

present Panduri belonging to the North bank of Brahmaputra, it may be supposed that Maṇḍi Viṣaya was also somewhere near or around modern Rangiya.¹¹⁹ It indicates that the land donated by the Guwākuchi Grant was near to the find spot.

The find spot of the Gachtal Grant of Gopālavarman is Gachtal, a village near Dabaka of the Nowgong district.¹²⁰ By this grant the king donated a land sliced off from the Khārikonākoñci-bhūmi in Bārāsrojambubā viṣaya.¹²¹ There is a village named Bādā in the modern Barpeṭā Sub-division of the Kāmṛp district. There is an affinity of this name with Bādāsojambubā of the Gachtal Grant.¹²² Further, the suffix konchi indicates that the land granted by this grant was in Kāmṛp district as it happened only in this district.¹²³

The Khanāmukh Copper Plate of Dharmapāla was recovered from Khanāmukh, a village in Barbaghia mauja of the Nowgong district.¹²⁴ It granted land at Digalaṇḍī in the Puruji viṣaya.¹²⁵ We have already identified Puruji viṣaya in connection with the identification of Purjjika praḍeśa of Dīghaliḡāō Grant of Vanamāla.

The find spot of the Śubhānkara pāṭaka Grant of Dharmapāla is not known. It is named such because the land donated by this grant belonged to a locality called Śubhān-

Varapātaka in the Dījjinnā viṣaya.¹²⁶ The identification of Dījjinnā viṣaya has been made in relation to the granted land of Kuruvābāli Grant of Harjjaravarman.¹²⁷

The Puṣpabhadrā Copper Plate of Dharmapāla was discovered somewhere on the dry bed of the river Puṣpabhadrā in North Gauhati. With this grant Dharmapāla donated a land sliced off from the land of Guheśvara-Digḍola Vṛddha-arāma in the Pūjari viṣaya.¹²⁸ The identification of the viṣaya has already been made in relation to the Dighaligāo Grant of Vanamāla.

Issuing Centres of the Grants of the Pāla Line

The Corāṭbarī Grant of Ratnapāla¹²⁹ and the Gachhal Grant of Gopālavarman¹³⁰ were issued from the administrative centre of Haḍapyaka, identical with Haḍapeśvara, was located at the site of modern Tezpur town. Whereas the Bargāon¹³¹ and Suwālkuchi Grant¹³² of Ratnapāla, the Gauhati¹³³ and Guwākuchi Grant¹³⁴ of Indrapāla were issued from Durjjayā. It has been suggested by P.N. Bhattacharya that when the people elected Brahmāpāla, he transferred his capital to Prāggyotiṣapura or its neighbourhood¹³⁵ from Haḍapeśvara and it was Ratnapāla who after fortifying the city called it Śrī-Durjjayā.¹³⁶ P.C. Choudhury has identified Durjjayā with Prāggyotiṣapura also but rejected

the view of shifting of the capital to Durjjayā from Haḍa-
 naśvara.¹³⁷ He is of opinion that, "the very name Durjjayā
 indicates a fortified city in Prāggyotiṣa which remained
 the capital of the rulers, beginning with Puṣyavarman, if
 not earlier, and ending with the Pāla line or even later".¹³⁸

The issuing centres of Khanāmukh and Śubhañkarapā-
 ṭaka Grants of Dharmapāla are not known. But his Puṣpabhadrā
 Grant was issued from the administrative centre of Kāmarūpa-
 nagara,¹³⁹ which N.N.Vasu thinks to be in Rangpur.¹⁴⁰
 P.K.Bhattacharyya following P.N.Bhattacharya has identified
 Kāmarūpanagara with the city of Kāmtāpur.¹⁴¹ K.L. Barua
 thinks it as 'the city of Kāmrūd of the Muslim chroniclers
 at North-Gauhati near the temple of Aśvakrānta.¹⁴² P.C.
 Choudhury holds that 'the city of Kāmrūd' of the Muslim
 writers can be identified with a place in North Gauhati, just
 opposite Prāggyotiṣapura or Gauhati.¹⁴³ The eastern portion
 of North Gauhati is still known as Rājduar (the royal gate)
 indicating that the king's palace was there.¹⁴⁴ There is
 another place called Rangmahal (the pleasure palace) which
 is incidentally the find spot of the Puṣpabhadrā Grant of
 Dharmapāla.¹⁴⁵

Under the former dynasty the political and cultural
 centres of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa were concentrated in the
 Darrang-Nowgong area. But in the time of the Pālas these

... concentrated in the western side of that area i.e. in the Kāmarūp district, though the previous area did not lose its importance which is evident from the find spots, location of the granted land and administrative centres of the grants.

Provenance of the Grants issued after the Pāla dynasty

The Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva was discovered at Kamauli - a village near the confluence of the rivers Varanā and Gaṅgā in Varanasi.¹⁴⁶ By this, Vaidyadeva donated two villages of Śāntibaḍā and Mandarā in Bāḍā viṣaya, in Kāmarūpa māṇḍala, in the Blukti of Prāggyotiṣa. The granted villages were undoubtedly situated in modern Kāmarūp district because we have already seen that Bāḍā viṣaya was located in modern Kāmarūp district of Assam, in connection with our discussion of the location of the lands donated by the Uttarbarbil Grant of Balavarman III and the Gachtal grant of Gopāla.¹⁴⁷

The exact find spot of the Assam Plate of Vallabhadeva is not known. W. Wincler, the then Assistant Executive Engineer of Tezpur, presented it to the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1886.¹⁴⁸ By this grant the king donated seven villages - Cādi, Devunīcoñcī, Sajjāpigā, Vaṅgaka, Saṁśrahi-koñcīkā, Dośīpāṭaka and Soñcīpāṭaka.¹⁴⁹ The suffix-Konchi,

in the names of the villages (Devunikoñci, Samārahikoñcikā) indicates that the donated villages were situated in modern Kāmārūp district.¹⁵⁰

Issuing Centres of the Grants

Vaidyadeva issued his Kamauli Grant from his victorious royal head-quarter situated at Hamsakonci.¹⁵¹ It was in modern Kāmārūp district is indicated by the suffix-Koñci with the name of the centre. The administrative centre from where Vallabhadeva's Assam Plate was issued is not known.

The find spot, location of the donated lands and issuing centre of the grants issued after the pāla dynasty confirm our inference that the political and cultural centres of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa gradually shifter from the east to the west.

NOTES & REFERENCES

- 1 A.H. Dani, Indian Palaeography, Oxford, 1963, pp.78 and 86
 Ibid. p.10, Dani writes, "The forms in any particular
 inscription are not ends in themselves. They are the
 materials for proper study and analysis into one or other
 tradition following one or other technique. The tradi-
 tion relates the script to one particular culture, and
 thus writing becomes a part of the culture, and the diffe-
 rence in technique accounts for the creation of the new
 forms. As a palaeographer I am in quest of the tradi-
 tions and the techniques that can better explain the
 development of the characters in India, and thus pave the
 way to defining the particular cultures within which the
 different writing styles operate. The development of
 their writings is a part of the evolution of these
 cultures."
- 2 Cited by M. M. Sharma, IAA p. 303
- 3 Loc. cit.
- 4 Ibid. The basis of Dr. Sharma is a letter, dated 27th
 July, 1972 to Kamaleswar Saikia, Lecturer, D.R.College
 by the Chief Epigraphist of the Government of India
 where he wrote that "the inscription is in Gupta charac-
 ter of about 500 A.D."
- 5 P. N. Bhattacharya, KS, p. 16

- 5 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 55.
- 7 S. L. Barua, EHK, p. 67.
- 8 Rama Prasad Chanda, Itihāse Bāṅgālī, Cal, 1981, p.104-05.
- 9 Loc.cit.
- 10 R. D. Banerjee, History of Orissa, I, p. 188f.
- 11 R. C. Mazumdar, Bāṅglā Desher Itihās, Prāchin Yuga, I, Cal, 1988 p. 39.
- 11a P. K. Bhattacharyya, Two Interesting Coins of Śaśāṅka, JRAS, , pp. 153-54.
- 12 R. C. Mazumdar, op. cit., p. 42.
- 13 Life of Yuan Chwang, pp. 169-74.
- 14 S. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 29.
- 15 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 29.
- 16 Tipperah Copper Plate Grant of Lokanāth, Line 29, EI, XV, p. 308.
- 17 Loc.cit.
- 18 Cited by P. L. Paul, Early History of Bengal, I, cal., 1939, p. 27 (foot-note).
- 19 Loc.cit.
- 20 Loc.cit.
- 21 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 178.
- 21a D. C. Sircar, Kailan Copper Plate Grant of Śrīdharaṇa Rāta, IHQ, XXIII, p. 224.
- 21b Ibid., Select Inscriptions, II, Delhi, 1983, p. 29.
- 22 JARS, XXXI, 1989-90, p. 111.
- 23 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 485.

- 24 Ibid., p. 212.
- 25 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 85.
- 26 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 212-13.
- 27 Ibid., p. 486.
- 28 Loc.cit.
- 29 Loc.cit.
- 30 EI, II, p. 347-58.
- 31 Loc.cit.
- 32 Ibid., V, p. 181-88.
- 33 Amalendu Guha, Medieval and Early Colonial Assam, p. 41.
- 34 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 303.
- 35 Ibid., p. 10.
- 36 Ibid., p. 38.
- 37 Nidhanpur Copper Plate Grant, lines 49, 133, IAA, p.43, 49.
- 38 P. N. Bhattacharya, KS, p. 5.
- 39 Cited in IAA, p. 62-64.

Barua's chief arguments are as follows :

I. Kausīkā must be identified with Kośī of Bihar, because phonetically the word Kausīkā is more akin to Kośī than to Kuśīārā.

II. The Kuśīārā, which runs practically from east to west, could not have formed the north-eastern and south-eastern boundary of the donated land. It must have been possible only on the part of a river like Kośī of Bihar, running from north to south.

III. P. N. Bhattacharya in his Kāmarūpa Śāsaṃvalī tries to establish that Sylhet was a separate kingdom in the beginning of the 7th century A.D. and that even Yuan Chwang made separate mention of Sylhet (Shi-hi-cha-to-lo).

- 40 Loc.cit.
- 41 J. C. Ghosh, IHQ, VI, p. 642.
- 42 D. C. Sircar, IHQ, VII, p. 743.
- 43 EI, XV, p. 301.
- 44 Tippera Grant of Lokanātha, line 22, EI, XV, p. 307.
- 45 Ibid., line 21, EI, XV, p. 307.
- 46 New Light on the History of Assam, IHQ, XXI (1945), p. 28.
- 47 Uttarbarbil Grant of Balavarman III, V.5.
- 48 Nowgong Grant of Balavarman III, V.5.
- 49 Bargāon Grant of Ratnapāla, V.5.
- 50 Suwālkuchi Grant of Ratnapāla, V.5.
- 51 Gauhati Grant of Indrapāla, V.6.
- 52 Guwākuchi Grant of Indrapāla, V.6.
- 53 Gachtal Grant of Gopāla, V.8.
- 54 Khanāmukh Grant of Dharmapāla, V.2.
- 55 Śubhañkarapāṭaka Grant of Dharmapāla, V.2
- 56 Kālikāpurāna, 38, 123f
- 57 Dubi Grant, V.37
- 58 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 156
- 59 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 221

According to D. C. Sircar, Lalitakāntā as mentioned in the Kālikā Purāna (Ch. 38), not fār from Gauhati, the

- chief city of Assam, lying a few miles from the Kāmākhyā temple and identified with the ancient city of Prāgijyotiṣapura (Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India, Delhi, 1971, pp. 162-63).
- 60 R. C. Mazumdar, History of Bengal, I, p. 7.
- 61 JARS, XXXI, 1989-90, p. 106.
- 62 Ibid., XXVI, 1981-82, p. 1.
- 63 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 242.
- 64 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 249.
- 65 Abhinanda Bhāratī, ed. by Biswanarayan Shastri & P. C. Choudhury, Gauhati, 1982, p. 123-29.
- 66 Loc. cit.
- 67 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 89.
- 68 JARS, XXIX, p. 37-52.
- 69 Ibid., p. 42.
- 70 Ibid., Benudhar Sharma Commemoration Vol., 1987, p. 212

Both Purajī and Pūjari of Dharmapāla's Grants are referred to as viṣaya, whereas Purjika is referred to as Pradeśa. The expressions Pradeśa, viṣaya etc. are generally used to indicate territorial units, sometimes big, and at other times small. The term viṣaya is generally used to mean a territory equivalent to a modern district, within a pradeśa, i.e., province. Thus pradeśa, according to the same references, is bigger territorial unit, while viṣaya is a

smaller such unit. But there are other references where pradeśa is used to mean actually a viṣaya, i.e., a district. In the Dighaligāō Copper Plate the term pradeśa may be taken in the latter sense, i.e., a territorial unit equivalent to a district (viṣaya).

71 Loc.cit.

72 JAS, XXIX, p. 50-51.

73 JAS, Benudhar Sharma Commemoration Vol., 1987, p.213 .

74 Loc.cit.

75 Tezpur Grant of Vanamāla, V.32, IAA, p. 100.

76 It is impossible to identify Trisrotā of Tezpur Grant with the Dhirai River of Tezpur which was also called Trisrotā in Kāmarūpa. Because Trisrotā is mentioned in such a manner in the Tezpur Grant that it appears that the river was most celebrated one. Hence, the Trisrotā referred to here must be the most celebrated Karatoyā river which is described as the river Gaṅgā of Dvāpara.

77 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 114 .

78 Parbatīyā Grant of Vanamāla, line 48, IAA, p. 119 .

79 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 125.

80 Gauhati Grant of Indrapāla, line 35, IAA, p. 183.

81 Assam Copper Plate of Vallabhadeva, V.12, IAA, p. 295 .

82 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 300 .

83 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 219.

- 84 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 127.
- 85 Uttarbarbil Grant of Balavarman III, lines 36-37, IAA, p. 132.
- 86 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 138.
- 87 P. C. Choudhury, EI, II, p. 347-58.
- 88 A. S. Allekar, The State and Government in Ancient India, Banaras, 1949, p. 156.
- 89 IA, XVIII, p. 135.
- 90 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 223.
- 91 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 142.
- 92 Nowgong Grant of Balavarman III, line 33, IAA, p. 146.
- 93 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 149.
- 94 Ibid., p. 313.
- 95 Ulubārī Grant of Balavarman III, line 37, IAA, p. 314.
- 96 Ibid., line 54, IAA, p. 315.
- 97 Ibid., line 54, IAA, p. 315.
- 98 JABS, Benudhar Sharma Commemoration Vol. (Gauhati, 1987, p. 208.
- 99 P. N. Bhattacharya, KS, p. 22.
- 100 K. L. Barua, EHK, p. 78-79.
- 101 Coratbārī Grant of Ratnapāla, V.15, IAA, p. 0.22.
- 102 Ichhimuddin Sarkar, Aspects of Historical Geography of Prāgiyotisa-Kāmarūpa, Cal. 1991, p. 125.
- 103 Bargāon Grant of Ratnapāla, lines 52-53, IAA, p. 159.
- 104 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 511.

- 105 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 173.
- 106 B. K. Barua, A Cultural History of Assam, Nowgong, 1951, p. 34.
- 107 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 179.
- 108 Gauhati Grant of Indrapāla, line 35, IAA, p. 183.
- 109 Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva, V.13, IAA, p. 295.
- 110 Parbatīyā Grant of Vanamāla, lines 50-51, IAA, p. 119.
- 111 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 300.
- 112 Loc. cit.
- 113 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 193.
- 114 Guwākuchi Grant of Indrapāla, line, 34, IAA, p. 197.
- 115 Ibid., lines 60-61, IAA, p. 199.
- 116 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 201-202.
- 117 Loc. cit.
- 118 Loc. cit.
- 119 Loc. cit.
- 120 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 207.
- 121 Gachital Grant of Gopālavarman, line 63, IAA, p. 212.
- 122 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 289.
- 123 Loc. cit.

The Suffix Koñchī, Kuñchī or Kuchī occurs in the names of numerous villages in Kamrup district, e.g., Suālkuchī, Kamarkuchī, Ranakuchī, Patacharkuchī, Vyahkuchī, Kāhikuchī, Majkuchī, Dongarkuchī etc. Such names are rare even in the contiguous districts of Goalpara, Darrang and Nowgong.

- 124 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 225.

- 125 Khanāmukh Grant of Dharmapāla, line 29, IAA, p. 228.
- 126 Śubhañkarapāṭaka Grant of Dharmapāla, lines 31-32, IAA, p. 244.
- 127 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 255.
- 128 Puṣpabhadrā Grant of Dharmapāla, line 46, IAA, p. 261.
- 129 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 0.21.
- 130 Gachital Grant of Gopālavarma, V.31, IAA, p. 212.
- 131 Bargāon Grant of Ratnapāla, line 40, IAA, p. 158.
- 132 Suwālkuchi Grant of Ratnapāla, line 30.
- 133 Gauhati Grant of Indrapāla V.19, IAA, p. 183.
- 134 Guwākuchi Grant of Indrapāla, V.19, IAA, p. 197.
- 135 P. N. Bhattacharya, KS, p. 25f.
- 136 Ibid., p. 251.
- 137 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 231.
- 138 Loc. cit.
- 139 Puṣpabhadrā Grant of Dharmapāla, V.20, IAA, p. 261.
- 140 N. N. Vasu, Social History of Kāmarūpa, I, New Delhi, 1983, p. 174.
- 141 P. N. Bhattacharya, KS, p. 29-34 Cf. P. K. Bhattacharya.
- 142 K. L. Barua, EHK, p. 93.
- 143 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 245.
- 144 Loc. cit.
- 145 Loc. cit.
- 146 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 273.
- 147 Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva, lines 48-49, IAA, p. 280.

- 148 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 291.
149 Assam Plate of Vallabhadeva, V.V.18, 19, IAA, p. 295.
150 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 300.
151 Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva, line 47, IAA, p. 280.
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CHAPTER - IV

Appearance and Organization of the InscriptionsThe Appearance of the Inscriptions

There are many similarities and differences both in the appearances and organizations of the inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, issued by the kings of the land with a single exception, i.e., the Tipperah Grant, issued by Lokanātha. Since no chemical analysis of the inscriptions have been made.¹ their differences in colour (as noticed by us in the Assam State Museum, Gauhati) indicate that there is wide variation in the chemical make-up of the plates. The sizes and weights of the grants also vary which has shown in table No. 2. The plate used in the Dīghalīgāō Grant of Vanamāla (12.5" x 8") is the biggest whereas the plate of Assam grant of Vallabhadeva (8" x 5½") is the smallest in size. There is also differences in the numbers of plates as has been used in the inscriptions of the land. Five plates have been used in the Dubi Grant of Bhāskaravarman and in the Assam Grant of Vallabhadeva, seven in the Nidhanpur Grant of Bhāskaravarman, two in the Kuruvābāhi Grant of Harjjaravarman and one in the Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha, while other grants were consisted of three plates. The

Table 2

Description of the Inscriptions

Plate Designation	Size	Weight	No. of Lines		Size of the Seal	Seal
			Obverse	Reverse		
Plates of the Varman Dynasty						
Nagājari-Khanikar-gaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription				5		
Dubi CP of Bhāskaravarman	5 plates each 9.3" x 4.6"	236½ tolas (including Seal)	1st plate 2nd plate 3rd plate 4th plate 5th plate	13 13 12 13 13	13 14 13 13 13	3.4" x 3.1" Elephant seal with a legend.
Nidhanpur CP of Bhāskaravarman	7 plates (one lost) each 6"x11"		1st plate 2nd plate 3rd plate 4th plate 5th plate or 6th plate 7th plate	15 14 14 15 13	15 15 14 15 14	Seal not clear
Tipperah CP of Lokanātha	1 plate 10½" x 7½"			26	31	Gajalakṣmī seal with a legend.
Plates of the Śālastambha Dynasty						
Nawgaon CP of Jivarāja (Fragmentary)						3.4" x 3" Elephant seal with a legend.
Kuruvābāhi CP of Harjjaravarman	2 plates each 4.5" x 2.7"		1st plate 2nd plate	18 18		3.7" x 2.5" Elephant seal with a legend.

Contd...

Table 2 (contd.)

Plate Designation	size	Weight	No. of Lines		Size of the		
			Obverse	Reverse	Seal	Seal	
Hāyuntal CP of Harjjaravaman	Among the three middle plate is available 6" x 11"		2nd plate	14	14		
Dīghaligāô CP of Vanamāla	3 plates, each 12.5" x 8"	5.3 Kg. (including seal)	1st plate 2nd plate 3rd plate	17 17 12	6.4" x 5.4"	Elephant seal with a legend.	
Tezpur CP of Vanamāla	Not known	not known	Not known		Not known	Elephant seal with a legend.	
Parbatīyā CP of Vanamāla	3 plates, each 10" x 6.2"	258 tolas (including seal)	1st plate 2nd plate 3rd plate	15 16 13	4.7" x 4.3"	Elephant seal with a legend.	
Uttarbarbil CP of Balavarman III	3 plates, each 10" x 6½"		1st plate 2nd plate 3rd plate	14 14 12	6" x 3"	Elephant seal with a legend.	
Nowgong CP of Balavarman III	3 plates, each 12" x 7"		1st plate 2nd plate 3rd plate	12 12 13	6" x 3"	Elephant seal with a legend.	
Ulubārī CP of Balavarman III	3 plates, each 6.3" x 10.3"	4200gs. (including seal)	1st plate 2nd plate 3rd plate	14 14 13	3.7" x 4.5"	Elephant seal with a legend.	

Plates of the Pāla Dynasty

Uttarbarbil CP of Balavarman III	3 plates, each 10" x 7.5"		1st plate 2nd plate 3rd plate	20 23 14		Elephant seal with a legend.	
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Contd...

Table 2 (contd.)

Plate Designation	Size	Weight	No. of Lines		Size of the Seal	
			Obverse	Reverse	Seal	Seal
Bargāon CP of Ratnapāla	3 plates, each 10½" x 6½"		1st plate 2nd plate 20 3rd plate 15	20		Elephant seal with a legend.
Suwālkuchi CP of Ratnapāla	3 plates, each 12" x 8½"		1st plate 2nd plate 19 3rd plate 7	19 19		Elephant seal with a legend.
Gauhati C.P. of Indrapāla	3 plates, each 10" x 6"		1st plate 2nd plate 15 3rd plate 9	14 15		Elephant seal with a legend.
Guākuchi CP of Indrapāla	3 plates, each 10" x 6"		1st plate 2nd plate 19 3rd plate 18	14 19		Elephant seal with
Gachtal CP of Gopālarman	2 plates, each 9.5" x 7.2"		1st plate 2nd plate 23 3rd plate lost	22 23	Lost	Lost
Khanāmkh CP of Dharmapāla	3 plates, each 9" x 6"		1st plate 2nd plate 15 3rd plate 12	16 15	5" x 3½"	Elephant seal with a legend.
Subhākarapāṭaka CP of Dharmapāla	3 plates, each 9" x 6½"		1st plate 2nd plate 16 3rd plate 14	17 16	Broken	Elephant seal(not available) with a legend.
Puṣpabhadra CP of Dharmapāla	3 plates, each		1st plate 2nd plate 16 3rd plate 10	15 15		Elephant seal with a legend.

Contd...

Table 2 (contd.)

Plate Designation	Size	Weight	No. of Lines		Size of the	
			Obverse	Reverse	Seal	Seal
Copper plate issued after the Pāla Dynasty						
Kamauli CP of Vaidyadeva	3 plates, each 9½" x 7"		1st plate	16		Four hundred Gaṇeśa
			2nd plate	16	16	
			3rd plate	9		
Assam CP of Vallabhadēva	5 plates, each 8" x 5½"		1st plate	7	Not available	Not available
			2nd plate	7	7	
			3rd plate	8	8	
			4th plate	8	9	
			5th plate	9		

numbers of lines in the inscriptions vary markedly from 14, used in the Nidhanpur Grant of Bhāskaravarman (though one plate has been lost) to 36, used in the Kuruvābāhi Grant of Harjjaravarman.

They bear a sufficiently close resemblance to each other as they are to be treated as a single class of documents. All of them were issued from the royal courts. Their language is Sanskrit, written in Brāhmī scripts.

They are written in mixed prose and verse with the exception of Assam Grant of Vallabhadeva which is written totally in verse. Furthermore, inscriptions issued by the same king are almost same in appearances and organizations.

Content and Organization of the Inscriptions

The inscriptions of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa have fourteen distinguishable parts, though many of them leave out one or more parts which is shown in Table No.3. The lengths and contents of these parts change from time to time in such a way that they give a separate character to the inscriptions of each dynasty. These fourteen parts of the inscriptions can be grouped into three broad parts, viz. the introductory part, the central part or properly transfer part and the concluding part. The introductory part or preamble of the inscription includes benediction,

invocation and description of the authority who issues the grant. The occasion upon which the grant was issued, the recipient, the description of the granted property constitute the central part. The concluding part includes address to the various officials and responsible persons to respect the grant of property, admonition, conveyance and names of the producers of the inscription. In addition to these three broad parts, there are three other elements which occur in most of the inscriptions. These are the date of issuing the grant, issuing centre and the authenticating seal.

No particulars opening formula or words can be found in the inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, but the anji sign frequently followed by the word Svasti meaning success or luck,² occurs in all the subsequent inscriptions. It is seen in the Dīghalīgāḥ, the Tezpur and the Parbatīyā Plates of Vanamāla, Uttarbarbil, the Nowgong and the Ulubārī Plates of Balavarman III, the Gauhati and the Guwākuchi Plates of Indrapāla, the Khanāmukh, the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka and the Puṣpabhadrā Plates of Dharmapāla. The inscriptions of Bhāskaravarman bears neither the anji sign nor the word svasti. His Nidhanpur Plate starts simply with the word OM and the Dubi Plate starts with a salutation to lord Śaśīśekhara. The inscriptions of Ratnapāla start with the

Table 3 A; Organization of the Inscriptions of the Varman Dynasty

Plate Designation	Benediction	Invocation	Description of the Authority	Place of Issue	Occasion	Recipient	Use	Granted Property
Nagājari-Khanikargāon Fragmentary Stone inscription					For gaining fame			
Dubi CP of Bhāskara		Adoration to Śaśīśekhara. 1/117 *	Royal descent for thirteen generations. 111/117	Prāgjyotiṣapura (known from the seal)	Wearing out of the previous charter.	Bhaṭṭapriyañ-Karaghoṣasvāmīn and others. 6/117	Not stated	
Nidhanpur CP of Bhāskara	<u>Svasti</u>	Adoration to Śaśīśekhara 1/140	Royal descent for thirteen generations. 48/140	Karnasuvarna 2/140	Wearing out of the previous charter.	208 Brāhminas 75/140	For <u>balli</u> , <u>caru</u> and <u>saṭra</u> .	166 $\frac{1}{16}$ parts with exemption of tax
Tipperah CP of Lokanātha		Adoration to Śaṅkara	Description of four generations 14/67	Not stated	Request of <u>Mahāsāmanṭa</u> Pradoṣaśarman.	210 Brāhminas 20/67	For erection of a temple and maintenance of the daily worship of the God.	Not clear.

* The expressions 1/117 indicates that this part fills one of the 117 lines in the inscription.

Contd...

Table 3 A (contd.)

Plate Designation	Address & Injunction	Admonition	Conveyance	Authentication	Production of plate	Date
Nagājarī- Khanikargāon Fragmentary Stone Inscription						
Dabi CP of Bhāskara					Royal seal; legend; genealogy.	
Nidhanpur CP of Bhāskara	Informed dis- trict officers and the courts of justice in the district of Candrapuri 1/140	Merit of giving and evil of confiscating 3/140	Officer Sri Gopāla	Royal seal; legend: not clear.	Written and composed by Vasuvārṇṇa, engraved by Kaliya.	
Tipperah CP of Lokanātha		Merit of giving and evil of confisca- ting 1/67	<u>Sandhivigrahi-</u> <u>ka Prasānta-</u> deva.	<u>Gajalakṣmi</u> seal; legend: <u>Kumāramūty-</u> <u>adhikarṇasya,</u> <u>Lokanāthasya.</u>	Composed by Bhagavan Vyāsa	year 344

Table 3 B; Organization of the Inscriptions of the Śālastambha Dynasty

Plate Designation	Benediction	Invocation	Description of the authority	Place of Issue	Occasion	Recipient	Use	Granted Property
Nagāon CP of Jivārāja (Fragmentary)		Not clear				A <u>Brāhmaṇa</u>		
Kuruṃbāhi CP of Harjjara	<u>Svasti</u>	Adoration of Rudra (Śiva) 1/34	Royal descent for four generations. 5/34	Not stated	Day of eclipse	A <u>Brāhmaṇa</u> 6/34	Not stated	Land producing 4000 <u>puṭaka</u> or 2000 units of paddy with all attributes and many exemptions.
Hāyuntal CP of Harjjara			Royal descent for ten generations. 20/28	Hadapeśvara 1/28				
Dighaligāo CP of Vanamāla	<u>Svasti</u>	Adoration of Lauhitya Śindhu and Lord Pināki (Śiva). 2/63	Royal descent for five generations. 28/63	Hadapeśvara 17/63		<u>Śaṅga</u> Gallahara and his five brothers. 3/63	Not stated	Not clear.

Contd...

Table 3 B (contd.)

Plate Designation	Benediction	Invocation	Description of the Authority	Place of Issue	Occupation	Recipient	Use	Granted Property
Tezpur CP of Vanamāla	<u>Svasti</u>	Adoration of the Lauhitya. 2/33 verses	Royal descent for five generations. 23/33 verses	Haḍapeśvara 17/24	For religious merit of the parents of the king.	<u>Brāhmana</u> Indoka 3/33 verses	Not stated	A village
Parbatīyā CP of Vanamāla	<u>Svasti</u>	Adoration of the Lauhitya 4/59	Royal descent for five generations. 22/59	Haḍapeśvara 14/59	For increase of the merit and fame of the parents of the king and of himself.	<u>Brāhmana</u> Cudāmani 6/59	Not stated	A village with many exemptions.
Uttarbarbil CP of Balavarman III	<u>Svasti</u>	Adoration of the Lauhitya 3/54	Royal descent for six generations. 19/54	Haḍapeśvara 1/54	For increase of the merit of the parents of the king and of his own welfare.	<u>Bhatta</u> Syāmadeva 7/54	Not	Land producing 2000 units of paddy with all attributes and many exemptions.

Table 3 B; Organization of the Inscriptions of the Śālastambha Dynasty

Plate Designation	Benediction	Invocation	Description of the Authority	Place of Issue	Occassion	Recipient	Use	Granted Property
Nowgong CP of Balavarman III	<u>Svasti</u>	Adoration to the Lauhitya 3/49	Royal descent for six generations. 19/49	Haḍappesvara 1/49	For gaining welfare of the king and his parents.	<u>Brāhmaṇa Śrutidhara</u> 9/49	Not stated	Land yielding 4000 units of paddy with all attributes and many exemptions.
Ulnbārī CP of Balavarman III	<u>Svasti</u>	Adoration to the Lauhitya 3/55	Royal descent for six generations. 19/55	Haḍappesvara 1/55	For gaining welfare of the king and his parents.	<u>Brāhmaṇa Viṣṇudeva</u> 9/55	Not stated	Land yielding 2000 units of paddy with all attributes and many exemptions.

Table 3 B (contd.)

Plate Designation	Address & Injunction	Admonition	Conveyance	Authentication	Production of Plate	Date
Nagāon CP of Jivarāja (Fragmentary)				Royal seal; a legend; <u>Mahā-rajādhirāja</u> <u>Sri Jivarājasya</u>		
Knruvābāhi CP of Harjjara	Addressed state officials beginning with <u>Viṣaya-karaṇa, Vyavahārika, RAJA RAJINI</u> etc. 3/34	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; a legend; <u>Prāgiyotisa-dhipati</u> - <u>Sri Harjjara</u>	Not stated	Not stated
Hāyunthal CP of Harjjara	Informed <u>Mahā-Sainyapati, Mahā-Dvārādhipati, Mahā-Pratihāra</u> etc. 3/28		By prince Vanamāla			
Dighaligḍō CP of Vanamāla	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; a legend; <u>Svasti Srimān Prāgiyotisādhipati Panvaya Mahārajādhirāja Sri Vanamāla-varmadeva.</u>	Not stated	Not stated
Tezpur CP of Vanamāla	Not stated	not stated	not stated	Royal seal; a legend; <u>Svasti Srimān Prāgiyotisādhipati Panvaya Sri Vanamāla-varmadeva.</u>		

Contd...

Table 3 B (contd.)

Plate Designation	Address & Injunction	Admonition	Conveyance	Authentication	Production of plate	Date
Parbatīyā CP of Vanamāla	Not stated	Merit of giving and evil of confiscating 2/59	Not stated	Royal seal; legend; <u>Svasti Srīmān Prāgjyotisādhipanvayo</u> <u>Mahārājādhirāja Sri-Vanamāla-Varmadeva.</u>	Not stated	Not stated
Uttarbarbil CP of Balavarman III	Informed <u>Brāhmanas, Visayaka-Rāṇa, Vyāvahārika, Rājās, Rājnis</u> etc. 4/54	Not stated.	Not stated	Royal seal; legend; <u>Svasti Srīmān Prāgjyotisādhipanvayo</u> <u>Mahārājādhirāja Sri-Balavarmadevaḥ.</u>	Not stated	Year 5th.
Nowgong CP of Balavarman III	Addressed citizens beginning with the <u>Brāhmanas</u> , the scribes, the administrators etc. 4/49	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; legend; <u>Svasti Srīmān Prāgjyotisādhipanvayo</u> <u>Mahārājādhirāja Sri-Balavarmadevaḥ.</u>	Not stated	Year 8th
Uttarbarbil CP of Balavarman III	Addressed citizens beginning with the <u>Brāhmanas</u> , the scribes, the administrators etc. 4/55	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; legend; <u>Svasti Srīmān Prāgjyotisādhipanvayo</u> <u>Mahārājādhirāja Sri-Balavarmadevaḥ.</u>	Not stated	Year 13th

Table 3 C; Organizations of the Inscriptions of the Pāla Dynasty

Plate Designation	Benediction	Invocation	Description of the Authority	Place of Issue	Occasion	Recipient	Use	Granted Property
Corātbāri CP of Ratnapāla	<u>Svasti</u>	Praise of Saṅkara and the Lauhitya. 5/72	Royal descent for two generations. 17/72	Hadapya-ka 1/72	For the fame of the parents of the king and for his own welfare.	<u>Brāhmaṇa</u> Siddhapāla 8/72	Not stated	Land capable of yielding 4000 units of paddy with all attributes and many exemptions.
Bargāon CP of Ratnapāla	<u>Svasti</u>	Praise of Saṅkara and the Lauhitya 5/72	Royal descent for two generations. 17/72	Durjjayā 13/72	For the fame of the parents of the king and for his own welfare.	<u>Brāhmaṇa</u> Viradatta 7/72	Not stated	Land capable of yielding 2000 units of paddy with all attributes and many exemptions.
Suwālluchi CP of Ratnapāla	<u>Svasti</u>	Praise of Saṅkara and the Lauhitya 5/64	Royal descent for two generations 17/64	Durjjayā 13/64	For the merit of king and of his parents and for gaining fame.	<u>Brāhmaṇa</u> Kāmadeva 5/64	Not stated	Land capable of yielding 3000 units of paddy with all attributes and many exemptions.
Gauhati CP of Indrapāla	<u>Svasti</u>	Obeisance to Saṅghu and Gouri 13/53	Royal descent for four generations. 14/53	Durjjayā	Not stated	<u>Brāhmaṇa</u> Deśapāla 5/53	Not stated	Land capable of yielding 4000 units of paddy with all attributes and many exemptions.

Contd...

Table 3 C; (contd.)

Plate Designation	Benediction	Invocation	Description of the Authority	Place of Occassion	Recipient	Use
Guākuchi CP of Indrapāla	<u>Svasti</u>	Obeisance to Paśupati 3/75	Royal descent for four generations. 14/75	Durjjayā 1/75	Not stated	<u>Brāhmaṇa</u> Not stated Land capable of yielding 2000 units of paddy with all attributes and many exemptions.
Gachtal CP of Gopāla-varman	<u>Svasti</u>	Adoration of Viṣṇu 4/68	Royal descent for five generations. 38/68	Hadāpyaka 2/68	Not known due to the loss of the 3rd plate	Not known due to the loss of the 3rd plate Land capable of yielding 8000 units of paddy with all attributes and many exemptions.
Khanāmkh CP of Dharmapāla	<u>Svasti</u>	Obeisance to Ardha-yuvatisvara 2/58	Royal descent for seven generations. 20/58	Not stated	Not stated	<u>Brāhmaṇa Mahābāhu</u> 9/58 Not stated Land yielding 6000 + 2000 = 8000 units of paddy with all attributes and many exemptions.
Śubhahkara-pāṭaka CP of Dharmapāla	<u>Svasti</u>	Obeisance to Ardha-yuvatisvara 2/63	Royal descent for six generations. 20/63	Not stated	Not stated	<u>Brāhmaṇa Himāṅga and Trilocana</u> 12/63 Not stated Land yielding 6000 + 2000 = 8000 units of paddy with many exemptions.
Puṣpabhadra CP of Dharmapāla	<u>Svasti</u>	Obeisance to Viṣṇu. 1/56	Royal descent for four generations. 14/56	Kāmarūpa-nagara	Not stated	<u>Brāhmaṇa Madhu-sudana</u> 20/56 Not stated Land yielding 10000 units of paddy with many exemptions.

Table 3 C (contd.)

Plate Designation	Address & Injunction	Admonition	Conveyance	Authentication		Date
Corāṭbārī CP of Ratnapāla	Informed Brāhmanas, <u>Viṣayakarana, Vyavahārika, Rājās, Rājās, etc.</u> 2/72	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; legend: <u>Svasti Prāggyotiṣadhīpati Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Ratnapālavarmadevah</u>	Not stated	Year 12th, on the day of <u>Dhanuṣ-sankrānti</u>
Bargāon CP of Ratnapāla	Informed Brāhmanas, <u>Viṣayakarana, Vyavahārika, Rājās, Rājās, etc.</u> 2/72	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; legend: <u>Svasti, Prāggyotiṣadhīpati Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Ratnapālavarmadevah.</u>	Not stated	Year 25th, on the day of <u>Viṣṇupadi-sankrānti.</u>
Suwālkuchi CP of Ratnapāla	Informed Brāhmanas, <u>Viṣayakarana, Vyavahārika, Rājās, Rājās, etc.</u> 2/72	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; legend: <u>Svasti, Prāggyotiṣadhīpatyanvayo Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Ratnapālavarmadevah.</u>	Not stated	Year 26th.
Gauhati CP of Indrapāla	Informed Brāhmanas, <u>Viṣayakarana, Vyavahārika, Rājās, Rājās, etc.</u> 2/53	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; legend: <u>Svasti Prāggyotiṣadhīpati Mahārājādhirāja Śrīmad Indrapālavarmadevah.</u>	Not stated	Year 8th.

Table 3 C (contd.)

Plate Designation	Address & Injunction	Admonition	Conveyance	Authentication	Production of Plate	Date
Guākuchī CP of Indrapāla	Informed <u>Brāhma- ṇas, Viṣayakarana, Vyavahārika, Rājās, Rājñis, etc.</u> 2/75	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; legend: <u>Svasti Prāgiyotisādhi- pati Mahārāja- dhirāja Śrīmad Indrapālavar- madevah.</u>	Most probab- ly Ani, Dhani, Sani	Year 21st
Gachtal CP of Gopāla- varman	Informed <u>Viṣaya- karana, Vyavahā- rika, Rājās, Rājñis etc.</u> 2/68	Not known due to the loss of the 3rd plate.	Not stated	Seal lost.	Composed by Balabhadra	Not stated.
Khanāmukh CP of Dharmapāla	Informed <u>Viṣaya- karana, Vyavahā- rika, Vyavaha- rika, Rājās, Rājñis, etc.</u> 3/58	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; legend: <u>Svasti Prāgiyotisādhi- pati Mahārāja- dhirāja Śrī- Dharmapālavar- madevah.</u>	Composed by the poet Prasthāna- kalasa.	Year 1st
Subhānkara- pātaka CP of Dharmapāla	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; legend: <u>Svasti Prāgiyotisādhi- pati Mahārāja- dhirāja Śrī- Dharmapālavar- mah.</u>	Composed by the poet Prasthāna- kalasa	Year 3rd
Unspanned CP of Indrapāla	Informed <u>Viṣaya- karana, Vyavahā- rika, Rājās, Rājñis, etc.</u> 2/55	Not stated	Not stated	Royal seal; legend: <u>Svasti Prāgiyotisādhi- pati Śrīmad Dharmapāla- varmadevasya.</u>	Composed by the king himself and Śrī Aniru- ddha, engra- ved by Śrī Vinita.	Not stated

Table 3 D; Organization of the Inscriptions issued after the Pāla Dynasty

Plate Designation	Benediction	Invocation	Description of the Authority	Place of Issue	Occasion	Recipient	Use	Granted Property
Kanauli CP of Vaidya-deva	<u>Svasti</u>	Adoration to Vāsudeva 1/73	Royal descent for two generations. 27-73	Hānsacoñci 1/73	For gaining heaven	Śri Śridhara-sarman 11/73	Not stated	Two villages with many exemptions.
Assam CP of Vallabhadeva		Adoration to Vāsudeva 1/63	Royal descent for four generations. 28/63	Not stated	For the maintenance of an alms house.		Not stated	Seven villages with many attributes.

Table 3 D (Contd.)

Plate Designation	Address & Injunction	Admonition	Conveyance	Authentication	Production of Plate	Date
Kamali CP of Vaidyadeva	Informed cultivators, citizens, <u>Caṭṭa, Bhaṭṭa, Viṣayillaka</u> , etc. 2/73	Merit of giving and evil of confiscating 3/73	Not stated	Four-handed Gaṇeśa seal	Composed by Manoratha, engraved by Karṇabhadra	On the day of an ekadasi coinciding with a <u>Viṣuvassakrānti</u> in the month of Vaiśākha, in the year 4th.
Assam CP of Vallabhadeva	Addressed his successors and future kings 2/63	Merit of giving and evil of confiscating 14/63	Not stated	Seal lost	Not stated	In the Śaka year counted with the mountains, the sky, and the Rudras.

word svasti. In the Kamauli Plate of Vaidyadeva and in the Assam Plate of Vallabhadeva the anji sign occurs first which is followed by the word Om. In these inscriptions the word svasti can be found after a salutation to Lord Vāsudeva.

In the inscriptions of the Śālastambha dynasty except the Dīghaligāô Plate of Balavarman, the anji sign is such - ॐ whereas in the pāla plates it is as - ॐ . The sign changes after the pāla dynasty. In the Assam Plate of Vallabhadeva the sign appears like - ॐ . The anji sign in the Dīghaligāô Plate of Balavarman III is like that of the pāla dynasty.

It has been suggested by D. C. Sircar that the anji sign is the word siddham which means as siddhir = astu, 'let there be success'.³ Dr. Hoernle read the sign as Om,⁴ which is not correct. Because the sign along with the word Om occur simultaneously in the Kamauli Plate of Vaidyadeva and in the Assam Plate of Vallabhadeva. Here the opinion of P. N. Bhattacharya seems to be the most correct one. He is of opinion that the sign does not mean any particular letter or syllable (like Om) but is the sign of the Kundalinī, the serpent-shaped divinity that pervades every letter and regulates its pronunciation. "No letter can be expressed through her". The sign,

P. N. Bhattacharya further says "is in fact the creative energy bringing out every letter. In whatever form it is seen at the beginning of any inscription, the right way is to reproduce that form and it will not be correct to put Om to represent the same. Om is the representative of the Vedic Brahma, whereas the anji is the symbol of the Tentric divinity Kundalinī..."⁵

After benediction in an inscription of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa we find the occurrence of invocation either to Śiva or to Viṣṇu or to the river Lauhitya. Sometime adoration to Śiva and the Lauhitya occur simultaneously in some of the inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. In the Varman Plates the invocatory part takes one line. But in the plates of the Śālastambha dynasty and in the Pāla Plates its length increases gradually. It takes five lines in the inscriptions of Ratnapāla which is full of literary allusions. We may quote the following paragraph as illustration .

"Let (Lord) Śaṅkara (the great dancer), who is, as it were, the spectator of the wealth of his own dancing art, as reflected in the (glossy) nails of his own, and at the same time is engaged in exhibiting the ceaseless motion of his auspicious tāṇḍava dance like some one seated on a horse of superior breed, and who, thus; like the

supreme self assumes plurality while remaining essentially one, shines in the world with the help of his irresistible will (Prākāmya), be the source of welfare for all. (V.1)

"Let the world be protected, after the destruction of all the sins, by the sea in the form of the river Lauhitya (i.e., the river Brahmaputra), regarding the current of the waters of which people may be pleased to conjecture as follows - "Is it the moonlight itself that flows here after assuming a physical form ? or "Is it a flow of melted crystals ? or "Is it the auspicious power of Lord Śaṅkara intently engaged in destroying the whole host of sins ?"⁶ (V.2)

The last part of the preamble of the inscription is the description of the authority who issues the grant. It contains an elaborate genealogical description in connection with the introduction of the donor which has been shown in table No.3. It takes a minimum of 14 lines to a maximum of 111 lines of the inscriptions excluding (in most cases) the description of many imaginary and mythical ancestors. In this portion of the inscriptions important historical information are generally scattered here and there. But in most cases, they are full of vague praises for the king and his ancestors. This will be clear from a quotation of the Dubi C.P. of Bhāskaravarman.

"This Gaṇendravarma who was similar to Gaṇendra (i.e. Gaṇeśa) and endowed with an excess of prowess had a son who was born for the purpose of tormenting the enemies and was, as it were, a lump of alkali to the wound of the kings (i.e., was capable of adding further injuries to the already injured kings). (V.21)

"This son was similar in his qualities to his father (of all the persons) in the world. The father who was as powerful as Janaka after having duly enjoyed the earth, gathered an assembly of people, placed the kingdom in the hands of his accomplished son and retired to the heaven.(V.22)

"He, the son of Yajñadevī, Mahendravarṃā by name, who was the vanquisher of the enemy and similar to the king of gods in valour and similar to the moon in lustures, enjoyed the kingdom and protected his subjects like his own progeny duly. (V.23)

"Having conquered the earth with the ocean as the girdle and subduing the enemy through power, the king performed a number of sacrifices like the great Indra and also got a Śacī - like consort in Suvratā. (V.24)

"In the mirror of the king's look (for beauty) she stood as the epitome of the foremost limit of beauty, (or so far as the mirror of intelligence of the king is

concerned, she shone therein as an epitome of the foremost limit of good conduct of the king) and on her own part she was so devoted to the king that she shone like a constant lustre in a moon in the form of that king. (V.25)

"In her, who was like Aditi, Nārāyaṇa, the holder of the Cakra, was born with a human form and became a king with the same name (Nārāyaṇa) with a view to dispelling the demerits of the subjects. (V.26)

"Queen Devamatī attained the status of a wife of this very Śrī Nārāyaṇavarmā like Padmā assuming the same status in respect of (God) Nārāyaṇa. (V.27)

"Then he (Nārāyaṇavarmā), who was a seat of good qualities, like the Lord of the Bhūtas (i.e., Śiva) causing the birth of Kārttikeya in the daughter of the king of mountains (i.e., Pārvatī) for the prosperity of the subjects caused in Śrī Devamatī the birth of Śrī Mahābhūtavarmā, who was a repository of supernal abilities (Vibhūti), another great element (mahābhūta), as it were, and finally, he, the destroyer of the vanity of enemies, also installed this Mahābhūta famous for his armour in the form of physical strength, as the king. (V.28-29)

"Having enjoyed most heartily plenty of objects of enjoyment and giving gifts to the people upto their best

desire, the king, who was though amiable yet terrible to the enemies, went away leaving behind his corporeal frame with the help of Yoga. (V.30)

"Then this illustrious king, who was like the king of Gods, famous for his valour, extremely lovely and intelligent, after having received the (kingship of the) paternal kingdom, having defeated, with the help of his prowess of the couple of his own arms, all the enemies duly equipped with weapons, having caused the birth of a son of moon - like face in queen Vījñavati, and having performed a horse sacrifice, retired to the abode of Indra." ⁷ (V.31)

In the inscriptions of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa when the name of the king is described special weightage has been paid to use artificially internally rhyming and ornately set metres and to use rare and long compounds of words with more than one meaning. ⁸ In many cases etymology of the name has also been made. For example, in the Parbatīyā Plates of Vanamāla-Varmadeva, it is stated that he was named Vanamāla by the creator on the ground that 'he was found fit to assume the lordship of the whole earth extending upto the rows of forests lying on the sea-shore.' Similarly, the Bargāon Plates of Ratnapāla tell us that Ratnapāla was known by that name because his subjects knew that this king would protect, with his own qualities, the

highly respectable persons who resemble the jewels.' Even more interesting, from the stylistic point of view is the Guwākuchi Plate of Indrapāla, where eleven lines of prose are devoted to thirty-two names of the patron king. ⁹

In the inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa the donor is usually described as 'Kuśalīn' i.e., 'in good health' according to the legal etiquette of those days. It indicates that the donation was made when the donor was in his full senses and was not under the influence of any disease or intoxicant and that therefore the deed issued in favour of the donee should have to be recognised as a valid document.

In the donative part of the inscription, the purpose or occasion of a grant, which was generally for the merit to the donor and his parents, is specifically mentioned in many cases. The Dubi and the Nidhanpur Plates of Bhāskara-varman were issued as the previous charters made by Śrī-Bhūti-varman had been worn out. Many of the inscriptions do not refer either the occasion or the purpose of the donation, though some of them were made for acquiring religious merit as they were issued on occasions like saṅkrānti, an eclipse of the sun or of the moon or a religious festival. The Kuruvābāhi Plate of Harjjaravarman was issued on the day of an eclipse. The Ćorāṭbārī and Bargāon Plates of Ratnapāla were issued on the days of Dhanuḥ Saṅkrānti and

of Viṣṇu Saṅkrāntī respectively. The Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva was issued for the purpose of gaining heaven on the day of an ekādaśī.

The recipient, in whose favour the grant was made, sometimes consisted of a single person and sometime of a number of persons. The donees of the Nidhanpur Plate of Bhāskaravarman are 208 Brāhmanas in number and that of the Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha, there are 210 Brāhmana donees. The donees of the inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa were generally Brāhmanas whose names are often mentioned along with those of their fathers and sometimes also with those of their grandfathers and great-grandfathers as well as those of their gotras, pravaras and the Vedic śākhās to which they belonged. In some cases mention have been made of the places from where the donees' families came.

The donation generally consists of a plot of land or a field or a village or several plots, fields or villages. The location of the donated land has always been indicated with the reference to the various administrative units such as grāma, viṣaya, maṇḍala, bhukti, etc. The area of a land is generally specified with the quantity of paddy produced by the land. The boundaries of the donated land are clearly defined. For marking the donated land hillocks, brooks, trees etc. were resorted. Sometimes by erecting bamboo posts the boundaries were demarcated.

The privileges enjoyed by the donees were not exactly the same. In this respect the Nidhanpur Plate of Bhāskara-varman speaks simply that no tax is to be levied on the donated land "as long as the sun, the moon and the earth will endure".¹⁰ The land granted by the Parbatīyā Plate of vanamāla was "free from visits of policemen and the army-men and also from (the obligation to pay) the taxes payable by temporary tenants"¹¹ The Uttarbarbil Plate of Balavarman III speaks that "this plot of land consisting of homestead land, paddy fields, ponds and mounds, standing as it is up to the boundaries of its own (as defined below) is rendered free from all troubles on account of fastening of elephants, searching of thieves, inflicting of punishment, tenants' taxes, duties due to different causes and grazing of the animals such as elephants, horses, camels, cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep as recorded in this charter."¹² (p.135) The land donated by the Nowgong Plate of Balavarman III was "out of bounds of all the troublemakers like the rājñī (queen), the rājaputra, the rānaka, the favourite of the king, the old female guard of the harem, the collector of the Hastibandha tax and the Naukābandha tax, the officer-in-charge of the recovery of stolen property, the policemen, the inflictor of punishment and the collector of the tenants' taxes and duties and the (royal) umbrella bearer."¹² In this connection the Kamaulī Grant of Vaidyadeva says that the donated land is "free from hindrances and entry of the constables and their leaders, complete with

their waters and dry lands and according to the principle of Bhūochidra, free from every type of tax, are ... along with four hundred (inhabitant workmen) ..."¹³

In some cases a statement of the use to which the grant would be put is seen in the early inscriptions. Seven shares of the Nidhanpur Plate of Bhāskaravarman were allotted "for the purpose of bali (worship), caru (oblation) and satra (hospitality)"¹⁴ Land granted by the Tipperah Plate of Lokanātha was for the purpose of the maintenance of the daily worship of the God Ananta-Nārāyaṇa with bali, caru and satra and for the dwelling of Brāhmaṇas versed in the four Vedas.¹⁵

At the starting of the concluding part of the inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa we find the occurrence of an address to Government Officials, leading persons and publics to respect the terms of the grant. It indicates that the protection of the grant was largely depended upon their cooperation. In the Nidhanpur Plate, Bhāskaravarman calls upon the present and the future district officers and the courts of justice in the district of Candrapuri to respect the transaction.¹⁶ The royal order regarding the Kuruvābāhi Plate of Harjjaravaman was addressed to the state officials headed by Viṣayakarṇa, Vyavahārika, Rājā-nājñī, Raṇadhikṛta and others like Rājnayaka, Rājaputra, Rājaballabha etc.¹⁷ Harjjara's Hāyunthal Grant was addressed to the "Mahā-Sainyapati (commander-in-Chief) Śrī Gaṇa,

who delights the whole world and who was like an ornament of the circle of vassals, Mahā-Dvārādhipati (Chief of the gate-keepers) Śrī Jayadeva, Mahā-Pratihāra (Chief usherer) Janārdana, Mahā-Amātya (Chief counsellor) Śrī Govinda and Madhusūdana, Brāhmaṇādhikāra (Officer-in-Charge of the welfare of Brāhmaṇas) Bhaṭṭa Śrī Kaṇṭha ..."¹⁸

In the Uttarbarbil Plate of Balavarman III, address was made to the citizens, beginning with the Brāhmaṇas, the scribes, the administrators and other officials like rājanaka, rājaputra, rājavallabha, rājā, rājñī, rāṇaka in connection with the grant of piece of land.¹⁹ All the addresses of the plates of the Pāladynasty are almost same like that of the Uttarbarbil Plate of Balavarman III which take two lines of each inscriptions. In the Kamauli Plate, Vaidyadeva calls upon the publics beginning with the caṭṭa, the Bhaṭṭa and the Viṣayillaka to respect the grant.²⁰

Another important part of the concluding section of the inscription is the statement of admonition by the donor to the future kings of the land whether of his own or of any other royal house, to the contemporary rulers and those who might replace him or his decendants and to his own officials, dependants and subjects. From dynasty to

dynasty it differs to in length and wording. In the Bidhanpur Plate of Bhāskaravarman it is said that the giver of land rejoices in heaven for sixty thousand years and he who confiscates lives in hell for the same period.²¹

Further, one who confiscates the land given by himself or by others, becomes worm of the filth and rots with the manes.²² Similar statement was made in the Parbatīyā Plate of Vanamāla. Except this we find no admonitory statement or verse in any of the inscription of the Śālastambha

dynasty. It is totally absent in the inscriptions of the Pāla dynasty. We see it again in the inscriptions of Vaidyadeva and Vallabhadeva. It takes three lines in the Kamauli Plate of Vaidyadeva and fourteen lines in the Assam Plate of Vallabhadeva which runs as follows :

"Whoever be the king in my family coming down from Bhāskara in an unbroken line of succession to him, Śrī Vallabha, with highly auspicious words, passionately says -
 "Please protect my fame . (V.23)

"And if my own family becomes extinct and some other king occurs, what indeed will I not be to him, who does not obliterate my fame. (V.24)

"If any person at any time commit any wrong in respect of what is described here in detail and in respect of the locality indicated with boundaries, and if the same

(wrong), is ascertained by the Brāhmanas conversant with the Vedas, then the Primordial Hog would forthwith mete out punishment to them. (V.25)

“Whoever does something favourable, even for a moment and even within his heart, for this alms house, which is, as it were, both a march to the heaven and a march against the enemies, would in this life become the abode of all prosperity and would have all the enemies defeated, and then in the other life would enjoy the coveted world of the gods. (V.26)

“Those, who are religious-minded by nature and pay attention solely to religious deeds, are likely to do something (for this alms house). In this life they would enjoy wealth with children and grand-children and in the life hereafter would obtain the various delights of heaven in large measures. (V.27)

“One who confiscates the land given by himself or by others, becomes worm of the filth and rots with the manes. (V.28)

“Land has been donated by many kings beginning with Sagara. Whoever happens to be the master of the land, gets the result (of the donation)”. (V.29)²³

An official called upon to act as a conveyancer or executor for the gift can be seen in the Nidhanpur Plate of Bhāskaravarman, in the Tipperah Plate of Lokanātha and in the Hāyunthal Plate of Harjjaravarman. This official is generally called Dūta or Dūtaka (meaning the messenger) in north Indian records and Ājñā or Ājñapti or Ajñāpti in the grants of South India.²⁴ Most probably Śrī Gopāla²⁵ was the officer who acted as Dūta in the Nidhanpur Plate of Bhāskaravarman. Sādhivigrahika Prasāntadeva acted as Dūta in the Tipperah Plate of Lokanātha.²⁶ In the Hāyunthal Plate of Harjjaravarman prince Vanamāla performed the duty of Dūta.²⁷ In this connection we may mention that Yuvarāja (heir-apparent) Tribhūvanapāla acted as the dūtaka in the Khālimpur Grant of Dharmapāla.^{27a}

The last component of the concluding section is the description of the persons who produced the grant. In this connection in the inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa only the names of the composer and engraver can be found. Their names have already been mentioned in Table No.3. Here, one remarkable thing is that in the inscriptions of the Śālasambha dynasty no references to the names of the composers or the engravers of the grants are available.

At the end of the Guwākuchi Plate of Indrapāla we find the occurrence of the names Sani, Dhani and Ani.²⁸ Most probably the first two names Sani meaning Sanirāma and Dhani meaning Dhanirāma were the names of the two scribes cum engravers and the name Ani meaning Aniruddha

of Anirāma was the name of the poet.²⁹ Another notable point of this part that king Dharmapāla of the Pāla dynasty himself composed first eight verses of his Puṣpabhadra Grant.

Two another important parts of the inscription of Prāgyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa are the date and issuing centre of the Grant which we have discussed in detail in the previous chapter. These two parts occur either in the donative or in the executive section of the grant. Generally the description of the issuing centre takes one or two lines of the inscription but there are many evidences that it takes 13 - 17 lines of the inscriptions, e.g., the Dīgha-ligāō, the Tezpur and the Parbatīyā Plates of Vanamāla and the Bargāon and the Suvālkuchi Plates of Ratnapāla. The city of Harūppeśvara as depicted by the Tezpur Plates of Vanamāla was as follows :

"There the people belonging to all castes and all the stages of life (āśrama) are extremely happy. This is the place of residence of innumerable fortunate and honest scholars, where the broad royal roads remain crowded with kings who come to pay homage to the monarch and go back being seated on colourful elephants, horses and śivikās (Palkins) and where all the quarters always remain blocked with innumerable military potentialities in the form of

elephants, horses and soldiers (lines 1 to 4). This prosperous city of Harūppeśvara is blessed with the presence of the Lord Lauhitya (line 21). (This river Lauhitya is as follows) : In this river the waters have become fragrant on account of coming in contact with the pollens of the flowers, which have been fallen down from various trees, shaken by the hissing sound of a crowd of snakes, frightened by the cackling sound of the excited peacocks that have been reclining in their homes in the tall trees standing on the Udayavelūcala (i.e., the tallest mountain of the eastern region) (lines 4 to 6). (This was the river) where the waves are rendered fragrant by the clouds formed by the smokes of black agaru trees burnt by the forest-fire occurring in the parks of the city of Harūppeśvara. (lines 6 to 7). The regions on the bank of this river remain plunged in the aroma of the secretions of the musk-deer, who feed on the shoots of the scented leaves of the trees growing on bowers of the chief mountain of the eastern region (literally the region where the sun rises) and who move either alone or in herds being attached with love to the chief of a group or in smaller groups spared by the herds of leopards, which kill a number of deer and get over-fed on their flesh (lines 8 to 10). The current of this river is full with waters which have become purer on account of constantly flowing over the slopes of the

mountain Kāmakūṭa, at the top of which there is the residence of the illustrious god Kāmeśvara and the goddess Mahāgaurī, whose foot-stool is illumined by the series of rays issuing from the crest-jewels of all the gods and demons (lines 11 - 13). The waters in this river are fragrant on account of being addled with the mud of luxurious ladies who have taken a plunge. (lines 13 to 14). The regions adjoining both the banks of this river are embellished with rows of boats (which were as follows): (line 20).

"The boats, like harlots, display the bodies, embellished with varieties of ornaments. They were jingling bells like small girls. They get their speed accelerated by hard strokes like the women of Karnāṭa (who get excited by hard assaults). Like prostitutes they hold chowries (cāmaras). They have red teeth (all round their person) like the damsels of the harem of (the ten headed) Rāvaṇa. They are extremely speedy as if they are consorts of (god) Pavana (i.e., Vāyu). They charm one and all like the beautiful women of Daluhā. Like dancing girls, their trembling increase with the approach of dancers. They always desire to remain in higher position (i.e., a higher level of water) like the gods who happen to have a downfall." (line 14 to 20)³⁰

There is a beautiful description of the city of Durjjayā, in the Bargāon plate of Ratnapāla which is the issuing centre of the said grant. The ^{detailed} description of the city runs as follows :

"The heat of the city of Durjjayā was allayed by the shower of the drops of ichor flowing from the temples of the rows of the spirited elephants presented by the hundreds of kings defeated by the power of (the king's) arms entangled with the series of rays issuing from the sharp swords. (line 28 - 30).

"The city was fit for the residence of great men, although it was full of the forests of the trees in the form of the arms of the strong warriors, ever eager to plunder the cities of all the enemies. (line 30 - 31). Here the orb of the sun used to be covered from view by the tops of the thousands of whitewashed mansions, as white as the smile of the intoxicated beautiful dames. (line 31 - 32). The city was the residence of hundred of people devoted to enjoyment (bhogin) like the (sandal) trees, growing on the soil of the mount Malaya, which are infested by hundreds of snakes (bhogins). Like the sky embellished with (the planets) Budha, Guru (i.e., Brāhaspati) and Kāvya (i.e., Śukra), this city was the place of poetical figures (Kāvya-lankāras) created (or discussed) by the learned men (budhas) and the preceptors

gurus). Like the peak of the mount Kailāśa, which was the abode of Parameśvara (i.e., Lord Śiva) this city was also the abode of Parameśvara (i.e., the king of the Lord Śiva of the local temple) and like the peak of the mount Kailāśa, inhabited by the god Kuvera (i.e., Vित्तेśa), this city was also inhabited by rich men (i.e., Vित्तेśas). (line 30 - 34)

"The outskirts of the city of Durjjayā were covered by a rampart which was like a stout cage for the play-bird in the form of the king of Śakas, a fever for the king of Gurjjaras, a Kūṭapākala disease for the untamable elephant in the form of the king of Gauḍa, a bitumen (śilājatū) for the mountain in the form of the king of Kerala, a veritable source of fear for the kings of Bāhika and Tāyika, a pulmonary consumption for the kings of the Deccan; because of destroying the side of the enemies it (i.e., the rampart) was like a (white silken) cloth covering the door panel in the form of the chest of the king. (line 34 - 36)

"The city of Durjjayā was beautified by the sea-like Lauhitya, which was the remover of the fatigue caused by erotic dalliances of the beautiful damsels, seated on the open tops of the palatial buildings with the help of the particles of water, issuing out of the waves very

lightly stirred by the beautiful breeze mingled with the cackling of the host of intoxicated female swans, which (i.e., the Lauhitya) was like the silken banner carried by the elephant in the form of mount Kailāśa, and which was like a bejeweled mirror of the damsels of the heaven, working as an aid to their preparation for amorous sport. (lines 36 - 39)

"The city of Durjjayā was the object of adoration for innumerable hosts of kings. (line 39)

"In that city of Durjjayā, there used to be jaḍatā (i.e., liquidness only in the (pearl) necklaces but never any jaḍatā (i.e., dullness) in the sense organs; there used to be cañacalatā (i.e., fickleness) only amongst the monkeys but never any cañacalatā (i.e., fickleness) in the minds (of the people); there used to be bhaṅguratā (i.e., fickleness) only in the play of brows but never any bhaṅguratā (i.e., undoing of breach of trust) in respect of deeds undertaken; there used to be sopasargatā (i.e., prefixing of upasargas) only in respect of the roots (i.e. dhātus) but never any sopasargatā (i.e., illness) in respect of the subjects; there used to be Vāmatā (i.e., beauty) only in the damsels (and never any Vāmatā or crookedness in respect of others); there used to be Skhalitam (i.e., faltering of steps) only in

case of the beautiful women elated through the intoxication caused by wine (and never any skhalita or breach of conduct of the people in general); there used to be a sense of apathy (nihrhatā) only toward the wrong doers (and never towards ordinary fellow beings), there used to be desire for incessant madhupāna (i.e., sucking of honey), only in case of swarms of bees (and niratayamadhupānāsakti or interest in incessant drinking of wine was never to be seen in case of the ordinary citizens); there used to be excessive allegiance to the beloved only in case of the cakravāka birds (and never in case of the citizens) and there used to be taking of meat (piśitāsītā) only in case of the animals (and never in case of the citizens)*
 (line 40 - 43)³¹

Nevertheless, such a big description of the capital city added considerably to the length of the donative sections of the charters.

From table No.3, we come to know that the inscription of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa is authenticated by a seal which is an essential part of the plate. The plates of the most of the inscriptions are bound together by a copper ring which passes through a hole in the middle of the left margin. The two ends of the copper ring are joined together and a ladle-shaped lump with a hollow interior

considered on it. It is the royal seal which in most cases oval in size. The hollow surface of the seal is divided into two halves by a horizontal ridge. The upper part contains the counter-sunk figure of a facing front of an elephant, being the royal insignia of the Kāmarūpa kings, while the lower part contains the legend of the donor. At the starting of the legend of the seal, sometimes we find Anji sign which is same to the Anji sign of the benedictory part of the inscriptions. Generally, the legend occurs in three lines. But the legend in the Dubi Plate of Bhāskaravarman occurs in eleven lines containing the genealogy of the Varman dynasty. The seal of the Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha is different from the royal seals of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa which bears a figure of the goddess Lakṣmī or Śrī, standing on a lotus of pedestal.³² Two elephants on the two side of the deity sprinkling her with water from two jars lifted by their trunks.³³ Two attendant figures, seated cross-legged at the two sides of the goddess, are in the posture of pouring out something liquid from two round pots.³⁴ The diametre of the seal measures about four inches.³⁵ In the reverse there is a full-blown lotus.³⁶ Below the pedestal of the goddess there is the legend.³⁷

Notes and References

- 1 Dr. R. D. Choudhury, The Director, Assam State Museums, Govt. of Assam, Gauhati kindly supplied me with this information.
 - 2 Barrie M. Morrison, Political Centres and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal, Delhi, 1974, p. 69.
 - 3 D. C. Sircar, Indian Epigraphy, New Delhi, 1964, p. 127.
 - 4 Cited in P. N. Bhattacharya, The sign ॐ in Ancient Copper Plate of Kāmarūpa, JARS, April, 1933.
 - 5 Ibid., p. 17-18.
 - 6 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 160 - 61.
 - 7 Ibid., p. 22 - 23.
 - 8 Nayanjot Lahiri, Pre-Ahom Assam, New Delhi, 1991, p. 33.
 - 9 loc. cit.
 10. M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 53.
 - 11 Ibid., p. 124.
 - 12 Ibid., p. 147.
 - 13 Ibid., p. 286.
 - 14 Ibid., p. 53.
 - 15 D. C. Sircar, op. cit., p. 303.
 - 16 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 53.
 - 17 JARS, XXVI, 1981-82, p. 4.
 - 18 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 93.
- The list is incomplete due to the loss of the last plate.
- 19 Ibid., p. 135.

- 20 Ibid., p. 286.
- 21 Ibid., p. 54.
- 22 Loc. cit.
- 23 Ibid., p. 299.
- 24 D. C. Sircar, op. cit., p. 143.
- 25 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 54.
- 26 D. C. Sircar, op. cit., p. 303.
- 27 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 92.
- 27a EI, IV, pp. 248 ff; also A. M. Choudhury,
Dynastic History of Bengal, Dacca, 1967, p. 32.
- 28 Guwākuchi Grant of Indrapāla, line 72-74, IAA, p. 200.
- 29 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 194.
- 30 Ibid., p. 103 - 104.
- 31 Ibid., p. 162 - 164.
- 32 EI, XV, p. 302.
- 33 Loc. cit.
- 34 Loc. cit.
- 35 Loc. cit.
- 36 Loc. cit.
- 37 Loc. cit.

CHAPTER - V

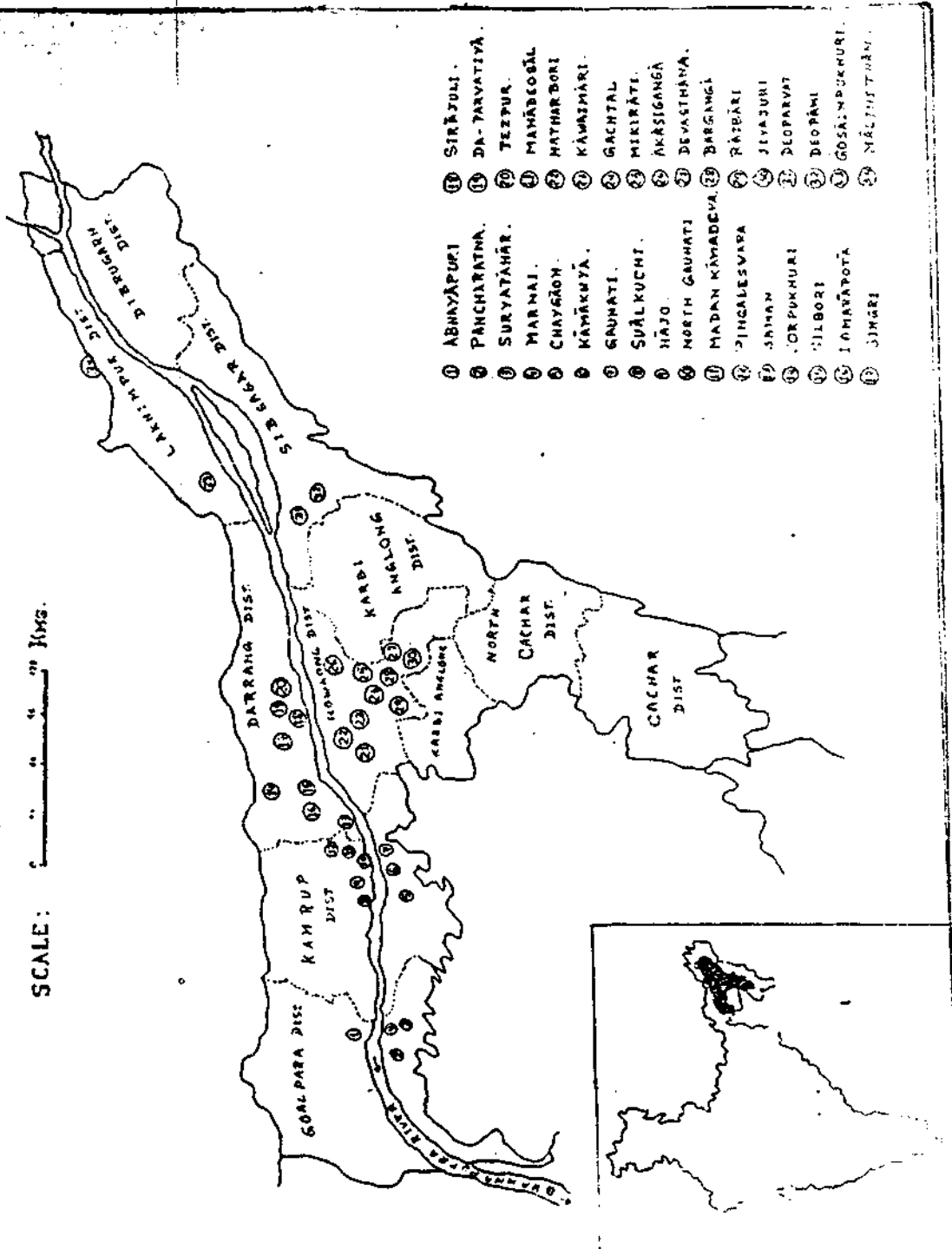
The Donors and the Recipients

In all the available land transferring inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, the donors were the kings and the recipients in most cases, the priests or learned Brāhmanas to whom the former granted tax-free lands. Along with tax-exemption, the granted land was often rendered free from the visits of policemen and army-men and also from the obligation to pay the taxes payable by temporary tenants. Moreover, from the ninth century onwards many administrative functions and judicial powers were also conferred on the donees which continued till the twelfth century.

One of the reasons for allowing such privileges to the Brāhmana donees was due to some injunctions of the law books (Smṛtis) and to a less extent that of the works on polity (Uti). Vaśiṣṭha while recommending that the king may take one-sixth of the wealth from his subjects, makes an exemption in favour of the Brāhmanas.¹ Like Vaśiṣṭha, Āpastambha includes the learned Brāhmanas in a list of persons exempted from taxation.² In this connection Manu says that even at the time of economic hardship of the king, he must not collect taxes (Kara) from learned Brāhmanas, and no Brāhmana living within his kingdom should suffer from hunger.³ We find a similar expression in the Artha Śāstra which stated that " the king who is about

EARLY MEDIAEVAL TEMPLE SITES OF ASSAM

SCALE: 1" = 100 Miles



- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| ① ABHAYAPURI | ① SIRAJULI |
| ② PANCHARATNA | ② DA-PAVATIYA |
| ③ SURYATAMAR | ③ TEZPUR |
| ④ MARNAI | ④ MAHABOBI |
| ⑤ CHAYGRON | ⑤ MATHARBORI |
| ⑥ KAMRUVA | ⑥ KAMZIMARI |
| ⑦ GAUHATI | ⑦ GANTAL |
| ⑧ SIALKUCHI | ⑧ MIKIRATE |
| ⑨ HAJI | ⑨ AKASIGANGA |
| ⑩ NORTH GAUHATI | ⑩ DEVASTHANA |
| ⑪ MADAN KAMARVA | ⑪ BRESANGI |
| ⑫ SINGALESVARA | ⑫ RAIBARI |
| ⑬ SHYAM | ⑬ JIYAJURI |
| ⑭ ORPUKHURI | ⑭ DEOPARVAT |
| ⑮ SILBORI | ⑮ DEOPALI |
| ⑯ IOMATAPOTA | ⑯ GOSAINPUKHURI |
| ⑰ JIMARI | ⑰ NALINTHANI |

COURTESY : DR. P. Sharma

to settle a new or resettle an old territory, as making grants of land, that are immune from taxes and fines and accompanied with rich gifts, to certain classes of Brāhmanas : those comprise the sacrificial priest, the spiritual preceptor, the chaplain (Purohita) and the learned Brāhmana." ⁴

The land donated to the Brāhmanas by the kings of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa were different in size. Sometime it was consisted of a small piece of land capable of yielding 2000 units of paddy e.g. the land donated by the Uttarbarbil copper plate of Balavarman III. ⁵ On the other hand, the donated land was consisted of a big area evident by the Assam grant of Vallabhadeva by which he donated seven villages. ⁶ In the seventh century Bhāskaravarman by his Nidhanpur grant donated land of Mayūraśālmalāgrahāra, capable of supporting 208 Brāhmanas. ⁷

Most probably the Brāhmana donees of the grants were related with the temples situated in different parts of the empire. It is evident by the fact that most of the inscriptions have been discovered in the Darrang, Tezpur, Kamrup, Goalpara, Nowgong, Sivsagar districts of Assam where ruins of ancient temples are present.

Kings of the land were responsible for the maintenance of peace and order in his realm. In this matter, it appears that the kings of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa were assisted indirectly by the donee Brāhmanas who were linked with the temples. These

Brāhmanas utilized religion to support the king and carried on propaganda in favour of the ruler in tribal societies. In another way, it may be said that the kings conferred honours and transferred material resources to the Brāhmanas and the temples; temples conferred honours on the Brāhmanas; and the Brāhmanas conferred honours on the kings.

This property transfer to the Brāhmanas by the kings of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa can be found in the central or executive part of the copper plate grants where a detail account of giving and receiving of property are described.

By the Nidhanpur grant, Bhāskaravarman transferred a large tract of land in the Mayūraśālmalāgrahāra - Kṣetra in the Candrapurī viṣaya.¹¹ Actually he re-issued the grant as the donated land had become taxable due to the loss of previous charter made by Bhūtivarman. The donees had been already enjoying the grant in the manner of bhūmi-ccidra. In the grant the words agrahāra and bhūmi-ccidra have been used in order to describe the condition of the land. According to D.C. Sircar the word agrahāra means a rent-free land given to the Brāhmanas.¹² But V.B. Misra takes it to mean a tahsil i.e., an administrative unit, smaller than a viṣaya.¹³ B.M. Morrison has suggested that the term agrahāra means a land free from all taxes and liabilities in perpetuity as a religious endowment.¹⁴ But D. Sharma holds the opinion that the term Agrahāra meaning a rent-free village in the possession of Brāhmanas was more

Table 4

Donation of Land under the Varman Rulers

Plate Designation	Donor	Granted Property
Sagājarī Khanikārgāon Stone Inscription	Unknown	Unknown
Ambi G.P.	Bhāskaravarman	Unknown
Nidhanpur C.P.	Bhāskaravarman	Exact extent unknown, granted <u>agrahāra</u> land was divided into 166— $\frac{1}{16}$ parts.
Chopperah C.P.	Lokanātha	Not known exactly

Table 5

Name of the Donees and their respective shares as allotted by the Hidhanpur C.P. of Bhāskaravarman.⁸

(The letter S after any name stands for the word swami)

Sl.No.	Names of the Donee	Veda	Gotra	Amsa
1.	Sādhārana S	Vājasaneyī (Yajurveda)	Pracetasa	2
2-3.	Śrīvāsu and his 3 brothers	Do	Do	1
4-7.	Somavasū and brother	Do	Do	$\frac{1}{2}$
8.	Manoratha S	Chāndoga (Samavedi)	Kātyāyana	$1\frac{1}{2}$
9.	Viṣṇughoṣa S	Do	Do	$\frac{1}{2}$
10.	Vedaghoṣa S	Do	Do	1
11.	Danaḍeva S	Bahvṛeya (Ṛgveda)	Yāska	1
12.	Ghoṣaḍeva S	Do	Do	$\frac{1}{2}$
13.	Nanaḍeva S	Bahvṛeya (Ṛgveda)	Yaska	$\frac{1}{2}$
14.	Arkadatta along with his clan	Chāndoga	Bhāradvāja	$1\frac{1}{2}$
15.	Auṣṭidatta S	Do	Do	$\frac{1}{2}$
16.	Rṣidāma S	Vājasaneyī	Kāśyapa	1
17.	Śubhadāma S	Do	Do	1
18.	Śanaścarabhūti with clan	Do	Kausta	1
19.	San̄karṣaṇa S	Bāhvṛeya	Gaurātṛeya	2
20.	Nara S	Do	Do	1
21.	Nārāyaṇa S	Do	Do	$\frac{1}{2}$

No.	Name of the Donee	Veda	Gotra	Ansa
22.	Viṣṇu S	Balvṛōya	Gaurātreya	1
23.	Sadarśana S	Do	Do	1
24.	Gopendra S	Do	Do	1
25.	Arka S	Do	Do	½
26.	Bhānu S	Do	Do	½
27.	Bhuyaskara S	Do	Do	½
28.	Yaśoshūti S with clan	Vājasaneyī	Kṛṣṇātreya	1
29.	Baruṇa S	Chāndoga	Bhāradvāja	1
30.	Madhusena S	Vājasaneyī	Kauṇḍinaya	1
31.	Dhruvasoma S	Chāndoga	Gautama	1
32.	Viṣṇusoma S	Do	Do	1
33.	Viṣṇupālita S	Vājasaneyī	Bhāradvāja	½
34.	Sucipālita S	Do	Do	1
35-36.	Mitrāpālita and Arthapālita	Do	Do	½
37.	Prajāpālita S	Do	Do	½
38.	Madhu S	Do	Gautama	1
39.	Chakraḍeva S	Vājasaneyī	Gautama	½
40.	Kuṣmāṇḍapatra S	Cārakya (Yajurvediya)	Vatsa	$\frac{3}{16}$
41.	Īśvajadatta S	Cārakya	Maudgalya	2
42-43.	Sudarśana and Dinakara S	Vājasaneyī	Do	1
44.	Yajñakunḍa S	Do	Śaunaka or Śaunaka	½
45.	Yaśakunḍa S	Do	Do	½

No.	Names of the Sonee	Veda	Gotra	Amsa
46.	Śrāddhakunḍa S	Vājasaneyī	Śaunhaka or Sāunaka	1
47.	Nārāyaṇakunḍa S	Do	Do	1
48.	Īśvarakunḍa S	Do	Do	1½ 8
49.	Saktikunḍa S	Do	Do	½
50.	Toṣakunḍa S	Do	Do	1½ 8
51.	Sādhu S	Cārakya	Parāśārya	1
52.	Gaṅga S	Chāndoga	Aślāyana	1
53.	Nara S	Bahvṛcya	Varāha	1
54.	Pravarānaga S	Do	Do	3 4
55.	Apanaga S	Do	Do	1
56-57.	Toṣanāga and Hampināga	Do	Do	½
58.	Mānaghoṣa S	Vājasaneyī	Kāśyapa	1
59.	Garṇiṇī S	Chāndoga	Vaiṣṇavṛddhi	1
60.	Janārdana S	Do	Do	1
61.	Arka S	Bahvṛcya	Kauśika	1½
62.	Śradhodasa S	Do	Do	½
63.	Sanātana S	Vājasaneyī	Gautama	1
64.	Harṣaprabha with clan	Vājasaneyī	Do	½
65.	Khaṇḍasoma S	Do	Kauṭilya	1½
66-68.	Śreyaskara, Gati and Gaurīsoma	Do	Do	1
69.	Vakulasoma S	Do	Do	½

No.	Names of the Donee	Veda	Gotra	Amsa
70-71.	Dhṛitisoma and Sīmhasoma S	Vājasaneyī	Kauṭilya	‡
72.	Bhāyaśali S	Do	Kṛṣṇatreya	‡
73.	Yajña S	Do	Do	‡
74.	Daiṣa S	Do	Do	‡
75.	Dardi S	Do	Do	‡
76.	Pradyumna S	Do	Do	‡
77.	Vṛddhi S	Do	Do	2
78-82.	Daiṣakara, Hari, Adbhūta, Tvaṣṭu and Toṣanāga	Do	Do	1
83.	Medha S	Do	Kavestara	1
84.	Dhṛti S with clan	Do	Māṇḍavya	‡
85.	Keśava S	Do	Do	1
86.	Gourī S	Do	Do	1
87.	Sucarita S	Do	Do	‡
88.	Vappa S	Do	Do	1
89.	Karkadatta S	Bahvṛcya	Kauṇḍinya	1
90.	Udayana S	Do	Bhāradvāja	1
91.	Merudatta S	Do	Vaśiṣṭha	1
92-93.	Narendra and Renubhūti S	Vājasaneyī	Agniveśya	1
94.	Medhabhūti S	Do	Do	‡
95.	Chandrapakṣa S	Cārakya	Saṅkṛityāyana	1
96.	Kālī S	Bahvṛcya	Yāska	1
97.	(?) Svāmī	Do	Do	‡
98.	Bhṛṅgimāheśvara S	Do	Do	‡

Sl. No.	Name of the Donee	Veda	Gotra	Amsa
99.	Topālanandi S	Bahvṛcya	Pārāśarya	1
100.	Viśvabhūti S	Do	Bhārgava	1
101-102.	Surāñjita and Sucarita S	Do	Do	½
103.	Sivagana S	Taittirīya	Bhāradvāja	1
104-107.	Vasuśrī S and brothers	Bahvṛcya	Kātyāyana	1
108.	Vīrabhūti S	Vājasaneyī	Kauśika	1
109.	Viṣṇubhūti S	Do	Do	½
110.	Pramodabhūti S	Do	Do	1
111.	Viṣṇudatta S	Do	Bhāradvāja	1
112.	Bhaspati S	Do	Kauṇḍinya	1
113.	Harṣadeva S	Bahvṛcya	Yāska	1
114.	Hodha S	Vājasaneyī	Jātukarṇa	1
115.	Kṛṣṇa S	Do	Do	1
116-117.	Hādihava and Hari	Do	Do	1
118.	Janārdanadeva S	Chāndoga	Bhāradvāja	1
119.	Viṣṇusoma S	Vājasaneyī	Maudgalya	½
120.	Dhanasena S	Cārakya	Gārgya	1
121-122.	Pramodasena and Ghoṣasena	Do	Do	1
123.	Somasena S	Do	Do	1
124.	Bhāskaramitra S	Bahvṛcya	Gautama	1
125.	Madhumitra S	Do	Do	1
126-127.	Sādihār anamitra and Sādhumitra	Do	Do	1

Sl. No.	Name of the Donee	Veda	Gotra	Amsa
128.	Dur̥timitra S	Bāhiv̥ṛeya	Gautama	1
129.	Sukrabhava S	Do	Bhāradvāja	½
1-131.	Sudarśana and Dhaneśvara	Do	Pauṭrimāṣya	1
132.	Ravi S	Vājasaneyī	Sāṅḍilya	1
133.	Madhu S	Do	Do	1
134.	Mahidhara S	Do	Do	1
135.	Bhaṭṭanāheśvara S	Bahiv̥ṛeya	Paur̥ṇa	1
136.	Bhaṭṭinātr̥ S	Do	Do	½
137.	Rudrabhaṭṭi S	Do	Do	½
138.	Adrivilepana S	Chāndoga	Kauśika	1
139.	Gominaga S	Vājasaneyī	Sāvarnika	1
140.	Sūrya S	Do	Do	1
141.	Bhavadēva S	Do	Do	1
142.	Śarvedēva S	Do	Do	1
143.	Gomideva S	Do	Do	½
144.	Sāvitradeva S	Do	Do	2
145.	Arkadeva S	Do	Do	½
146.	Sādhārana S	Do	Do	½
147.	Dāmārata S	Vājasaneyī	Gargya	1
148.	Vasudatta S	Do	Bhāradvāja	2
149.	Yāgeśvara S	Do	Alambāyana	2
150.	Viśeśvara S	Do	Do	1
151.	Divyēśvara S	Do	Do	1

No.	Name of the Donee	Veda	Gotra	Amsa
152.	Gaṇeśvara S	Vājasaneyī	Alambāyana	1
153.	Abud eśvara S	Do	Do	1
154-155.	Jateśvara and Angeśvara	Do	Do	1
156.	Dhanteśvara S	Do	Do	½
157.	Magheśvara S	Do	Do	½
158.	Jahneśvara S	Do	Do	½
159.	Nandeśvara S	Do	Do	1
160.	Dāmabhūti S	Do	Āngirasa	1
161-162.	Prakāśaśvara S with brother	Bahvṛca	Kāśyapa	1
163.	Gāyatripāla S	Vājasaneyī	Yāska	1
164.	Śāntaśarma S	Bahvṛca	Parāśarya	1
165.	Padmadasa S with clan	Do	Kauśika	1
166-169.	Govardhana, Yajñapāla Panu and Sudarśana S	Do	Do	½
170.	Gopāla S	Chāndoga	Paṅkalya	1
171.	Ugradatta	Tailliriya	Kāśyapa	1
172.	Bhāttinanda S	Bahvṛcya	Bārhaspatya	1
173.	Sādhu S	Do	Do	1
174.	Devakula S	Do	Do	1
175.	Janārdana S	Do	Do	½
176-178.	Sunyayana, Nārāyaṇa and Brddhi S	Do	Do	½
179.	Īśvarabhāṭṭa S	Do	Gautama	1

No.	Name of the Donee	Veda	Gotra	Amsa
180.	Bhṛgu S	Bāhvr̥cya	Gautama	½
181.	Rudraghoṣa S	Do	Bhāradvāja	1
182.	Kauśisoma S	Garakya	Kātyāyana	1
183.	Prabhākarakīrti S	Vājasaneyī	Gautama	1
184.	Ananta S	Do	Sāṅḍilya	1
185.	Gatibhaṭṭi S	Bāhvr̥cya	Śaunaka	1
186.	Tejabhaṭṭi S	Do	Do	1
187-189.	Managhoṣa, Tejabhaṭṭi and Nandabhūti S	Do	Do	½
190.	Danabhaṭṭi S	Do	Do	1
191.	Medhabhaṭṭi S	Do	Do	1
192.	Sumatibhaṭṭi S	Do	Do	1
193.	Suyogabhaṭṭi S	Do	Do	1
194.	Śāśvatadāma S	Do	Vātsya	1
195.	Toṣa S	Chāndoga	Gautama	1
196.	Bhaṭṭihara S	Bāhvr̥cya	Varāha	1
197.	Nāgadatta S	Vājasaneyī	Bhāradvāja	½
198-199.	Durveśvara S with brother	Do	Ālambāyana	½
200.	Repādhyā S	Do	Bhāradvāja	½
201-202.	Candradāsa and Vimardana S	Bāhvr̥cya	Kauśika	1
203.	Supratiṣṭhita S	Vājasaneyī	Kāśyapa	1
204.	Nandana S	Do	Gautama	1
205.	Toṣa S	Do	Śākaṭayana	½

Sl. No.	Name of the Donee	Veda	Gotra	Amsa
206-207.	Sarasa and Vandia S	Vājasaneyī	Gautama and Kāśyapa	1
208.	Vidūṣa S	Do	Bharadvaja	$\frac{1}{2}$
For the purpose of <u>bali</u> , <u>Garu</u> and <u>Satra</u>				7
Total				$166\frac{1}{16}$ parts

Table 6

Names of the Donees and their respective shares as allotted by the Tipperah grant of Lokanātha.

Name of the Donee		Portion		Name of the Donee		Portion	
Bhatta	Anantadeva-Svamin	<u>Pātakas</u>	9	Kaṇa			
"	Dharmādama	<u>Pāṭaka</u>	1	Viśva			
"	Nāgadatta	"	"	Khadga			
"	Keśava	"	"	Vadara			
"	Guda(?) nandin	"	"	Vicakṣana			
"	Medhasoma	"	"	Patī (?)			½ of what is not clear
"	Udayacandra	"	"	Govardhana			
"	Manojñadeva	"	"	Prabhāvariṣa			
"	Jayasoma-Svamin	"	"	Viṣṇu			
"	Pūrnadāma	<u>Dronas</u>	20	Andasūri			
"	Videśa	"	20	Pitrikeśvīr			
"	Yajñadeva	"	"	Antacara			
"	Amaradeva	"	"	Harṣabhūti			Portion not known
"	Lōdra (?) - Svamin	"	"(?)	Subrata			Portions not known
"	Pūrnaghoṣa	"	"	Bhanda			
"	Ugrasoma	"	"	Harṣa			Portion not known
"	Manoratha			Madra			Portions not known
"	Ravi (?) la			Khaliśa			
"	Rāsañscāla	(Jointly)		Vṛiddhidroha			<u>Dronas</u> 20(?) of Woodland
"	Bhikṣāta	<u>Pātakas</u>	2	Vidagdha and others			<u>Pāṭaka</u> 1
"	Harīśarman	<u>Dronas</u>	10+7=17	Kakka			<u>Dronas</u> 20
"	Jayasoma	"	10+5(?)=15	Muṇeśa (?)			
"	Nanda	"	"	Teja			
"	Abānu	"	10 (?)	Soma Janārdana			(Jointly) <u>Dronas</u> 20(?)
				Inda			
				Viṣṇu			
				Satyaśa			
				Sūrya			

Name of the Donee	Portion	Name of the Donee	Portion
Rudra		Navacakra	
Vikasīta		Jaya	
Harīśa		Sīva	(Jointly) <u>Drones 20</u>
Vijaya		Viṣṇu	
Vāmana	(Jointly) <u>Pāṭaka 1(?)</u>	Sujātasārman	
Gopīśarman		Bandhu	
Ānanda		Vedāju	
Nirdhāra		Lavvu	
Sutoṣa		Dhṛīti	
Lochnka		Jayamitra	
Sukṣmabhūti	<u>Pāṭaka 1</u>	Deva	
Rudra	(Jointly) <u>Pāṭaka 1</u>	Sra (?) dhu	Portions not known.
Dāmodara		Videśa	
Anda		Jīva	
Nṛisoma		Mahāsaka	
Vidagdha	portions not known	Vilhi	
Janārdana		Suy (?) ta	
Upati (?)		Ugra	
Skanda		Pratoṣaka	
Isāya		Artha	
Pati		Adbhū	
Kriṣṇa	Portions not known	Santosa	
Bhava		Dai taṅaṅa	
Rudra		Rupa	
Surata		Santu (?)	Portions not known.
Janasoma		Viṣṇumitra	
Vidagdha		Nistārāṅa	
Vappa		Govinda	
Dhṛīti		Koṭṭa (?)	
Avallīṅga		Kahāra (?)	
Koṭṭa (?)		Vappa (?)	
Budhadatāsarvada	portions not known	gdha	
Vaḍḍasārman			

Name of the Donee	Portion	Name of the Donee	Portion
Suśeṣa		Kṛiṣṇa	
Lavvu		Harīśa	
Līṅga		Vikāśita	
Soka		Manoratha	
Hambo		Vṛikāśa	
Subha		Nayana	
Gunatoṣa		Chitra	
Yappa	Portions not known.	Vipascita	Portions not known.
Soka		Yajña	
Vappa		Sukṛita	
Atithi		Toṣa	
Bhānu		Chandra-Vappa	
Kṣīragardha		Ahi	
Nidhi		Markaṭa	
Bhadra		Candra	
Janārdana		Prāṇa	Portion not known.
Bhāskara	<u>Droṇas 20 (?)</u>	Manda	
Vappa		Aśemabhūti	<u>Pāṭakas 2</u>
Devulatta	<u>Droṇas 20</u>	Vappa	
Jhamaṅkara	<u>Droṇas 20</u>	Deva	
Bhāṭṭa Pramaṅgatta	<u>Droṇas 20</u>	Prasānta	
" Apadatta	<u>Droṇas 20</u>	Dudhu-Svānin	<u>Pāṭaka 1 (each ?)</u>
Svamicatta-Vappa	Portions not known.	Prakāśa	
Chandra		Śama	
Pāna		Śaivadama	<u>Droṇas 20</u>
		Śaṅka	(Jointly) <u>Droṇas 20(?)</u>
		Yadva-Svānin	(Jointly) <u>Droṇas 20(?)</u>

Name of the Donor	Portion	Name of the Donor	Portion
Nārāyaṇa Haridēva Candrakeśa	(Jointly) Pāṭaka 1	Madhu (?) Lakṣaṇa Dhānānanda Paraśala	
Bhaṭṭa Suta	<u>Dronas</u> 10	Uṣā Indra	
" Piñchadeva	<u>Pāṭaka</u> 1	Hari Dhṛiti Iccha Deva	It is not clear each of these men got one <u>adhika</u>
Nandagopa Vanamāli Trilocana Khanya	Portions not known.	Gaṇa Mahārāja Dadhībhāta	
Puṅgava Ahi ... Svāmin	Jointly (?) <u>Pāṭakas</u> 9	<u>Bhogin</u> Bhavadāsa	<u>Dronas</u> 20
Samridha Sangha Santoṣa	Portions not known.	<u>Pācaka</u> Vasu	" "
Jayaśarman Daidava Ivaṅti (ni?)		<u>Racaka</u> Sudhame(?)	" "
Naravijaya Śambhuvijaya Guptajaya		Vīra (?) ha	" 10 + 9.
		<u>Utkhata-karmana</u> Naradatta	" 10 + 9 = 19
Sūri	<u>Dronas</u> 9 (?)		
Priya	<u>Dronas</u> 10		

N.B.: Many more names has been lost and allotment of portions has not been ascribed to proper persons.¹⁰

popular in Southern India than in the North.¹⁵ In Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa a village was sub-divided into Ksetra or arable land, khila or waste-land, go - (pra -) cara-bhūmi or land for cattle grazing and vāstubhūmi or building sites.¹⁶ Therefore, the land donated by the Nidhanpur grant was a tax-free arable land of Mayūrasālmalā village of Candrapurī viṣaya.

B.M.Morrison wants to mean the term bhūcchidra as a land unfit for cultivation, which is exempt from any tax demand.¹⁷ According to D.C.Sircar, the term speaks of an old custom by which a person who brought a piece of fallow or jungle land under cultivation for the first time was allowed to enjoy it without paying rent.¹⁸ The custom was based on the principle that the hunted deer belonged to him who hit it first.¹⁹ The Cchidra in this case seems to have originally referred to the furrowing of the land.²⁰ Gradually, however, "the expression bhūmi-cchidra acquired the meaning of uncultivable (Kṛsyayogya) land ... "²¹ Yādavaprakāśa in his Vaijayanti says that the term means an uncultivable land.²² Such land remained tax-free when it used to be brought under cultivation for the first time.²³ But R.S.Sharma by referring nine inscriptions from Gujarat and Maharashtra of 5th to 7th centuries, holds that the term bhūmicchidra have been used in cases of those villages and plots of lands which were settled and cultivated.²⁴ One of these inscriptions from Gujrat, ^{of 642 A.D.} granted land which included a farm-house (śaśībaram) indicating that the land was cultivated.²⁵ Therefore, it appears that

the term will mean that just as no assessment of taxes is made on unarable land, so also no assessment is to be made for these donated lands.²⁶

We do not get any clear idea of the quantity of land, donated by the Nidhanpur grant as no unit of land measurement has been stated in the grant. There is only a reference of division of the granted land into $116\frac{1}{16}$ parts.²⁷ But in the Tipperah grant of Lokanātha we find the term pāṭakas and dronas as the units of land measurement. We shall get an idea of these units of land measurement from a quotation of Mr. Morrison. "The total Vainyagupta grant is for eleven pāṭakas, which are made up of different sized plots measuring seven pāṭakas and nine dronavāpas, twenty-eight dronavāpas, thirty-three dronavāpas, thirty dronavāpas and two pāṭakas less one-quarter (pāḍona - pāṭaka - dvaya - parimāṇa - kṣetra - khaṇḍasya). If we take expression 'two pāṭakas less a quarter' to mean one and one-half pāṭakas, then we have the relationship that eleven pāṭakas equal eight and one-half pāṭakas plus one hundred dronas. Therefore, forty dronas equal one pāṭaka. Moreover, if the dronas in these plates are the same as those in the district grant, the five Kulyavāpas equal one pāṭaka, for in the district inscriptions it had been established that eight dronas equalled one Kulyavāpa."²⁸

Here we see that in the Gupta inscription, a pāṭaka is equivalent to forty dronas. The term droṇa means an area on which one droṇa of seeds could be sown.²⁹ But how much quantity of grain contained in a droṇa to any known unit of measure - it is not known. D.C.Sircar points out that the term droṇa was also known in certain regions outside Bengal and its neighbourhood.³⁰ But the area denoted by the term differed from place to place even in Bengal.³¹ Similar also is the case with the denotation of the term pāṭaka.³² In Sanskrit lexicons the weight of the contents of a drona is variously given e.g. 80 -, 64 -, 32 -, 20 -, and 16 seers etc.³³ At present in Assam the measure of a Droṇa (dona in Assamese) is equal to 5 seers or 4.28676 kgs. in case of rice and 3½ seers or 3.21507 kgs. in case of grain. It has been suggested by P.C.Choudhury that a plot of land producing 2000 Assamese dona of paddy should roughly measure 5 bighas of land according to the prevailing land measurement in Assam.³⁴

Table 7

Donation of Land under the Śīlastambha Rulers

Plate Designation	Donor	Granted Property
Nagāon CP	Śrī Jīvarāja	Not known
Kuruvābāhi CP	Harjjaravarman	Land producing 4000 <u>Putaka</u> of paddy and also a land yielding 2000 units of paddy.
Hāyanthāl CP	Harjjaravarman	Not known
Dīghalīgṣṣ CP	Vanamāla	A <u>khandalaka</u> of land divided into some <u>angśas</u>
Tezpur CP	Vanamāla	A village, named Abhiśū-ravūṭaka containing land and water
Parbatīyā CP	Vanamāla	A village, named Haposa-grāma
Uttarbarbil CP	Balavarman III	Land producing 2000 units of paddy
Nagāon CP	Balavarman III	Land yielding 2000 units of paddy
Ulubārī CP	Balavarman III	Land yielding 2000 units of paddy

In this group of land grants we find that all the grants were issued by the kings of the land and no grant was issued by any subordinate ruler. Secondly, all the recipients of this group are individual Brāhmanas except the Dīghalīgāō grant of Vananāla where the recipients were Brāhmana Gallaharā and his five brothers. Thirdly, there are references of the donation of a village in two grants of this group for the first time. Fourthly, some new terms have been used in this group in connection with the donation of lands.

By the Kuruvābāhi grant, Harjjaravarman donated a plot of land yielding 4000 puṭaka of paddy along with a land producing 2000 units of paddy. In no land grants of our period we find the term 'Puṭaka' but see the expressions such as dhānyadvisaharsa (Uttarbarbil CP and Ulubārī CP of Balavarman III, Bargāon CP of Ratnapāla and Guvākuchi CP of Indrapāla), dhānyachatusahasra (Nowgong CP of Balavarman III and Gauhati CP of Indrapāla) dhānyasatsahasrika (Khanāmukh CP and Śubhañkarapāṭaka CP of Dharmapāla), dhānyastahasra (Gachtal CP of Gopāla) and dhānyadaśahasra (Puṣpabhadra CP of Dharmapāla) etc. indicating areas yielding two thousand -, three thousand -, four thousand -, six thousand -, eight thousand and ten thousand units of paddy respectively. The expressions have been made in such a manner that it appears that the particular measure or weight was most popular and thus a standard

one. Most probably this popular measure or weight was drona.

The term puṭaka occurs again in the Nilācala grant of Mādhavaḍeva (C. 15th Cen. approx.), Hayagrīva Mādhava grant (C. 1677 A.D.) and in the Lapatkatā grant of the time of Rudrasingha (C. 1701 A.D.).³⁵ Again the word puṭi have been used for the same purpose in the Dhenukhanā grant of king Satyanārāyaṇa and Pratyakṣanārāyaṇa (C. 1392 A.D.) and in the Ghilāmarā grant of king Lakṣminārāyaṇa (C. 1401 A.D.).³⁶ It has been suggested by Dr. D. Chutia that both the words puṭaka and puṭi are used to indicate a particular land measure, supposedly equivalent to a Assamese Purā, a measure equal to four Assamese bighas, one bigha measuring 4800 sq. yards.³⁷ The term puṭaka may also imply a land and grain measure, equalling four bighas in case of land and three donas (drona) in case of grain.³⁸

At the time of describing the nature of grant, most of the inscriptions of the Śālastambha and Pāla dynasty use the similar statement of the Kuruvābāhi grant of Harjjaravarman which says that it is given along with its land, waters etc. ~~which says that it is given along with its land, waters etc.~~ which is free from all troubles on account of fastening of elephants (hastibandha), fastening of boats (naukābandha), chourodharana, uparikara, utkhetana and grazing of animals such as elephants, horses, camels, cows, buffaloes, goats and

sheep.³⁹ In the Nowgong grant of Balavarman III we find the term aparikara which is similar to the term uparikara of the Kuruvābāhi grant.⁴⁰ In Wilson's Glossary the word uparikara means 'a tax levied on cultivators having no proprietary right on the soil.'⁴¹ According to Hoernle "uparikara is a fiscal term; the rent or tax (kara) paid by an upari or tenant who does not reside or has no occupancy rights in the land.'⁴² L.D.Barnett thinks uparikara as the Tamil melvarām or the king's share of the produce.⁴³ In this regard the suggestion of P.C.Choudhury seems to be the most correct one. According to him "upari" is clearly a preposition with the sense of Latin super or extra, and uparikara, therefore, means an extra revenue derived from all classes of cultivators, both permanent and temporary.⁴⁴

Utkhetana was also a tax levied on special occasions as an emergency measure.⁴⁵ R.D.Banerjee takes the term chourodharana in the sense of the right of extirpation of robbers.⁴⁶ But U.N.Ghosal thinks it as an oppressive tax imposed upon the villagers for protection against thieves.⁴⁷ It was levied for the maintenance of the village police and was assigned to the donees along with the land itself.⁴⁸ It appears that the donees were exempted from any provision to pay anything and provide for the maintenance of police who might enter their land in connection with the apprehension of thieves.⁴⁹

Table 8

Donation of land under the Pāla Rulers

Plate Designation	Donor	Grant property
Coratbārī CP	Ratnapāla	Land capable of yielding 4000 units of paddy
Bargāon CP	"	Land capable of yielding 2000 units of paddy
Suwālkuchi CP	"	Land capable of yielding 3000 units of paddy
Gauhati CP	Indrapāla	Land capable of yielding 4000 units of paddy
Guākuchi CP	"	Land capable of yielding 2000 units of paddy
Gachtal CP	Gopāla	Land capable of yielding 8000 units of paddy
Khanāmukh CP	Dharmapāla	Land capable of yielding 6000 + 2000 units of paddy
Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka CP	"	Land capable of yielding 6000 + 2000 units of paddy
Puṣpabhadra CP	"	Land capable of yielding 10000 units of paddy

The terms hastivandha and naukābandha meaning 'roping the elephants' and 'tying boats' respectively might have some occasional taxes imposed upon the people in Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.⁵⁰ According to D.C.Sircar, Naukābandha was perhaps a tax levied upon the boatmen at landing places.⁵¹

The donation of lands under the Pālas follow the same terminology of the previous dynasty. But the distribution of granted land in the Western part of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, instead of eastern part under the previous dynasty, makes it clear that due to some reasons the Pālas shifted their political and cultural activities from east to west, this inference is confirmed by the fact that the Pāla rulers starting from Indrapāla donated large amount of lands in that area. The Gauhati grant of Indrapāla, the Gachthal grant of Gopālavarman, the Khanāmukh, Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka and Puṣpabhadra grants of Dharmapāla record the donation of lands producing 4000, 8000, 8000, 8000 and 10000 units of paddy respectively. It has been suggested that this change was due to either of two causes viz. 1. The Shān and other non-Aryan tribes became powerful in the east and threatened Prāggyotiṣa, 2. that in the west Gauḍa kings attacked Kāmarūpa. It may be that the rulers of the Pāla dynasty paid special attention to the west rather than the east to save the situation.

Donation of Land after the Pāla Rulers

The land grants made after the Pāla dynasty follow the same form and style of those of the preceding dynasties with some remarkable exceptions. The script used in the Assam plate of Vallabhadeva has more affinity with the scripts of Bengal inscriptions than those of Kāmarūpa. The whole text of the grant is in verse. By this grant Vallabhadeva granted seven villages for the maintenance of an alms house which is an exception among the inscriptions of the land.

The prose portion of the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva is full of deśi words. In the seal, there is a figure of four handed Gaṇeśa which can not be found in any other inscriptions of Kāmarūpa. By both the grants of the period donations were made of villages.

The Donees under the Varman Rulers

In the Nagājarī-Khanikargāon inscription we find the names of Mahattara Brahmadata and Vāji.⁵² P.C.Choudhury thinks the former as the donee of the inscription.⁵³ If it is so then there must be the word Bhaṭṭa before the word Mahattara. According to D.C.Sircar the term Mahattara means a member of the village assembly.⁵⁴ Accordingly it may be

that Brahmadatta and Vāji were members of the village assembly.⁵⁵ They acted as the witnesses of the donation or demarcation of the plot of land concerned.

Due to loss of the last plate of the Dubi grant of Bhāskaravarman we do not get the complete list of the Brāhmana donees of the inscription. From last portion of the fifth plate we get the name of some donees. Here mention have been made of the Vedaśākhās and gotras of some of them. They are :

Bhaṭṭa Priyañkaraghoṣasvāmin, a follower of the Vājasaneyī (carana of the Yajurveda) belonging to the Kauśika gotra, Āṅgārīka Bhaṭṭadevaghoṣasvāmin, a follower of the Vājasaneyī carana and belonging to the Kauśika gotra, where the share-holders are Bhaṭṭapriyañkaraghoṣasvāmin, Bhaṭṭaparaśaraghoṣasvāmin, Bhaṭṭadhruvaghoṣasvāmin, Bhaṭṭabhūmaghoṣasvāmin, Dakṣṇaghoṣasvāmin, Śreyāṣkaraghoṣasvāmin, Bṛhaspatisvāmin of Maudgalya gotra, ... of Māṇḍavya gotra, Kabhaṭṭasvāmin of Kauśika gotra, ... "⁵⁶

In the Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskaravarman, we get a complete list of the Brāhmana donees with their respective shares and Vedic śākhās. It is seen in table No. 5 that the donees of this grant belonged to the following gotras : Agniveśya, Alambayana, Aśvalayana, Aigirasa, Kavestara, Kātyāyana, Kāśyapa, Kṛṣṇatreya, Kauṭilya, Kauṇḍinya, Kausta, Kauśika, Gautama, Gaurātreya, Gārgya, Jātukarna, Parāśarya,

Prācetasā, Bhāradvāja, Bhārgava, Maṇḍavya, Maudgalya, Yaska, Vaśiṣṭha, Vātsa, Varāha, Vārhospatya, Viṣṇavṛddhi, Pauri-
māsyā, Pauruṣa, Sāvarṇika, Śālaṅkāyana, Pāṅkalya, Śākatāyana,
Sāṅḍilya, Śaunaka, Saubhaka (?) and Sankṛityāyana. Their
vedic śākhās were Cārakya (Yajurveda), Chāndogya (Sāmaveda),
Taittirīya (Yajurveda), Vājasaneyī (Yajurveda) and Valvṛicya
(Rgveda).

The Tipperah grant of Lokanātha transferred a large area of land to support the service at the temple of Ananta-Nārāyaṇa and to help sustain the community of over two hundred Brāhmaṇas who were associated with the temple. But the grant is silent about the gotras and vedic śākhās of the donee Brāhmaṇas.⁵⁷

Here we see that all the grants of Varman period donated large tracts of land to the Brāhmaṇa communities and not to individual Brāhmaṇas. It may be that the donated lands of Varman period were situated on the edge of cultivated areas which were for some other reason difficult for the individual cultivator to bring under profitable cultivation. For example, the land donated by the Tipperah grant was a jungle area having a thick network of bush and creepers, where deer, buffaloes, boars, tigers, serpents etc. enjoy, according to their will, all pleasures of home-life ...". There might have some strategic reason also. In order to strengthen their position in a newly conquered area the kings

of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa had done so. Here we may remind that the donated land of the Nidhanpur grant was located at the outskirts of the empire of Bhāskaravarman.

The Donees under the Śālastambha Dynasty

In the fragmentary copper plate inscription of Jīvarāja we find a reference to a Brāhmaṇa family of Kāmarūpa. Most probably this family was related to the recipient of the charter.⁵⁸ Besides this, nothing is known about the donee of this inscription. By the Kuruvābāhi grant of Harjjaravarman, the donation was made in favour of a Brāhmaṇa, named Dhāresuta, son of Maṇvadeva, who again is the son of famous Kumāra-dvija belonging to the Naidhruva-Pravara of the Kauṇḍinya-gotra, and follower of the Kāṇva-śākhā of the Yajurveda.⁵⁹ Due to loss of the last plate of the Hāyunthal grant of Harjjaravarman we know nothing about the recipient of the grant. The recipients of the Dīghaligṣṣ grant of Vanamāla are Bhaṭṭa Gallahara and his five brothers viz. Bhaṭṭa Gayāhara, Payohara, Balahara, Caṇamāna and Kātyāyana.⁶⁰ Jātaveḍa of Kauśika gotra was their father.⁶¹ The donee of the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla was a Brāhmiṇ named Indoka.⁶² Bhijjāta of Śāṇḍilya gotra was his father who studied the whole Yajurveda along with the ancillaries.⁶³ The name of Indoka's mother was Sabhāyikā.⁶⁴

Brāhmaṇa Cūḍāmani was the donee of the Parbatīyā grant of Janamāla.⁶⁵ Bhaṭṭa Jejjāta was donee's father who belonged to the carana of the Sāmaveda and of Sāṅḍilya gotra.⁶⁶ By the Uttarbarbil grant of Balavarman III, the donation was made to a Brāhmaṇa named Śyāmadeva.⁶⁷ Gabhiṣṭhira was his father.⁶⁸ Garga of Upamanyu gotra was Gabhiṣṭhira's father "who was a master of entire vedic lore, reputed through the performance of several sacrifices, a follower of the Kāṇva school of Vedas, and the very repository of Yajurveda."⁶⁹ Balavarman III donated land to Bhaṭṭa Śyāmadeva for the merit of his parents and for his own welfare on the day of annual celebration of Śakrotthāna.⁷⁰ The donee of the Nowgong grant of Balavarman III was Brāhmaṇa Śrutidhara.⁷¹ Devadhara⁷² was his father and Śūmayikā⁷³ was his mother. Mālādihara Bhaṭṭa was the father of Devadhara who was a follower of the Kāṇva śākhā of Vedas and of Kāpila gotra.⁷⁴ Here Balavarman III donated land to Śrutidhara for the cause of his parents gaining welfare in the other world.⁷⁵ By the Ulubārī grant of the same king, donation was made to Brāhmaṇa Bhavadeva at the holy juncture of the Sun's passing into the north of the equator for king's own welfare.⁷⁶ The names of Bhavadeva's parents were Budhadēva⁷⁷ and Uṣa.⁷⁸ Viṣṇudeva was Budhadēva's father who was a follower of the Kāṇvaśākhā of Yajurveda and of Parāśara gotra.⁷⁹

Here we see that under the Śālastambha dynasty all the

grants were made to individual Brāhmaṇa except the Dīghalīgāô grant of Vanamāla where the donees were five brothers. Secondly, under this dynasty, the use of pravara⁸⁰ by the Brāhmaṇa donee is found for the first time in Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. In the Kuruvābāhi grant of Harjjaravarman, pravara of donee's grand father has been mentioned along with his gotra and vedic Śākhā. Thirdly, some of the grants under the Śālastambha dynasty were made for earning puṇya not only for the donors but also for their parents, e.g., the Tezpur and Parbatīyā grants of Vanamāla, Uttarbarbil, Nagāon and Ulubārī grant of Balavarman III. Some of these donations were made on the occasion of auspicious days. In the Uttarbarbil grant of Balavarman, the gift is recorded to have been made at the time of annual worship in connection with Śakrotthana.⁸¹ The gift recorded in the Nagāon grant of Balavarman has been made at the time of Vishuvat (Kāle Vishuvatī).⁸² The time of making the gift in the Ulubārī grant of Balavarman III is given as Udaksankramana.⁸³

Brāhmaṇa Donees under the Pāla Dynasty

The donee of the Coratbārī grant of Ratnapāla was Brāhmaṇa Siddhapāla who was a master of Yajurveda. Siddhapāla was the son of Nidhipāla who again was the son of Jayapāla belonging to Gautama gotra and follower of Kāṇva

Sānu.⁸⁵ The donee of the Bargāon grant of the same king was Vīradatta.⁸⁶ Sadgāgadatta was donee's father and Syāmayikā was donee's mother. Devadatta was donee's grandfather belonging to Parāśara gotra and follower of the Kāṇva śākhā of the vājasaneyī saṁhitā (of the Yajurveda).⁸⁷ Ratnapāla donated land to Vīradatta on the auspicious moment of the Viṣṇupadī saṁkrānti for the fame of his parents and for his own merit.⁸⁸ The donee of Ratnapāla's Suwālkuchi grant was Brāhmaṇa Kāmadeva.⁸⁹ Vasudeva was donee's father⁹⁰ and Ccheppāyikā was donee's mother.⁹¹ Valadeva, the donee's grandfather was well-versed in Vedic lore and belonged to the vājasaneyī saṁhitā of the Kāṇvaśākhā.⁹² King Ratnapāla made this donation to Kāmadeva for the merit of his parents and of him and for gaining fame.⁹³ By the Gauhati grant of Indrapāla land was donated to Brāhmaṇa Deśapāla⁹⁴ who was the son of Savarapāla.⁹⁵ Saukhayikā was donee's mother.⁹⁶ Haripāla was donee's grandfather belonging to Kāśyapa gotra and follower of the Yajurveda.⁹⁷ Brāhmaṇa Devadeva was the donee of the Guwālkuchi grant of the same king.⁹⁸ Vasudeva and Anurādhā were the parents of the donee.⁹⁹ Somadeva, the grandfather of the donee lived at Vainama, a village in Savathi.¹⁰⁰ He was a follower of the Kāṇvaśākhā of the Yajurveda. No mention has been made of his gotra in the inscription. Due to loss of the last plate we know nothing about the donee of the Gachtal grant of Gopālavarman. The donee of the Khanāmukh grant of Dharmapāla was Brāhmaṇa Mahābāhu¹⁰¹ who was the son of Viṣṇu.¹⁰² Manoramā was his mother.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁴
 Annoka was his grandfather who lived in Madhyadeśa and belonged to the Kāśyapa gotra. He was a follower of the Kānvaśākhā of Yajurveda. The donee's of Dharmapāla's Śubhañ-karapāṭaka grant was Brāhmaṇa Himāṅga¹⁰⁵ and his brother Trilocana,¹⁰⁶ Bharata was donee's father and Pāukā was donee's mother.¹⁰⁷ Rāmadeva who was donee's grandfather lived at Krosāñya - a village in Srāvastī.¹⁰⁸ He was a follower of Kauthumaśākhā and belonged to Sāṅḍilya gotra. The donee of the Puṣpabhadra grant of the same king was Brāhmaṇa Madhuśūdana.¹⁰⁹ Patrā was his wife.¹¹⁰ Sutanu and Netrā were the parents of Madhuśūdana.¹¹¹ Bhāsvara and Jīvā were again the parents of Sutanu.¹¹² Naravāhana was the father of Sutanu who lived at Khyātipali where Brāhmaṇas of pure Maudgalya gotra having the pravaras of Autathya, Maudgalya and Aṅgīrasa lived.¹¹³ These Brāhmaṇas were the followers of Madhyandinaśākhā of Yajurveda.

In the land grants of the Pāla dynasty, it is seen that most of the donees were followers of Kānvaśākhā of Yajurveda. Secondly, the land grants after Ratnapāla are silent about the purposes of donations, Thirdly, in the land grants under previous dynasties we find no any mention of the original home of the donee. But from the time of Indrapāla it is seen that almost all the inscriptions mention the original home of the donee.

The Donees After the Pāla period

Śrī Śrīdhara,¹¹⁴ the donee of the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva, belonged to the Kauśīka gotra.¹¹⁵ Yudhiṣṭhira and Pāi were donee's parents.¹¹⁶ The name of the grandfather of donee was Bharata who lived in the strongly administered village called Bhāva in the Varāndrī region,¹¹⁷ Vaidyadeva made this grant to Śrīdhara on the Viṣuvati (saṁkrānti) on Vaiśākha on an Ekadaśī (tithi) for gaining heaven.¹¹⁸ Vallabhadeva in his Kamauli grant donated seven villages for the maintenance of an alms house, established by him, for the hungry ones for his mother's obtaining the heaven for ever.¹¹⁹

Under the previous dynasty we observe that the land grants after Ratnapāla do not mention the purposes of donation. But in the inscriptions of Vaidyadeva and Vallabhadeva the purposes of donation are mentioned. In the inscription of Vallabhadeva the donation was made for the maintenance of an alms house.

Notes and References

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- 2 Loc. cit.
- 3 Ibid., P. 184.
- 4 Ibid. p. 183.
- 5 Bargāon Grant, line 37, IAA, p. 132 . .
- 6 Assam Grant, VV. 15-17, IAA, p. 298.
- 7 Nidhanpur grant, lines 50-53, IAA, p. 43
- 8 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 76-81.
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- 16 S. Chattopadhyay, CHA, p. 236.
- 17 B. M. Morrison, op. cit., p. 93.
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- 19 Loc.cit.
- 20 Loc.cit.
- 21 Loc.cit.
- 22 Vaijayantī, Bhūmikhaṇḍa, Vaisyādhyāya, V.18.

- 23 Loc.cit.
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- 25 Loc.cit.
- 26 D. Sharma, op. cit., p. 125.
- 27 M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 81.
- 28 B. M. Morrison, op. cit., p. 91.
- 29 P. C. Choudhury, HCPA, p. 280.
- 30 D. C. Sircar, I.E., p. 414.
- 31 Loc.cit.
- 32 H. K. Barpujari, CHA, p. 188.
- 33 JARS, XXVI, 1981-82, p. 10.
- 34 P. C. Choudhury, Asom Sāhitya Sabhā Patrikā, Vol. 15.
No.3, p. 187-94.
- 35 D. Chutia, JARS, Vol. XXVI, 1981-82, p. 10.
- 36 Loc.cit.
- 37 Loc.cit.
- 38 Loc.cit.

It must be noted that at present in Assam a basket or a vessel made either by bamboo or cane shreds or of a particular type of leaves is used for measuring grains which is called doṇa.

- 39 Kuruvābāhī grant, lines 19-21, JARS, XXVI, 1981-82, p. 7.
- 40 Nowgong grant, line 38, IAA, p. 146.
- 41 Cited in D. C. Sircar, IE, p. 394.
- 42 Cited in M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 125.
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- 44 P. C. Choudhury HCPA, p. 275.
- 45 Loc.cit.
- 46 R. D. Banerjee, EI, XIV.
- 47 U. N. Ghosal, IHQ, V. pp. 277-79.
- 48 Loc.cit.
- 49 P. C. Choudhury, ABR, p. 152.
- 50 H. K. Barpujari, CHA, p. 191.
- 51 D. C. Sircar, IEG, p. 213.
- 52 Nagājāri-Khanikargāon Stone Inscription, line 2,
IAA, p. 304.
- 53 Cited in M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 304.
- 54 Ibid., p. 305.
- 55 Loc.cit.
- 56 Ibid., p. 28.
- 57 R. G. Basak, EI XIV, p. 311.
- 58 D. Chutia, JARS, XXXI, 1989-90, p. 108.
- 59 Ibid., XXVI, 1981-82, p. 4.
- 60 Ibid., XXIX, 1986-87, p. 42.
- 61 Ibid., line 57.
- 62 Tezpur grant, V. 32, IAA, p. 105.
- 63 Ibid., V. 30, IAA, p. 105.
- 64 Ibid., V. 31, IAA, p. 105.
- 65 Parbatīyā grant, V. 26, IAA, p. 124.
- 66 Loc.cit.
- 67 Uttarbarbil grant, V. 29, IAA, p. 136.
- 68 Ibid., V. 27, IAA, p. 135.

- 69 Ibid., V. 26, IAA, p. 135.
 70 Ibid., V. 30, IAA, p. 136.
 71 Nowgong grant, V. 30, IAA, p. 148.
 72 Ibid., V. 27, IAA, p. 147.
 73 Ibid., V. 28, IAA, p. 147.
 74 Ibid., V. 26, IAA, p. 147.
 75 Ibid., V. 32, IAA, p. 148.
 76 Ulubāri grant, V. 30, IAA, p. 316.
 77 Ibid., V. 27, IAA, p. 316.
 78 Ibid., V. 28, IAA, p. 316.
 79 Ibid., V. 26, IAA, p. 315.
 80

Regarding the practice of Pravara John Brough writes "a man may not marry a woman who has the same pravara as himself. A pravara is a stereotyped list of names of ancient ṛsis or seers, who are believed to be the remote founders of the family. This list is regularly recited as specific points in the sacrificial ritual. In the Sūtra appendices, these pravaras are classified according to the main exogamous gotras, and in effect therefore this last prohibition is precisely the same as the restriction as to gotra, since those prevented from marriage by considerations of pravara are also members of the same gotra. It would in fact seem that the sole reason for the pravara rule in marriage was that it formed an infallible test of the

exogamous group to which a man belonged, when the prohibition as to gotra was gradually coming to be insufficient by itself, since in the course of linguistic development the word came to be applied loosely to various subdivisions of the exogamous classes, and even to individual families."

81 Uttarbarbil grant, V. 30.

This ceremony is possibly same as the popular Bhatheli festival, in connection with which the vedic custom of worship of Indra setting up Indradhyaja still survives in Assam.

82 Nagāon grant, V. 31, IAA, pp. 146-47.

P. N. Bhattacharya points out that there are two such auspicious days which may be referred to as vishuva kāle, viz. the last day of Aśvina and the last day of Chaitra. Here probably the last day of Chaitra is meant. This corresponds to the popular Assamese festival of Bahāg Bihu which is even now treated as the right occasion for making gifts.

83 Ulubārī grant, line 51, IAA, p. 315.

Most probably it is the time of Magha Bihu.

84 Coratbārī grant, V. 22, IAA, p. O.24.

85 Ibid., V. 19, IAA, p. O.24

86 Bargāon grant, V. 19, IAA, p. 165.

87 Ibid., V. 16, IAA, p. 165

88 Ibid., V. 20, IAA, p. 165

- 88 Guwālkuchi grant, V. 19, IAA, p. 176.
- 89 Ibid., V. 17, IAA, p. 176.
- 90 Ibid., V. 18, IAA, p. 176.
- 91 Ibid., V. 16, IAA, p. 176.
- 92 Ibid., V. 20, IAA, p. 176.
- 93 Gauhati grant, V. 23, IAA, p. 188.
- 94 Ibid., V. 21, IAA, p. 188.
- 95 Ibid., V. 22, IAA, p. 188.
- 96 Ibid., V. 20, IAA, p. 188.
- 97 Guwālkuchi grant, V. 24, IAA, p. 200.
- 98 Ibid., V.V. 23-23, IAA, p. 200.
- 100 Ibid., V.V. 20-21, IAA, p. 200.
- 101 Khanāmukhi grant, V. 21, IAA, p. 233.
- 102 Ibid., V. 19, IAA, p. 233.
- 103 Ibid., V. 20, IAA, p. 233.
- 104 Ibid., V.V. 16-17, IAA, p. 232.
- 105 Śubhañkarapāṭaka grant, V. 20, IAA, p. 247.
- 106 Ibid., V. 22, IAA, p. 248.
- 107 Ibid., V.V. 18-19, IAA, p. 247.
- 108 Ibid., V. 17, IAA, p. 247.
- 109 Puṣpabhadra grant, V. 18, IAA, p. 266.
- 110 Ibid., V. 19, IAA, p. 266.
- 111 Ibid., V.V. 16-17, IAA, p. 264.
- 112 Ibid., V.V. 14-15, IAA, p. 264.
- 113 Ibid., V.V. 9-14, IAA, p. 263-64.

- 114 Kamauli grant, V. 25, IAA, p. 285.
115 Ibid., V. 21, IAA, p. 285.
116 Ibid., V.V. 23-24, IAA, p. 285.
117 Ibid., V. 22, IAA, p. 285.
118 Ibid., V. 28, IAA, p. 286.
119 Assam Plate, V.V. 13-15, IAA, p. 298.
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CHAPTER VI

Aspects of Society and Economy

Varna System

The division of society into four Varnas, namely, Brāhmanas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śudras, is the keynote of the whole system of social life in the Smritis. It is evident that the kings of Prāgijyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa took special care to protect this Varna system. In the Nidhanpur Grant, Bhāskara-varman is described as "being created for the purpose of re-establishing the institutions of classes and orders, which has for a long time past become confused".¹ In the Gauhati Grant of Indrapāla, it is said "When polite and valorous Indrapāla became the king and effected a proper division of the four aśramas and the four Varnas, it appeared as it were, that the earth, as a wish-yielder and a source of pleasure to all the people, once again became celebrated with prosperity as it was under (king) Pṛthu".²

But, in course of time the caste system took the place of ancient Varna system. Numerous castes and sub-castes were formed due to the development of different arts, crafts and professions. According to Risley, various tribal, racial and religious factors were also at work in gradually adding to

their number.³ Gradually, the caste system became more rigid than what we come across in the earlier periods. In its extreme form, it made the lower castes untouchable to the higher.

In fact, ancient Varna system was the nucleus, round which caste system grew in later ages. A late hymn of the Rgveda - Puruṣa Sūkta refers to the origin of four Varnas.⁴ It is said in the Sūkta that when the gods divided the creator (Puruṣa), the Brāhmaṇa was his mouth; the Rājanya (Kṣatriya) was made his arms; the Vaiśya was his thighs; and the Śudra sprang from his feet. Here, we see that while the first three Varnas were identified with the limbs of the Creator, the Śudra merely sprang from his feet. Thus, an inferior status is definitely assigned to the Śudras and a distinction is made between them and the first three Varnas.

Brāhmaṇas

Almost all the inscriptions of our period testify to the fact that Brāhmaṇas received both gifts and respect at the royal court of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. It encouraged many Brāhmaṇas to migrate to the land from different places. This migration of the Brāhmaṇas occurred at a time when the Gupta

Empire was on its way of decline and the influence of Kāmarūpa increased over north-western India.⁵

The social organisation of the Brāhmaṇas was distinguished by gotras, pravaras and veda-śākhās of which they attained mastery (Supra Chapter V). These were important fundamentally in matters relating to inheritance, marriage, worship, sacrifice, the performance of daily sandhyā prayers.⁶ The gotra denotes all persons who trace their descent in an unbroken male line from a common ancestor while the pravara is associated with the priest or sage whose name constituted the pravara of that gotra.⁷

Deva, Śarman and Svāmin are the titles of the Brāhmaṇas which have been mentioned in the epigraphs. The surnames which are generally found in the epigraphs are Bhaṭṭa, Dāma, Deva, Dhara, Dāsa, Dutta, Ghoṣa, Kara, Kuṇḍa, Mitra, Nāga, Nandi, Pātīla, Sena, Soma, Nāgara etc. These surnames are not generally found elsewhere in India except in Kāmarūpa and Bengal.⁸ These surnames have the similarity to those of the Nāgara Brāhmaṇas, who are supposed to have originally migrated from Nagarkot in the Punjab to different places of the country.⁹ This has led some historians to take that the Brāhmaṇas, who were granted land by the Nidhanpur Grant of Bhūti-varman were of the same stock as the Nāgara Brāhmaṇas who are said to have migrated to Gujarat about the

same time with the rise of the Vallabhi kings.¹⁰ Here, it is important to note that the Brāhmaṇas of Assam like those of Bengal trace their descent from the Brāhmaṇas of Kānyakubja (Kanauj).¹¹ It would not appear surprising that a number of them might have migrated from Puṇḍravardhana and other parts of ancient Bengal. The case of Prahāsa, the celebrated scholar of Bālagrāma situated in the Tarkāri of Śrāvastī region of Puṇḍravardhanabhukti,¹² who migrated to Kāmarūpa as mentioned in the Śīlīmpur Inscription,¹³ may be cited as an instance in this point.

The Brāhmaṇas of Kāmarūpa most probably led their life in conformity with the canonical texts. From the Puṣpabhadra Grant of Dharmapāla, we come to know that the village of Khyātipāla was inhabited by ideal Brāhmaṇas who performed Yajñas, fire oblations, trīsandhyā muttering of prayers in the morning, at noon and in the evening, and read the four Vedas.¹⁴ We further find reference to a Brāhmaṇa of this village who was well-versed in śruti, smṛiti and mīmāṃsā, whose son Sutaṇu was always engaged in bestowing charities on others.¹⁵ From the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka Grant of the same king we are informed that in a village called Krosaṅja in Śrāvastī lived Brāhmaṇas versed in the Sāme Veda.¹⁶ According to D.C. Sircar Krosaṅja or Kroḍaṅja of Śrāvastī of the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka Grant was situated in the Hili-Balurghat area of North Bengal i.e., within

Sundravardhanabhukti.¹⁷ One of those Brāhmaṇas as has been described in the Śubhakarapāṭaka Grant was engaged in six-fold duties viz. Yajana, Yājana, adhyayana, adhyāpana, dāna and pratigraha.¹⁸ The other epigraphs of the land also give the hints of the existence of many such Brāhmaṇas.

The normal business of the Brāhmaṇas was to study and teach the Vedas and allied subjects and to act as the Purohita.¹⁹ The epigraphs of the land mention three Vedas, Mīmāṃsā, which was the most orthodox school of Vedic theology was studied in Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.²⁰ S. Chattopadhyaya has suggested "the study of mīmāṃsā and reference to the Yajñas prove that the oblations performed at that time were not of Tantric character but pertained to the Vedic method although in the Hevajra Tantra, composed about 693 A.D., according to Benoy Nath Bhattacharya, Kāmarūpa was a centre of Tantricism while Kāmākhyā, one of the earliest four Tantric Piṭhas, was located there."²¹

Besides the study of Vedas, Brāhmaṇas cultivated various sciences and arts. The Puṣpabhadra Grant of Dharmapāla informs us that Bhāsvara, the grand father of the donee, was duly gifted with skill in arts.²² He had an epithet 'Cāṇakyaṃāṇikyabhū'²³ which possibly indicates that Bhāsvara studied the Arthaśāstra of Cāṇakya.²⁴

The epigraphs give the hints that the Brāhmaṇas of

Kāmarūpa sometimes took other professions and maintained their livelihood. In the Nidhanpur Grant of Bhāskaravarman mention has been made of a Brāhmaṇa Janārdana Svāmin who acted as a nyāyakaraṇika²⁵ The term means an officer, responsible for settling disputes regarding the gift of land.²⁶ The Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka Grant of Dharmapāla refers to a Brāhmaṇa Himāṅga who "accomplished all the (martial) acts like pada (i.e., piercing through the target) in a commendable manner, who was used to the hard and difficult acts concerned with the picture-like arrangements of the army (Citra), and who was experienced in the matter of velocity, striking and effects of a drafted shaft."²⁷ Besides these high administrative posts the Brāhmaṇas were sometimes appointed as the court poets and Ministers of the rulers.²⁸

Other Castes

From the inscriptions of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa it is learnt that besides the Kaivartas, Kumbhakāras, Tantuvāyas, Nankī, Daṇḍī, Vaṇika, Mahājanas and others many professional groups like Kāyasthas, Karaṇas, Lekhakas, Daivajñas, Bhiṣajas lived in the region. Many of these were titles of officers and professional classes rather than castes. In the Nidhanpur Grant of Bhāskaravarman, Janārdanasvāmin is called as a

Kāyākarāṇika (the dispute-settler) and Haradatta as a Kāyastha (the clerk).²⁹ Thus we see that the epigraph do not establish the Kāyasthas and the Karāṇas in the sense of castes. But in the Sūtras, the Smritis and the Mahābhārata, Karāṇa has been used in the sense of a caste.³⁰ On the other hand, Uśanas and Vedavyāsa take Kāyasthas as the name of a caste.³¹ Vedavyāsa includes it among the Śūdras.³² The Gunāghat copper plate inscription refers to a Karāṇa-Kāyastha as the minister in charge for peace and war.³³ It indicates that originally, the Karāṇas and the Kāyasthas belonged to the same group. In latter period they bifurcated into two groups.³⁴ If it was not so how can a minister in charge for peace and war be regarded as a mere scribe?

Some modern writers like Bhandarkar³⁵ and J.C.Ghosh³⁶ hold the view that the Kāyasthas were descended from the Nāgara Brāhmaṇas because of the likeness of their surnames. But N.N.Vasu has suggested that both the tradition and genealogical records of the Kāyasthas of Kāmarūpa testify to their affiliations with the Kṣatriyas.³⁷ At present the Kāyasthas of Assam are given a position next to the Brāhmaṇas.³⁸

Another allied class, mentioned in the epigraphs, is Lekhaka - meaning a scribe. Sumantu, who is quoted in the Parāśara Mādhyāya, considers food of a Lekhaka as unfit for a Brāhmaṇa.³⁹ The Smṛiti Candrikā of Bṛhaspati speaks

the Ganakas and Lekhakas as dviyas and it is prescribed that they are to be associated with justice in a court.⁴⁰ Regarding the Ganakas and the Daivajñas it is said in the Census Report, 1891, that "In the Surma Valley, as in Bengal, their rank is so low that the Navasākḥās refuse to take their water, but in the Brahmaputra valley their position is one of much greater respectability. Here they claim to rank as Brāhmanas still, but ... they can not act as priests. There is, however, no doubt that although socially inferior to Brāhmanas, they rank above all other castes, their high position being doubtless due to the favour in which they were held by the Ahom and Koch king."⁴¹

Prasthānakalasa, the composer of the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka Grant of Dharmapāla was a Vaidya.⁴² P.N. Bhattacharya does not believe that the term 'Vaidya' was the name of a caste.⁴³ But in the 8th century, there existed a caste named Vaidya in South India.⁴⁴ The Ambasthas, otherwise called Vaidyan of the Tamil country, follows principally the profession of the barber and surgeon; but he is usually regarded as nasavar (bad luck). He has no entrance in the houses of Brāhmanas on some specified days. The name Ambastha becomes Ambattan in Tamil spelling and pronunciation and means a barber in the Tamil language.⁴⁵ Bhiṣaka, another class of physician is again mentioned in the Nagson Grant of Balavarman.⁴⁶ According to Uśanas, the Bhiṣaka was the offspring of a Brāhmaṇa father through a Kṣatriya wife.⁴⁷ The Bhiṣakas had to learn the Ayurveda in its eight parts or astronomy, astrology and mathematics.⁴⁸

Among the lower professional sub-castes the Meṣṇu

Rock Inscription of Harijjaravarman refers to Kaivartas whose duty was to collect tols on the rivers.⁴⁹ According to Manu a Kaivarta is the offspring of a Niṣāda father through a Ayogava wife.⁵⁰ A.N. Bose has suggested that the Kaivartas are identical with the Kevaṭṭas of the Pali texts.⁵¹ Whatever their origin, they have been included among the Śudras. In the 19th century they were divided into several classes. The two main divisions of them are the Halovā Keyots and the Jalovā Keyots. The former are mainly cultivators, while the latter are fishermen.⁵²

From the epigraphs we come to know about the Kumbhakāras and the Tantuvāyas. The origin of the Kumbhakāras is not definitely known. Uśanas thinks that they are the offsprings of a Brāhmaṇa and a Vaiśya woman though Vedavyasa and Devala include them among the Śudras.⁵³ Now in Assam there are two classes of Kumbhakāras - Kumāras and Hidas, the latter being regarded as inferior to the former.⁵⁴ Marriage is not allowed between these two classes. At the time of making pottery the Kumāras use wheels but the pottery of the Hidas is hand-made.⁵⁵ As the Tantuvāyas are excluded from the sacrificial rites, they are regarded as Śudras by Patanjali. But at present in Assam the term TāṭI i.e., the Tantuvāya is regarded as a professional class. Now, even the members of higher class group take to this profession at leisure periods.

The Puṣpabhadra Grant of Dharmapāla refers to the term antaja meaning low caste.⁵⁶ There is another reference in the said grant Dijjarati-Hādi.⁵⁷ B.K.Barua has suggested that the term Hādi may mean the Hāri caste of to-day who are linked with the Ḍoma and the Caṇḍāla. Now in Assam their position have been improved much as they have taken largely to trade and to work in gold.⁵⁸

Economy : Riverine Character of the Settlement

The people of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa were mainly agricultural, though cattle breeding, forest products and industry helped to the development of economy of the land. Cultivation of rice was their chief employment. But as the pressure on land increased day by day, perhaps due to increase of population, demand for more cultivable land was felt gradually. As a result, people of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa were forced to bring waste lands, jungles, mountainous regions under cultivation.⁵⁹

But interestingly enough, most of the inhabited and cultivated areas of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, lay within the valley of Brahmaputra or by the sides of other rivers which is evident from the epigraphs. Mayūrasālmalagrahāra which was granted to more than 200 Brāhmaṇas in the 7th century A.D. was marked off almost fully by the Kauśikā and the

...river beds.⁶⁰ Guhesvara Digdola Vṛddhagrāma, as mentioned in the Puṣṭabhadrā Grant of Dharmapāla, was surrounded by the rivers Jaugalla and Bekkaśuṣka and the jolis or streams like Camyāla, Nekkaḍuli, Siṅga and the Dijamakkā.⁶¹ The land donated by the Guwākuchi Grant of Indrapāla was marked off by the rivers Kāhāravijola, Śakhotakajola, Srotasījola etc.⁶² There are many other instances which prove the riverine character of the settlements of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.

Along with the cultivated areas, the capitals of the rulers of the land were situated by the side of the river Brahmaputra. Prāggyotiṣa or Prāggyotiṣapura which was the capital of the kings of Bhauma-Naraka dynasty and of the legendary king Naraka, was situated near the Brahmaputra.⁶³ Haḍapeśvara, the capital of the rulers of Śālastambha dynasty was located at the site of modern Tezpur town on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra.⁶⁴ Durjjayā, the royal capital of Ratnapāla and Indrapāla has been identified with the old city of Prāggyotiṣa.⁶⁵ Kāmarūpanagara, the capital city of Dharmapāla of the Pāla dynasty stayed in North Gauhati just opposite Prāggyotiṣapura,⁶⁶ or Kāmatānagara (Kāmatāpur) in Western Kāmarūpa by the side of the Dharlā river.⁶⁷ The political centres of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa changed from time to time with the change of dynasty from lower Assam valley to upper Assam valley (and from east to west, but the location of the capitals near the river remained unchanged throughout the period.

Ownership of Land

From the inscriptions of the land it is learnt that land was the backbone of the economic life of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa which was divided into three parts - (1) janapada (countryside), (2) pura or nagara (city), town) and (3) vana (forest land).⁶⁸ The janapada or the countryside was divided into grāmas or villages consisting of kṣetra or arable land, khila or waste land, go-(pra) - carabhūmi or land for cattle grazing which was evidently located at the outskirts of the village and vāstubhūmi or building sites.⁶⁹ But the inscriptions do not provide a great amount of data on the system of landholding or ownership of the land.

According to Manu, a field belongs to him who first clears it of the weeds.⁷⁰ It indicates that the janas or people were the owners of janapadas. Kauṭilya made distinction between Crown's land and privately owned land over the later of which the king had only a protective control.⁷¹

B.K.Barua, in this regard, holds the opinion that "the Kāmarūpa kings, following general northern Indian tradition, claimed that all land belonged to the crown. Not only did the king exercise this right on the lands, cultivated or waste, but he extended his prerogative ownership over all woods, forests, ferries, mines etc. But the recorded

procedure of granting land to the Brāhmaṇas, as described in the copper-plates raises a very important issue regarding the Indian theory of crown ownership. In certain cases, king, when giving away land, communicated the order not to the state officials concerned but to the Brāhmaṇas and leading men of the district (Samupasthita-Brāhmaṇādi ... pramukha jānapadān ... yathākāla - bhāvinopī ^{Sarvān} samānanāpūr - Vvamānayati bodhayati samādhīśati ca)"⁷²

But repudiating ~~the above~~ the above theory, Barua himself remarks elsewhere "the major part of the cultivable land was held by the agriculturists who farmed it ... The right of occupation was hereditary, subject to the payment of dues and taxes to the king's officers or representatives."⁷³

Actually in Ancient India the question of ownership of land by the king and individuals differed from place to place and in time to time. It has been suggested that in practice the tillers of the soil were the ultimate owners of lands, the king's rights being normally confined to eviction for non-payment of taxes.⁷⁴ King's proprietary right seems to have extended to his own estates, including his right over forests, mines etc. There is in fact no genuine evidence of ascribing to the king the ultimate ownership of the soil. The king's relations with cultivators can be

better explained by reference to his duty of protection of his subjects, in return for which he received revenue from the cultivators, and so long as the latter paid their dues, the ownership of the soil remained with them. It is true that there is no clear evidence to show what view prevailed in Ancient Assam, but it appears that the royal claim to ultimate ownership, as in other parts of India, if made at all, had no effect on the peasant, who paid his dues to the State and who was, therefore, the real owner of the soil.

Therefore, whenever a king donated a land to any individual Brāhmaṇa or a group of Brāhmaṇas, he did so from his own estate. In case of public land, he normally had no right to hand over it to others. Here, he might alienate only his right of exacting tax from the tillers to the donee. The epigraphs of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa are silent about such type of the donated land. Keith has suggested that when the king donated land, he granted not ownership, but privilege, such as the right to receive dues and maintenance from the cultivators.⁷⁵ If it was so, then the lands donated by the kings of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa were public land.

Besides the Crown land and private land, there were also tribal lands on the fringes of the land which was hardly influenced by Aryan culture. It appears that the communal or tribal ownership of the land sub-divided into family owner-

ship, prevailed among them. Thus the Angami Nagas who are divided into three main divisions are again sub-divided into more than thirty communities known as Khel who are exogamous and not unoften engaged in blood feuds. This proves that each Khel had under it a particular portion of territory which they jointly owned among different Khel families.⁷⁶ Again, among the Ao Nagas, each village is a small republic and though the village headmen exists, their authority is very weak. The Sema Nagas, however, exhibit a different character. In the Sema territory, the hereditary village chiefs are the real owners of the land and their subjects cultivate the land for nothing and only get what the chiefs are pleased to bestow on them. And it is not unlikely that such systems prevailed among the tribes of Assam since the early days.⁷⁷

Mode of Cultivation

Before the use of plough, agriculture in Prāgijyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa was carried on through the method of 'Jhuming' or shifting cultivation.⁷⁸ There are still several regions in India where people depend mainly on this system of agriculture. Some of these are Arunachal Pradesh, the Naga Hills (Mizo), the Garo Hills, the Khasi Hills etc. in Assam; Tripura; Sikkim; Bhutan; the mountains of Keonjhar and Koraput in Orissa; the Abujhmar Hills and Mandla District

in Madhya Pradesh; some of the Hills of Kerala etc.⁷⁹

We have a clear picture of the process of Jhum-cultivation in the following paragraph :

"When a piece of land is selected, the trees or bushes are cut down to a certain extent, allowed to dry and then set on fire. In the land cleared, seeds are sown in little holes dug in the ground or they are broadcast. Here, no plough is used and no animal is employed ... Such a field which is not replenished by manure (except the ashes obtained from firing) gives a diminishing return and is practically exhausted in two or three years' time. Then the farmer moves over to a new patch of jungle, and allows plants to grow on the abandoned field... When the abandoned fields are once more covered by an adequate cover of plants, the farmer may return to it for cropping again."⁸⁰

A more complicated process of cultivation started with the introduction of the use of hoes and ploughs. This process of cultivation has been reflected in the epigraphs of the land - particularly in the agrahāra settlements.⁸¹ References of ploughs indicate that iron ploughshares, as prescribed by Bṛhaspati, was in vogue in Prāgjyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa as in other parts of India.⁸² From writings of Cosmas, it is learnt that some people used thick rhinoceros skin in their plough instead of iron.⁸³ As rhinoceros is found in large number in Assam, we may think that such

practice was also followed in Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, though there is no any reference.⁸⁴

As we have seen earlier that most of the agricultural lands were situated by the side of any river, specially the Brahmaputra, people of the land took due care against their plough-land from becoming overflowed causing damage to the crops.⁸⁵

Agricultural Products and Plants of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa

Rice seemed to be the dominant crop of the land. The extensive cultivation of paddy in Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa is proved by the fact that whenever a land grant of the region describes the areas of a donated land it is expressed in terms of the measures of paddy it produces. There are three kinds of rice viz., śāli, bāo and āhu. Śāli is a winter crop which grows on low lying land. Bāo grows mainly on marshy land in deep water while āhu is usually broadcast in spring time giving coarse rice. There are references of more than hundred varieties of paddy in the early Assamese literature such as jāhingā, mālbhog, bagītara, cakowā, raṅgā śāli, māguri, sāgar śāli etc.

That sugar cane was also cultivated in Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa is evident from the fact that the presents of

Bhaskara to Harṣa included gūḍa (molasses) - a preparation from sugar cane.⁸⁶ According to Cazim, the sugar cane of Assam "excels in softness and sweetness and is of three colours; red, black and white."⁸⁷ The Bargaon Grant mentions lābkuṭikṣetra meaning a land for cultivation of gourds. From this we may hold that cultivation of gourd was well-known in the region. Besides rice and sugar cane, there were plantation of various fruit trees which has been mentioned both in the inscriptions and literature. The epigraphs mention Kaṇṭāphala (jack fruit), Āmra (mango), Jambu (eugenia jambollana), Śrīphala, Dumbarī (fig), Sākhoṭaka (walnut), Bādari (jujube), Lakuca, Amḷaka (a kind of bread-fruit tree), Betasa (gamboze) Puga (betel nut), Coraka (a kind of wild palm tree), Budrakṣa (bead tree) and various kinds of citron trees.⁸⁸ Yuan Chwang states that in Kāmarūpa "the jackfruit and coconut were in great esteem though plentiful."⁸⁹ The extensive cultivation of areca nut and betel vine is proved by both literature and inscriptions.⁹⁰ From Cazim's record it is known that "Assam produces mangoes, plantains, jacks, oranges, citrons, limes, pineapples and punialeh, a species of amleh which has such an excellence of flavour that every person who tastes it, prefers it to the plum. There were also coconut trees, pepper vines, areca trees and sadiz (malabothrum) in great quantity."⁹¹ In the Yoginī Tantra mention has been made of haridrā (turmeric), ardraka (ginger), jiraka (cumin), pippaliyaka (long pepper), maṛīca (pepper),

sariṣā (mustard), Karpūra etc.⁹² There are names of some trees including sarala (pine), śāl, candana and aguru in the Kālikā Purāṇa.⁹³

Among the trees found in forests mention may be made of Vaṭa (Fiscus Indica) alternatively also called Āśvattha.⁹⁴ It is used by the people for many religious purposes. Madhu-rāśvattha is another tree, used for rearing lac insects.⁹⁵ Śīmalī is the silk-cotton tree. Other important trees, mostly found in the forests of the land are Kāśimbala, Devadāru, Suvarṇadāru, Khadira (acacia catechu), Odianna (bischoffia javanice), Pamā, Khoṣan (durbanga soneratioides), Gamāri (gmelina), Titācampā (micheliachampca), Hijal, Pāḍali (pātali) and various kinds of bamboos.⁹⁶

Industries and Crafts

The development of different industries and crafts in Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa is evidenced by literature, foreign accounts and epigraphy. These mention people of various professions such as weavers, spinners, dyers, smiths, workers in ivory, metal, wood, cane, bamboo etc.⁹⁷ Among different industries weaving was an important one which developed in the region from very early times. In the Kālikā Purāṇa and in the Harṣacarita, there are references of Karpāsa (cotton) garments.⁹⁸ The former, further mentions the manufacture of

wollen garments (kambala), bark cloths (valka), silk (koṣaja) and hemp cloth (śānavastra).⁹⁹ The art of sericulture and rearing of cocoons for the manufacture of varied silk cloths were known to the people of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa from the time of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Arthaśāstra. The former has mentioned Magadha, Aṅga, Puṇḍra and the 'country of Cocoon rearers'¹⁰⁰ which was none but Kāmarūpa lying to the east of Puṇḍra.¹⁰¹ The classical sources including the Periplus refer to both raw and manufactured silk from Thina¹⁰² or Assam.¹⁰³ According to Schoff the silk industry originated in China and from there it reached to Assam and other parts of India.¹⁰⁴ But Watt thinks it originated first in Manipur and then reached to China.¹⁰⁵ There are three varieties of Indian silk known as Pāṭa, Enḍi and Mugā. The Mugā silk originated in Assam had a world-wide reputation and had a foreign market. The Enḍi silk is very warm and suitable for use in winter is manufactured in Assam.

Besides weaving, gold washing and manufacture of jewellery was another important industry of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. Gold was found in the rivers of the land, namely, Subhansiri, Dikhau, Jaglo, Dihong, Bharāli and Dhansiri. The Tezpur Grant of Vanamāla says that the river Lauhitya carried down gold-dust from the gold bearing boulders of Kailāśa mountain.¹⁰⁶ The Śilimpur Grant mentions that king Jayapāla donated gold equal to his own weight to a Brāhmaṇa (tulya puruṣadāna) along

with nine hundred gold coins.¹⁰⁷ From the Tabāqāt - i - Nāsiri it is known that there was numerous idols both of gold and silver, ~~in large quantities~~, a huge image of beaten gold weighing two or three thousand maunds in a temple in Kāmarūpa.¹⁰⁸

Robinson and Hunter find some traces of silver in Assam in minute quantities.¹⁰⁹ K.L.Barua thinks that Gaulika located by Bhaṭṭasvāmin in Kāmarūpa is probably Gulla or Ghulla in the Goalpara district which produced silver.¹¹⁰

The existence of copper is indicated by the Bargāon Grant of Ratnapāla where we find the occurrence of the term 'Kamalakara'¹¹¹ The term Kamala means copper.¹¹² The existing remains of the copper temple of Sadiya is a proof of works on copper. Besides copper plate inscriptions of different kings of Prāggyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa is another proof of the existence and use of copper.

From the Bargāon Grant of Ratnapāla we come to know that there were many shops of merchants where varieties of ornaments were available (vipani vaddhṛitapādmara gagitśobhiṣhta (bhota) vira vapijāṃ nikaraiḥ prakīrnā).¹¹³ Besides, use of ornaments by the people of the land is proved by many sculptured coins of our period. The Kālikā Purāṇa refers to ornaments of gold, silver, bellmetal and even of iron.¹¹⁴ The best example of the art of jewellery may be visualized in the list of presents sent by Bhāskara to Harṣa which included the ābhoga umbrella, ornamented with jewelled ribs; ornaments, which crimsoned the heavenly spaces with the light of the

finest gems; shining crest jewels; pearl necklaces which seemed the source of the milk-ocean's whiteness; quantities of pearls, shells, sapphire and other drinking vessels made by skilful artists; bright gold leaf-work; various birds with the necks bound in golden fetters and enclosed in gold painted cages.¹¹⁵ It indicates that working in gold and Jewellery reached almost the point of perfection in the period under our study.

Other industries like iron, salt, wood and minor crafts like leather work, stone work, brick work, pottery, ivory, cane, bamboo etc. developed to a great extent in the region. This industrial progress not only made the people self-sufficient but also helped the land in its external trade.

Medium of Exchange

In the palaeolithic period, people did not feel the necessity of means of exchange as the basis of subsistence was hunting and food gathering. But with the passage of time, when the primitive society developed and the political and economic relationship among different groups of peoples and tribes gradually cropped up, they required means of exchange in their economic undertakings. The earliest transactions were made through a system of barter. For this cattle, animal

skins, garments, rice, cowries etc. were used in ancient Assam as in other parts of India.¹¹⁶ But we are totally in dark how and when coins appeared as a medium of exchange in Prāggyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa. From the Harṣacarita we come to know that the presents of Bhāskara to Harṣa included 'heaps of black and white cowries'¹¹⁷ We find another reference of cowries in the Tezpur Rock Inscription of Harjjaravarman where mention has been made of a penalty of a hundred cowries for the infringement of a certain state regulation.¹¹⁸ The existence of a copper mine as mentioned in the Grant of Ratnapāla helps us to believe that copper was used for coinage in the region, though^{no} such coin has so far come to our notice. Silver was also used for coinage. In the Tezpur region a number of silver coins have been discovered which are minted in the names of Harjjaravarman and Vanamāla.¹²⁰ Gold coins were also in circulation in Prāggyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa is proved by the recent discovery of 14 gold coins of the Gupta type from Paglātekar near Goalpara, by the State Department of Archaeology, Guwahati.¹²¹ In this connection we may refer to the donation of 900 gold coins to a Brāhmaṇa by king Jayapāla in the Śilimpur Grant.¹²² It is thus possible that cowry shells were meant for all types of ordinary transactions, though barter system was not altogether discarded. The silver and gold coins were not meant for ordinary business transactions, and their use were mainly confined to gifts and donations, and also possibly meant for foreign trade exchanges, if any.

Nature of the Socio-Economic System of Prāgijyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa

In the post-Gupta period or even before we find some remarkable changes in the socio-economic or politico-economic structure of India. This new structure has been termed as feudalism by scholars like R.S.Sharma and Romila Thapar. There are some others who would like to term it as quasi-feudalism, feudalistic etc.¹²³ Before entering into the problem we should define the term 'feudalism'.

R.S.Sharma in the light of European experience suggests that "the political essence of feudalism lay in the organisation of the whole administrative structure on the basis of land; its economic essence lay in the institution of serfdom in which peasants were attached to the soil held by landed intermediaries placed between the king and the actual tillers, who had to pay rent in kind and labour to them. This system was based on a self-sufficient economy in which things were mainly produced for the local use of the peasants and their lords and not for market"¹²⁴ In the opinion of D. Mukherjee 'Feudalism' implies a system of holding land by means of military tenure and hence it involves a kind of military service.¹²⁵ N.R.Ray observes that the word 'feudal' comes from the Latin word feudalis meaning pertaining to a feud or fief which is synonymous with fee.¹²⁶

But D.C.Sircar holds the opinion that there was no

any condition attached to any land grant made by the kings of Ancient India to the Brāhmanas which were made only for religious merit and fame.¹²⁷ According to him there was no feudalism but landlordism in Ancient India.¹²⁸

But to Dr. R.S.Sharma there is no much difference between landlordism and feudalism. According to him "the essence of feudalism is the dependence of tillers of land on the king or the state in respect of land." He remarks that economic self-sufficiency of a country is an essential condition of feudalism.¹²⁹

On this point S.K.Saraswati suggests that although the land grants do not refer to any kind of obligation, still there must be some inherent obligations on the part of the beneficiaries.¹³⁰ N.R.Ray goes a step further and says, "if we can establish a hierarchy from top to bottom there must be some sort of obligations."¹³¹ There are different types of obligations, e.g., military, political or economic which may differ from country to country.¹³²

It may be held that inspite of the fact that the type of feudalism in India was not identical with the feudal system in other parts of the world and all the conditions of feudalism are not satisfied in India, the term may ordinarily be applied to the prevailing economic condition of India.

Under this background we shall examine the socio-economic set up of Prāggyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa and try to identify the feudal trends in it.

In Prāgjyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa, kings starting from Bhūti-varman whose rule started in C. 510 A.D. made many land grants to the Brāhmaṇas. The donated land varied in size from a small plot of land having the capacity of yielding 2000 units of paddy to an area of land large enough to support more than 200 Brāhmaṇas - recorded in the Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskara-varman and the Tipperah Grant of Lohanātha. The Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva, the Assam plates of Vallabhadeva granted villages to the Brāhmaṇas. In turn of land grants, the Brāhmaṇa donees performed religious services for obtaining spiritual welfare of the donors or their parents. No secular responsibilities were placed upon them by the charter. But it may be that they in return for land grant maintained law and order in the areas under their charges and impressed the people to remain obedient to the king.¹³³ The donees did not supply militaries to the kings in time of war like the bishops of England but they played no less important role by keeping the subjects obedient to the king.¹³⁴

For administrative purposes the kings divided their empire into bhuktis, maṇḍalas, viṣayas, puras, agrahāras (group of villages) and grāmas. Bhukti was the largest administrative unit in Prāgjyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa is proved by a phrase in the Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva which runs as 'Śrī-Prāgjyotiṣa - bhuktāu Kāmarūpa - maṇḍale Bādā viṣaye'¹³⁵

As in many other kingdoms of the time, the Yuvarājas who

helped their fathers in administrative affairs may have acted as governors of the bhuktis.¹³⁶ Maṇḍala was the next administrative unit which was sub-divided into numerous viṣayas. From the inscriptions of the land we get the name of many viṣayas such as Chandrapurī, Dījjinnā, Hāpyoma, Pūrajī, Bāḍā, Kāmarūpa, Maṇḍī etc. Viṣayapati was the head of the viṣaya. From the Nidhanpur grant of Hāskaravarman we get the name of Śrī Kṣikuṇḍa who was the viṣayapati of Chandrapurī viṣaya.¹³⁷ To carry on the administration of Chandrapurī viṣaya he (Śrī Kṣikuṇḍa) was helped by many officials.¹³⁸ He had his office or adhikaraṇa at his adhithāna (Headquarter)¹³⁹ Village was the lowest administrative unit. From the inscriptions we get the names of many villages such as Abhiśuravāṭaka, Heṣivā, Trayodaśa, Haposa, Bhaviṣā, Kaṅjiā, Guheśvara, Digdola, Chāḍī etc.¹⁴⁰ We have little information about the village administration. Most probably the village headman, helped by an advisory body or a council of elders carried on the administration of a village.¹⁴¹ Villages were divided into pāṭakas, koṅcī and palli such as Kāśī pāṭaka, Vāmaḍeva pāṭaka, Vapāḍeva pāṭaka, Devanikoṅcī, Khyātipalli etc.

The Yuvarājas, Viṣayapatis, village-headmen along with their assistants were all administrative officials of the kingdom. There were other type of officials such as sachivas, amātyas and mantrīngs.¹⁴² All of them were members

of a council of ministers. From the Kamauli Grant it is known that these posts were hereditary and the Brāhmanas only hold the posts.¹⁴³ The Baḍgaṅgā epigraph mentions the name of Āryyaguna or Avaguna as a viṣayāmātya meaning a minister in charge of a district.¹⁴⁴ From the Hāyuntal grant we further know the name of Mahā-Sainyapati (commander-in-chief) Śrī Gaṇa, Mahā-Dvārādhipati (chief of the gate-keepers) Śrī Jayadeva, Mahā-Pratihāra (Chief usherer) Janārdana, Mahā-Amātya (chief councillor) Śrī Govinda and Madhusūdana and Brāhmanā-dhikāra (Officer-in-charge of the welfare of Brāhmanas) Hiaṭṭa Śrī Kaṇṭha.¹⁴⁵ The Uttarbarbil Grant of Balavarman III¹⁴⁶ and some other grants of the Śālastambha and the Pāla dynasty mention the names of some officials such as rājānaka, rājaputra, rājavallabha, rājā, rājñī and rānaka. According to D.C.Sircar the title rānaka is title of feudatory rulers and later of the nobility.¹⁴⁷ The word rājānaka also means a feudatory, smaller than the rānaka. The rājaputra was the crown prince but in the sense of feudatory rājā.¹⁴⁸ Rājavallabha was the title of a countier.¹⁴⁹ In the Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla,¹⁵⁰ Guwākuchi grant of Indrapāla¹⁵¹ Guchtal grant of Gopālavarman¹⁵² and Khanāmukh grant of Dharmapāla¹⁵³ we get the names of more two officials viz. Viṣayakarāṇa and Vyāvahārika who were in charge of judicial department.¹⁵⁴ There is no any convincing proof that the kings paid these officials in cash in exchange of their services. At the same time, no charter have yet been found

which will prove that the kings granted land for their services. But here we may think that when the Brāhmanas who gave religious services to the kings were paid by grants of land, the other officials of the state were also paid in the same way like the Brāhmanas.

The law book of Manu which was written most probably in the second century provides for the payment of fiscal officers by grants of land.¹⁵⁵ In the fifth century Bṛhaspati wrote that when a king was pleased with the services, valour etc. of a person, he granted him a district or the like.¹⁵⁶ At one place Yuan Chwang stated that the governors, ministers, and officials were granted a portion of land for their personal use.¹⁵⁷ Under the circumstances we may think that the royal officials in Prāggyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa were paid in the grant of lands for their personal support. The charters of land grants to the officials are not available most probably due to the perishable nature of the material on which they were recorded.

Besides the royal officials, there were feudal kings who ruled almost independently in their respective areas and sent annual tributes to the king. Lokanātha of the Tipperah Grant was one of such feudal kings. The Nidhanpur Grant of Bhāskaravarman mentions the 'ring of feudatories' meaning a circle of feudal kings.¹⁵⁸

The feudatories were granted the revenues of land

theoretically and not the land itself. If they failed to fulfil the terms of the grants, their lands were taken back by the kings.¹⁵⁹ After the death of the tenant the granted land was taken by the king. But in practice, when control of the king became weak, the granted land became hereditary.¹⁶⁰ The land donated to the Brāhmana donees for religious purposes, perhaps never confiscated by the king in any condition which is proved by the admonitory verse of the inscriptions where in most cases it is said that "who confiscates the land becomes worm of the filth and rots with the manes and who respects the grant gets the result of the donation". In the Nidhanpur grant it is stated that no tax would be levied on the donated land as long as the sun, the moon and the earth will endure.¹⁶¹ The expression also indicates that the donees of the grant were eligible to enjoy revenue of the land and not the land itself.

The lands of the feudatories were cultivated by the peasants - generally Śudras who were in practice tied with the land. They gave a fixed share of the total produce of the land to their feudal lord. The Brāhmana donees also cultivate their land by the peasants because they could not cultivate land by themselves due to caste laws. The aristocracy lived on the revenue from land. As the peasants became subservient to their feudal lords, the economic and political power of the state were concentrated in the hands of few.

Almost all the inscriptions donating land in Prāggyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa were issued by the kings rather than by some local council or provincial ruler. But sometime feudatories were also allowed to grant land. For example we may refer the donation of land by Lokanātha. Lokanātha issued the grant through his sāndhivigrahika Pradogaśarman who made an application to his chief through the king's son, prince Lakṣminātha as dutaka, granting him a plot of land in the forest region in the viṣaya of Suvvūṅga.¹⁶² The ruler instructed his officer to issue the plate. The officer called upon the subordinate administration to obey the plate's instruction. The plate reads "(from his headquarters) the Kumāramātya and his office staff (adhikaraṇa) notify the present and future feudatories, (mahāsāmantas), ... and viṣayapatis (district officers) (and adhikaraṇas) headed by the Brāhmanas and Aryas ... with the chief businessman and people of the country."¹⁶³ Sāndhivigrahika Prasāntadeva recorded and presumably made arrangements for the incising of the copper plate. In this way Lohanātha granted land to support the temple of Ananta Nārāyaṇa and a community of over two hundred Brāhmanas.

The donation of the Tipperah grant indicates that subordinate rulers often had their own feudatories, thus building up a hierarchy. Records of subinfeudation by religious donees are wanting because they could not be recorded on copper plates.

The Tipperah grant further signify that lands sometimes were donated to the temples. Another example of granting land to the temple is the donation made by Vallabhadeva by his Assam plate. Vallabhadeva established a bhaktaśāla near the temple of Mahādeva, for the maintenance of which he donated seven villages along with their woods, thickets, people, water and land : (sajhāṭa - Viṭapa - grāman śājalas-
thalān dadau).¹⁶⁴

The feudatories had to attend royal court on important occasions. They were allowed to take many titles and various symbols of feudal dignity. These symbols are consisted of throne, a fly-whisk, a special designed palanquin, the riding of an elephant in state possessions, and being heralded of the sound of five special musical instruments.¹⁶⁵ The Nidhanpur grant mentions Śrī Gopāla - the officer issuing hundred commands received the five great śabdās (pañchamahā-
śabda).¹⁶⁶

When the king declared war against any other king, it was the duty of the feudal kings to help his lord by supplying army.¹⁶⁷ We get no evidence of it in the inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. But from the Tipperah grant of Lokanātha we come to know that when Lokanātha was attacked by another nriṇa, his own liege lord supplied army to help his own feudatory.¹⁶⁸ From this it appears that supplying of soldiers at the time of war was a common duty not on part

There were both crown land and land held in fief in Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. The kings kept a sizeable area as crown land under his direct administration. They generally sent sāsanas to the heads and respectable inhabitants of the villages and country parts through the viṣayapatis for effecting good administration. But the privileges and powers of the feudatories sometimes hampered the local autonomy in administrative matters. It is evident from the epigraph that the kings not only granted revenues of the land to the donees but administrative rights were explicitly transferred to them. They were allowed to govern the inhabitants of the donated places. It is stated in the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva that "these two villages, demarcated by their four boundaries, free from hindrances and entry of the constables (cattas) and their leaders (bhattas), complete with their waters and dry lands and according to the principle of bhūcchidra free from every type of tax, are given to Gugguli Śrīdhara - Śarman along with four hundred (inhabitant workmen)¹⁶⁹

The royal revenue officials assessed and collected different types of revenues and special charges in the crown land. Besides land revenue, there were different types of revenues and special charges in Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa such as uparikara, utkhetana, Auparika, Chourodharana, dues paid by cultivators in connection with the entrance of catta

and bhatta, hōstibandha, naukābandha etc., which we have discussed elsewhere. This led to the economic depression of the peasantry. The increasing number of intermediaries also forced the peasants to pay extra taxes who might have exacted new dues for their own maintenance. The Brāhmanas donees collected all those taxes from the peasants which were collected earlier by the king's revenue officials. This is clear from the Kamauli grant of Valdyadeva which states that the donated villages were "to be provided with all sources of revenue (sarvāyopaya saṃyuktam) and "to be made^{free} from all kinds of regular and irregular taxes (Karopaskaravarjjitam)".¹⁷⁰ Collection of taxes by the intermediaries not only weakened the position of the peasantry but also that of the king "who suffered from the diversion of income"¹⁷¹

It is stated in the Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla that when the twenty-first king of that line, named Tyāgasimha retired to heaven without an heir, the high officials and important members of the State i.e., the feudatories selected Śrī Brahmāpāla as the king because of his relationship with the family of Naraka.¹⁷² It indicates that the role of the feudatories at that time was so high in the politics of the country that they even settled such important matter as the selection of king. It may be that the kings of Prāggyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa from the very beginning were highly alert of this growing power of the feudatories. Hence they attributed divinity in the kingship. Romila Thapar remarks "the divine

begin of kingship was much emphasized during this period, as was also the king's obligation to protect the Kṣatriya caste, which obligation assigns to the feudatories a subordinate position.¹⁷³ The kings of Prāgjyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa claimed their descent through the Boar incarnation of Viṣṇu. Some of them compared themselves with gods. "Puṣya-varman was like second Viṣṇu. Nārāyaṇavarman was the divine Caḅrapāṇi in human form. Bhūtiavarman was like Indra in power and fame; so were Susthitavarman and Brāhmapāla. Ratnapāla emulated the renowned good of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, and was like Purusottama and Janārdana. Vaidyaḅeva is compared with Varuṇa, Kuvera, Brhaspati and other deities because of possessing their qualities. The rulers might have been so compared because thereby they expected to receive respect from their subjects equal to that of gods; for Mann says that even an infant king should not be despised, as he is a great god in human form.¹⁷⁴

In order to bringing barren tracts under cultivation, the kings of Prāgjyotiṣa - Kāmarūpa often donated large areas of lands to the Brāhmanas. Perhaps they thought that such kinds of land would be of no use unless they were brought under cultivation. Thus the area of arable land was extended. It also helped to the colonisation of new area. The Tipperah grant of Lokanātha is an example of such policy of the ruler. By the grant Lokanātha donated an area of jungle land which was infested by wild animals in the Suvvūṅga

Śyāya to more than two hundred Brāhmanas. The boundaries of the donated land were not demarcated. It appears that Manāsāmanṭa Pradoṣasārman at whose initiative the grant was made, brought the Brāhmana community at that place for the worship of god Ananta Nārāyaṇa.¹⁷⁵ But the real significance of the grant lay in bringing uncultivated land under cultivation and new settlement.¹⁷⁶ In this connection the donation of land by the Nidhanpur grant of Hāskaravarman can be referred, where it is seen that the granted land was located in the outskirts of the empire of Hāskaravarman.

In most cases the donated lands were situated in the midst of tribal areas. It is evident from some of the inscriptions which contain many non-Sanskritic place names, clearly of tribal origin, e.g., the Guwāhati grant.¹⁷⁷ These Brāhmana settlements were outposts of the Indo-Aryan civilization and its settled way of life in the midst of tribal lands had a chastening influence on the primitive way of life of the inhabitants. These Brāhmana settlers had the knowledge of calendar, seeds, crops and cattle breeding. Their duty was to encourage settled agriculture in a region where fire farming, hoe culture and shifting plough cultivation were predominant.¹⁷⁸

As agriculture became the main source of income, problems concerning the division of land and inheritance gradually became acute. By the Nidhanpur grant land was donated to

several brothers jointly. A good example of joint family system is found in the Parbatiyā grant of Vanamāla under which the four brothers Cuṣāmani, Detobhā, Garga and Śambhū lived together. But in the Dighaligād grant of Vanamāla we see that the donated land was divided among six brothers - Pallahara, Gayāhara, Payohara, Balahara, Caṇamāna and Kātyāyana. The inscription mentions their respective shares of the granted land.¹⁷⁹

The most contributory factor for the development of caste system, which is no doubt a feature of feudalism, was the attitude of superiority assumed primarily by the higher classes. The higher classes such as Brāhmanas in Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa became powerful by acquiring political power and becoming land owners. They began to maintain their superiority by keeping themselves aloof from other castes. Romila Thapar rightly observes, "the desire for exclusiveness on the part of the Brāhmanas led to an obsession with keeping aloof from the lower castes in particular. Not only was the touch of the Chandāla (outcaste) polluting but even for his shadow to cross the path of the Brāhmana called for ritual ablation. Such social observances reduced still further the status of the śudra and the outcastes. Gradually untouchability was extended to even the heretical sects of quite high caste but who were opposed to the Brāhmanas."¹⁸⁰

Constant shifting of the seats of power was undoubtedly

a disintegrating factor in the kingdom of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. It indicates administrative decentralization typical of feudal polity. It might be that in order to impress their power on the feudal lords the kings of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa moved their administrative headquarter in different places.

Formation of guilds and growing power of the commercial classes are other features of the age. People of the same caste or class like the astrologers (Daiyajñas) settled in different parts of the country and gave their names to those parts they inhabited.¹⁸¹ The expressions of the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant - Caturvīṁśati tantrāṇām bhūsimni¹⁸² and orangi tantrāṇām bhūsimni¹⁸³ meaning 'boundary of the land of Orangitantras' indicate that the tantuvāyas formed there something like guilds.¹⁸⁴ The bhogin and Vitteśas¹⁸⁵ of the Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla who lived in the city of Durjjayā were none but rich men, most probably merchants (vaṇik). The activities of these rich persons were not confined within trade and commerce but they participated in important political ceremonies such as abhiṣekha.¹⁸⁶ Thus we see that these guilds, castes and classes had a great influence in the administration of the country like those in other parts of India.¹⁸⁷

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" Throughout the ancient and medieval times Assam remained a very thinly populated region, because of its difficult terrain, an agriculturally retarded tribal population and its forests and swamps. Of some 24,000 square miles of its flat alluvial plains, very limited areas were habitable. The central belt of riverine tract, open to the constant alluvial and delluvial

process of the Brahmaputra and covered with reed and grass jungles, was unfit for any permanent cultivation and habitation. The belt of submontane tract, also covered with reed and grass jungles and having a sloping surface, was unsuitable for settled agriculture. In both the belts the fast growth of irrepressible weeds as a result of heavy rainfall - once the jungles were burnt off - made continuous cultivation on the same plot of land beyond the third or even the second year extremely difficult and labour consuming.

" Only various forms of shifting cultivation were suited to these two belts. Peasants shifted every year from one piece of land to another preparing a new clearance by burning off its cover of bush and grass. Land under such cultivation must have been held only as a tribal or communal territory. This theory is supported by the recorded story of constant tribal migrations from place to place as well as, by such practice as are still extant in our times." (p. 39)

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Chapter - VII

Concluding Observations

The culture of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa was composed by both the Aryan and the non-Aryan people.¹ Before the advent of the former, different ethnic stocks with different cultural groups of people settled in the land from earliest time. This prehistoric settlement in Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa is proved by both the lithic implements and remnants of their material culture. In the early centuries of the Christian era, high class Aryans like the Brāhmaṇas, the Kāyasthas and the Kalitās came to the land from the west and settled in its different parts.² Their settlement in the region remarkably influenced the culture of the land. In the present work an attempt has been made to identify this change which has been reflected in the epigraphs of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. They help us to know that three major dynasties - the Varman, the Śālastambha and the Pāla and some independent rulers ruled in the region from the 4th century A.D. to the 13th century A.D.

The rulers of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa often created agrahāra settlements for the Brāhmaṇas which were recorded in the stone or copper plates. They acted as the documents of legal claim of the recipients and their families before the future kings.

Dynasty-wise we can group these land donating

inscriptions into four categories. The last category includes the inscriptions which were issued after the Pāla dynasty. An examination of the physical appearances and organization of the inscriptions, the social and political position of the donors, the nature of property transfer, geographical provenances of the granted lands and the character of the recipients confirms this fourfold divisions. Each category belongs some special characteristics of its own which can not be equated with the other. This fourfold divisions of the inscriptions indicates that Prāggyotiṣa-Kānarūpa witnessed major historic changes during the period of over eight centuries.

The inscriptions of the Varman period may be distinguished due to following features :-

I. They start with an adoration of Śaśīśekhara or Śaikhara i.e., Śiva ;

II. The donations were made to Brāhmaṇa communities and not to individual Brāhmaṇas in general ;

III. The donated lands were situated at the edge of the empire, perhaps for strategic or for other reasons. Probably, it was not possible for the individual Brāhmaṇas to bring those areas under profitable cultivation. By donating land at the edge of the empire where the light of Brāhmanical culture had not yet reached, the Varman kings established new Brāhmanical cultural centres in those areas. These centres were concentrated in the lower Assam valley ;

IV. The issuing centres of the grants were Prāggyotiṣapurā and Karnasuvarṇa. However, the administrative centres of the Nagājari-Khanikargāon inscription and the Tipperah grant of Lokanātha are unknown ;

V. Almost all the land-granting inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Nāmarūpa, so far have been discovered were issued by the kings of the region. But it is under the Varman period an inscription was issued by a subordinate king i.e., the Tipperah grant of Lokanātha.

The distinctive features of the inscriptions of Śālastambha period are :-

- I. They start with an anji sign which is as C ;
- II. In the introductory part of the inscriptions we find that an invocation has been made to Śiva along with the river Lauhitya or only of the Lauhitya whereas under previous dynasty it was made only of Śiva ;
- III. All the donees of this period are individual Brāhmaṇas except those of the Dighaligāḥ grant of Vanamāla where the donees are five brothers ;
- IV. Some of the donations were made on the occasion of auspicious days ;
- V. In an inscription of this period we find the use of pravara along with the gotra of Brāhmaṇa donee for the first time;
- VI. Besides agricultural land, villages were also donated by the kings of the dynasty ;

ii. In the Kuruvābāhi grant a new unit of land measure has been used i.e., the putaka whereas under previous dynasty drona and pātala have been used in the Tipperah grant at Lakanātha ;

iii. In describing the nature of the grant, inscriptions of this period use the statement as it is given along with its land, waters etc. which is free from all troubles on account of fastening of elephants (hastibandha), fastening of boats (naukābandha), chourodharana, unarikara, utkhetana and grazing of animals such as elephants, horses, camels, cows, buffaloes, goats and sheeps. Such expression is also found in the inscriptions of the Pāla dynasty ;

iv. The epicentre from where all the inscriptions of this dynasty were issued was Haḍapeśvara - located at the site of modern Tezpur town on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra. The find spots of the inscriptions, location of the issuing centre of the grants and donated land indicate that the political and cultural centres of this period concentrated in the Darrang-Howgong area of present Assam ;

v. The inscriptions of this dynasty do not mention the date of issuing the grant.

Following are the remarkable features of the Pāla inscription :-

I. The anji sign of the inscriptions is such ☉ ;

II. In the preamble of the inscriptions adoration to Śiva on the river Lakhitya also continued in this period

ii. Towards the last part of the rule of this dynasty we find the invocation of Viṣṇu which signify growing popularity of Vaiṣṇavism in the region;

iii. All the donated lands are agricultural lands and no village has been granted under this dynasty ;

iv. Most of the donees were the followers of Kāṇva-śāma of Yajurveda ;

v. From the time of Indrapāla it is seen that the grants refer to the original home of the donees which is not found under the previous dynasties ;

vi. The inscriptions are silent about the purpose of donations ;

vii. The administrative centres of this period are Jagmoyda identified with Haḍapeśvara, Durjjayā, identified with Durjjayotagaṇam and Kāmarūpanagara which is identified with a place in North Gauhati or Kāmatāpura (Supra, Ch. III). The find spots and issuing centres of the inscriptions, geographical provenance of the donated lands - all indicate that the political and cultural centres of the Pāla period gradually moved from east to west and concentrated in modern Kāmrūp district of Assam although the previous centres under the Śālastambha dynasty did not lose its importance.

The last group which includes the inscriptions issued after the Pāla period has been separated from other groups due to its following characteristics :-

I. Adoration to Vāsudeva i.e., Viṣṇu have been made in the introduction of the inscriptions ;

II. Donations are consisted of villages and not of agricultural land ;

III. A separate type of addresses has been made under this group. In the Kamauli Grant Vaidyadeva addresses are made to the cultivators and other citizens begining with the Gatpa, the Bhatta and the Viṣayillaka.⁴ In the Assam plate, Vallabhadeva made the grant addressing his successors.⁵ But in the inscriptions of the Śālastambha and the Pāla period addresses are made to the Brāhmanas, Viṣaya-
karana, Vyāvahārika, Rājās, Rājās, Rājās, Rājānyakas,
Rājāputras, Rājavallabhas etc. ;

IV. The seal of the Kamauli grant bears the figure of a seated four-handed Gaṇeśa which is not found in any other inscription of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.

V. The Assam plates of Vallabhadeva is an exception among the inscriptions of the region as it has been (a) dated according to Śaka era, (b) its scripts have close affinity with the scripts of Bengal inscriptions of the same period, (c) donation was made for the maintenance of an alms house and (d) the whole text of the grant is in verse ;

VI. Vaidyadeva issued his Kamauli Grant from Haṁsakocī which was in Kāmrūp district of Assam. The issuing centre of the assam plate of Vallabhadeva is unknown. The find spots, location of the donated lands and issuing centres of the inscriptions of this group confirm our notion that the political and cultural centres of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa gradually

shifted from eastern part of the land to the western part.

In this connection it is notable that more than eighty copper plates of the Ahom period have been discovered till now. Most of them have recorded donations of Brahmattara and Devottara lands and few of them record appointment to different offices, whether of the State or in some temples and donation of Nankar land to non-Brāhmanas. The Ahom kings ruled in Assam from 1228 A.D.⁶ upto the British occupation of Assam in 1824 A.D. The earliest copper plates recording grants of land by the Ahom kings to Brāhmanas or Hindu temples date from the time to Gadādharaśiṃha.⁷ Other kings of Assam - Rudraśiṃha (1696-1714), Śivaśiṃha (1714-47) and his consorts, Pramathasiṃha (1744-51), Rājeśvaraśiṃha (1751-69), Lakshmiśiṃha (1769-80), Gaurīnāthasiṃha (1780-95), Kamalāśvaraśiṃha (1795-1870) and Chandrakāntasiṃha (1810-18, 1819-24) and some of their ministers and officers made numerous land grants. The last land-donating copper plate inscription of the region was issued by the last independent Ahom king Chandrakāntasiṃha in 1744 Śaka/1822 A.D. by which the king made a dharmatra grant in favour of the temple Abibheti-na-sattra.⁸ Most of the donated lands as recorded in these inscriptions are situated in Kāmarūp district of Assam and few of them occasionally in Sibsagar, Darrang and other districts of the said state. It indicates that the political and cultural centres of the Ahom period was centred

in Kāmrūp district of Assam with Gauhati as the epicentre. From this we may hold, that the cultural and political centres of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa from the time of Pāla rulers in the western part of the kingdom remained almost unchanged in the Ahom period also.

We observe a separate identity of the land donating inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa as a whole when we compare it with those of Bengal of the same period. From the above discussion we learn that certain political and cultural centres got due importance under the rule of a specific dynasty in Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. Those centres lost their importance with dynastic change. But in Bengal we find a different picture. From very early time Bengal was divided into four cultural regions which survived centuries after century. It is evident from the number of inscriptions issued from different political centres within each subregion from 5th century A.D. to 13th Century A.D. For instances, in the Varendra region nine inscriptions were issued in the 5th Century, one in the 6th, two in the 10th and one in 12th century A.D. Similarly in the Dacca-Faridpur area four inscriptions were issued in the 6th century, seven in the 10th, three in 11th, ten in 12th and five in 13th century A.D.

So far as the appearance concern it is seen that the inscriptions of Bengal are generally consisted of one plate. The seals attached to the inscriptions are of two types⁹

- (1) pre-cast seal soldered to the middle or the top of plate, and (2) engraved seal cut into the top centre of the plate. They bear different type of symbols like Gajalakṣmī, two-armed deity with wheel background, bull facing, trident, deer park, cakra, Sadāśiva, lion in temple, Kṛṣṇa and Śāpūra wrestling, sun set etc.¹⁰ The number of plates used in the inscriptions of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa vary from one to six. There is a hole in the left side of each plate of an inscription of the region for the purpose of tagging the handle of plates to the elephant marked seal. The seal of the Kansuli grant of Vaidyadeva bears the figure of four headed Gaṇeśa. The Tipperah grant of Lokanātha is more similar to the inscriptions of Bengal than that of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa as it is consisted of one plate and its seal bears a Gajalakṣmī symbol.

From the internal organization of the inscriptions of Bengal we know that there are two type of inscriptions - (1) The property transfers authorized by the district administration and (2) the royal grants.¹¹ The first category includes nine fifth-century inscriptions, plus the Vijaya-sena grant from Kallasarai, the four Faridpur district grants of Gopacandra, Dharmāditya (two inscriptions) and Samāccharadeva, the Dāmodaragupta Grant from Damodarpur and the second grant of Śaśāṅka from Midnapore.¹² All these fifth, sixth and early seventh centuries plates indicate that the consent of district, town or village leaders was

essential for transferring property. Here, in each case the land was actually bought by a person from the local governing bodies for his own use or for religious donation.¹³ These persons held different positions in the society like a district officer (Viṣayapati), a city major (naḡara śreṣṭhin), a noble man (Kulaputraka), a district trade officer (Viṣaya-vyāpara), an agent (sādhnika), a priest (Brāhmaṇa), clerk-writers (Kāyasthas), record-keepers (pustapālas), leading men (Kulikas) and headmen (Kuṭumbins).¹⁴ The second category includes the remaining inscriptions recording grants of land by the rulers.¹⁵ Each inscription of this category bears a long poetic introduction lauding the royal dynasty and the powers of the ruler, a donative section and a concluding section bearing a long list of officers, who are called upon to respect the grant and a lengthy admonitory verses.¹⁶ The inscription of Prāḡjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa are similar to this second category of Bengal inscriptions.

In most cases, like Prāḡjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, the recipients of the grants of Bengal were Brāhmaṇas having different gotras, valasākhās and pravaras. But sometimes in the Samatata region of Bengal large areas of lands were donated to Buddhist monasteries and other religious institutions. Donation of land to the Buddhist monasteries is totally absent in Prāḡjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.

Epigraphs of Prāggyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa throw some light on the socio-economic system of the land. Society was based on Varnadharmā and the kings of the land took great care to maintain it. But in course of time caste system took the place of Varnadharmā. Numerous castes and sub-castes rose into prominence. Among the lower professional sub-castes mention may be made of Kaivartas, Lumblakāras, Tantuvāyas, Nāgi etc. in the society Brāhmaṇas enjoyed a high position. The rulers of the region took great interest for the settlement of high class Brāhmaṇas in the land. Teaching of Vedas and performance of religious activities were their chief functions. But they often took other professions and maintained their livelihood. Agriculture, industry and trade formed the sinews of economic life of the people. There were three kinds of land - royal land, land under public ownership and land under communal possession. Rice was the staple food of the people and so cultivation of rice got the highest importance. It produced highly in the fertile valley of the Brahmaputra. Besides rice, different types of crops and fruits were cultivated in the land. Its jungle products included valuable trees, lac, silk etc. Industries like cotton, silk, metal, wood and minor crafts like leather work, stone work, brick work, pottery, ivory, cane, bamboo also developed in the region. As noticed above besides cowry shells, coins made of gold and silver were the medium of exchange, although it would appear that coins in precious

metals were generally meant for gifts and donations to the deserving personages and also for foreign trades etc. Along with those, the barter system might have also been prevalent side by side.

Thus we see that the socio-economic condition of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa may be compared well with that obtaining in other parts of India in the same period. Scholars like K.S. Sharma and Romila Thapar have observed some characteristics of feudalism in the socio-economic and political system of India during the early medieval period. Those characteristics of feudalism are also present in the socio-economic and political system of the region under our study. But here we do not find an exact picture of feudalism which was prevailed in Europe in the middle ages. Actually, it was a preparatory stage of feudalism. The period was characterised by decentralization of fiscal and administrative authority.¹⁷ Society was broadly divided into two groups. On the one hand there was the king and his secular and religious beneficiaries. The secular beneficiaries included the persons associated with the administration like the rājās, rājās, rājās, rājaputrās, rājavallabhas, sāmantas etc. The religious beneficiaries were the learned Brāhmanas to whom the king donated land for acquiring pūnya or for other reasons. On the other hand there were the Vaiśyas and Śudras - the chief producers of social goods.¹⁸ King with the help of his administrative machinery established

his ownership over the surplus produce of the Vaiśyas and Śudras and controlled its distribution. He did so by imposing different type of taxes upon them who were most probably left with a bare subsistence.

The land donated to the Brāhmaṇas were free from all kinds of taxes. But it will not be correct if we think that, the people attached to the donated land were exempted from paying taxes. From now on they had to pay all the taxes to the Brāhmaṇa donee instead of the king. It greatly affected the financial condition of the ruler. But it helped him in other ways.

Firstly, by donating land to the Brāhmaṇas, virgin soil were often brought under cultivation as is reflected in the Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha.

Secondly, it led to the Brāhmaṇisation and acculturation of the tribal peoples who got the knowledge of better technique of cultivation, knowledge of season, scripts, calendar, art, literature and a new way of higher life.¹⁹

Thirdly, the vastness of the country and the difficulty of communication made it hard for the king to maintain law and order in his kingdom. But the donation of land to the Brāhmaṇas made it easy for the king to maintain law and order in his kingdom because with the donation of land, he laid upon the donee Brāhmaṇas the judicial and administrative power of the donated land.

Lastly, it helped the king to keep his hold over the disputed or strategically frontier areas. Perhaps, such was the case of the Midhanpur Grant of Bhāskaravarman.

References

1. Banerji - Chastai, JRHS, XII, pp. 243-84;
 2. B. C. Mazumdar, History of Bengal, I, p. 564 f.
 3. H. D. Ghosh, HACA, p. 254.
 4. P. N. Bhattacharyya, KS., p. 22.
 5. M. M. Sharma, IAA, p. 286.
 6. Ibid., p. 298.
 7. M. Hoog, Prāchya Śāsanāvalī, Gauhati, 1974, p. 129
 8. Ibid., p. 130
 9. Ibid., p. 135
 10. M. Hoog wrongly mentioned in Prāchya-Śāsanāvalī in page 129 as the inscription belonged to 1750 Śaka.
 11. J. M. Morrison, op. cit., p. 66
 12. Ibid., p. 60-65
 13. Ibid., p. 80 f
 14. Loc. cit.
 15. Loc. cit.
 16. Ibid., p. 90
 17. Ibid., p. 88
 18. Loc. cit.
 19. R. S. Handi, Social Roots of Religion in Ancient India, p. XVI
 20. Loc. cit.
 21. R. S. Sharma, op. cit., p. 222 f.
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A P P E N D I X

Catalogue of Inscriptions

Nagājari-Khanikargāon Fragmentary Stone Inscription.

Collected from Khanikargaon of the Sarupathar area of the Golaghat Sub-division of the Sibsagar district in 1972.

Grant : Not known.

Issued from: Not known.

Published : P.C.Choudhury, JARS, XX, 1972-73, pp.3.5;
D.C.Sircar, JAIH, VII, 1973-74, p. 245
M.M.Sharma, IAA, Gauhati 1978, p.303-305;
JARS, XXIX, 1986-87, pp. 12-21.

Dubi Plates of Bhāskaravarman.

Found near a Śiva temple called the Parisarēśvara-devalaya in the village of Dubi, about three miles from the Pathshala station in Barpeta district of Assam in 1950.

Grant : Reissue of grant originally made by Bhūtivarman. Bhāskaravarman re-issued the land to certain Brāhmīns. Description of the land is not known due to the loss of the last plate.

Issued from: Prāgjyotiṣapura.

Published : P.D.Choudhury, JARS, XI, Nos.3-4, pp.33-33; XII, Nos.1-2, pp.16-33.

D.C.Sircar, F I , XXX, No.47, July 1954;
Indian Museum Bulletin, January, 1969.

M.M.Sharma, op. cit., p.10-34.

D.Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, Gauhati, 1981
 part III, p.7-18.

Nidhanpur Plate of Bhāskaravarman.

Found at Nidhanpur Village, 17 miles east and a little south of Sylhet town of Bangladesh. Six of the seven plates have been recovered.

Grant : Re-issue of grant originally made by Bhūtivarman. Bhāskaravarman re-issued land which was known as Mayūrasālmālagrahāra to 205 decendants of Brāhmaṇas who originally received grant.

Issued from: Karpasuvārṇa.

Published : P. N. Bhattacharya, F I XII, 65-79; XIX, 115-126; XIX, 245-50; Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, pp.1-43.

Kamalakanta Gupta, Copper Plate of Sylhet I, 1967; Historical and Literary Inscriptions, pp.235-40.

M.M. Sharma, IAA, pp.38-81.

D. Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, Part III, pp.161-66.

Tipperah Plate of Lokanātha.

Found in Tipperah district in 1905, exact find spot unknown.

Grant : Mahāsāmanṭa Pradoṣaśarman donated jungle land in Suvvūṅga viṣaya to support service at temple and to support community of some 200 brāhmaṇas.

Issued from : Unknown.

Published : N. K. Bhattasali, I. A. S., XXII, 169-71;

D. C. Sircar, I. H. Q., XXIII, 221-41.

A. H. Dani, Indian Palaeography, p.133.

H. G. Basak, E. I., XV, p.301-15.

Nagāon Plate of Jīvarāja (Fragmentary)

Found at Karaiyani Bamungāon, Palasani in Nagaon district of Assam in 1988.

Grant : Jīvarāja donated a land at a certain viṣaya to a brāhmaṇa from Kāmarūpa.

Issued from : Unknown.

Published : Dr. D. Chutia, JARS, XXXI, Nos.1-2, 1989-90, pp.106-14.

Kuruvābāhi Plate of Harjjaravarman.

Found at Kuruvābāhi Sattrā in Nagaon district, few miles away from the district head-quarter.

Grant : Harjjaravarman donated a land producing some two thousand units of a certain measure of paddy to a Brāhmaṇa, named Dhāresuta.

Issued from : Unknown.

Published : Dr. D. Chutia, JARS, XXVI, 1981-82, p.1-11.

Hāyunthal Plate of Harjjaravarman.

Found one of the three plates in the Nowgong district and now in the Mikir district of Assam in 1920.

Grant : By this Harjjaravarman made a donation but the name of the recipient is unknown due to the loss of the last plate.

Issued from : Harūpeśvara.

Published : P. N. Bhattacharya, JAS, I, pp.109f.; Kāmarūpasāśanāvālī, pp.44-53.

M. M. Sharma, IAA, p.89-94.

D. Sharma, Kāmarūpasāśanāvālī, Part III, p.36-39.

Dighaligāō Plate of Vanamāla.

Found in village Dighalī under Kaliabar revenue circle of Nagaon district in Assam in April 11, 1985.

Grant : Vanamāla made a gift of a Khaṇḍalaka of land in Purjjika Pradeśa on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra to a Brāhmaṇa Gallahara and his five brothers.

Issued from : Haḍapeśvara.

Published : Dr. D. Chutia, JAS, XXIX, 1986-87, pp.37-52; JAS, Benudhar Sharma Commemoration Vol. pp.202-18.

Tezpur Plate of Vanamāla

found underneath the earth near the town of Tezpur,
Assam, nearabout 1840.

Grant : Vanamāla granted a village to a Brāhmaṇa
Indoka on the western side of the river
Trisrotā.

Issued from : Haḍapeśvara.

Published : JASB IX, II, 1840, pp.766f;

P. N. Bhattacharya, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī,
pp.54-70.

Rangpur Sāhitya Parishad Patrikā, No.1, 1321
Bengali sāl.

M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp.95-113.

D. Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, Part III,
pp.173-76.

Parvatīyā Plate of Vanamāla

found in the village Parbatīyā, three miles away from
the Tezpur town of Darrang district, Assam.

Grant : Vanamāla donated a village Haposagrāma
belonging to the Svalpamangoka viṣaya in
the northern side of the Brahmaputra to a
Brāhmaṇa, named Cudamani.

Issued from : Haḍapeśvara.

Published : P. D. Choudhury, D.C.Sircar, E.I., XXIX,
pp.145-59.

M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp.114-26.

on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra
to a brahmin Śrutidhara.

Issued from : Haḍapeśvara.

Published : Hoernle, JASB, LXVI, pp.285-97.

P. N. Bhattacharya, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī,
pp.88-109;

Bangia Sāhitya Patrikā, No.2, 1317 sal.

M. M. Bhattacharya, IAA, pp. 142-51.

D. Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, Part II,
pp.71-77.

Ulubārī Plate of Balavarman III

Found in a field of No.1 Ulubārī village of the Nāhar-
bārī Mouza in Darrang district, Assam in 1977.

Grant : Balavarman III donated a land capable
of yielding two thousand units of paddy
which was sliced off from the land known
as Dikkūra belonging to the Mañjal
viṣaya on the northern bank of the
Brahmaputra. The recipient was a Brāh-
maṇa, named Bhavadeva.

Issued from: Haḍapeśvara.

Published : M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp. 313-17.

Corāṭbārī Plate of Ratnapāla

The find spot is unknown.

D. Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, Part II,
pp.50-55.

Uttarbarbil Plate of Balavarman III

Found at the village Uttarbarbil of the Howraghat area of the present Mikir district, Assam, near about in 1953.

Grant : Balavarman III donated a land capable of yielding two thousand units of paddy, sliced off from the Vappadevapāṭaka belonging to the Varasepāṭṭana viṣaya to a Brāhmaṇa Śyāmadeva.

Issued from : Haḍapeśvara.

Published : P. C. Choudhury, Assam Sāhitya Sabhā Patrikā, XV, No.3, pp.187-94;
R.M. Nath, ibid, XVI, No.2, pp.84-88.
M.M. Sharma, IAA, pp.127-41.
D. Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, Part II,
pp.65-70

Nowgong Plate of Balavarman III

Found at the village Sutārgāon by the side of the river Kalang near the small town of Puraṇigudām, six miles to the east of Nowgong, Assam, in 1893.

Grant : Balavarman III granted a land, capable of yielding 4000 units of paddy, in an area called Haṅśivā, in Diḷjinnā viṣaya

Grant : Ratnapāla granted a land, capable of yielding 4000 units of paddy, sliced off from the Sāntidāsa Pāṭṭaka and Bhaṭṭayā Pāṭṭaka belonging to the Havṛṅga viṣaya. The Recipient was a Brahmin, named Siddhapāla.

Issued from : Haḍapyaka.

Published : M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp.0-21-0.24

Bargāon Plate of Ratnapāla

The find spot is not known exactly. Recovered from a cultivator of the Nāharhābi village of the Bargāon Mouza of the Tezpur sub-division of the Darrang district, Assam, near about in 1897.

Grant : Ratnapāla donated a land, having the capacity of yielding 2000 units of paddy, in the field of Lāvukuṭi, comprising also of a plot of land sliced off from the Mahādevapāṭaka in the Trayodaśagrāma, on the northern side of the Brahmaputra. The recipient was a Brāhmaṇa, named Viradatta.

Issued from : Durjjayā.

Published : Hoernle, JASB, LXVII (1896) pp. 99ff; P. N. Bhattacharya, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, pp. 88-109; Rangpur Sāhitya Parishad Patrikā, No.1, 1322 sal.

M. M. Sharma, IAA, Pp.152-72.

D. Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, pp. Part II, pp. 78-87.

Suwālkuchi Plate of Ratnapāla

Found at the village Suwalkuchi of Kamrup district of Assam in nearabout 1896.

Grant : Ratnapāla donated a land, having the capacity of yielding 3000 units of paddy, in Kalāṅgā viṣaya. The recipient was a Brahmin, named Kāmadeva.

Issued from : Durjjayā.

Published : Hoernle, JASB, LXVII, pp.113-32.

P. N. Bhattacharya, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, pp.116-29; Rangpur Sāhitya Parishad Patrikā, Nos.2, 4, 1319 sal.

M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp. 173-78.

D. Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, Part II, pp. 88-90.

Gauhati Plate of Indrapāla

Found at the village Barpānārā of the Pātidarrang maujā of the Gauhati sub-division of the Kāmarūp district in Assam in sometime around 1863.

Grant : Indrapāla donated a land, having the capacity of yielding 4000 units of paddy, sliced off from the Haviṣābhūmi of the Kāsī Pāṭaka, in the Hapjomā

visaya, on the north bank of the Brahmaputra. The recipient was a Brahmin, named Deśapāla.

Issued from : Durjjayā.

Published : Hoernle, JASB, LXVI, No.1, 1897, pp.113-32.

P. N. Bhattacharya, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī,

pp.116-29; Rangpur Sāhitya Parisad

Patrikā Nos.2, 4, 1319 sal.

M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp.179-92.

D. Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, Part II,

pp. 91-98.

Guwākuchi Plate of Indrapāla

Found at Guwākuchi village, lying very near to the modern Nalbāri town of the Kāmarūp district in Assam in 1925.

Grant : Indrapāla donated a land, having the capacity of yielding 2000 units of paddy, sliced off from the Paṅḍarī bhūmi belonging to the district of Mandi, in the northern bank of the Brahmaputra.

Issued from : Durjjayā.

Published : P. N. Bhattacharya, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī,

pp.130-45; Rangpur Sāhitya Parisad

Patrikā, 1336 sal.

M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp.193-206.

Gachtal Plate of Gopālavarma

Found at the village Gachtal, near Dabaka of the Nowgong district, in Assam in 1966.

Grant : Gopālavarma donated a plot of land capable of yielding eight thousand units of paddy sliced off from Khārikopūñci bhumi, belonging to the Bārāsrojambubā viṣaya. The name of the recipient is unknown due to the loss of the last plate.

Issued from : Haḍapyaka.

Published : P. C. Choudhury, JARS, XVIII, 1968, pp.55-60.

M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp.207-24.

J. Sharma, Ānarūpaśāsanāvālī, Part II, pp.103-17.

Khanāmukh Plate of Dharmapāla

Found at Khanāmukh, a village of Barbhagia mauja of the Nowgong district of Assam.

Grant : Dharmapāla donated a territory of the hamlet of Meru yielding 2000 units of paddy in the Puruji viṣaya.

Issued from : Unknown.

Published : P. D. Chowdhury, JARS, VIII, pp.113-26.

N. K. Bhattasali, ibid, IX, pp.1-3.

M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp.225-40.

D. Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāśanāvalī, Part II,
pp.118-23.

Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka Plate of Dharmapāla

The find spot is unknown.

Grant : Dharmapāla donated a plot of land having yielding 6000 units of paddy, in the locality of Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka, in the Dijjinnā viṣaya. The recipients were two Brahmins - Himāṅga and his brother Trilocana.

Issued from : Unknown.

Published : P. N. Bhattacharya, Kāmarūpaśāśanāvalī,
pp.146-67.

K. L. Barua, EIK, Appendix III.

M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp.241-54.

D. Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāśanāvalī, Part II,
pp.124-31.

Puṣpabhadrā Plate of Dharmapāla

Found near the river puṣpabhadrā in North Gauhati, Assam in nearabout 1909.

Grant : Dharmapāla granted a land, capable of producing 10000 units of paddy, sliced off from Guheśvara-Digdola Vṛddhagrāma, in the Purujī viṣaya to a Brāhmaṇa, named Madhusūdana.

Issued from : Kāmarūpanagara.

- Published : P. N. Bhattacharya, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī,
pp.168-84.
K. L. Barua, EHK, Appendix IV.
M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp.255-72.
D. Sharma, Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī, Part II,
pp.132-39.

Kamauli Plate of Vaidyadeva

Found in the village Kamauli, situated near the confluence of the rivers Varuṇā and Gaṅgā at Varanasi in 1892.

Grant : Vaidyadeva donated two villages Śānti-pāṭaka and Mandarā in the Bādā visaya of the Prāggyotiṣa bhukti of the Kāmarūpa maṇḍala to a Brahmin Śrīdharaśarman.

Issued from : Haṅsākoṅci.

- Published : Arthur Venis, E. I. II, pp.347-58.
S. K. Maity and h. R. Mukherjee, Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions, pp.370-86.
A. K. Maitreya, Gaṇḍalekhamālā,
pp.127-46.
M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp.273-90.

Assam Plate of Vallabhadeva

The find spot is unknown.

Grant : Vallabhadeva granted seven villages, Cadī, Devunikoṅci, Sajjāpīgā, Vaṅgaka,

Samśrahikoñcikā, Dośipāṭaka and
Sonepāṭaka and five assistants along
with their sons and wives for the
maintenance of an alms-house.

Issued from : Unknown.

Published : Keilhorn, EI., V, pp.181-88.

M. M. Sharma, IAA, pp.291-301.

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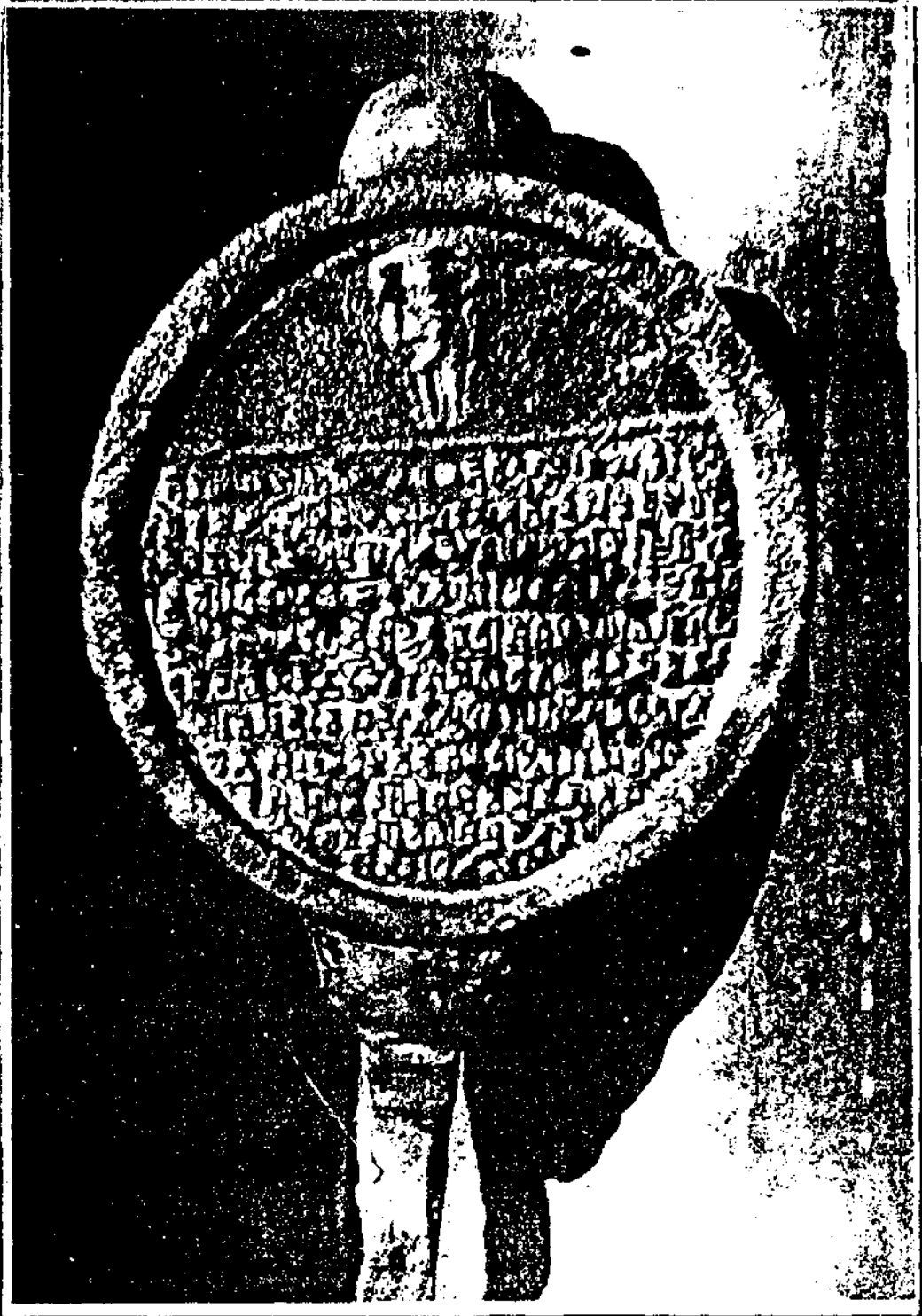
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Plate I



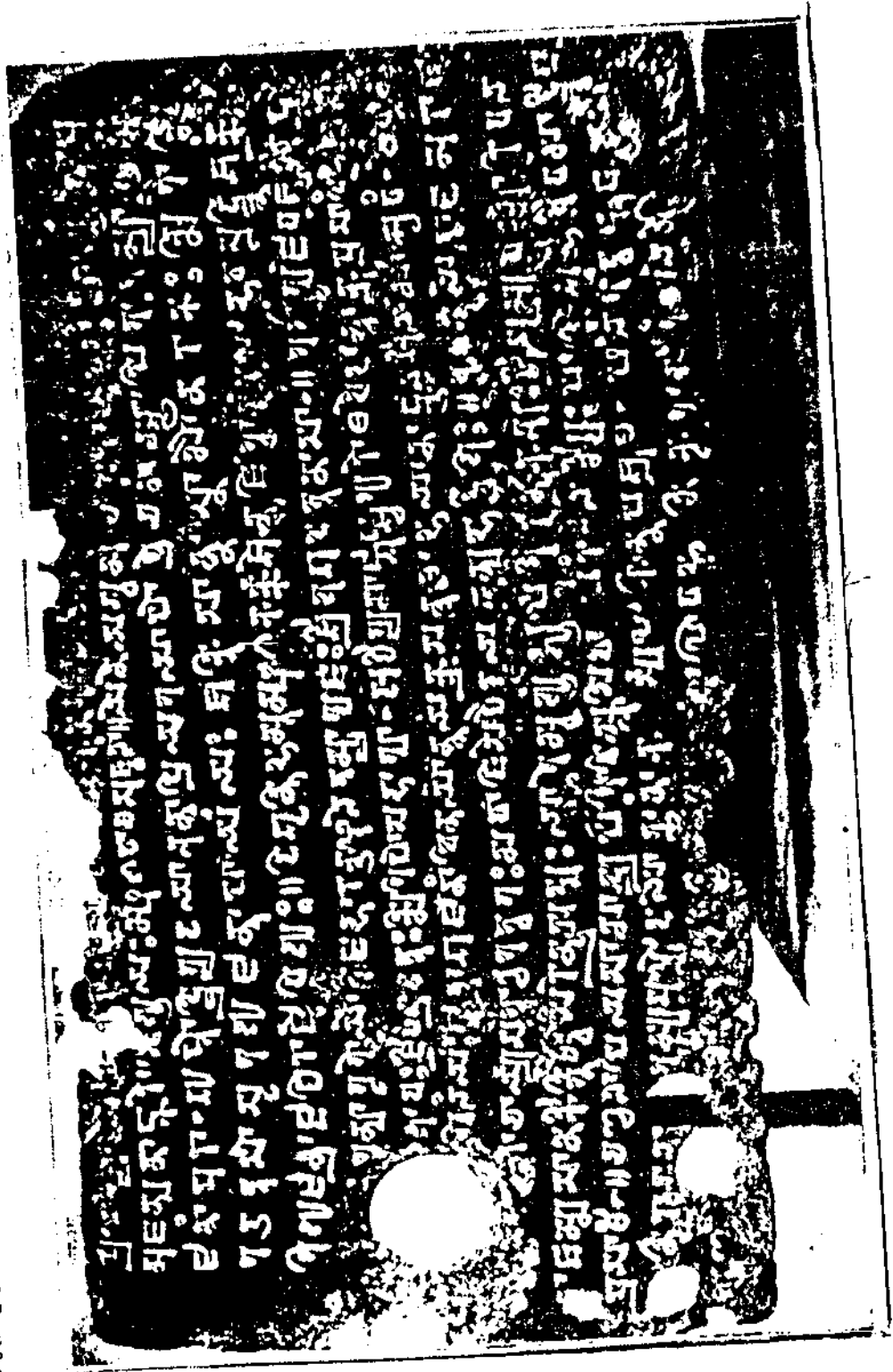
Magōjari Khanikargāon Stone Inscription

COURTESY : M. M. Sharma



Dubi Grant of Bhāskaravarman, Seal

COURTESY : M. N. Sharma

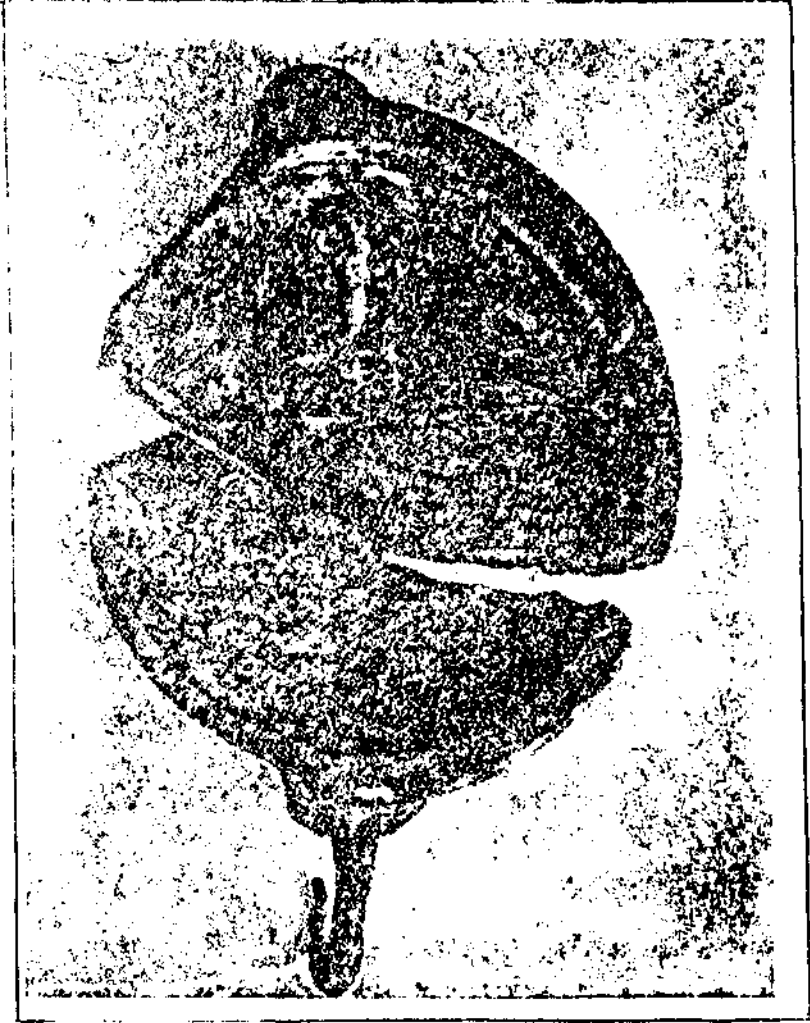


1-B

Dubi Grant of Bhaskaravarman,

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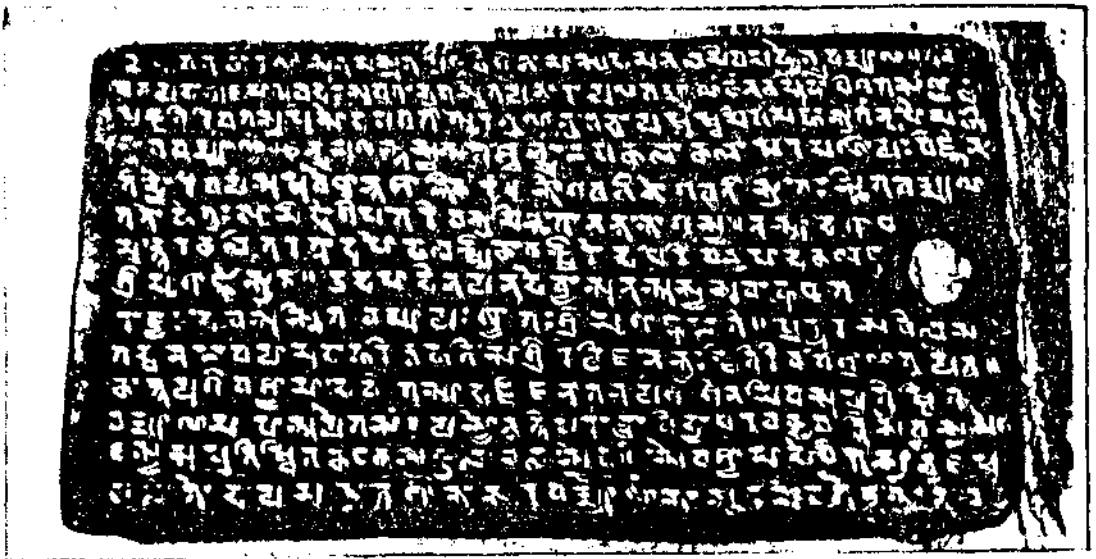
Plate IV



Nidhanpur Grant of Bhāskaravarman, Seal

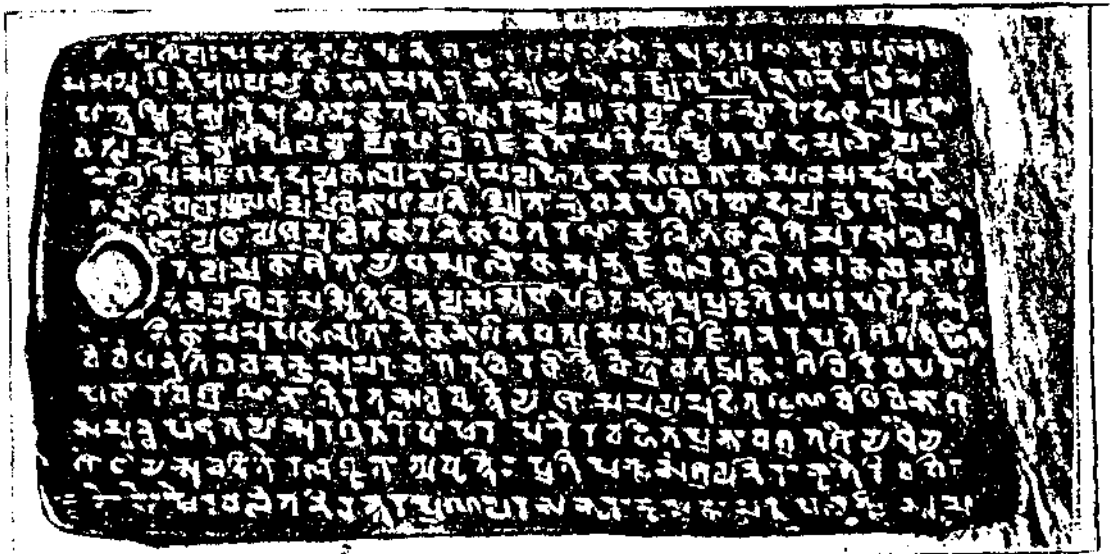
COURTESY : Dr. D. Sharma

Plate V (A)



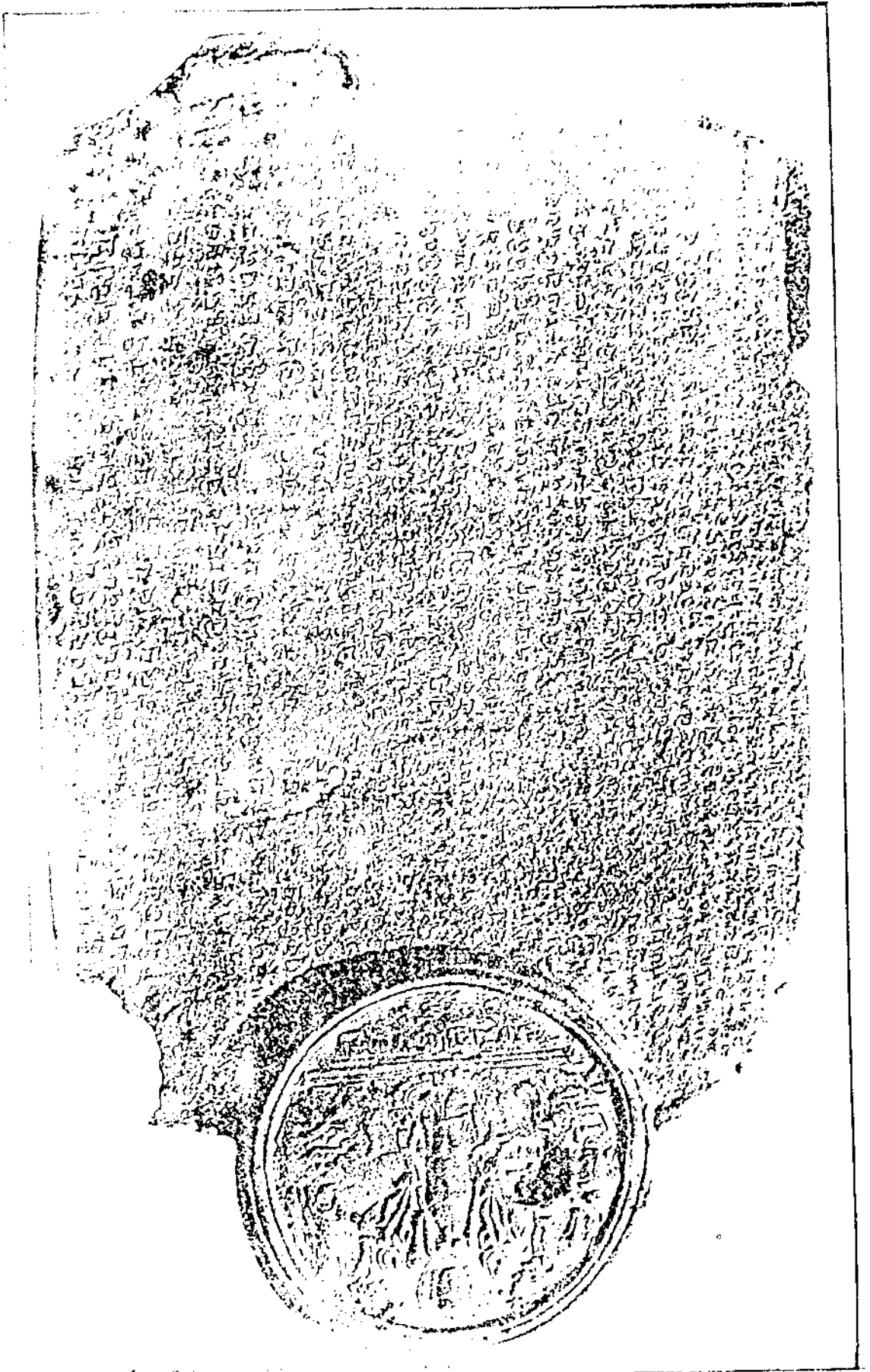
Nidhanpur Grant of Bhāskaravarman, Seal 2. I

Plate V (B)



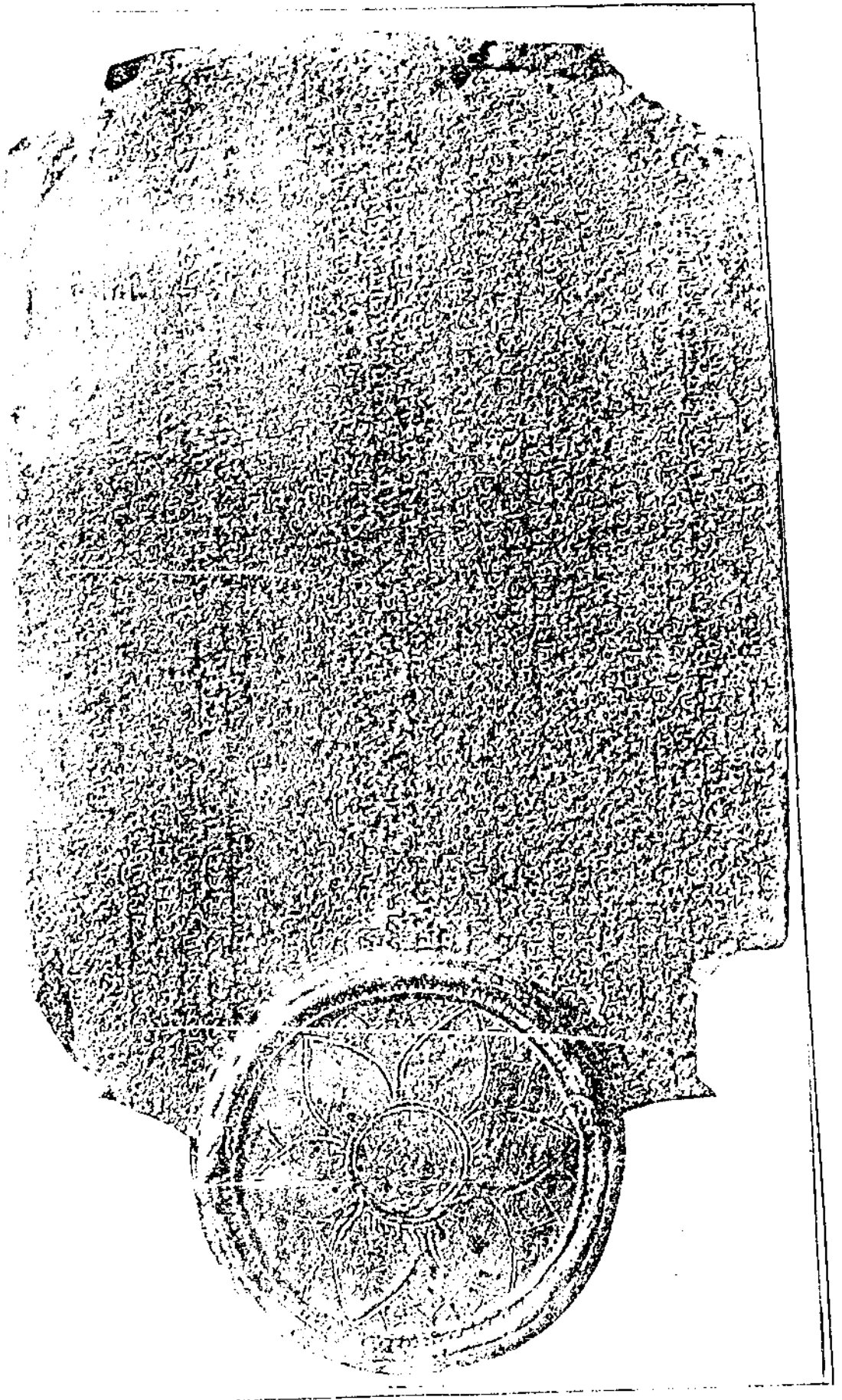
Nidhanpur Grant of Bhāskaravarman, Seal 2. B

COURTESY : M. K. SHARMA



Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha 1. A

COURTESY : Epigraphia Indica



Tipperah Grant of Lokanātha 1. B

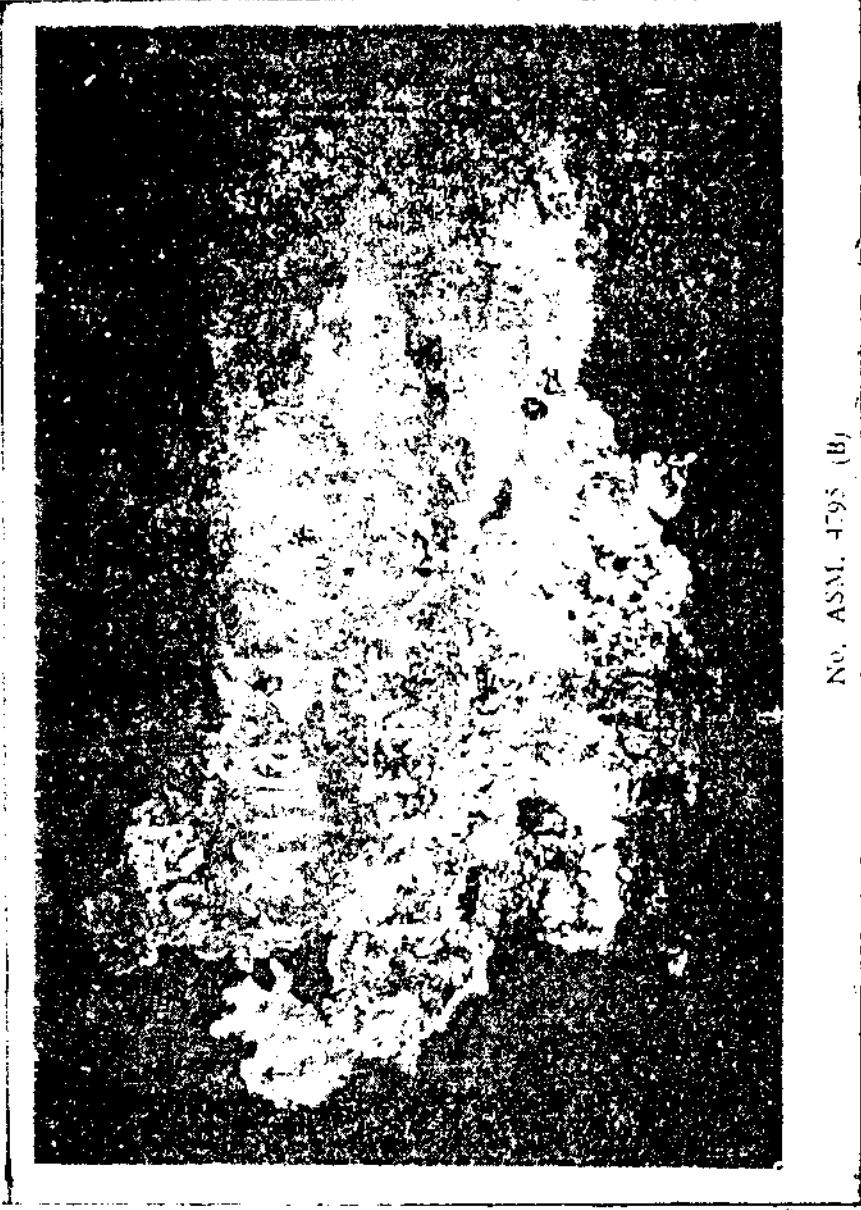
COURTESY : Epigraphia Indica

Plate VIII



Nagāon Grant of Jīvarāja, Seal

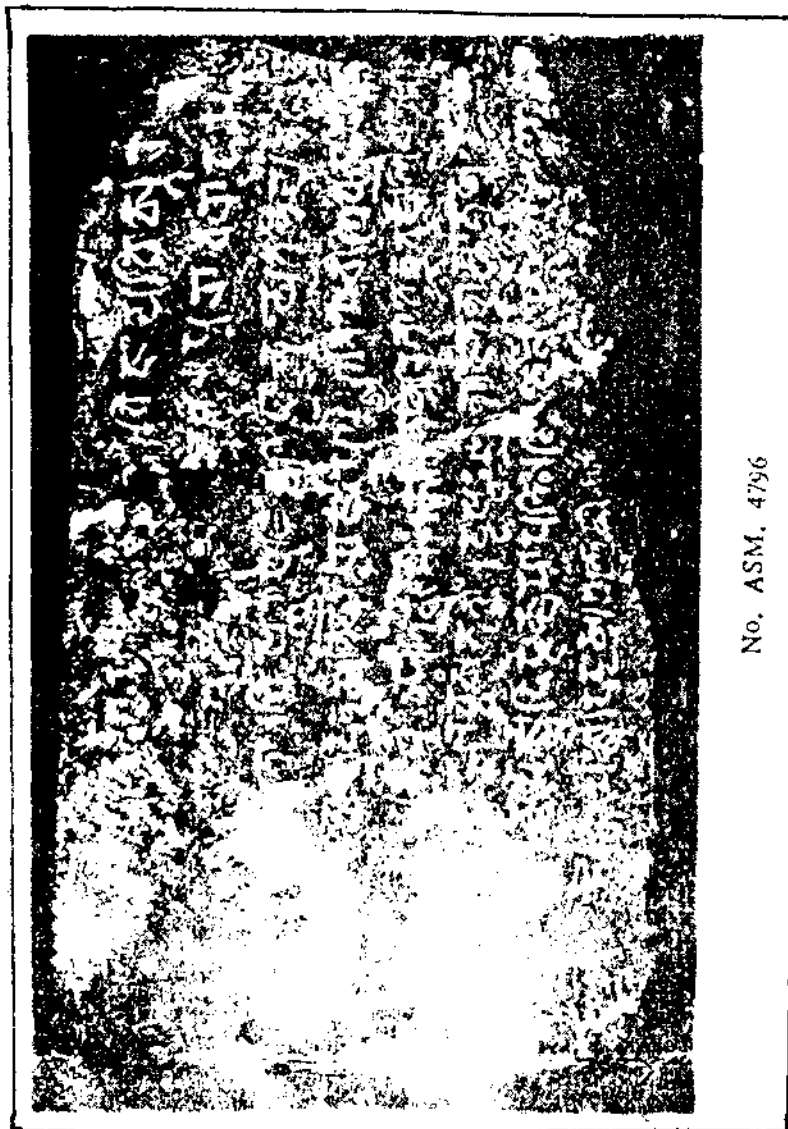
COURTESY : Dr. D. Chutia



No. ASML. 4795 (B)

Nagāon Grant of Jivarāja, Seal

COURTESY : Dr. D. Chutia



No. ASM. 4796

Nagāon Grant of Jivarāja, Seal

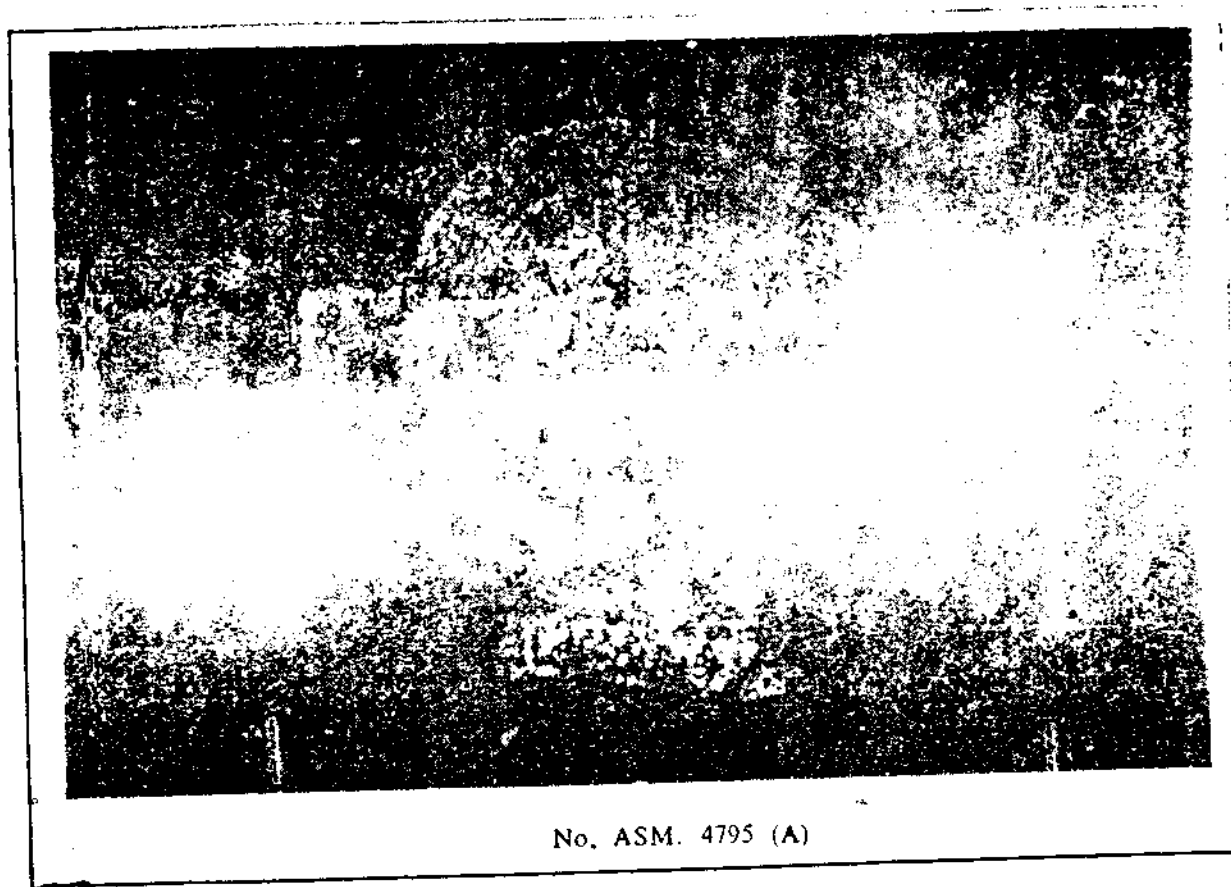
COURTESY : Dr. D. Chutia



Nagāon Grant of Jīvarāja, Seal

COURTESY : Dr. D. Chutia

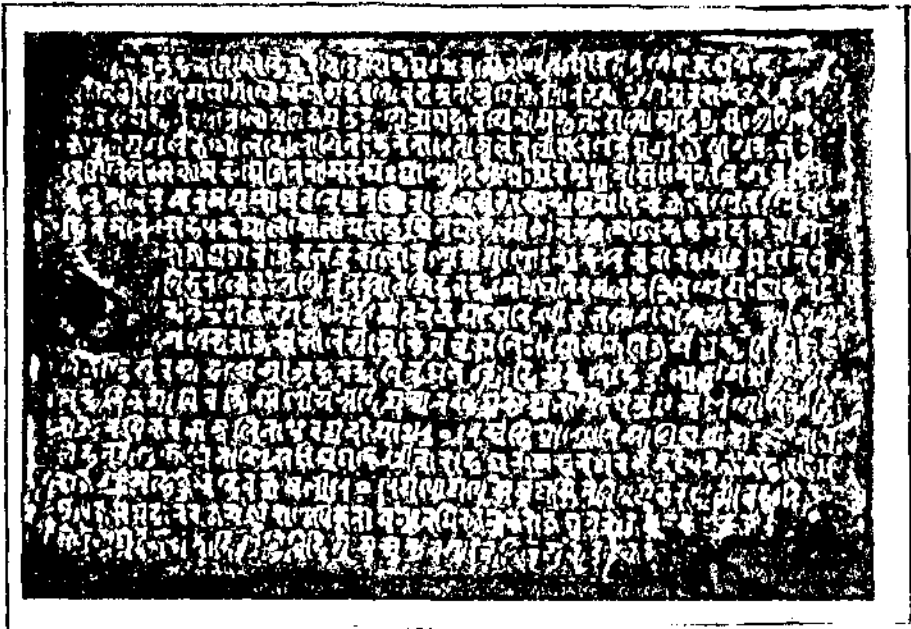
Plate XII



No. ASM. 4795 (A)

Nagāon Grant of Jīvarāja, Seal

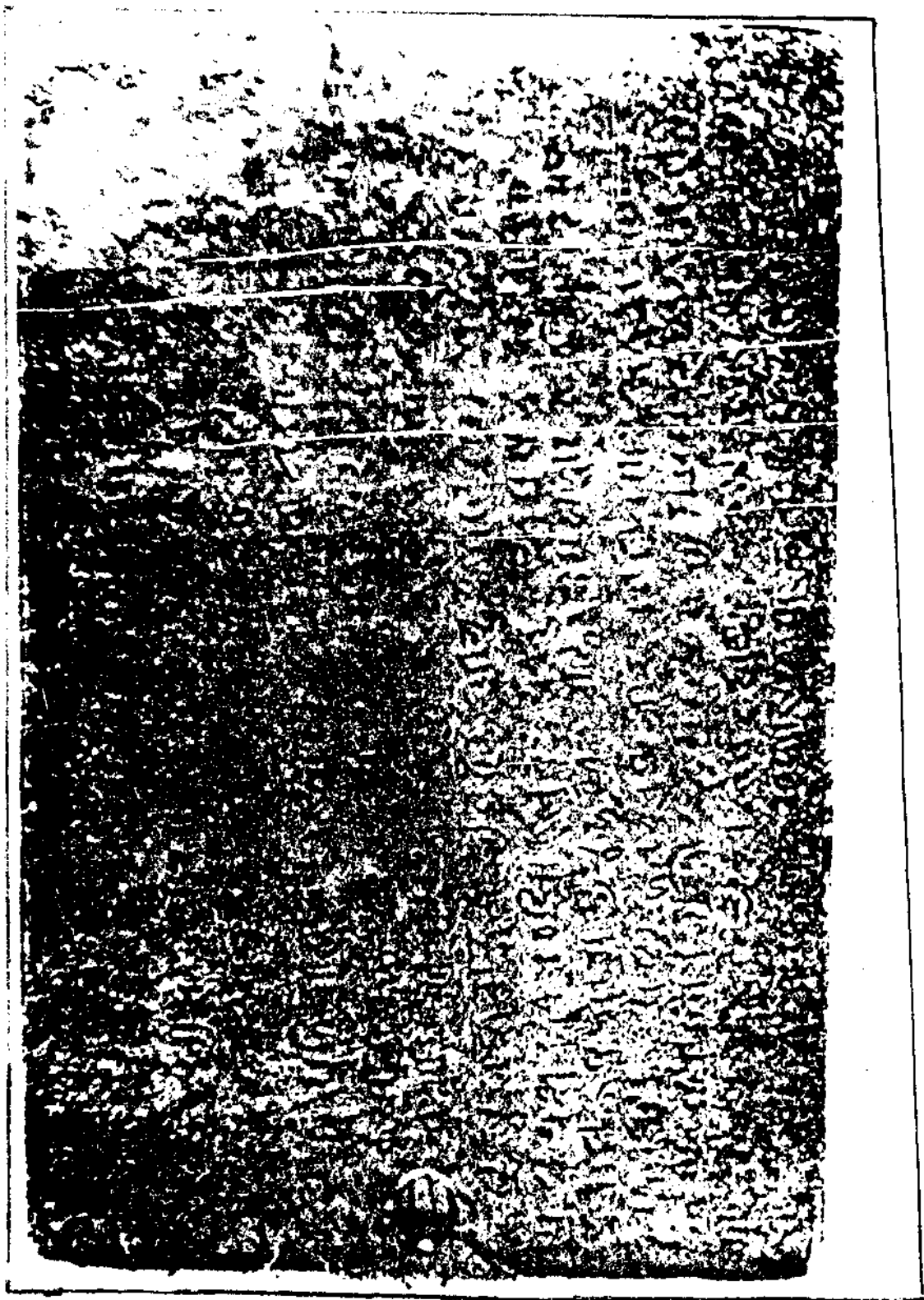
COURTESY : Dr. D. Chutia



Kuruvābāhi Grant of Harjjaravarman 2. A.



Kuruvābāhi Grant of Harjjaravarman 2. B



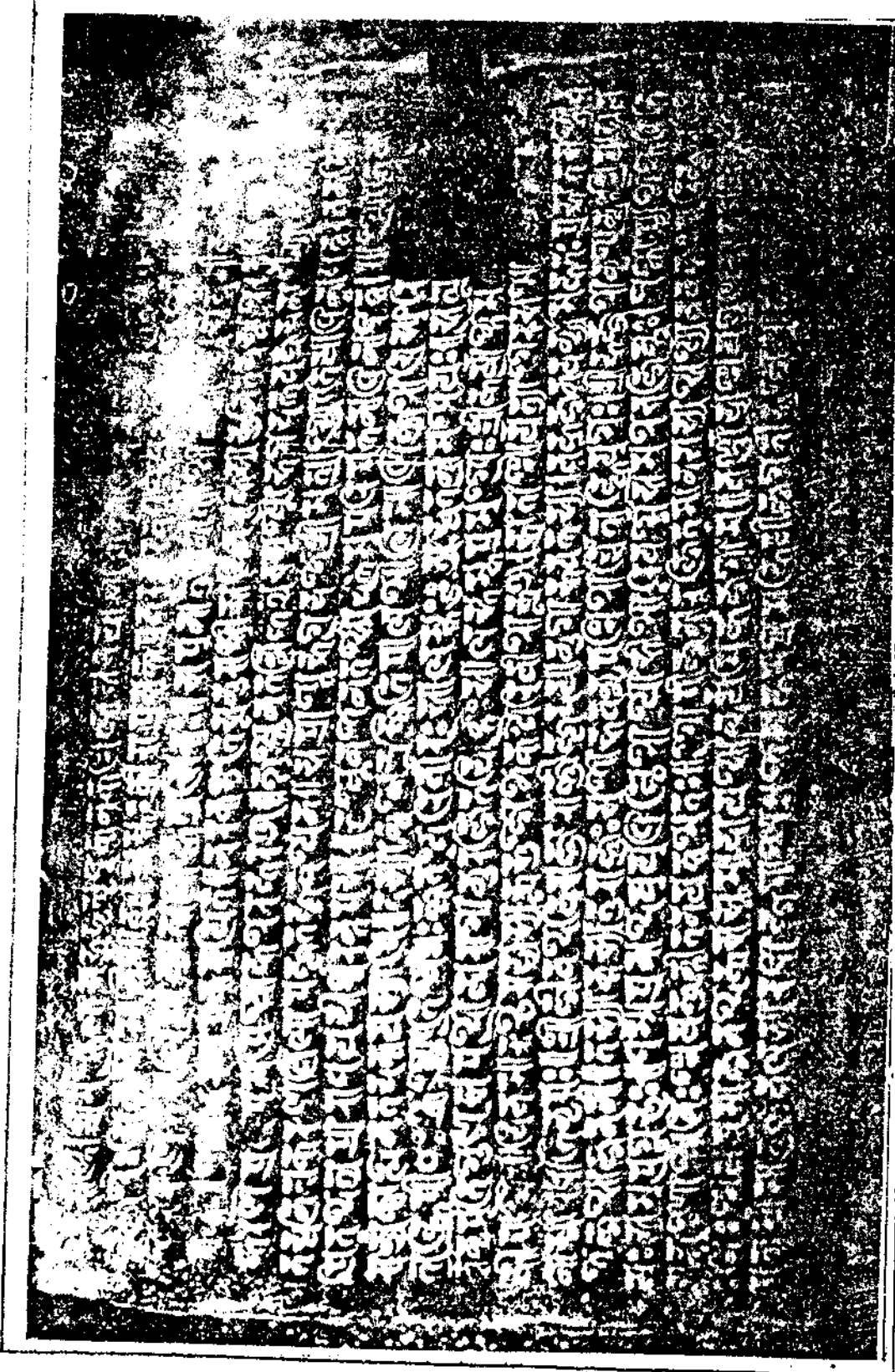
Hāyūthāl Grant of Harjjaravarman 2. A

COURTESY : Dr. D. Sharma



Dighaligāon Grant of Vanamāla , Seal

COURTESY : Dr. D. Chutia



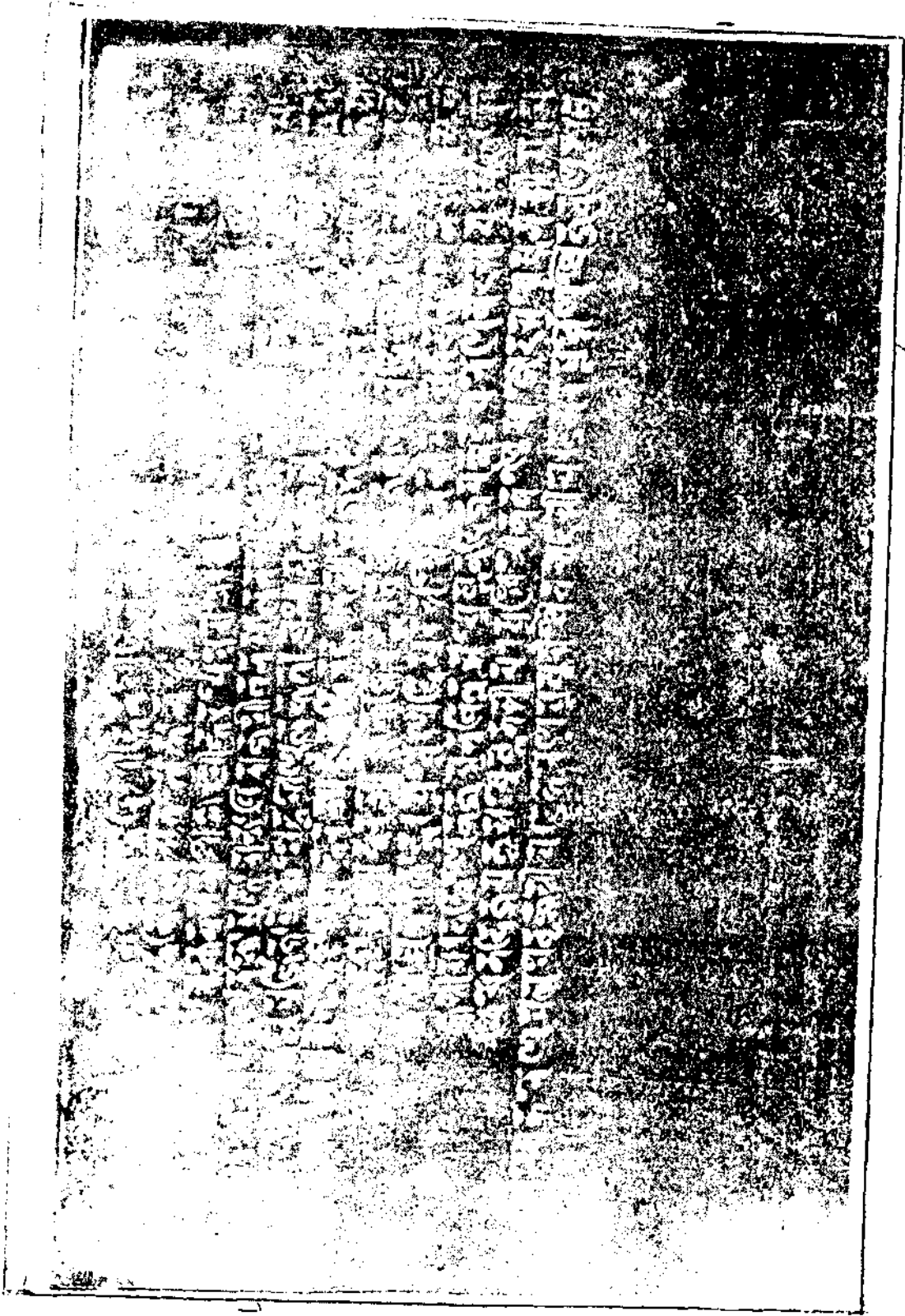
Dighaligōon Grant of Vanamāla , 1. B

COURTESY : Dr. D. Chutia

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Dighaligāon Grant of Vanamāla , 2. B

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Digvijān Grant of Vamanāla , 3. A

COURTESY : Dr. D. Chutia



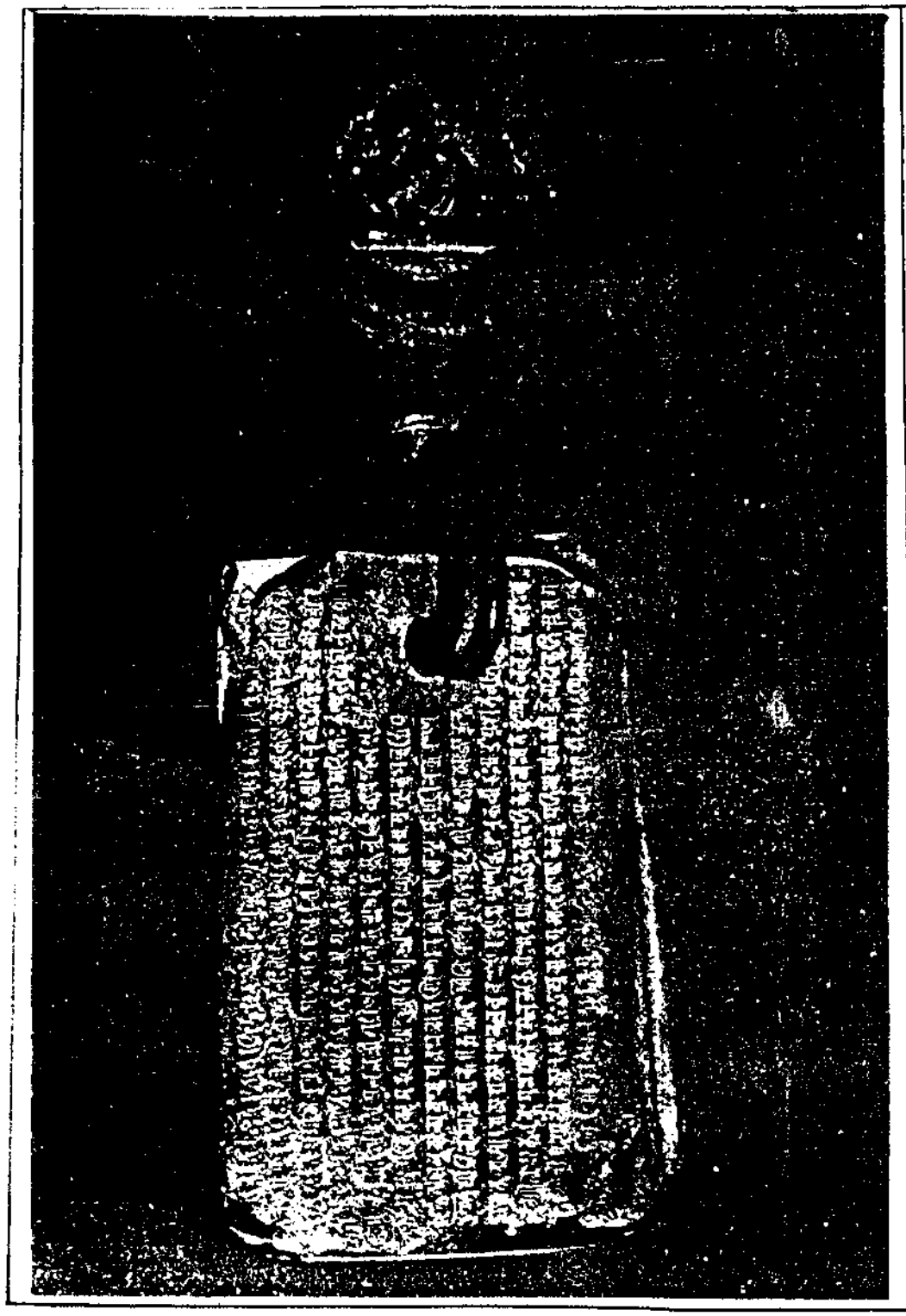
Parbatīyā Grant of Vanamāla, Bunch

COURTESY : M. M. Sharma



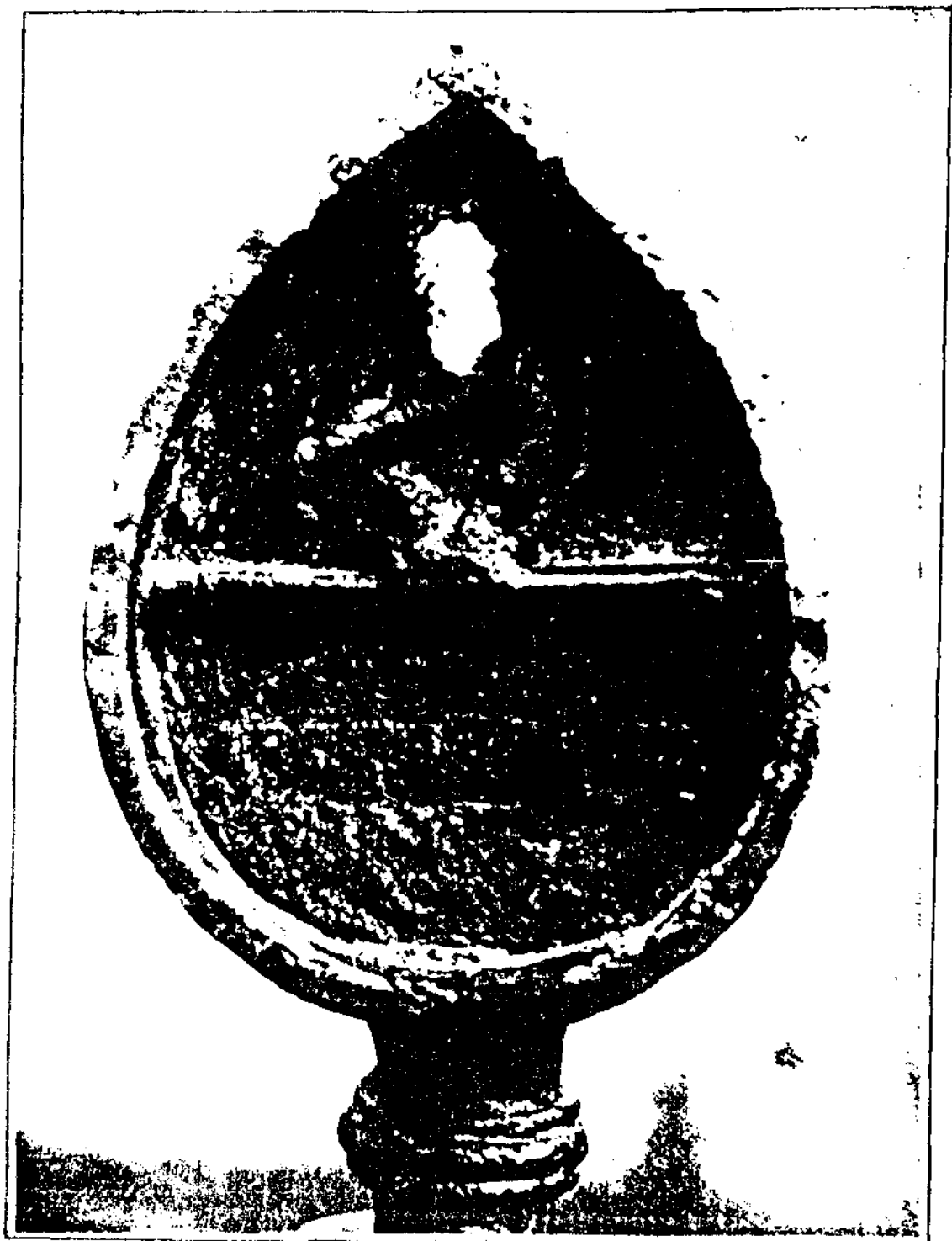
Uttarbarbil Grant of Balavarman III, Seal

COURTESY : M. M. Sharma



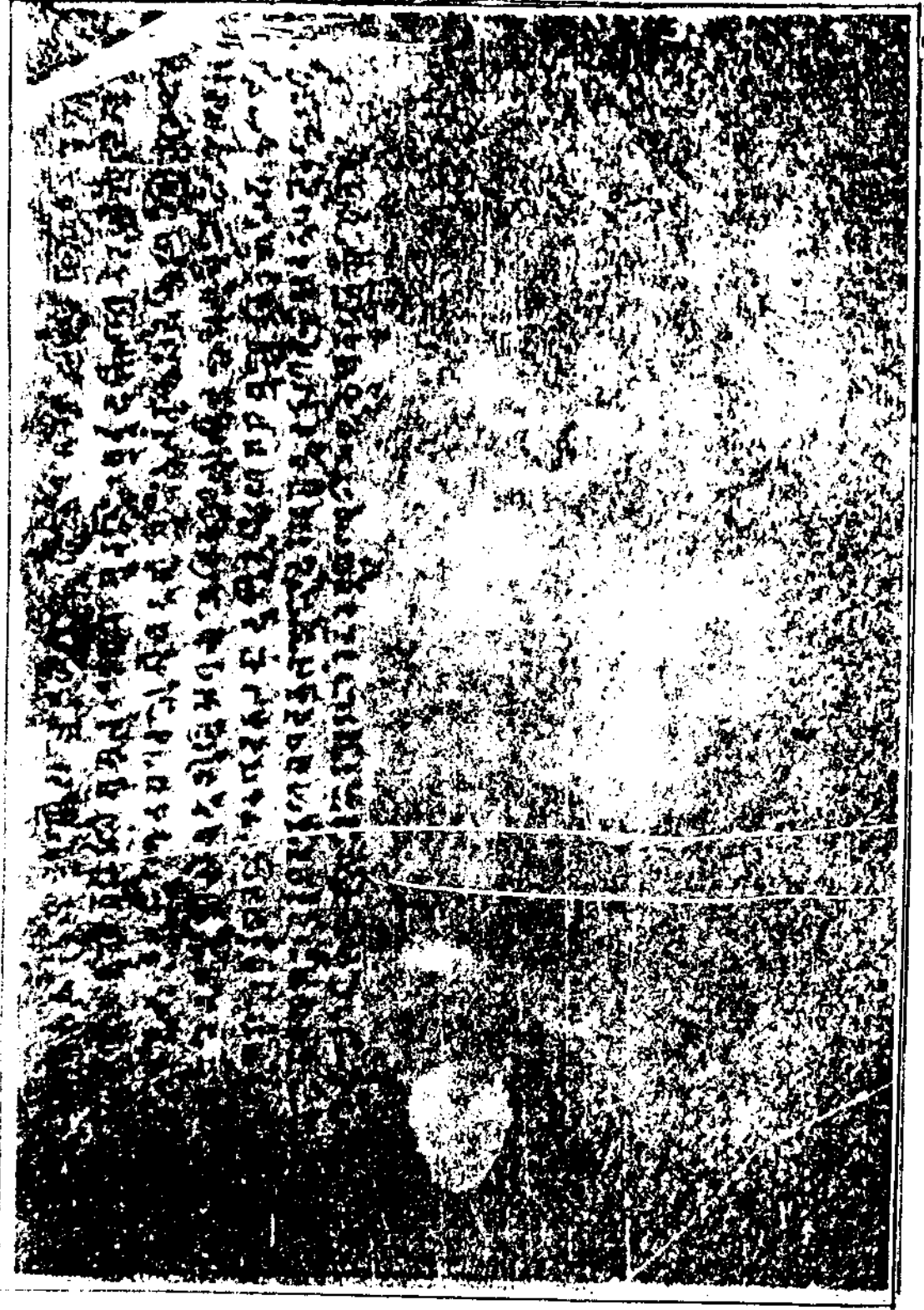
Nagāon Grant of Balavarman III, Bunch

COURTESY : M. M. Sharma



Bargāon Grant of Ratnapāla, Seal

COURTESY : M. M. Sharma



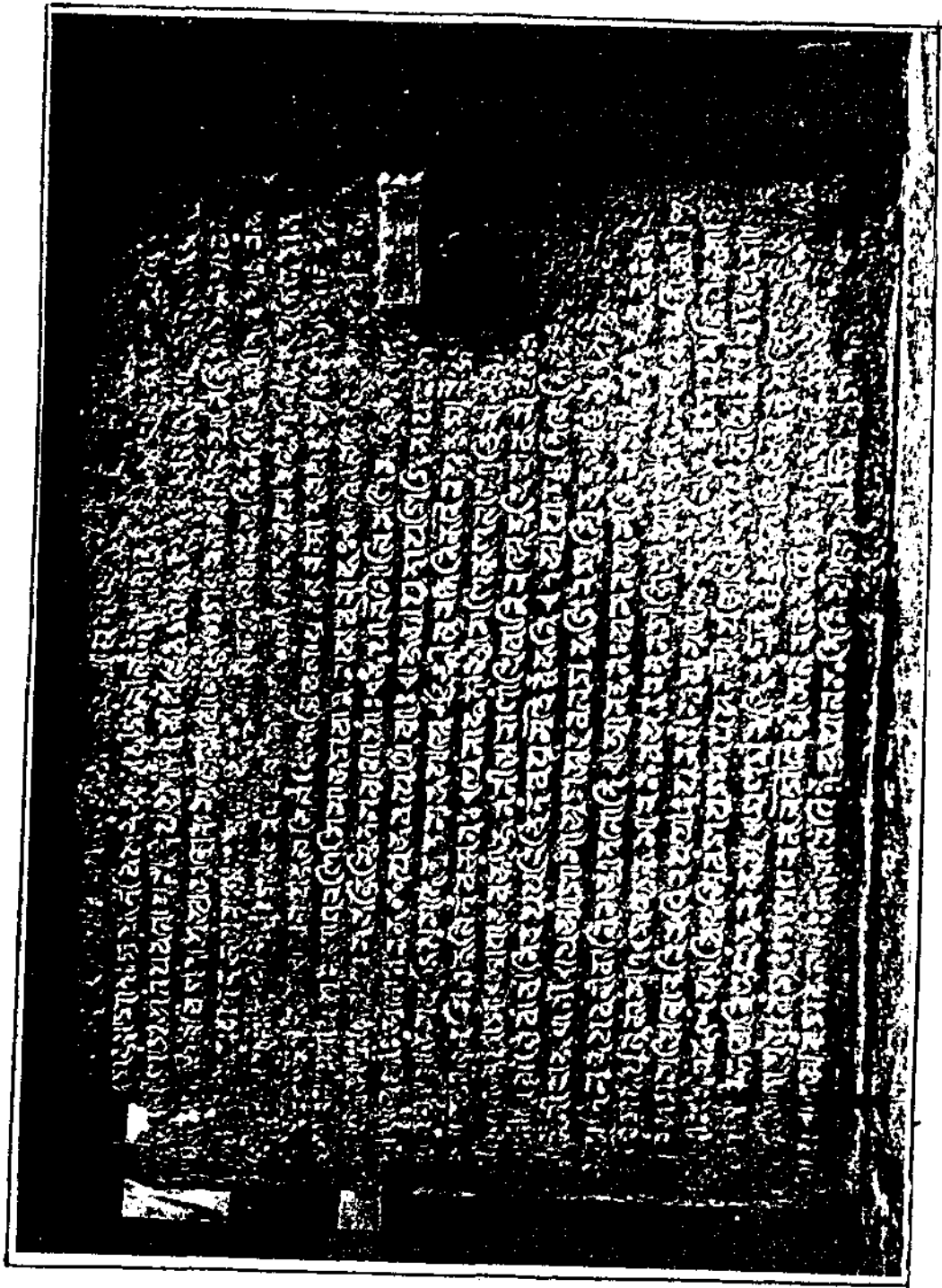
Suālbuchi Grant of Ratnapāla 3. A

COURTESY : Dr. D. Sharma



Guvākuchi Grant of Indrapāla , Seal

COURTESY : M. M. Sharma



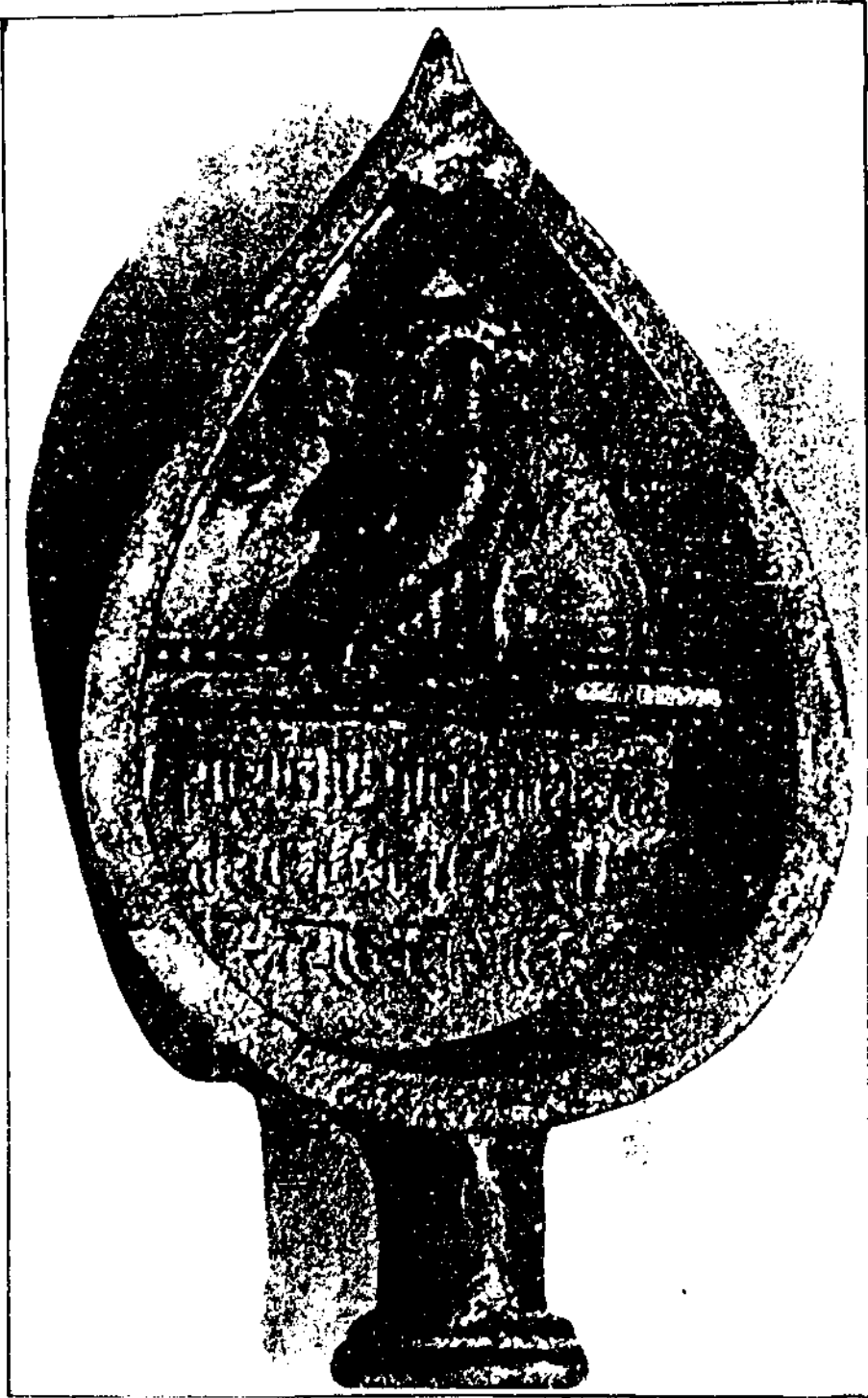
Gachthal Grant of Gopālavarmaṇ , 1. B

COURTESY : M. M. Sharma



Khanāmukh Grant of Dharmapāla , Bunch

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Khanāmukh Grant of Dharmapāla , Seal

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Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka Grant of Dharmapāla , Seal

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This image shows a highly degraded and low-contrast scan of a document page. The text is written in a traditional South Asian script, likely Devanagari, but is completely illegible due to the extreme contrast and noise. The characters are black on a white background, but the individual strokes and diacritics are lost. The text is arranged in approximately 15 horizontal lines across the page.

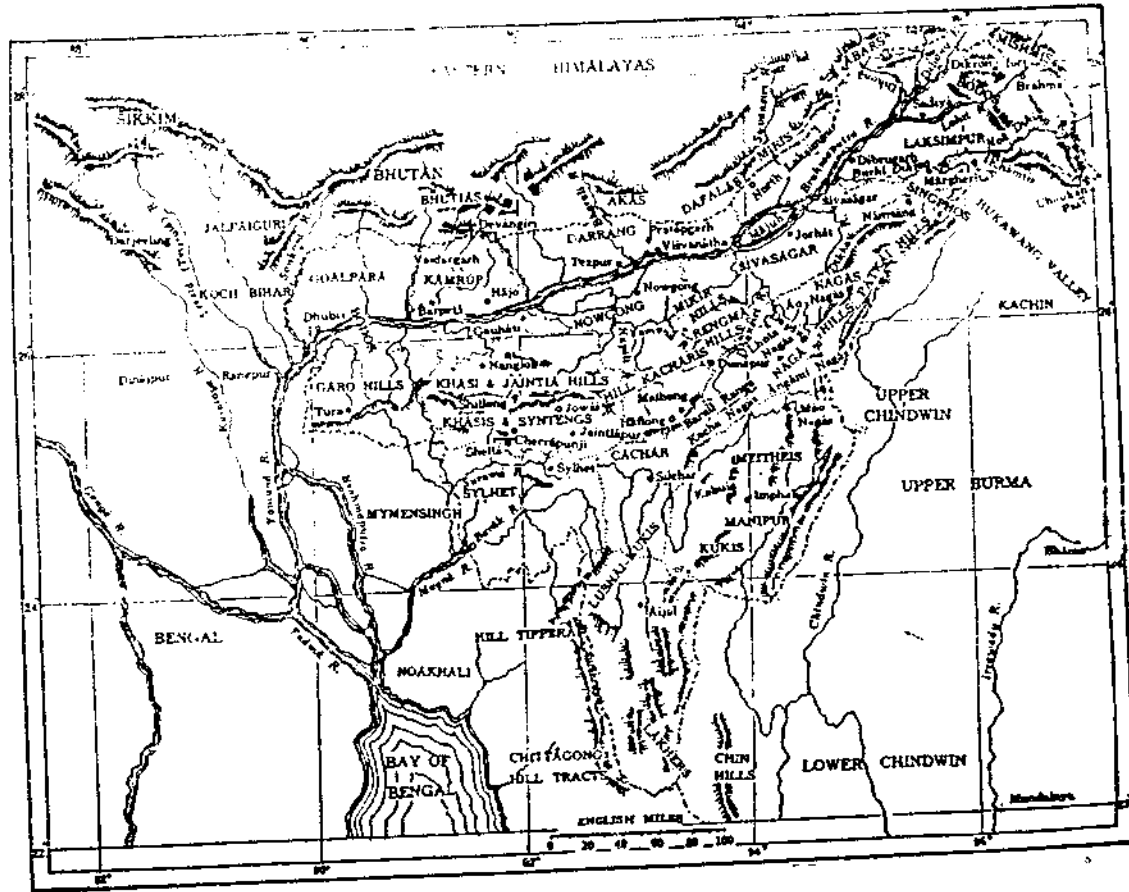
Śubhankarapūṭaka Grant of Dharmapāla , Seal

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Puṣpabhadra Grant of Dharmapāla , Seal

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A map showing physical feature and distribution of tribes

COURTESY : Dr. P. C. Choudhury

