CHAPTER IV.

ASSAM DURING HISTORICAL PERIOD.
Section 1.

TRADITIONAL RULERS.

The history of Assam starts with the traditional rulers mentioned in the Purāṇas. They were called Dānavas and Asuras, and were evidently non-Aryans people. In the epics and the Purāṇas, they are mentioned as Kirātas and mlecchas. The name of the earliest ruler, so far known from tradition, in Assam, was Mahiranga Dānava. Mahiranga is sanskritised from the Bodo name Mairang. Mahiranga was followed by Hatakāsura, Sabmarāsura, Ratnāsura and Ghatakāsura respectively.

Ghatakāsura, who is described as the ruler of Kirātas, a powerful race, was defeated and slain by Naraka, a prince from Videha, who established a new dynasty. The kings of this new dynasty, ruled over Prāgjyotisa for a considerably long time. Nararka is mentioned in the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata. The episode relating to him is given in the Kalika Purana,1 the Bhāgavata Purana,2 the Viṣṇu Purana3 and the Hariyamśa.4

1. Kālikā Purāṇa, Chapters, 36-40.
2. Bhāgavat Purāṇa, Book X, Ch. 59.
3. Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Book V, Ch. 29.
4. Harivamśa, Viṣṇu parva, Chaps. 63-64.
The episode of Naraka as given in those works, is as follows: Viṣṇu in his Varāha incarnation, impregnated Bhūmi or the Earth. Bhūmi delivered a son, only when Rāvaṇa was killed by Rāma, in the country of Videha, where Janaka was ruling in Mithilā.

Hearing the news that a son was born to Bhūmi, Janaka, according to his promise, came to take the son and found the child lying on a human skull. Janaka picked up the child and went to his capital, where the child, under the name Naraka, was brought up. Bhūmi in the disguise of a nurse named Kātyāyanī, lived in the king's harem and brought up the child. When Naraka grew up, he was gifted with brilliance and various powers, more than the other princes; Janaka felt jealous and tried to humiliate him. Bhūmi, knowing the feelings in the king's mind, removed her son, and disclosed his birth to him. Naraka declared that he would believe his birth story only when Viṣṇu himself personally assured him of its truth. Bhūmi invoked Viṣṇu, who appeared and confirmed the statement of the goddess Earth.

Viṣṇu with Bhūmi and Naraka went to Prāgjyotīspura, where the kirāta king Ghataka was ruling. Naraka conquered the country from the Kirātas and was installed as king by Viṣṇu. He was asked by Viṣṇu to worship goddess Kāmākhyā and to pay respect to the Brāhmaṇas. Then Viṣṇu got him married to Māyā, princess of Vīdarbha.
Naraka ruled the country righteously for a very long time. At the end of Dvāpara yuga, Naraka made friendship with Bāna, the Asura king of Sonitpura. Bāna was a devotee of Śiva and was dis-respectful to the Brāhmaṇas. As a result of his company, Naraka, too, became disrespectful to the Brāhmaṇas and started worshipping Śiva. Once Vasiṣṭha went to Prāgjyotiśpura to pay homage to the goddess Kāmākhyā. But he was neither given respect nor allowed to enter the temple of the goddess. This enraged Vasiṣṭha, who cursed Naraka.

According to the Pūrānic tradition, Naraka became a staunch Śaiva. He neglected the goddess Kāmākhyā, and harassed the Brāhmaṇas. In his arrogance, he captured 16,000 ladies from different parts of the country and took away by force the kuṇḍalas of Aditi, the mother of the gods. Then the gods requested Kṛṣṇa to punish him. Kṛṣṇa went to Prāgjyotiśpura, killed Naraka and installed Bhagadatta, son of Naraka, on the throne.

In Haragaurisāṁvāda, it is said that some 24 or 25 kings of the dynasty of Naraka ruled in Kāmarūp. The rulers of the Naraka's dynasty are mentioned cryptically, evidently corresponding to the initial letters of their names. These

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were Ja, Sa, Na, Ga, Bha, Ra, Ta, Ma, Ra, Ja, Ha, Da, Pa, Ca, La, A, Ma, So, Sya, Ma, Bhu, Go, Dha etc. Each of them bore a distinct personal name and also the dynastic name Naraka. N.N. Vasu thinks that all the kings of Kāmarūpa, prior to the ascendancy of the kirāṭa family, passed under the general name or title of Naraka.\(^1\)

According to the Kālikāpurāṇa, Naraka ruled for one full yuga. The religious Naraka of the earlier days and the irreligious Naraka described later on are not the same person but two different ones. The Purāṇa refers only to the first and the last kings of the dynasty. Naraka of the Rāmāyana was different from his namesake mentioned in the Mahābhārata.\(^2\)

Naraka, like Janaka, was a dynastic title. The two words Janaka (Jan-ka) and Naraka (Nara-ka), convey the same meaning. It indicates that Naraka belonged to the family of Janaka. He introduced the Devī cult in Kāmarūpa. He brought many learned and orthodox Brāhmaṇas from the parent country and got them settled in Kāmarūpa. The Devī cult introduced by Naraka in Kāmākhyā was not Vedic in origin.

The Naraka episode mentions the first Naraka ruler, who was righteous and religious and who ruled for a considerable

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2. Ibid.
length of time. The last Naraka ruler, who became very arrogant and who oppressed the Brāhmaṇas and even women was a devotee of Śiva. He was friend of Banaśura and was opposed to Devī worship. He showed non-Aryan qualities, and was called Narakāśura. Lord Kṛṣṇa vanquished and killed this last Narakāśura, and put Bhagadatta, 1 the son or grandson of Narakasura, on the throne.

The Naraka episode furnishes interesting material of historical significance, and provides a good starting point for the history of Assam. 2

Bhagadatta:

After Naraka, Bhagadatta ascended the throne of Prājyotīṣa. He is frequently mentioned in the Mahābhārata as a powerful warrior and mighty king of the mlecchas. 3 Some of the copper plate grants, the Kālikāpurāṇa, the Yoginītantra and the Hāṛṣa-carīta, mention Bhagadatta. In the "sabhā parva" of the Mahābhārata, it is said that Arjuna attacked his kingdom of Prājyotīṣa, but met with a strong resistance. Bhagadatta's army consisted of warriors from Kīrāta, Cīnā

1. Kālikāpurāṇa, Mahābhārata and Inscriptions mentioned Bhagadatta as the son of Naraka. Only Hāṛṣa-carīta describes him as being in the anvaya (line of succession) of Naraka.
and dwellers of the sea coast. After eight days of severe fighting with Arjuna, Bhagadatta surrendered, because the former was the son of his bosom friend, and paid tributes to Arjuna. On the occasion of the Rājasūya sacrifice at Hastinapur, Bhagadatta came with a retinue of Yavanas and presented to Yudhishthira a fleet of horses, utensils of precious stones and ivory hilts of swords.¹

In the great battle of Mahābhārata, he assisted Duryodhana with his powerful army, and proved his uncommon valour and prowess.² The Drona Parva of the Mahābhārata describes his heroic deeds on the field of Kurukhestra. He rescued Duryodhana from the onslaught of Bhima in his fight with Arjuna. He was defeated and slain by Arjuna only with the help of Kṛṣṇa.

According to the tradition, Duryodhana married Bhanumati, the daughter of Bhagadatta. In the Mahābhārata of Kasiram Das, there is a reference to this matrimonial relationship but it is not found in the original sanskrit epic.

P.C. Choudhury places the last Naraka and Bhagadatta during the first century A.D., and states that Bhagadatta's association with the Mahābhārata in circa 9th century B.C.,

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¹ M.B., II, 47, 13-14.
² Udyoga Parva, CLXVI, 5304.
is a later invention. The episode of Bhagadatta is so intermingled with the Mahābhārata story, that it cannot be separated and it cannot be stated that it is a later invention. He must have flourished during the Mahābhārata period.

Vajradatta:

Bhagadatta was succeeded by his son Vajradatta. Vajradatta is also mentioned in the Mahābhārata, but he could not join in the great battle with his father, as he was then a child. Yudhisthira performed horse-sacrifice to prove his supremacy as a samrāt. Vajradatta, after a vigorous fight, acknowledged Yudhisthira as his overlord. In the Harsacarita, Puṣpadatta and Vajradatta are mentioned as the successors of Bhagadatta. The name of Puṣpadatta is not found in the inscriptions as belonging to Bhagadatta's line. Probably Vajradatta was the younger brother of Puṣpadatta, but the writers of the inscriptions of Vanamala, Balavarman III, and Ratnapala, erroneously mentioned him as brother of Bhagadatta.

2. Copper-plate grants of Bhāskarvarman and of Indrapāla describe Vajradatta as the son of Bhagadatta. But the copper-plate grants of Vanamala, Balavarman, and Ratnapāla describe him as the brother of Bhagadatta.
   - Kāmarūpa sāasanāvali, PP. 10-11.
3. Asvamedha parva, Chaps. 75-76.
Naraka's descendants continued to rule for nineteen generations. The last kings of this line were Subâhu and Suparna. Subâhu became as ascetic and went to the Himalayas, and was succeeded by his son Suparna, who was afterwards killed by his minister, Sukrâti. Though Haragaurisamvâda gives the names of the rulers, most of them are fictitious. The Nidhanpur Grant of Bhâskaravarman records that a period of three thousand years elapsed between the death of Vajradatta and the succession of Puṣyavarman, founder of a new line.\(^1\) Huen Tsang also records that there were a thousand generations between Viṣṇu, the progenitor of Naraka, and the birth of Bhâskaravarman.\(^2\)

In the Bhagavat Purâna, there is a mention of Bhishmaka, who ruled in Vidarbha which, according to the tradition in Assam, is located in Sadiya region. The name of the Capital was Kuṇḍîna, and the ruins of an extensive fort, about 24 miles north of Sadiya, between the gorges of the Dikrong and the Dibong rivers, are said to be the remains of his capital.\(^3\)

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1. Nidhanpur grant of Bhâskaravarman; Bhattacharya, P.N., I.A., XLIII, PP. 95 ff; I.H.Q., 1927, P. 839; Dikshit, K.N., A.R.A.S.I., 1921-22, P. 115; E.I., XII, PP. 73 ff; XIX, PP. 113 ff; PP. 246 ff; Kâmarûpa Jâsanâvali, PP. 1-43.


Bhiṣmaka had five sons and a daughter named Rūkmini. She was very beautiful and was loved by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Bhiṣmak arranged her marriage with another prince named Śisupāl of Chedi. Rūkmini secretly sent a message to Kṛṣṇa, who appeared and carried her off in his chariot. He was pursued by Raktabīr and other princes but Kṛṣṇa defeated them, and married her at Kuṇḍina amidst the rejoicings of the people. The marriage songs, pertaining to this legend, in the Rūkmini Haran, are still current in Assam.

P.C. Choudhury \(^1\) supposes that the story of Kṛṣṇa's exploits, is a myth, but that there was a prince of the name of Bhiṣmak is quite possible. The story may have had its origin in the invasion of distant Kāmarūpa by Arjuna, some prince during his time or at a time when Nāraka flourished and was, therefore, associated with Kṛṣṇa.

The Bhāgavat and Viṣṇu Purāṇas narrate the story of Bāna, son of Bali, king of Sonitpur. Sonitpur is identified with the modern city of Tezpur. \(^2\) He is known as Bānāsura, contemporary of Nāraka, had many sons besides a daughter named Uṣā. Bāna was a staunch devotee of Śiva. Aniruddha, grandson of Kṛṣṇa, who was attracted by the beauty of Uṣā, entered the castle where she was guarded; and married her according to the Gandharva system of marriage.

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2. Ibid, P. 114.
He was captured, after a valiant resistance, but was rescued by Krisna. Krisna defeated and killed Bāṇa in a great battle. The episode is narrated in an Assamese book named, Kumāra Haran. Bāṇa's grandson made his capital at Bhālukpung, at the foot of the Akā hills.

In the Rāghuvamśa, (canto IV), it is said that Raghu crossed the Lohit and defeated the King of Prāgjyotisā, who gave him a number of elephants as tribute. But we do not find mention of this in any other source.

According to the Vṛṣṇītantra, sudra ruler named Debesvara was ruling in Kāmarūpa in the beginning of the Saka era. Another name found is that of Narasankar or Nāgākhyā, who flourished and ruled in the Svarna pīth. The capital was at Pratāpgarh in Miswanath, where the ruins of a fort attributed to him, are still in existence. In his line, there were four other rulers, who ruled for two hundred years. They are Mimang, Gajang, Sribang and Mrigang.

A Kshatriya named Jitārī, from the Dravidian country, came to Assam under the name Dharmapāla and founded a Kingdom. He made his capital somewhere west of Gaubati. He was pious, and brought Brāhmans and other high caste Hindus and installed them in Assam. His son Vatupāla, Satānika or Ratnapāla invaded Gauḍa, and he was succeeded by his son Somapāla. This dynasty ruled for eight generations. The
last king of this dynasty was Râmchandra, whose capital was at Ratnapur in Majuli.

Saśānka or Ārimatta was the illegitimate son of Râmchandra. He founded a kingdom further west, defeating many other chiefs. He came into conflict with Râmchandra and killed him unknowingly. The location and extent of his kingdom is not known. But most of the accounts place his kingdom in lower Assam, and his capital at Baidargarh in Kamrup. He was attacked by a king of Phenguā, of the house of Kamatāpur. The King of Phenguā was defeated first but by taking the help of Ratnamālâ, wife of Ārimatta, he killed Ārimatta and took possession of his capital. Then he killed Ratnamālâ also. The king of Phenguā was killed by Ārimatta's son Gajānka, who was succeeded by Sukrānīka and Mrigānka. Ārimatta's descendants ruled for four generations, and with the death of Mrigānka, the kingdom was divided into many parts.¹

Jongal Balahu, another son of Ārimatta, founded his capital in the Sahāri Mauza in Nowgong district, where the ruins of an old fort are still extant. The name of the fort is Jongalgarh. He was defeated by the Kachāris, and drowned himself in the Kallang river.

¹. The accounts of Ārimatta & his kingdom are found in Haragaurī-saṁvāda; Bhuγan, S.K., Kamarūpar Puranji, PP. 1-5; Assamese Historical literature; Gait, E.A., History of Assam, PP. 18-19.
In the earliest times, the kingdom of Prāgjyotīsa did not comprise the whole of Assam. There were some small independent kingdoms, too. Amongst those, we find the name of Davoka, Kandoli, Manipur, Hiḍimba and Tippera (Tripura) country. After Vajradatta, the kingdom of Prāgjyotīsa gradually became weaker during the centuries. Thus, it was surpassed by others small kingdoms, which became stronger politically.
Section 2.

THE VARMAN DYNASTY.

The sober political history of Assam starts from the Varman dynasty. Puṣyavarman who ruled during the fourth century A.D. was the founder of the line. He traces his descent from the Bhauma dynasty of Naraka-Bhagadatta, and was the first distinguished ruler of the line as recorded in the inscriptions.\(^1\)

The origin of the Puṣyavarman family is still obscure, though we trace the origin of the family from Naraka, who was born through the union of the Boar incarnation of Viṣṇu with Earth, according to literature and the epigraphs. However, the historicity of the origin can be doubted. Either it might have a poetical exageration to show greatness or a humble origin, as is found in many lines of rulers in ancient time, where the origin of the family could not be traced and simply traced to the moon, sun, fire etc. Hiuen Tsang described the Varman as Brāhmaṇa.\(^2\) R.C. Majumdar thinks that their supposed descent from the demon Naraka probably indicates the


non-Aryan origin of the ruling family, though converted to the orthodox Brāhmaṇical religion. 1 N.N. Vasu states that they were Mleccha Brāhmaṇs. 2 K.L. Barua thinks that they were kshatriya monarchs. 3 According to S.K. Chatterji, the Varmans were neo-kshatriya, a member of a Hinduised Mleccha, of non-Hindu Indo-Mongoloid family. 4 The view does not seem to be convincing. The Varmans were Brāhmaṇs, as they are clearly mentioned by Hiuen Tsang. Some of the surnames, as found in the epigraphs, were meant for Brāhmaṇs and those are now used by other castes besides the Brāhmaṇs.

The Nidhānpur grant says: "when the kings of the Naraka family, having enjoyed the position of rulers for three thousand years, had all attained the conditions of gods, Puṣyavarma became the lord of the world." 5

The Varman dynasty probably continued from the middle of the fourth century A. D. to the middle of the seventh century or even later. Puṣyavarma, most probably, was the contemporary of Samudragupta. As he used the epithet

5. Nidhānpur Grant; Nālandā Clay Seal; Doobi Grant; also partially given in the Harsacarita (Nirnaya Sagar edition, P. 220; Tr. Cowell & Thomas, P. 217).
'Mahārājādhirāja', he must have gained power and influence in Eastern India. The dynasty ruled from the city of Pragjyotispura, though a few other small principalities might have been established in other parts of the region before Puṣyavarman. The epithet 'prāgjyotisādhipati' used by the rulers, indicates that throughout the ancient period, to the end of the Varman dynasty or a little later, Prāgjyotiṣa remained the capital city of those rulers. B.M. Barua believes that the epithet was borrowed from the Epics.1 There is a possibility that the kingdom was known as Prāgjyotiṣapura, and during the historical period the name of the kingdom was converted to Kāmarūpa. But "Prāgjyotiṣapura" remained the capital of the new kingdom.

The origin of the Varmans is not known. R.A. Nath, believed that Puṣyavarman, who established the Varman dynasty came from Central India and occupied the throne with the help of Samudragupta.2 B.M. Barua connects the Varmans of Kāmarūpa with those of Trigarta in the uttarapatha (Kangra valley) or somewhere in the Punjab.3 P.C. Choudhury believes that Puṣyavarman was an Aryan prince having an admixture of Alphee blood and distantly connected with the family of Bhagadatta, who flourished, according to him, during or about the first century A.D.4 We do not connect

2. Background of Assamese culture, PP. 32-33.
3. I.H.Q., XXIII, PP. 200 f.
him with the legendary king Bhagadatta; but probability is that Puṣyavarman, undoubtedly, was an Aryan, whose predecessors came to Assam earlier than the fourth century A.D. and must have established themselves in Assam. There was anarchy in the political field of Assam and some non-Aryan chiefs could have enjoyed the possession of small kingdoms. Puṣyavarman's family must have had good response from the people. It rose to a much better position later, but at the time of Puṣyavarman, he was able to establish himself as a ruler and to unify some of the small kingdoms by his prowess.

The Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta mentions a Kāmarūpa king as "Samataṭa-Davāka-Kāmarūpa-Nepāla-Karttṛpurādi pratyanta nṛpatibhiḥ;" these were the Pratyanta kingdoms of Samudragupta.¹ The name of the Kāmarūpa king is not mentioned. R.G. Basak states that Puṣyavarman was the contemporary of Chandra Gupta and Samudra-Varman of Samudragupta.² H.C. Ray states 'that there is no conclusive proof that the Guptas conquered Kāmarūpa,' but the similarity of the names of Samudragupta and Samudra-Varman and of the names of their queens and the insertion of the Gupta era in an inscription, led him to suspect "that some Gupta influence must have penetrated in the valley of the Brahmaputra."³ He

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2. H.N.E.I., P. 211.
further thinks that Samudravarman and Samudragupta were contemporaries. P.C. Choudhury supposed that, Puṣyavarman was the contemporary of Samudragupta and Davokā was another frontier state to the east of Kāmarūpa. Both the states submitted to Samudragupta, but their autonomy was maintained. Choudhury places Puṣyavarman in between the period 355 and 380 A.D. Puṣyavarman's accession was around 355 A.D.¹ P.N. Bhattacharya places Puṣyavarman, the first king of the line, in the middle of the fourth century A.D.² and states that Puṣyavarman was a contemporary of Samudragupta, probably a vassal of that great emperor, who took pleasure in making known his attachment to his liege-lord by naming his son and daughter-in-law after him and his queen.³ Bhattacharya considers that Puṣyavarman was a contemporary, not of Samudragupta, but of his father Chandragupta I, and he places Puṣyavarman in the early part of the fourth century A.D.⁴ K.L. Barua supports the view of Bhattacharya and considers Puṣyavarman to be the frontier king of Kāmarūpa referred to in the Allahabad prasasti, who was compelled by Samudragupta to enter into subordinate alliance with him by paying all kinds of tribute, obedience to his commands and attendance

3. Ibid., P. 14; I.H.Q., III, PP. 837 ff.
in his court. 1 The accession of Pusyavarman may be placed about A.D. 350, or a little earlier. 2

2. Samudravarman :

Pusyavarman was succeeded by his son Samudravarman in circa 380 A.D. 3 "He was a fifth Samudra (ocean) as it were and his reign was free from troubles." 4 "The king was of illustrious fame, and was endowed with all good qualities, who was like an ocean, and akin to his father in power. He was comparable to ocean for his greatness and coolness and truly he was inestimable (vast) amiable (clear) and grave. He was the abode of all good qualities, the destroyer of enemies, the self-controlled, the righteous, and died after having enjoyed the entire world." 5 He was probably the contemporary of Chandragupta II. The assumption of the title of Maharajādhirāja suggests that he ruled as an independent king like his father. 6

3. Balavarman :

Samudravarman was succeeded by his son Balavarman, who was a great warrior and "whose irresistible troops

1. Early History of Kāmarūpa, P. 42.
4. Ibid.
5. Doobī copper plate Inscription of Bhāskaravarman, VV. 7-9.
constituted his armour."¹ He was considered pre-eminent and virtuous on account of the stand he took for the stability of his kingdom and, and who was endowed with wisdom and royal attributes and acquired sovereignty. Having endured fire like arrows in the battle and conquered the mighty army of the enemy, he enjoyed the earth."² Like his father he assumed the imperial title of Mahārājādhīrāja.

4. Kalyānavarman :

Kalyānavarman was the son and successor of Balavarman. He ruled for about 20 years. He "indulged in the supreme pleasure of doing good to others", and he was of equal strength to Indra, with a face like the moon; he 'did noble deeds and killed the mighty army of the enemy.'³ He "was not the abode of even very small faults."⁴

5. Ganapativarman :

Ganapativarman was the son and successor of Kalyānavarman. His reign was uneventful. He was endowed with innumerable good qualities and is said to have been born "to remove war and dissension from the country."⁵

1. Nīdhānpur grant, V. 8.
2. Doobi copper plate, VV. 10-11.
3. Doobi grant, V. 14.
5. Ibid., V. 11.
6. **Mahendravarman**

After Ganapativarman, his son Mahendravarman, came to the throne, who was the repository of all sacrifices.\(^1\) According to the Nālandā clay seal, he was the performer of two horse sacrifices. He was the first among the rulers of this line to celebrate horse sacrifices which are undoubtedly, acts of much political importance. It indicates also his independent status and political influence over his neighbours. Gait states that 'by his brilliant career of conquest and glory, he paved the way for the greatness which Kāmarūpa attained under Bhāskaravarman.'\(^2\) It would seem that, as suggested by Bhattasali, when the Gupta empire declined, the Kāmarūpa kingdom began to flourish and Mahendravarman, by performing two horse sacrifices,\(^3\) became a paramount sovereign in Eastern India.

7. **Nārāyanavarman**

Mahendravarman was followed by his son Nārāyanavarman, who is reputed to have possessed great knowledge in military and political affairs.\(^4\) He did away with the evils of the time by maintaining a comparatively peaceful order in the kingdom.

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1. Ibid., V. 12.
3. 'Āsvamedha celebrated by the kings of Kāmarūpa,' *I.H.Q.*, XXI, PP. 143-145.
8. Bhūtivarman or Mahābhūtavarman:

Nārāyanavarman was succeeded by his son Bhūtivarman, whose accession is regarded as a landmark in the early history of Kāmarūpa. The weakness of the Gupta power gave opportunity to him to continue his conquest. The Bādagāṇa Rock Inscription\(^1\) refers to Bhūtivarman, who performed a horse-sacrifice; and it contains also reference to the Gupta era 234,\(^2\) corresponding to 554 A.D., the only dated inscription of the line of the Puṣyavarman family. This inscription according to Bhattasali, was made during the last part of his reign, as by that date, the king had already performed a horse sacrifice, and his minister of state had founded a religious order. He placed Bhūtivarman's reign between circa 520 and 560 A.D.\(^3\)

Bhūtivarman donated land to a large number of Brāhmaṇas in the Mayūrāṣālamālāgrahāra in the Candrapurivisaya, near the river Kausika, as confirmed by both the Doobi and Nidhānpur grants of Bhāskaravarman. Bhūtivarman had a circle of feudatory rulers; truly, he was able to capture the whole of Kāmarūpa by his benign glance, as is recorded in the Nidhānpur grant.\(^4\) This grant was originally issued by this

\(^1\) The inscription is incised in three lines and a granter on a rock in Bādagāṇa in Mikir Hills district. Edited by Bhattasali, J.A.R.S., VIII, PP. 133-39.

\(^2\) D.C. Sircar reads 244. 'A Note on the Bādagāṇa stone inscription' J.A.R.S., X, PP. 64-67; I.H.Q., XX, PP. 143-145.

\(^3\) Bhattasali, N.K., 'New lights on the History of Assam' I.H.Q., XXI, PP. 19-23.

ruler, and Bhūtivarman was the real donor of the lands, Bhāskaravarman, fifth in descent from him, only confirmed the grant.  

9. Chandramukhavarman:

After Bhūtivarman, his son Chandramukhavarman ascended the throne of Kāmarūpa. The inscriptions referred to him as the best of kings, the illustrious, who attracted the city damsels, who was wise and charming, and who ruled his kingdom like the sun with brilliant lustre. He was a source of delight to the people and himself happy and gay.  

10. Sthitavarman:

Chandramukhavarman was followed by his son, Sthita-

-varman. According to the Nālandā clay seal, he performed two horse sacrifices. It indicates the growing prosperity of the Varman dynasty. The Doobi grant mentioned that his coronation ceremony was performed by the Brāhmaṇs according to the Śāstras.  

This is the first recorded instance of the vedic coronation ceremony of a Kāmarūpa ruler. Again, it states that the king built a city, on the bank of

2. Doobi grant, VV. 26-28; Nidhānpur grant, V. 15.
3. Ibid., VV. 32-37.
Brahmaputra, in his kingdom, with his friends and followers. The name of the newly constructed city is not given. His knowledge of the Śāstras is mentioned in the epigraph: "he was a moon to the lotus-like enemy, born in the line of the Śaumas, with firm knowledge of different Śāstras, well-versed in the vedas, with a renowned lineage."¹

11. Susthitavarman :

Susthivarman ascended the throne after his father, Sthitavarman. He was renowned as Śrī Mrgāṅka. The Harsa carita asserts that Susthitavarman was a powerful monarch "who took away the conch-shells 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."² It even gives to him the sovereign title of Mahārājādhirāja. The Doobi grant states that he was "Indra on this earth, born for upliftment, like the highest virtue, born of the company of the honest, like vast knowledge born of the study of the vedas, like the great Agni in the sacrifice."³

1. Doobi grant, VV. 34,38.
3. Ibid.
The Āśad inscription of Ādityasena refers to his grandfather, Mahasenagupta, the later Gupta monarch who led an expedition against Sushitavarman and defeated him on the bank of Lauhitya. Some writers identify Sushitavarman with a Maukhari ruler of the same name. Raichaudhuri and others have rightly identified him as the king of Kāmarūpa. A hint is found in the Nidhanpur grant about the defeat of Sushitavarman. It is said that he (Sushitavarman) "gave away the goddess of royal fortune, like the earth, to supplicants."

Sushitavarman had left two sons, namely, Supratisthitavarman and Bhāskaravarman. Both of them ascended the throne in turn.

12. **Supratisthitavarman** :

Supratisthitavarman was the elder son, and ascended the throne after his father. R.G. Basak and P.N. Bhattacharya do not give him the credit of accession to the throne. However, the Doobi copper plate grant proves that Supratisthitavarman

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1. C.I.I., III, P. 213 (No. 46).
4. V. 19.
5. History of North-East India, P. 217.
did reign for a few years. This is supported by *Harsacarita* and *Nalanda* clay seals of *Bhaskaravarman*.

Immediately after the death of their father, the two princes were caught unawares by the second invasion of Mahasenagupta. The Doobi grant states that "the Gauḍa army having gradually arrived (at the frontiers) the two brothers, though in their youth only, arrived at the scene with a handful of soldiers on account of disturbance of peace, without any care or anxiety, just like *Bala* and *Achyuta*."

The fighting between the *Kamarūpa* and Gauḍa armies is also described in the grant. The two brothers put up a heroic fight and brought bewilderment and consternation in the ranks of the Gaudas. But in spite of their brave resistance, they were pursued and captured by the enemies. However, they later on succeeded in getting themselves freed and returned to their kingdom causing great delight to the people of the land of their father. Immediately after the war, *Supratis-thita* died; perhaps he was wounded in the battle and the wound was fatal. In spite of his failure to recover the lost possessions of *Kamarūpa* in Bengal, he built a prosperous capital and increased the military strength of the kingdom.

1. *Harsacarita* (cowell), PP. 212 ff.
13. Bhāskaravarman:

After the premature death of his elder brother, Bhāskaravarman ascended the throne. He was, undoubtedly, the greatest monarch of the line, and one of the most remarkable rulers of early mediaeval India. He was a contemporary of Harṣavardhana and may be placed between circa 594 and 650 A.D.

The most memorable event in his career was the diplomatic alliance with Harṣavardhana, which was formed at the beginning of his reign. This was probably due to the growing power of Śaśāṇka, who was a common enemy of both of them. According to Hiuen Tsang and Bānabhaṭṭa, Śaśāṇka became the master of Gauḍa; and Kāraṇasuvarnā was his capital.

He treacherously murdered Rājyavardhan, the brother of Harṣa. To take revenge on Śaśāṇka, Harṣa marched towards Gauḍa with a great army. At this time, Bhāskaravarman sent his confidential messenger, Hamsavega, to Harṣavardhana for making an alliance between themselves. The messenger brought many valuable presents, mostly products of Kāmarūpa. Harṣa received Hamsavega most cordially and sent him back with presents. The alliance is depicted well by Bānabhaṭṭa.

The Si-yu-ki says that Harṣa first marched towards the east, apparently against the Gauḍā king, Saśāṅka. The She-kia-Fang-Chi further states: "so the king with Kumārārāja (Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa) destroyed (subdued?) the heretical king Saśāṅka, his army and his followers." It is, thus, suggested that the combined forces of Harṣa and Bhāskaravarman stopped the aggression of Saśāṅka.

According to R.D. Banerji, this new alliance proved fatal to the Gauḍās. Unfortunately we do not find any record to show that either Bhāskaravarman or Harṣa succeeded in conquering the Gauḍā kingdom during the life-time of Saśāṅka. According to Arya-Mañjśrī-Mulākalpa a king named 'Ha' defeated the king 'Soma'. Some scholars are inclined to identify 'Ha' with Harṣa and 'Soma' with Saśāṅka. It appears that Harṣa defeated Saśāṅka. But the Ganjam copper plate dated 619 A.D. records the power of Saśāṅka over Bengal and Orissa.

According to the account of the She-kia-fang-chi his defeat took place some time after that date. According to Ma-Twan-lin, Harṣa assumed the title of "the king of Magadha" in 641 A.D. and that took place long after the death of

4. History of Kanauj, Ch. IV & V.
Śāśāṅka. R.S. Tripathi is of the opinion that Bengal passed into the hands of Harṣa after the death of Śāśāṅka. The treatise neither refers to Bhāskara nor to the occupation of Śāśāṅka's kingdom by the Kāmarūpa king or Harṣa. From both the Nidhānpur grant and the account of the Chinese pilgrim, it is clear that Bhāskaravarman was in possession of Karṇasuvārna and Gauḍa. The Nidhānpur grant was issued by Bhāskaravarman from his victorious camp at Karṇasuvārna.

P.N. Bhattacharya states that Bhāskaravarman issued the grant in commemoration of his triumphant entry into the capital of Karṇasuvārna, after having expelled the Gauḍa king. R.C. Majumdar gives a later date for Bhāskara's occupation of Karṇasuvārna, after Harṣa's death. R.S. Tripathi, following Majumdar, remarks that "in spite of the imperishable alliance" there seems little likelihood that Harṣa would allow him to appropriate these fertile provinces to himself, and thus gain an immense accession of strength. Karṇasuvārna must have been occupied long before the end of Harṣa's reign by Bhāskara.

P.N. Bhattacharya states that Karṇasuvārna was occupied by Harṣa after Śāśāṅka's death in A.D. 625, or

1. Ibid.
2. Kāmarūpa śāsanāvali, Intro. P. 16; and also PP. 5, 6, & 9.
3. History of Bengal, I, P. 70.
Sasanka was expelled by the joint attack of Bhaskara and Harsha. By their joint effort they conquered Karnasuvarna and Pundravardhana. But Harsha occupied Karnasuvarna. Bhaskara issued the grant when he was with Harsha for some time in the victorious camp at Karnasuvarna. Karnasuvarna came into the possession of Harsha after Sasanka's death, and Bhaskara either occupied it after Harsha's death, or was rewarded with it because of his help to the Chinese Mission.

According to R.G. Basak, there were two campaigns by Harsha for the occupation of Sasanka's Kingdom after 619 A.D. or after his death. In the second campaign, Bhaskara may have joined. By the second campaign, the kingdom was conquered either from Sasanka or his unknown successor, and Harsha made it over to the Kamarupa king, who annexed it to his kingdom, and both north and Central Bengal were annexed to Harsha's kingdom. The date of occupation is somewhere in between 619 and 637 A.D. B.C. Sen thinks that Sasanka was not expelled and it was only after his death that his kingdom was occupied by Harsha. Bhaskara may have held brief dominion over Gauḍa after Harsha's death.

2. E.I., XII, PP. 66 f; I.A., XLIII, PP. 95-96; Sircar, D.C., I.H.Q., XIX, PP. 278-311.
6. Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal etc., 1932, PP. 290-68.
states that Harṣa probably allowed Bhāskara to rule over Gauḍa.¹ According to C.V. Vaidya, after Śaśāṅka's death, Karṇasuvarṇa was given to Bhāskara, who accepted Harṣa's sovereignty.²

Bhāskara's occupation of both Karṇasuvarṇa and Puṇḍravardhana is proved by his Nidānānupur grant. D.C. Ganguly has rightly observed that "there is not the slightest evidence to prove that Harṣa ever held sway over Bengal", but "the larger portion of Gauḍa, which was situated between Kāmarūpa and Karṇasuvarṇa was within the kingdom of Bhāskara."³ The occupation is proved by the fact that Bhāskara accompanied Huen Tsang, passed through Gauḍa with a large army, without any opposition. D.C. Ganguly, again, states that about 642 A.D. Gauḍa formed a part of Kāmarūpa.⁴ This view also supported by N.N. Dasmukha.⁵ B.N. Sircar contents that Harṣa's sway never reached Bengal, the kingdom of Śaśāṅka must have passed on to Bhāskara, otherwise the latter could not have controlled the sea-route to China, as testified by Huen Tsang.⁶

² H.M.H.I., I, pp. 11, 30, 41; B.R.A. S., 1915-16, pp. 236-76.
⁴ Ibid.
⁶ I.H.O., VI, pp. 442-43.
The areas of south-east Bengal, including Sylhet, Tripura and parts of Samatata, were included in the kingdom of Bhāskara as stated by J.C. Ghosh, Bhattacharya, Choudhury, and others on the basis of the discovery of the Nidhānpur grant; while P.N. Bhattacharya, K.L. Barua and others state that Sylhet lay outside Kāmarūpa. South-east Bengal including Sylhet, Tripura, parts of Dacca, Mymensing and other regions were already under Bhūtivarmā. The Tippera grant of the feudatory chief, Lokanatha, throws a new light on Bhāskara's sway over Sylhet and Tripura. Bhāskara's political sway over these regions is testified by Huen Tsang. The Nidhānpur grant also mentions a number of his feudatories. He "vanquished hundreds of kings in battle, who spoke in praise of him."

The clay seals of Bhāskara, discovered at Nālandā, provide further historical material about the boundary of Kāmarūpa, which reached even beyond Bengal. D.C. Sircar

3. Śribhatter Itivṛtta, IV, (f.n.), P. 74.
8. Life, Intro. PP. XVI-XVII.
9. L. 34 f.; E.I., XII, P. 78.
suggests that, after the death of his powerful friend Harṣa, Bhāskara occupied parts of Bengal and Bihar, and that the seals belonged to the period of Kāmpūpa occupation of Nālandā. But the suggestion regarding the occupation of Bihar is rendered doubtful by the fact that Harṣa probably established the 'later Guptas' in Magadha during the concluding years of his life. The seals may then be connected with Bhāskara's stay in South Bihar in the year 643 A.D.¹ K.L. Barua thinks that both Harṣa and Bhāskara, on their march from Rajmahal to Kanauj, visited Nālandā together with Hiuen Tsang, and, to commemorate their visit, left their respective seals there.² N.N. Dasgupta states that when Bhāskara 'extended his conquests upto Nālandā region - the discovery of his seals at Nālandā - is not an accidental phenomenon."³ P.C. Choudhury supposes that Bhāskara's kingdom included the whole of Assam, great portions of Bengal and some portions of Bihar or at least the Nālandā region.⁴ He states, further, that Devavarman was installed by Bhāskara over the Nālandā region towards the end of his reigns perhaps after the departure of Hiuen Tsang. This view does not seem to be convincing. The discovery of seals at Nālandā does not prove

5. Ibid.
that Nālandā was under Bhāskara's sway. Dr. Spooner has brought to light seals of three different dynasties, discovered at Nālandā.

According to Hiuen Tsang, the kingdom was "more than a myriad li in circuit and its capital about thirty li." "To the east of Kāmarūpa the country was a series of hills and hillocks without any principal city, and it reached the South-west barbarians (of China)." "The pilgrim learned from the people (of Kāmarūpa) that the South-west borders of Szuchuan were distant about two months journey. In the South-east of the country were wild elephants which ranged in herds." From Pundravardhan, the pilgrim travelled east above 900 li, crossed a large river, and came to Ka-mo-lu-po (Kāmarūpa). The large river, which in the T'ang-shu is known as Kalotu, is identified with the Brahmaputra by Watters; Cunningham identifies it with the Teesta. The capital is identified with Gauhati, and the river with Karatoya.

1. Choudhury, N.P., Hiuen Tsang, pp. 81-82 (f.n.).
5. Ibid., pp. 185-86.
6. Ancient Geography of India, pp. 572-73.
7. Majumdar, S.N., Cunningham’s Ancient Geography of India, pp. 572-73.
Bhāskaravarman was a patron of learning and a friend of the learned. He kept himself well-informed about learned men living in other countries. When Hiuen Tsang was at Nālandā for the second time in 642 A.D., Bhāskara heard of his presence and longed to see him. So he sent a messenger to Nālandā to invite and urge the pilgrim to pay him a visit. Śilābhadra, the head of the monastery, did not comply with it or even with a second request. Then Bhāskaravarman grew angry and threatened Śilābhadra: "If he (the pilgrim) does not come, your disciple will then let the evil portion of himself prevail. 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."¹ The threat had the desired effect. Hiuen Tsang visited Kāmarūpa and stayed there for a month. P.C. Choudhury supposes that Bhāskaravarman could not have sent such a strong letter, had Nālandā not been within the sphere of his influence.² We do not find any record anywhere that Nālandā was under the Kāmarūpa ruler at any time. The probability is that there was no other ruler who was equally strong and could stand against Bhāskara except Harṣa, who was his ally. Bhāskara had sent such a strong letter to Śilābhadra because of his love of learning and his desire for the company of learned men.

¹ Watters, T. I. P. 348; Life of Hiwang Chwang, PP. 165 f.
After returning from the Kongoda campaign, Harṣa heard that Hiuen Tsang was at Kāmarūpa. He sent a messenger to Bhāskara to send the Chinese pilgrim immediately. Bhāskara replied with a refusal, saying that "He (Harṣa) can take my head, but he cannot take the Master of the Law yet." Harṣa was annoyed, and gave an appropriate reply, "send the head, that I may have it immediately by my messenger who is to bring it here." Thereupon Bhāskara became submissive, and proceeded with the pilgrim and a grand retinue to join Śīlāditya."¹ From this passage Bhāskara's love of learning and his respect for learned men can be understood.

Bhāskara met Harṣa at Kajangala near Rājmahal, and the latter received him courteously and then they were joyfully reconciled.² From this place the two monarchs most triumphantly marched towards Kanauj with their armies, Harṣavarman proceeding along the southern bank of the Ganga and Bhāskaravarman along the northern.

In the great religious assembly at Kanauj, Bhāskara was given the highest honour by Harṣa. In the procession carrying the image of the Buddha, Śīlāditya-Rājā, under the form of lord Cakra with a white chowrie in his hand, went to the right and 'Kumāra-Rājā, under the form of Brahma with a precious parasol in his hand, went to the left.'³ After the

conclusion of the assembly, Harṣa arranged the quinquennial assembly at Prayāg, at the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamuna. The proceedings of this assembly lasted for twenty-five days, commencing with a military procession of the followers of Harṣa and of Bhāskara embarked in the ships and the attendants of Dhruvabhatta-rāja mounted on elephants. The kings of the eighteen countries joined the cortège according to arrangement. Here also Bhāskara was given highest honour. These accounts, proved that Harṣa treated Bhāskaravarman as a respected ally and esteemed friend and not as a vassal king.

We find another mention of the name of Bhāskaravarman is 'Kumār' (Youth) from the Chinese source. "The reigning king was named Bhāskaravarman (sun-armour) his other name being Kumāra (Youth)." Another passage mentions Bhāskaravarman, styled Kumāra, the king of Kāmarūpa. P.C. Choudhury believes that due to his accession early in his career, he was called Kumāra. P.N. Bhattacharya suggests that he retained this title as he had remained a bachelor. Kielhorn contends that his actual name was Kumāra, and Bhāskara was only his Surname. His name is Bhāskaravarman,

1. Ibid, PP. 185-86.
4. Ibid.
his title Kumāra (Keu-mo-lo). K.L. Barua supposes that he was a celibate. 'Kumāra' was perhaps a sort of a pet name which he retained even in his old age. It was perhaps due to his early accession to the throne as well as his celibacy that the name continued till his death.

Bhāskaravarma was well educated in the Śāstras, as we know from the Doobi copper plates. His intellect was matured by listening to the essence of the meaning of the various Śāstras, and he acquired high eloquence and poetical genius of all styles possessing sweet wordings with clear and superb ornament. The accounts of Huen Tsang also throws some light on the personal character of Bhāskaravarma. "He was a lover of learning and his subjects followed his example; men of ability came from far lands to study here." His invitation to Huen Tsang is a testimony to his love of learning. Though the king was not a Buddhist, he treated accomplished Śramaṇas with respect. Personally he was devoted to Śaivism. Towards the end of his career he showed a special leaning towards Buddhism.

In the Midhānpur grant, Bhāskaravarma is described as being created by the creator for the purpose of re-establishing

the institutions of society which had for a long time past become confused. He propagated the light of the Aryan religion (āryadharma) by dispelling the darkness of the Kālī age by making a judicious application of his revenues. He caused the deep loyalty of his subjects to be heightened, on account of his power of keeping order, his dispaly of modesty, and cultivation of close acquaintance with them. His virtuous activities, like those of Sivi, were applied in making gifts for the benefit of others; his powers, as a second preceptor of the gods (Brihaspati), was recognised by others on account of his skill in devising and applying the means of politics, which appears at suitable moments. His conduct was adorned by learning, volour, patience, prowess and good actions.¹

Section 3.

Salastambha Dynasty.

After the Varmanas, the Salastambha dynasty ruled over Assam. The dynasty was founded by a great chief of the Mlecchas, named Salastambha.

The origin of the Salastambha dynasty is still obscure. The Bargaon copper plate grant of Ratnapāla records that after the descendants of Naraka had ruled Kāmarūpa for several generations, owing to a turn of adverse fortune, Salastambha took possession of the kingdom.

Bhāskaravarman probably died without any issue, for he seems to have been a bachelor throughout his life. In the Harsacarita of Bānabhaṭṭa, he is called Kumāra and is compared to Bhiṣma. Bhāskaravarman survived his friend, Harsa, by a few years. His death may be placed around the year 650 A.D.

The records left by I-tsing, a Korean priest named Hwui Lun, who visited India some years after the departure of Hiuen Tsang, mentions a king of Eastern India whose name

1. Edited by Hoernle in J.A.S.B., LXVII, PP. 99 f; Bhattacharya, P.N., Kāmarūpa Sāsanavali, PP. 89-109.
was Devavarman.¹ This Devavarman was probably the immediate successor of Bhāskaravarman. The real name is supposed to have been Avantivarman who is mentioned in Mudrārākṣasa.² J.C. Ghosh identifies Avantivarman with the successor of Bhāskaravarman.³ The identification of Devavarman of the records of I-tsing is disputed. P.L. Paul identifies Devavarman with Deva Gupta, son of Ādityasena.⁴ R.C. Majumdar supposes him to be Devakhadga, a Khadga ruler.⁵ Holding the same view, N.K. Bhattasali states that the past glory of the empire builders of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa departed immediately after Bhāskara. Devakhadga, mentioned in the Ashrafpur inscription,⁶ carved out a big kingdom in Samatata, and Bhāskara has been referred using the epithet of Bhṛhatparamesvāra, the former’s liege-lord. Two other kings, Lokanātha of Tripurā and Kāntideva of the Chittagong, are also said to have declared independence, defying the central authority of Kāmarūpa, until at last Śālastambha about 700 A.D., overwhelmed the dynasty of Bhāskara.⁷

¹ Beal’s introduction to the Life of Huien Tsang, P. XXVII.
³ Ghosh, J.C., J.P.A.S.B., XXVI, P. 244.
⁴ I.H.O., XII, PP. 67–83.
⁷ M.A.S.B., I, PP. 85 f; P.A.S.B., 1885, PP. 49 f; Ibid.
⁸ I.H.O., XXI, PP. 19 f.
D.R. Bhandarkar identifies Devavarman with a Kāmarūpa ruler, and takes him and his successor Harsadeva to be the son and the grandson of Bhāskara. K.L. Barua identifies him with Śālastambha, and states that in the gap of 5 - 10 years between Bhāskaravarman and Śālastambha, Avantivarman ruled. He further states that it is probable that before 670 A.D., Śālastambha rebelled successfully and, dethroning the immediate successor of Bhāskaravarman, proclaimed himself a king, perhaps assuming the high sounding name Jayatungavarman. Avantivarman was uprooted by Śālastambha alias Jayatunga, who was the king mentioned as Devavarman by I-Tsing. P.C. Choudhury identifies Devavarman with Mādhava of the Assamese chronicles (Hara-Gaurī Samvāda). According to him, Devavarman was the same as Śālastambha.

The danger of a Mleccha revolt, which the author of the Mudrārakṣasas had feared, actually materialised. It is also referred to by the Bargaon copper plate grant of Ratnapāla. In the grant, he (the chief of the Mlecchas) has been described as Mlecchadhīnātha. Dr. Hoernle suggests that the word 'Mleccha' means a foreigner and that the dynasty

1. E.I., APP. (XIX-XXIII), PP. 379-406.
3. Ibid.
was that of foreign invaders, though they may have occasionally preferred a claim to belong to the ancient indigenous line of kings. 1 R.G. Basak explains the word 'Mlecaha' as unorthodox. 2 The word was used as a generic term to denote people who were outside the pale of Indo-Aryan civilization. Kamarp, Vanga and some neighbouring regions were known as Mlecha countries. 3 Bhagadatta 4 is also described as the Lord of the Mleccahas and Yavanas. 5 K.L. Barua holds that the word undoubtedly means the non-Hindu Mongoloid people; a tribe is still known by the name Mech which is the abridged form of Mleccha, and the word Mlecchadhinatha may mean the 'Governor of the Mech country.' He thinks 'Sālastambha who was the governor of the Mech country probably belonged to the dynasty of Bhagadatta, for ordinary nobles of the royal family were appointed as governors. He, however, did not belong to the direct line but to a collateral branch and hence could not claim the throne legally. 6 Holding the same view, P.N. Bhattacharya points out that the kings of the Sālastambha dynasty proclaimed themselves as the descendants of Naraka and Bhagadatta. 7

1. Ibid., P. 105.
5. Sabhaparva, 15/14; 14/14.
E.A. Gait opines that both the dynasties of Śālastambha and Brahmapāla, followed it, were of aboriginal origin, and when they rose to power, were converted to Hinduism and fitted out with a noble ancestry by the Brāhmīns.¹ H. Ray holds that the dynasty was of Mongolian origin and, further, states that the Varman dynasty and even Bhagadatta himself were Mongolians.² B.M. Barua states that the Naraka-Bhagadatta lineage is a fabrication in the case of all the three dynasties of Kāmarūpa kings, and suggests that Pusyavarman was the first Indo-Aryan ruler set up by Samudragupta over the two territories of Kāmarūpa and Dāvokā unified into a single kingdom.³ In the Häyuṅgthal inscription of Harjjaravaran,⁴ we find a sentence line 2 of the middle plate, "For these reasons, O son of the Earth, (Pārthiva) your descendants will be known as Mlecchas," the meaning of which is clear, that the rulers of the Śālastambha were of Mleccha origin.

In the last sloka of the Mudrārākshasam of Visakadatta, we find mention of Avantivarman, who has been frightened by the Mlecchas. According to Barua, Avantivarman or Avantivarmadeva, direct successor of Bāskaravaran, did not reign for more than five years at the longest, and that

3. I.H.Q.
Salastambha occupied the throne of Kamārupa about 655 A.D. after dethroning and probably killing him. The Bargaon copper plate grant of Ratnapāla records that a great chief of the Mlechas, owing to a turn of adverse fortune, took possession of the kingdom. He was Salastambha. Salastambha usurped the throne of Kamārupa a few years after the death of Bhāskaravarman. R.C. Majumdar states that "Bhāskaravarman was shortly after overthrown by a barbarian, Salastambha by name" and the greatness of Kamārupa passed away with Bhāskara. Salastambha, alias Devavarman or Mādhava, came from the Nālandā region, where Bhāskara had probably established him as a ruler, and, immediately after Bhāskara's death, without leaving any son, he came to Prājyotisā and declared himself as king, as stated by P.C. Choudhury. He further states that there was no gap between Bhāskara and Salastambha, who was the same person as Avantivarman. Choudhury's view does not seem to be convincing.

K.N. Dutta seems to be right in concluding that the Varman dynasty, which was probably the first Indo-Aryan dynasty in Assam, was overthrown by Salastambha, (Mongoloid) origin, who then made himself the king of Kamārupa. He

4. Outline of the ancient History and civilization of India, P. 348.
transferred the capital from Pragjyotispura to Haruppesvara modern Tezpur, where his successor continued to rule. After attaining power, the rulers of the dynasty were also fitted up with a heroic lineage and in order to secure the allegiance of the subjects, they assumed a common ancestry with the dynasty which they supplanted, and could have mixed with the descendants of the old ruling family forming matrimonial alliance.

The Bargaon copper plate grant of Ratnapala gives the number of the kings of the dynasty as twenty; and the last king, the twenty-first of the dynasty, was Tyagasisinha. We have a few records of this family in which some other names appear. The middle plate of Harijara mentions seven princes; they are Vijaya, Palaka, Kumara, Vajradeva, Harshavarman, Balavarman and Harijaradeva. The Tezpur grant of Vanamala, son of Harijara, mentions the name Sastambha, Harijara and Pralambha. The Nowgong grant of Balavarman, grandson of Vanamala, refers to king Jayamala.

Sastambha was evidently a powerful king. He is described in the copper plate grant of Harjjaravaran as a tiger-like king.

1. Only the middle plate was found in the village Hayungthal in Nowgong District, which was issued from Haruppesvara by Yuvaraja Vanamala. Published by Battacharya, P.N., I.H.Q., 1927, PP. 838, 841 & 844; J.A.R.E., I, PP. 109-115.

2. Battacharya, P.N., J.A.S.B., IX (1840) PP. 766 ff; Kamarupa Sasanavali, PP. 54-70.
The name of Sālastambha is given in the inscriptions of Harjjara, Vanamāla, Balavarman III and Ratnapāla. Sālastambha carried on the old policy of the extension of the frontiers of Kāmarūpa in the west. The possessions of Bhāskara in the west were also consolidated in his time. He was followed by Vijaya (Vigrahastambha), Pālaka, Kumāra and Vajradeva.

The successor of Sālastambha was his brave son Vijaya, the vanquisher of enemies; Vijaya became the mighty lord of the earth as mentioned in the Ḥāyunthal grant (V. 4). The Bargaon grant of Ratnapāla calls him Vigrahastambha. Vijaya was followed in succession by Pālaka, Kumāra and Vajradeva. We do not find any important record about these rulers except for Kumāra, who was a mighty king. His name occurs in an inscription found on a hillock at Narakāsuragaon, inscribed on a copper bell.

The translation given by P.C. Choudhury is as follows:

"Sī Kumāra who was like Indra and was the killer of the elephants belonging to the king of Devas and Asuras, meaning Indra again or kings and princes, was or became the protector of this worship of his i.e. Indra. This bell was given by him (Kumāra) for use in the worship of the deities."

1. Ḥāyunthal grant, VV. 4-5.
This Kumāra is identified with the Kumāra mentioned in the inscription of Harjjarā.\(^1\) Shortly after Kumāra's reign, Pundravardhana, which was occupied by Bhāskaravarman, was lost.\(^2\) No detailed records are found.

Śrī Harsa or Harsavarmadeva:

The accession of Harsavarmadeva may be placed circa 730 A.D., and he reigned for 20 years till 750 A.D. His accession to the throne of Kāmarūpa is a remarkable achievement in the history of the dynasty. The Hāyungthal grant (V. 6) records that the prince, who was well known as Harsavarma, became a great king of merit and piety, who protected his subjects as his own children and never ill-treated them. In the copper plate grant of Vanamāla, he is called Śrī Harsa.

The Nepal inscription of Jayadeva II mentions Harṣadeva as king of Gauḍa, Odra, Kalinga, Kosala etc. of the line of Bhagadatta. The text of the inscription is: "The King (Jayadeva II) wedded, as if she were fortune, queen Rājyamati, possessed of virtues, befitting her race, the noble descendant of Bhagadatta's royal line: and daughter of Śrī Harṣadeva, lord of Gauḍa, Odra, Kalinga, Kosala and other lands, who crushed the heads of hostile kings with the club-like tusks of his rutting elephants."\(^3\)

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1. Ibid.
2. 'The Bhagholi plates of Jayavardhana', E.I., IX, P. 41.
Jayadeva's Nepal Inscription was recorded in the year 153 is an unspecified era. According to Sylvian Levi, it was a Tibetan era, 11 years earlier than Harṣa era, which corresponds to 748 A.D.¹ This date tallies with the system of chronology for Harṣadeva of Kāmarūpa, whom we have placed between 730 and 750 A.D., and his overthrow by Yasovarman took place some time after 748 A.D.

From the Nepal inscription it is clear that Harṣadeva of the family of Bhagadatta was connected with the royal house of Nepal by a marriage alliance. The identification of Harṣadeva with the Kāmarūpa ruler is disputed by B. Chakravarti.² R.P. Chanda supposes that the ruler, who after the conquest of Orissa established a relation of his, named Kshemankara Deva there, was not Harṣapāla of Gauḍa as stated by D.N. Mukherjee,³ but Harṣadeva of Kāmarūpa.⁴ R.C. Majumdar supposes that both Rājyamati and Harṣadeva belonged to Orissa. He does not trace out "any king of Kāmarūpa named Harṣa who may be credited with such brilliant conquests."⁵ Kielhorn rightly states that he "was almost certainly a king of Prājyotisā. In fact, he was probably the Harisa (or Harṣa) of the Tezpur grant, who would thus

5. History of Bengal, I, PP.85 f; Bharatiya Viyā, VI, PP.111-12.
be placed in the first half of the eighth century A.D.\textsuperscript{1} His view is followed by S.K. Aiyangar,\textsuperscript{2} and others.\textsuperscript{3} R.D. Banerji writes that Harṣadeva must have held Bengal sufficiently long so as to enable him to pass through that country and conquer Orissa; Kalinga and Kośala.\textsuperscript{4} Kshemankara Deva and his successors claimed origin from Bhauma and to be descendants from Naraka-Bhadradatta; and these kings ruled in Orissa in the 8th and 9th centuries A.D. It is probable that after Harṣadeva's death, circa 750 A.D., Kshemankara Deva, the first king of this line proclaimed himself independent.\textsuperscript{5}

The conquests of Harṣadeva were probably made before the date of the Nepal inscription of Joyadeva II, and probably the conquests were purely temporary.\textsuperscript{6} N.N. Dasgupta considers that Śrī Harṣa referred to in the copper plate inscription of the Rāstrakuta king Dantidurga (753 A.D.) and who was defeated by Karnataka King Kirtivarman was none but Śrī Harṣa of Kāmarūpa.\textsuperscript{7}

The kingdom extended during the middle of the 8th century A.D. "from Sadiya in the east to Ayodhya in the west,

\begin{thebibliography}{7}
\bibitem{J.I.H.} J.I.H., V, P. 326.
\bibitem{Paul} Paul, P.L., Early History of Bengal, PP. 29-32.
\bibitem{Palas} Palas of Bengal.
\end{thebibliography}
and from the Himalayas in the north as far as the Bay of Bengal and Orissa in the south-east. It included Assam, Gauda, a great part of Orissa, portions of Magadha and northern part of Madras state, including South Kośala," as stated by P.C. Choudhury.¹ This view seems to be very hypothetical. According to Gait, the statement in the inscription of Nepal, is purely an "instance of poetic exaggeration indulged by panegyrists of early Hindu Kings,"² and this view is also supported by J. Monahan.³ It is probable that Harṣadeva was powerful enough, and one of the great rulers during his period. Further his influence may have reached those areas mentioned in the Nepal Inscription, and he may have also conquered at least a few of them beyond Bengal. The poetical exaggeration might have been meant to indicate his greatness.

P.C. Choudhury rightly accepts the contention of S.K. Aiyangar that Harṣadeva, mentioned in the Nepal Inscription, was the king defeated by Yasovarman.⁴ The defeat of Harṣadeva took place soon after 748 A.D. He, further, states: 'if Kalhan is right in attributing to Lalitaditya -

³ Bengal, past and present, 1910, PP. 62-63.
the murder of another Gauḍa ruler or prince in his kingdom, it
can be held that Yaśovarman did not kill Harṣadeva, but
took him as a prisoner to Kanauj, and, after Yaśovarman's
defeat in the hands of Lalitaditya, the Gauḍa ruler fell
into the hands of the latter and was killed by him.\(^1\) While
Bengal was overwhelmed by the anarchy that followed the death
of Harṣadeva, Kāmarūpa proper to the east of Pundra seems
to have been little affected by the invasion from the west
and the south, and Gopal was chosen king in Bengal.\(^2\) The
end of the occupation of the Kāmarūpa ruler in Bengal, after
the removal of Harṣadeva, caused a set back to the prestige
of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa, which was built up with great
ability by the varmans of Kāmarūpa. Kāmarūpa proper
probably remained unaffected by the anarchy which overtook
Gauḍa, but its kings were no longer overlords.

Harṣadeva was succeeded by his son Balavarman.
According to the Hayunthal inscription, Balavarman was a
powerful monarch. After him probably there were two kings
whose names have not yet been ascertained.\(^3\) After them,
the names of two princes Chakra and Arathi, have been found,
but they do not seem to have ruled over the kingdom.

\(^{1}\) Ibid. \\
\(^{2}\) Ibid., P. 20 f. \\
\(^{3}\) Barua, K.L., Op. cit, P. 76. \\
\(^{4}\) Hayunthal grant.
The next important king of the dynasty was Prālambha, the son of Arathi, who seems to have been a contemporary of Gopāla, the first ruler, of the Pāla dynasty of Bengal. It is said that Prālambha or Sālambha established a new line when the family of Sālastambha ended with Śrī Harsa, which does not seem to be correct. The Bargaon grant (V. 10) conclusively proves that all the twentyone rulers of the family of Sālastambha belonged to the same line. Again the Nowgong grant of Balavarman (V. 9-10) further proves that Harjjara (a successor of Prālambha) belonged to the line of Sālastambha. Both the grants of Vanamāla refer to his war-like activities. He was the mighty lord of Prāgjyotisa, the destroyer of all enemy heroes and was the possessor of the good qualities of his predecessors. 1 It is probable that Prālambha tried to revive the lost prestige of the kingdom, and succeeded in establishing a comparatively peaceful reign after some his weak predecessors. Prālambha's wife was named Jivadevi or Jivadā and by her he had a son named Harjjara. 2

Harjjaravarman:

Prālambha was succeeded by his son Harjjaravarman, a benevolent king, who ruled circa 820-835 A.D. The dates

1. Parbatiya plates, VV. 7-8.
2. J.A.S. B., IX, PP. 767-71., Jivadevi was the queen of Prālambha and mother of Harjjaravarman, according to the Copper Plate Grant of Harjjaravarman, while in the Vanamala's Grant she is named, Jivada.
are supported by his rock-inscription of Tezpur which is dated 510 Gupta era, corresponding with the period 829-30 A.D. One important event of Harjjara's reign was his coronation ceremony, performed according to religious rites in which the people including the merchants took an important part.\(^1\)

The copper plate grant of Harjjara states that just as 'Yudhisthira was born of Kuntī and Abhimanyau of Subhadrā, in the same way Harjjara who was the future king of the world and powerful like a lion, was born of Jivadevi.' Again, the Parbatiya grant states that he was "like Yudhisthira in truth, like Bhima to his enemies and like Jiṣṇu in battle.' The Nowgong copper plate grant of Śalavarman states that in the family of Śālastambha was born a moon-like king, named Harjjara who was an affliction to his enemies. From the above version, it is clear that he was undoubtedly a great ruler, and a benevolent king. He was a very powerful monarch and the smaller kings of the substantial tracts, who used to fight among themselves, all acknowledge his suzerainty.\(^2\) He used the title **Mahārājādhirāja Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka.**\(^3\) His political supremacy over the

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2. The Parbatiya grant, Vv. 11-12.
3. Ibid.
farthest limits of the hills and his victory over the petty chiefs of the hills and the plains alike in the east and the south-east of the kingdom is a proof of his greatness.

Harjjaravarman was probably the contemporary of Devapāla of Gauḍa (circa 815-850 A.D.). R.C. Majumdar states that Prālabha or Harjjara accepted Devapāla's sovereignty. The Bhagalpur grant of Nārāyanapāla records that Jayapāla under the order of his brother, Devapāla, subdued all quarters, the lord of the Utkalas left his capital on hearing the name of (Jayapāla), and the king of Prāgjyotisā enjoyed peace at last. Devapāla's Nālandā copper plate records that Devapāla fought against the Gurjara, Dravidas, Kāmbojas, Utkalas and Kāmarūpa. R.D. Banerji holds that Jayapāla led an expedition against Utkala and conquered Prāgjyotisā for Devapāla. B.C. Sen supposes that the object of the Pāla expedition was to prevent a war between Kāmarūpa and Utkala, and the Kāmarūpa king had to accept the authority of Gauḍa. P.C. Choudhury does not support this

1. Kāmarūpa Sāsanāvali, P. 52 (f.n. 3).
2. Nowgong grant, V. 11; Ĥāyungthal Grant, V. 12.
3. History of Bengal, I, P. 117.
5. M.A.S.B., V. P. 57; Bānglār Itihāsa, I, P. 183.
interpretation. A.K. Maitra refers to an alliance between Devapāla and the Kāmarūpa king. This is supported by N.N. Vasu. According to Hultsch, "Jayapāla supported the king of Prājyotisha successfully against the king of Utkala." H.C. Ray, supporting the view, holds that the Pāla army crossed the river Karatojā, forcing the prince of the Brahmaputra valley to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Pālas. Probably there was no Pāla invasion over Kāmarūpa, and the Kāmarūpa king did not acknowledge the suzerainty of the Pālas. P.C. Choudhury contends that just at the time when Jayapāla invaded or conquered Orissa, the Kāmarūpa army under Harijara invaded Bengal, and was either repelled by Jayapāla (and peace concluded between them) or returned to Kāmarūpa from the frontier of Bengal after hearing of the conquest of Jayapāla. This seems to be correct from the inscriptions about his war-like activities and his political influence over his neighbours.

The name of the capital as mentioned in inscriptions is found as Hāruppesvara, Hatappesvara or Haṭappesvara,

located in Tezpur. During the reign of Vanamāla the city was of considerable dimensions extending probably from the Bāmuni hill on the east to Dah-porbatia on the west with the modern town of Tezpur in the centre, where evidently the king's palace stood. The inscription of Vanamāla gives a vivid and poetic description of the city of Hāruppeśvara, the river Lauhitya (Brahmaputra) on which it stood and the line of boats that adorned the river-side. People of all castes and occupations lived happily in Hāruppeśvar; the city was the residence of numerous learned and pious men; the streets were wide but crowded with elephants, horses and chariots, on which were mounted the kings and the nobles, and the horizon was clouded by the massing of elephants, cavalry and infantry.

Hāruppeśvara was the capital city of the Śālastambhas, at least from the time of Harjjara. Vanamāla erected a row of palaces which had no equal in the world and being extensive possessed many rooms and, gay with general ornamentation, was also furnished with true pictures. The extensive architectural remains in and around Tezpur testify to the

building activities of Harajjara's son Vanamāla as recorded in the Tezpur grant. This place was the ancestral camp at Hāruppeśvara, and was also the capital of Harjjara. P.C. Choudhury supposes that the rulers of the Śrālastambha dynasty ruled from the old capital of Prāgjyotispura, and the second capital was built at Hāruppeśvara to escape from the traditional rivalries with the western powers.¹ This view does not seem to be established in any case.

Harjjaravarmān constructed a magnificent tank at Tezpur, which is still known as Harjjarapukkhuri.

The kingdom of Harjjara extended as far as the lines of forest near the sea-shore, or sea-like waters.² This probably means that Sylhet and Mymensing bordering on the low-lying sea-like country, were under his sway.³

Vanamāla:

Harjjaravarmān had, by his queen Tārā, a son named Vanamāla, who succeeded his father in about 835 A.D. and ruled up to circa 860 A.D. He enjoyed a long reign.

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2. Copper plate grant of Vanamāla.
Vanamāla excelled in the arts of peace as well as war, and erected a row of palaces as mentioned above, which indicates his building activities and reveals his artistic skill.\(^1\) He was in ardent devotee of Śiva, like his father.\(^2\) He reconstructed the lofty temple of Hetuka Śūlin, and endowed it with villages, elephants, and temple girls. The feudatory kings used to come to pay their homage\(^3\) to him.

He possessed a charming personality and pleasing disposition and, as a mighty monarch, extended his kingdom through conquests as far as the sea shore. He installed his son Jayamala on the throne and starved himself to death, evidently under religious influence.

**Jayamāla:**

Jayamala, whose other name was Virabāhu, succeeded his father Vanamāla, at the proper age. "Having received the kingdom, the king, the excellent Virabāhu married (a lady) called Ambā, who was equal to himself in point of family,

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2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., Parbatiya plates.
beauty and age.¹ He was also known as Ranastambha,² and this title indicates his war-like activities. He is said to have distinguished himself in war.³ He may be placed between circa 860 and 880 A.D. It was probably this king who was a contemporary of the king Devapāla, whose cousin Jayapāla is mentioned in the Bhāgalpur inscription.

Like his father, Jayamāla abdicated the throne in favour of his son, Balavarman III, when he suffered from a serious disease. Considering the world as vain and human life unstable like a water drop, he thought over his last duty in life and on an auspicious day in-stalled his son on the throne in a proper manner.

Balavarman III:

He was the last important known king of the Ālastambha dynasty, who ruled probably between 880 and 905 A.D.⁴ He was a powerful monarch, who 'conquered all quarters in dire contest by his arm which showed dark against

1. Nowgong grant V. 18.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., V. 21.
5. The Howraghat plate (Uttarbarbil) was issued in the 5th regnal year of king Balavarman III. 'The Tezpur Ins. of his great grand father is dated in G.E. 510 (=829-30 A.D.) allotting a quarter of a century per generation approxima-tely this may be suggested that the year 900 A.D. fell in Balavarman's reign. Thus his rule may be roughly assigned to the period 880-905 A.D. and the inscription to a date about the end of 9th cy. A.D.
the numerous flashes of his drawn sword-blades." He was "fearful of disgrace, harsh towards enemies, gentle towards religious preceptors, truth speaking, not contentious nor vaunting, generous and purified from sin through the reverence shown to his parents."  

Balavarman assumed the imperial title of Mahārājadhirāja Paramesvara Paramabhāttāraka in his grants, indicating his supremacy. By his Nowgong Grant, the king granted lands to the Brāhmaṇa Śrūtidhara in Hēsivā, which lay to the west of Teesta or Karatoya in Pundravardhana. P.C. Choudhury believes that Balavarman made fresh conquests in North Bengal at the cost of the Pālas under Nārāyanavarman. In his Howraghat Inscription we find mention of the list of the subordinate officers. The list includes the rājans (ruling chiefs), rājñīs (queens of the ruling chiefs) rānakas (smaller chiefs) and officers as well as the rājanakas (minor chiefs or land lords), rājaputras (sons of the chiefs) and rājavallābhās (courtiers), who might have been associated with the administration.

1. Nowgong Grant, Vv. 24 f.; Howraghat Grant.
2. Ibid., Lines, 30-32; Ibid., Lines, 33-35.
Balavarman proved himself benevolent ruler, who managed the administration with well organised governmental machinery.

The names of any of the successors of Balavarman are not known. The name of the last ruler of the dynasty as known from the inscription is Tyāgasiṁha, who ruled in the beginning of the 11th century. The inscription referred to twenty one rulers of the Šālastambha dynasty, whereof we know only fifteen rulers. Since Tyāgasiṁha's successor Brahmapāla seems to have ruled about the beginning of the 11th century A.D., most of the six rulers, whose names are missing, appear to have rules in the period of about a century intervening between Balavarman III (about the close of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century) and Tyāgasiṁha (beginning of the 11th century A.D.).

Tyāgasiṁha the twentyfirst ruler between circa 970 and 990 A.D., died without leaving any of his race to succeed him. The gap of (895 A.D. to 970 A.D.) 75 years was covered by six rulers. The Bargaon grant of Ratnapala (V.10) mentions that there were altogether 21 rulers of the family of Šālastambha, Tyāgasiṁha being the last, who died childless; and that the line of the Šālastambha came to an end with his death. Brahmapāla, founder of a new line came to the throne of Kāmarūpa.

4. Bargaon Grant.
Section 4.

PĀLA DYNASTY.

After the extinction of the line of Śālastambha with Tyāgasimha, the kingdom passed into the hands of a new line. In the Barghaon grant of Ratnapāla, it is stated, that when Tyāgasimha, the twentyfirst king of Śālastambha family, died childless, "the subjects thinking it well that a Bhauma (i.e. Naraka's race) should be appointed as their lord, chose Brahmāpāla, a kinsmen of the deceased ruler, to be their king, on account of his fitness to undertake the administration of the country."¹ Thus Brahmāpāla was elected by the people, a feature which finds a parallel with that of Gopāla of Gauḍa.² The event was important in the political history of the land, too.

Brahmāpāla, the founder of the family, as stated in the inscription, was a scion of the Bhagadatta dynasty and that is why the choice of the people fell on him.³ He was a mighty hero. Hearing his very name the enemies fled in all directions. After his accession to the throne, he

1. Barghaon copper plate, V. 10.
married Kula Devī, by whom he had a son named Ratnapāla. It is recorded in the inscription that Brahmapāla passed away, placing on his throne Ratnapāla, who was the sun-god of the lotus of the line of Naraka. He assumed only the title Mahārājadhirāja.

K.L. Barua thinks that the election of Brahmapala was a myth. Brahmapāla may have been ruling elsewhere in a subordinate capacity, and made himself master of Pragjyotisa after the downfall of the Śālastambha line. P.C. Choudhury is of opinion that "Brahmapāla was chosen king not only because of his connection with the former ruling dynasty, having a rightful claim to the throne in the absence of any direct heir, but also because of his ability to undertake the difficult task of ruling the kingdom and protecting the people, the basis of sovereignty in ancient India." K.L. Barua seems to be right in saying that 'the fact is that both Gopāla in Magadha and Gauḍa, and Brahmapāla in Kāmarūpa were actually adventurous upstarts, who, finding the throne vacant, collected followers and proclaimed themselves as kings.'

1. Copper plate grant of Ratnapāla.
N.N. Vasu\(^1\) places Brahmapāla in between 930\(^2\)-960 A.D., while K.L. Barua\(^2\) puts him in circa 980-1000 A.D. P.C. Choudhury assigns him the dates between 990 and 1010 A.D. He may correctly be placed between circa 990 and 1010 A.D.

K.L. Barua supposes that during the Brahmapāla's reign, Kāmarūpa was attacked by Jātavarman, son of Vajravarman of the Varman dynasty which ruled probably in Eastern Magadha when the Pāla power began to decline. This invasion is mentioned in the Belava copper plate inscription of Bhojavarma Deva,\(^4\) the grandson of Jatavarman. Jātavarman invaded Kāmarūpa and defeated its king but could not annex the kingdom.\(^5\) A. Banerjee\(^6\) and P.L. Paul\(^7\) are of opinion that Jātavarman crippled the power of the king of Kāmarūpa; and, according to K.D. Banerji,\(^8\) Jātavarman conquered Kāmarūpa. Jātavarman's conquest of Kāmarūpa is not established.\(^9\) He lived in the kingdom of Prāgjyotisā at the city of Durjaya beautifully situated on the Lauhitya.\(^10\)

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4. E.I., XII, P. 37.
7. Early History of Bengal, P. 79.
10. Bargaon grant of Ratnapāla.
Ratnapāla:

The accession of Ratnapāla to the throne may be placed circa 1010 A.D., and his reign continued till circa 1040 A.D. He had a long reign as is proved from his Bargaon and Suālkuchi grants issued respectively in his 25th and 26th regnal years.

He assumed the imperial title 'Parameśvara Paramabhattāraka Mahārājadhīrāja, and it shows that he was the first powerful monarch of the family. He "was a bright lustre and worthy of his name; he was a victor in battles, the royal goddess of fortune manifested herself at his feet, that were adorned by the garlands of crests of kings."¹

Ratnapāla built his capital on the bank of the Brahmaputra probably somewhere in Nowgong district, fortified the capital, and named it Durjaya, or Impregnable. The grandeur of the capital is depicted in poetic style. It was as "though the capital was crowded with a dense forest, as it were, of arms of his brave soldiers who were hankering after the plunder of the camps of all enemies, yet was it fit to be inhabited by wealthy people (merchants). In it the disc of the sun was hidden from the view by the thousands

¹. Khonamukhi grant of Dharmapāla, V. 5; Subhankarapāṭaka grant, V. 5.
of plastered turrets which are rendered still whiter by the nectar-like smiles of the love-drunk fair damsels standing on them. It is adorned by learned men, religious preceptors and poets who have made it their place of resort. - Like the cloth which protects the king's broad chest, its boundaries were encompassed by a rampart, furnished with a fence strong like that used for the game-birds of the Sakas, fit to cause chagrin to the king of Gurjara, to give fever to the heads of the untameable elephants of the chief of Gauḍa (Gauḍendra), to act like bitumen in the earth to the lord of Kerala, to strike awe into the Bāhikas and Taikas, to cause discomfiture to the master of the Deccan country (Dakshinātya). It is rendered beautiful by the river Lauhitya. - Such is the town in which the Lord of Prāgjyotīsa took up his residence and which he called by the appropriate name Durjaya."

The capital was shifted to Durjaya from Harūppeśvara by Brahmapāla. Ratnapāla fortified and strengthened it.  

Ratnapāla is praised for his powerful and warlike activities. It is said that "by reason of the elephants pearls, carried forth by the impetus of the unrestrainable

1. Bargaon Grant, Lines 28-33; Swālkuchi Grant, Lines 6-7.
3. Grant of Ratnapāla; Grant of Indrapāla; Grant of Dharmapāla.
stream of blood running from the split foreheads of the elephants of his enemies, his (Ratnapāla's) battle-field looked beautiful like a market-place strewn with the stores of merchants and ruby-coloured through the blood of the slain." He is "the mighty crush of enemies." The Sakas, the kings of Gurjara, Gauḍa, Kerala and the chief of the Bāhikas and the Tāis and the ruler of the Deccan were vanquished by him. The reference does not mean that Ratnapāla actually had any conflict with the kings of those countries, as supposed by Hoernle. It was simply meant to emphasize the strength and excellence of the fortifications. N.N. Vasu thinks that it refers to an unsuccessful invasion by the above-mentioned kings during the time of Ratnapāla. The statement may have a bearing on contemporary events, as suggested by H.C. Ray. He identifies the Kerala king with Rajendra Chola I and the lord of the Deccan with Chālukya Vikramāditya VI., and takes the Tāikas and the Bāhikas to be the Turkish invaders. The king of Gurjara was either Rājyapāla or Trilocanapāla. The presence of the Gurjara in Magadha and North Bengal, he writes, made them familiar

2. Gauhati grant, W. 9, 15; Khonāmukhi grant, V. 5.
to the Kāmarūpa poets. S.L. Katare identifies the master of the Deccan with Vikramāditya VI Chālukya of Kalyāna and stated that owing to the difficulties of the region Vikramāditya had to return. P.C. Choudhury rightly supposed that the invasion of Kāmarūpa or the defeat of the Vikramāditya did not occur at all.

In the Vikramaṅkaṇḍaevacarita of Hilaṇa, we find mention of the defeat of a Kāmarūpa ruler by a certain Vikramāditya. Buhler identifies this Vikramāditya with Tribhuvanamalla of Kalyāna and suggests that "he made with his cavalry a raid into their territories." P.N. Bhattacharya identifies Vikramāditya as Karṇatendu and states that the invasion took place either during the reign of Indrapāla or Harṣapāla, but there was no loss of Kāmarūpa territory. Harṣapāla was involved in a war with Vikramāditya Chalukya VI. Ray places the invasion during Ratnapāla's time. R.S. Tripathi states that "Ratnapāla beat back the Chālukya army, which then returned by way of Southern Kośala." We

2. I.C., IV, PP. 43-52.
5. Intro. to the Vikramaṅkaṇḍaevacarita, PP. 23, 31.
9. History of Ancient India, P. 422.
find in the grant that the Deccan King was defeated by Ratnapāla, but Bilhana refers to Vikramaditya's victory over Kāmarūpa. P.C. Choudhury thinks that if there is any historical basis of this work, Vikramaditya was no other than Chālukya Vikramaditya VI of Kalyāna, and probably he was contemporary of Harṣapāla, but not of Ratnapāla.  

All the contemporary powers mentioned in the Bargaon grant might not have invaded the kingdom of Kāmarūpa. The reference is merely proof of the existence of such powers, just as the poetic description of the capital refers only to the impregnability of the fortified palace of Durjaya. 

Ratnapāla is given the credit of defeating the Gauḍa king named Rājayapāla in a great war by the strength of his own arms. The decline of Pāla rule in Gauḍa after Mahipāla gave an opportunity for the extension of the influence of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa.

"Purandarapāla, the son of Ratnapāla who filled the earth with white-washed temples of the god Śiva, the houses of the Brāhmaṇas learned in the Vedas with all sorts of wealth, the yards of the houses of sacrifice with sacrificial

posts, the whole sky with the sacrificial smoke and all the quarters with monuments of victory, was of noble fame, charitable, capable of enjoyment, versed in the fine arts, heroic and a good poet."¹ He married Durlabhā, the princess of the royal family of Prāchī, and through her, he had a son named Indrapāla. Hoernle supposes that Purandarapāla died as Yuvarāja during the life-time of his father Ratnapāla, who was succeeded by his grandson Indrapāla.² Purandarapāla did not reign, and died as Yuvarāja, are confirmed from other accounts.³

We have two copper plate grants of Indrapāla, i.e. the Gauhati⁴ and the Guākuchi grants recorded respectively in the 8th and the 21st of his regnal years. Both Hoernle and Bhattacharya ascribed the Gauhati grant to the middle of the 11th century A.D. Indrapāla may be placed between circa 1040 and 1065 A.D.

He "was the lamp of the east and was the foremost of the vanquishers of the enemies, of the continent, the

¹. Copper Plate Grant of Indrapāla, VV. 10-11.
². J.A.S.B., LXVI, 1897, PP. 113-32.
³. Guākuchi Grant, V. 17; Khonāmukhi Grant of Dharmapāla, V. 6.; Subhankarapāṭṭaka Grant, V. 6.
⁴. This Copper Plate Grant consists of three plates found in Barpanara village (Darrang district). Edited by Hoernle, J.A.S.B., LXVI, 1897, PP. 113-32; Bhattacharya, P.N., Kamarupa Sasanavali, PP. 116-129.
⁵. This consists also of three plates, found in Guākuchi village, Nalbari sub-division (Kamrup district), I.H.O., 1927, P. 839; Edited by Bhattacharya, P.N., op.cit., PP. 130-45.
politicians and men of character."↑ He assumed the title of 'Paramesvara Paramabhattaraka Maharatadhirastra', which indicates that he was a mighty ruler. He properly ruled the earth for a long time, vanquished the enemy by dint of his might, performed many sacrifices pleasing to Indra and to the damsels he was like Kamadeva."↑ Further, it states that "when he sat on the throne, the mosaic floor of his audience hall looked like a fruit-covered tree by reason of the strewnabout jewels that fell from the crowns of the princes as they voluntarily stood, reverently bowing before him with joined hands."↑

Indrapala was followed by his son Gopala who may be placed between circa 1065 and 1080 A.D. 'Gopala was matchless in might and a light of the royal family; on this earth, he was at the (extreme) limit of the mighty, meritorious, munificent and the learned, accomplished with politeness."↑ The Pusparadhra grant↑ described him as possessing many virtues, and as one who had the knowledge of the niti-dharma and whose power like fire burnt the kingdoms of his enemies. Gopala was powerful as well as liberal in his gifts.

1. Copper plate grant of Indrapala, WV. 13, 15.
2. Khonamukhi grant, V. 7; Subhankarapattaka grant, V. 7.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., V. 8; J.A.R.S., VIII, PP. 113-26.
5. V. 4.
Harsapāla was the son and successor of Gopāla. He was a great warrior and a resourceful leader. It is recorded that the blood of his enemies killed by him in battle appeased the thirst of the Rākṣhasas. This indicates that Harsapāla was involved in a war, which resulted in much bloodshed. Vikramāṅkadevacakrita of Bilhaṇa refers to a war between the Chalukya prince Vikramāditya and the king of Kāmarūpa. This Vikramāditya is identified by P.C. Choudhury with Chālukya Vikramāditya VI (1076-1126), who is said to have overrun Magadha, Anga, Gauḍa and Kāmarūpa. It is possible that Harsapāla may have been involved in war with him, somewhere in North Bengal or in the frontier of Kāmarūpa in the west; but it is unlikely that the raid resulted in the occupation of any land either in Gauḍa or in Kāmarūpa. During the time of Harsapāla, probably Kāmarūpa lost her territory in the west, which was shortly re-acquired by his successors.

Harsapāla married Ratnā, a lady of high rank and by her had a son named Dharmapāla. The accession of Dharmapāla

to the kingdom of Kāmarūpa regained her lost prestige, and the kingdom flourished during his reign.

We have found three copper plate grants of Dharmapāla. Of these, the Khonāmukhi\(^1\) and Subhankarapāṭaka\(^2\) grants were issued respectively in the first and third of his regnal years. The Puṣpabhadra grant\(^3\) bears no date and P.N. Bhattacharya places it towards the end of his reign.\(^4\)

The important political event of his reign was the extention of the western boundary of his kingdom to the west of Karatoya. P.C. Choudhury states that after the temporary loss of Puṇḍravardhana during the time of Harṣapala, Dharmapāla acquired the region just after his accession possibly from the hands of some minor chief in North Bengal or from Rāmapāla himself, and granted lands as a mark of his victory in this region.\(^5\) The conquest of the region 'girdled by the ocean' may indicate his supremacy towards the sea (Bay of Bengal). The weakness of the successors of Jatavarman till the rise of Bhōjavarman

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3. Found on the bed of Puṣpabhadra river, north bank of Brahmaputra; Bhattacharya, op.cit., PP. 168-84.
5. Ibid., PP. 242-43; also Subhankarapāṭaka Grant; Silimpur Stone Inscription, Basak, R.G., E.I., XIII, PP. 283-89.
6. Majumdar, op.cit., I, PP. 197-204.
may have given Dharmapāla the opportunity to establish his supremacy over them and to extend his kingdom to the sea. 1 Bhattacharya supposed that Dharmapāla, at the beginning of his reign, was troubled from external enemies or he was in anxiety over an impending invasion. 2 Anyhow, he tackled them with his strong hand and pushed back the boundary to the west of Karatoīa.

Dharmapāla shifted his capital from Prāgjiyotiśapura to Kāmarūpanagara towards the end of his reign. Controversy has arisen among the scholars about the location of Kāmarūpanagara. N.N. Vasu places it in Kangpur. 3 The removal of the capital towards the west was, according to Vasu, in order to save the kingdom from the invasions both from the east, from the shan and other non-Aryan tribes, and from the west from the Gaudas. 4 Bhattacharya states that Dharmapāla and Jayapāla were liberally inclined towards the people of Śravasti, and this might also be due to the location of their capital at Kāmarūpanagar in close neighbourhood of Śravasti

2. Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali, P. 164.
4. Ibid.
(Pundravardhana). 1 K.L. Barua located the capital at North Gauhati. 2 This view was upheld by E.A. Gait 3 and P.C. Choudhury. 4 Prāgjyotisapura here may mean the city of the east (i.e. Durjayanagara). The capital shifted either to Gauhati or North Gauhati. Thus the location of Kāmarūpanagar was either in Gauhati or North Gauhati, which had been continued as the capital since Dharmapāla’s reign till the latter part of the 13th century A.D., when the seat of the government was transferred to Kamatāpur.

Dharmapāla may be placed between circa 1095 and 1120 A.D. He is mentioned in the inscriptions as "Paramesvara, Parama-bhattacharya Mahārajadhiraḷa Dharmapaladevavarma."

Dharmapāla was one "whose praise was sung by the whole world and who was accomplished with all the qualities and whose heart was set on piety alone. The goddess Sarasvati attracted as it were by the fragrance of his face which resembled a lotus flower settled for ever on it." 5 He was "the sun of the Pāla line, the crown-jewel of poets, cultivated the fine

5. Puṣpabhadrā grant, VV. 6,7,8.
arts, endowed with all qualities and possessed spotless reputation.\textsuperscript{1} From the accounts it appears that Dharmapāla was an accomplished and virtuous king. He was well versed in all the fine arts and was a great poet, too, who composed the first eight verses of the Puṣpabhadra grant. He devoted himself to the spread of religion and he became the propagator of Dharma. He granted lands to the learned Brāhmaṇas and patronised them. He was, undoubtedly, the last great ruler of ancient Assam.

The dynasty of the Pāla rulers of Kāmarūpa, as found in the grants, came to an end with Dharmapāla. The successor of Dharmapāla is not known. However, the Silimpur inscription\textsuperscript{2} mentions the name of Jayapāla, king of Kāmarūp, apparently of the Brahmāpāla family. In the Rāmacarita of Sandhyākara Nāndi, it is mentioned that a general of Rāmapāla named Māyana conquered Kāmarūpa. It is believed that the Kāmarūpa

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{2} The stone inscription was found in Silimpur Mauza of the Bogra district (Bengal). The object is to record the erection of a temple by Praḥāsa, wherein it is incidentally mentioned that he (Praḥāsa) "though excessively solicited, did not by any means accept 900 gold coins and grant of land " from Jayapāla, King of Kāmarūpa, R.G., Basak, \textit{E.I.}, XIII, PP. 283-95.
\end{itemize}
king conquered by Rāmapāla, king of Gauḍa, was no other than Jayapāla. Jayapāla's exact place in the line is not known. But in all probability, he was a son and successor of the last king Dharmapāla. The accession of Jayapāla may be placed in circa 1120 A.D.

Rāmapāla seems to have installed a vassal named Tiṅgyadeva on the throne of Kāmarūpa. This is known from the Kāmauli grant of Vaidyadeva, which on the Paleographic evidence has been placed by Venis about 1142 A.D. The possessions of Kāmarūpa in Bengal had been lost, and Tiṅgyadeva was placed as a vassal over those territories. He is not mentioned as the ruler of Kāmarūpa in the inscription. He is only referred to as a prince who ruled to the east of the Pāla dominion. During Kumārpala's reign, Tiṅgyadeva revolted. Kumārpāla having heard of the disaffection of Tiṅgyadeva, who had been formerly treated with high honour, appointed Vaidyadeva, his minister as a ruler in Tiṅgyadeva's place. Vaidyadeva thereupon marched with his younger brother

3. It consists of three copper plates found in the Kāmauli village, near the confluence of the Bārnā and Gāṅgā at Banaras. Edited by Venis, Arthur, K.I., II, PP. 347-58; Gauḍalekhamālā, PP. 127-46.
Budhadeva against Tingyadeva and after defeating and killing him occupied the throne. Vaidyadeva did not remain long as a feudatory of the Pālas of Bengal; for within a short time, possibly after the death of Kumārapāla, he became independent and assumed the imperial title 'Mahārajadhiraja Paramesvara Paramabhaṭṭarakā,'¹ and thus, though only for a short period he established a Brāhmaṇ dynasty in Kāmarūpa.

The Kāmauli grant was issued from Hamsakonci,² in his fourth regnal year, and it records the gift of two villages, namely, Sāntipātaka and Mandara, situated in the Viṣaya of Bādā in the maṇḍala of Kāmarūpa included in the Pragjyotisabhuṭki. He was not only a great hero, but also a consummate scholar. He was a devout worshipper of Viṣṇu. He established his capital in Vaidargarh (in modern Kamrup).³

The successors of Vaidyadeva are not known. Dr. H.C. Ray thinks that Vaidyadeva was succeeded by his brother Budhadeva.⁴ The discovery of the Tezpur copper plates⁵ of Vallabhadeva dated S.E. 1107 (A.D. 1185), however, reveals a

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1. Kāmauli Grant of Vaidyadeva.
2. Barua, K.L., op.cit., PP. 126-27 (Hamsakonci is identified with Hākhuchi, a village in modern Kamrup).
5. The inscription consists of five Copper Plates; Kielhorn, E.I., V, PP. 181-88.
new line of kings. They are Kāyārideva, Udayakarna, and Vallabhadeva. The inscription records the establishment of a Bhaktasāla (alms house) by Vallabhadeva at the command of his father for the spiritual welfare of his mother. P.N. Bhattacharya ignores it, as it has nothing to do with Assam.¹ K.L. Barua states that these kings could not have been rulers of Kāmarūpa only because there is no room for them between Vaidyadeva and 1185 A.D., the date of Vallabhadeva's inscription; and that, however, they were feudatory chiefs perhaps under the later Kāmarūpa kings.² R.D. Banerji puts the dynasty of Vallabhadeva in its proper place, and identifies Vallabhadeva's line as the rulers of Kāmarūpa.³ Ray,⁴ Vasu,⁵ and Bhattasali⁶ take them to be the immediate successors of Vaidyadeva's descendants. Vasu, further, states that Kāyārideva defeated either Vaidyadeva or one of his descendants, and took possession of Kāmarūpa. The father of Kāyārideva was not a king. Both the father Bhaśkara, and the son were brave generals.⁷ The Tezpur plates trace the genealogy of

Vallabhadeva from Bhāskara (lineage not immediate successor) whom Bhattasali tries to identify with Bhāskaravarman.

Rāyārideva, surnamed Trailokyasiāha, 'an ornament of kings in Bhāskara's race met in battle and defeated the king of Vanga. Bhattasali finds here a reference to his (Rāyārideva) encounter with Vijayasena of Bengal.¹ Rāyārideva established himself as an independent ruler. Next came Udayakarṇa, who was succeeded by Vallabhadeva. Vallabhadeva was a powerful king, as eulogised in the inscriptions which say that Vallabhadeva was of versatile, peaceful and military qualities. Ray and Bhattasali hold that the campaign led by Muhammad-bin-Bakhtiyar in 1202 A.D. to Tibet² was annihilated in Assam either by Vallabhadeva or his successor.³ This event was recorded in the Kānāibāqṣā stone inscription (North Gauhati) dated 1127 Saka, 13th of CaiTRA equivalent to 7th March, 1206 A.D., as 'the Turukas on reaching Kāmarūpa had been annihilated'; but the reigning king is not mentioned. K.L. Barua supposes that the king of Kāmarūpa was one Pṛthu.⁵

1. Ibid.
The Gāchtal pillar inscription, dated Saka era 1149 = 1227 A.D., records that the king Viśvasundaradeva ordered one Candrakānta to repair the Śiva temple damaged by the Mlecchas. The Mlecchas are identified with the Muslims,¹ who accompanied Ghiasuddin in his campaign against 'Kāmrūd' and 'Baṅg' in 1226 A.D. The Gāchtal inscription corroborates the record of the second Muslim invasion of Assam as found in the Tabakat-i-Nasiri. Sultan Ghiasuddin Iwaz invaded Assam, probably through Vanga, i.e. Eastern Bengal in 624 H. which began on Dec. 22, 1226 A.D.² He invaded Kāmarūpa early in 1227 A.D. and advanced as far as Davokā and Gāchtal in Northong district, and destroyed the temple of Śiva at Gāchtal. The next Muslim invasion was that of Ikhtiyar-uddin Yuzbāshī circa 1256-57 A.D.³ Soon after these invasions, the old kingdom of Kāmarūpa seems to have split up into several independent principalities. At the same time, the Ahoms penetrated into the Brahmaputra valley, and pushed back the successor of the old dynasty towards the west. Probably, the ruler of the old dynasty shifted his capital to Kamatā to save himself from the harassment of the Ahoms. The Ahoms occupied the kingdom, and they started a new era in the history of Assam.

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3. Ibid., P. 263.