CHAPTER - III

EXTENSION OF THE BOUNDARY OF PRĀGJYOTIŚA
KĀMARŪPA DURING THE RULERS OF VARIOUS
DYNASTIES IN ANCIENT TIMES

SECTION- A

KINGS OF VARMAN DYNASTY

In the middle of the 4th century A.D. when the Imperial Guptas made their power felt almost throughout the peninsula Prāgjyotiśa-Kāmarūpa sprung up from a long period of oblivion following the great Mahābhārata war, under a new line of kings called the Varmans, whose government lasted for about three centuries

1. The Allahabad pillar prasasti of the Gupta emperor Samudragupta, the Dubi and the Nīdhanpur copperplate grants, the seal attached to the Dubi copperplate grant and the Nālandā clay of Bhāskaravarman have established the fact that one Puṣyavarman was the founder of the Varman dynasty which again happens to be the first historical dynasty of ancient Assam.

Puṣyavarman traced his descent from the Bhauma dynasty of Naraka-Bhagadatta. The Dubi grants of Bhāskaravarman (C. 594-650 AD) the last ruler of the family states that in the lineage of Naraka was born a king of kings, named Puṣyavarman equal to

1. Baruah, S. L. ACHA, P. 89.
Śiva in honour and fame, equal to Indra in sacrifices, an annihilator of enemies. The goddess of fortune, though fickle by nature was steady with him, who was as it were a second Viṣṇu. The Nidhanpur grant (V.7) states thus: "When the kings of his (Naraka) family, having enjoyed the position (of rulers) for three thousand years (all), attained the condition of gods, Puṣyavarman became the Lord of the World." The same reference is found in the Nālandā clay seal: "Srīman Narakatanayo Bhagadatta Vajradattanvayo Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Prāgjyotiṣendrah Puṣyavarman."

When and how Puṣyavarman occupied the throne at Prāgjyotisa is still uncertain. R.M. Nath says that Puṣyavarman originally came from central India and helped Samudragupta to expel the reigning king of Kāmarūpa and afterwards established himself on the throne. But B.M. Barua has tried to establish a connection between the Varmans of Kāmarūpa with those of Trigarta in the Udicyottaratapatha or some where in the Punjab. D.C. Sircar, after examining various possibilities regarding the origin of Puṣyavarman has come to the conclusion that there is no need to attach much importance to the fabricated ancestry claimed by the descendants of Puṣyavarman. P.C. Choudhury believes that Puṣyavarman was an Aryan prince having an admixture of Alpine blood and distantly connected with the family of Bhagadatta, who

2. Nath, R. M., Background of Assamese Culture, PP. 32-33.
3. I. H. Q., XXIII, PP. 20 of.
4. TCHA, Vol.- I, P. 96
flourished, according to him during or about the first century A.D.\textsuperscript{5}

We do not connect him with the legendary king Bhagadatta; but the probability is that Puṣyavarman, undoubtedly was an Aryan, whose predecessors came to Assam earlier than the 4th century A.D. and must have established themselves in Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa. There was anarchy in the political field of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa 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 first historical mention of a Kāmarūpa king is found in the Allahabad Prāśasti of Samudragupta, which refers to ‘Samatā-Ḍavāka-Kāmarūpa-Nepāla-Karttrpurāḍḍi Pratyanta nṛpatibhiḥ’ indicating that Samudragupta’s "imperious commands were fully gratified by giving all (kinds of) taxes and obeying (his) orders and coming to perform obeisance". The record, though does not mention the name of the ruler, the scholars by inference believe it to be none other than Puṣyavarman, the founder of the Varman line of kings.\textsuperscript{5}

Generally, it is held on the basis of the Mathura inscription

\textsuperscript{5.} Choudhury, P.C., HCPA, P. 130
that Samudragupta's son Chandragupta II ascended the throne between 375 and 380 A.D.\(^6\), leading to the conclusion that Samudragupta obviously reigned before A.D. 375 or 380 A.D. On the other hand, Bhāskaravarman who was the 13th generation from Puṣyavarman and a contemporary of Harṣavardhana is generally said to have died in or around 650 A.D. If we take 25 years as the average period for each Varman king then Puṣyavarman's period lies between 350-375 A.D. The two copperplate grants of Bhāskaravarman say that the names of Puṣyavarman's son and successor and his daughter-in-law were Samudravarman and Dattavati or Dattadevi respectively, which were exactly the names of the Gupta emperor and his chief queen. This has been generally inferred that the Gupta emperor, Samudragupta reigned before 375 A. D. and Puṣyavarman was a contemporary of Samudragupta- the unnamed frontier king of Kāmarūpa who in imitation of 'Samudragupta' named the crown prince and the crown princess as Samudra and Dattadevi\(^7\). It is also possible that Samudravarman and his queen themselves adopted these names at the time of appointment as Crown Prince and Princess, or at the time of the coronation ceremony\(^8\). This shows that Puṣyavarman was contemporary of Samudragupta, while Samudravarman was the contemporary of Chandragupta II.

\(^6\) Epigraphia Indica, XXI, PP. 8 of; Sircar, D.C., SI- I. PP. 269 of.
\(^7\) Choudhuri, P. C., HCPA, P. 142 ; TCHA, Vol. I. P. 96
\(^8\) TCHA, Vol.- I, P. 97
Both the grants- Dubi and Nidhanpur have described Puṣyavarman as a powerful king who assumed the title of Mahārājādhirāja which indicates his independent status, though how far he could extend the frontiers of his kingdom is not known. That Davāka, identified with the Kapili valley in the modern district, was an independent kingdom is indicated by its separate mention in the Allahabad pillar prasasti of Samudragupta. During his reign the boundary of Prāgjyotiṣa on the west extended to the border of west Bengal where from on the north of the Brahmaputra it extended upto Tezpur, as Dabāka (i.e. Nowgāon district) and Samatat (the southern region of Vaṅga) along the sea were two contemporary independent states (according to the Samudragupta’s Allahabad pillar inscription), so the area of the kingdom of Puṣyavarman was confined to the districts of Kamrup, Goalpara, Darang and some segments of Sonitpur.

Samudravarman (375-400 A.D.) :

Puṣyavarman's son and successor, Samudravarman maintained the elevated status of the kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa, for he has been praised in the Dubi and the Nidhanpur grants as possessing power as well as knowledge and other qualities. In the Nidhanpur grant, his reign is described as devoid of anarchy (mātsyanāna) and in the seal attached to the Dubi grant, he has been called a mahārājādhirāja. The meaning of the word
“Mātsyanyāna” is a rule devoid of lawlessness, exploitation or oppression. Such a meaning of the word simply states that during his reign the country was peaceful and no internal rebellion or external invasion could undo its congenial state. This word also unveils another feature and it is the political domination of the Guptas during the reign of Puṣyavarman was done away with by Samudravarman.

The following verses are attributed to Samudravarman:

"...............He was similar to an ocean, famous and illustrious with an excess of knowledge and qualities" (V. 11, Dubi Grant, IAA, P. 21)

"He, who was adored by the host of kings, and endowed with qualities, and the dispeller of darkness in the form of enemies, and capable of subduing others, retired to the heaven with the help of Yoga after having enjoyed for long the whole earth, endowed with auspicious jewels" (V. 13, Dubi Grant, IAA, P. 21).

"His (Puṣyavarman) son Samudravarman, who was, as it were, the fifth Samudra (ocean) being devoid of anarchy (i.e., mātsyanyāya, which is common to other four oceans), having jewels as open exhibits (unlike the other oceans which have jewels hidden
This perhaps indicates that he could consolidate his political power and had a reign free from troubles. He also assumed the title of Mahārājādhirāja which suggested that, like his father, he ruled as an independent king 9.

Balavarman:

Kāmarūpa’s early contact with Kaśmir:

Samudravarman was succeeded by his son Balavarman (400-425 A.D.) He was a king of remarkable abilities. In the seal attached to the Dubi grant, he has been called a Mahārājādhirāja. Balavarman’s activities have been described in the following verses of the Dubi and the Nīdhanpur grants—

"Having endured the fire like arrows in the battle-field and having defeated the enemies accompanied by large armies, this strong man, the ornament of the Bhauma dynasty enjoyed the world and as such was known as Balavarma" (V. 15, Dubi grant, IAA, P. 21).

"This fulfiller of wishes retired to the heaven itself with the help of meditation after having enjoyed the earth embellished with gold and jewels and also having performed several sacrifices accompanied by gifts and having destroyed the power and pride

of the enemies." (V. 16, Dubi grant, IAA., P. 21)

"That king (Samudravarman) had a son born of (his queen) Dattadevi, (named) Balavarman, whose force (bala) and armour (Barma) never broke up and whose army would easily march against enemies". (V. 9, Nidhanpur grant, IAA., P. 51)

"His (Samudravarman's) son from Dattadevi was the king of kings Śrī Balavarman, from him was born in queen Śrī Ratnavatī the king of kings Śrī Kalyāṇavarma". (Seal attached to the Dubi grant).

All these verses and the data provided by the seal attached to the Dubi grant resemble each other in describing Balavarman, that Balavarman was the son of Samudravarman and Dattadevi, that he succeeded his father and possessed the title of Mahārājādhirāja and in due course, he was succeeded by his son Kalyāṇavaran.

The V. 16 of the Dubi grant reveals that Balavarman was the first among the 'Several sacrifices', there by confirming his status as a Mahārājādhirāja. This information has motivated historians to conclude that it was Balavarman who expanded the south eastern frontier of the kingdom of Prāghyotiṣa by conquering 'the kingdom of Davāka' which had formerly been an 'independent status'.
However P. C. Choudhury has not given any view in this regard because, as he put it, "It may be conjectured that he tried for the conquest of Davāka or other small principalities to the east, but he could not have been successful, since his triumphs are described in the vaguest and most general terms. Therefore it may be said that Balavarman maintained Prāgjyotiśa's suzerainty over other principalities of the time. The V. 15 of the Dubi grant says that because of his prowess, this "ornament of the Bhauma dynasty" came to be known as Balavarman, 'Bala' meaning strength or power.

The Dubi copperplate grant provides us with a very important information regarding Balavarman in particular and the Varmans in general. The Varmans were performers of sacrifices or Yajñas and Balavarman was the first among the Varmans to perform 'Sacrifices accompanied by gifts' (V. 16). This king has also been described as a person who possessed 'great strength', 'good look' 'virtue', and also 'intellect'. This combination of such personal merits, of course, made him a magnificent personality of his time and may be concluded that Balavarman was the king who formally ousted Gupta suzerainty from Prāgjyotiśa–Kāmarūpa and also brought neighbouring areas under his control. To boost up his morale, he performed sacrifices and also established diplomatic relations with other Indian states like Kāśmirā.

10. Choudhury, P.C., HCPA. P. 137
Balavarman is, however, taken to be the father of princess Amṛtaprabhā, married to king Meghavāhana of Kāśmir. Kalhana refers to Amṛtaprabhā as a Kāmarūpi princess but does not give the name of her father. Considering the time factor, this is generally held that Balavarman was supposed to be the father of princess Amṛtaprabhā. In the Rājatarāṅgini, Meghavāhana is said to have gone "to the land of the king of Prāgīyotīṣa, who was descended from the race of Viṣṇu for the Svayambara of the king's daughter—. There in the presence of kings, he received from the princess Amṛtaprabhā the bridegroom's garland, while the parasol of Varuṇa cast its shade upon him 11. Amṛtaprabhā is also said to have been accompanied by her father's preceptor, a Tibetan Buddhist monk named Stunpā 12. This Stunpā erected a Stupa in Kāśmir called Lo-Stunpā. Amṛtaprabhā also erected in Kāśmir a lofty Vihāra (monastery) for the benefit of foreign Bhiksus, called Amṛtabhavan, now corrupted into Amitabhavan or Antabhavan. The historicity of this Vihāra is proved by Ou Kung13. M. A. Stein rightly observes: "the attribution of a Stupa known by Tibetan designation (Lo-Stunpā) to the guru (teacher) of this foreign queen, seems also to rest on genuine tradition 14.

It seems that Amṛtaprabhā embraced Buddhism before her marriage. Her father had a soft corner towards Buddhism which is

14. RT, B.K. I, PP. 81-82
evident from the presence of a Buddhist pontiff by the name of Stunpä (Lo-Stunpä who belonged to a country called Loh) in Kāmarūpā. It shows that during Balavarman's time Buddhism was known to Prāgjyotīṣa-Kāmarūpā. Further, this matrimonial relation between Kāmarūpā and Kāśmir, the two frontier states of the east and the north west respectively, is very significant in the political history of India.

It shows that politically Prāgjyotīṣa was strong enough to control the neighbouring rulers and as such could proceed to Kāśmir through different states.

Kalyāṇavarman (425-450 A. D.) :

The following verses are dedicated to Kalyāṇavarman, the fourth king in the Varman line.

In the Dubi Inscription:

"With the remainder of the merits of his good deeds Kalyāṇavarman, who was endowed with accumulation of merits and who was the performer of good deeds became the king" (V. 17, IAA., P. 21).
"Bron of Sri Ratnadevi, the wise king (Kalyāṇavarma), who indulged in the only pleasure of doing good to others, who was equal in strength to Indra, who was the killer of the enemy and who had a moon like face and was possessed of great strength, retired in course of time to become the guest of Indra, after having performed a number of auspicious deeds also having killed huge hosts of enemies and also having enjoyed pleasure produced by his own good deeds". (V. 18-19, IAA., P. 21)

In the Nīḍhanpur Inscription:

"His (Balavarman) son born of (queen) Ratnavati was the king named Kalyāṇavarman, who was not the abode of even very small faults". (V. 10, IAA., P. 51)

In the seal attached to the Dubi grant, Kalyāṇavarman has been described as the fourth generation of Varman line.

These information clearly show that Kalyāṇavarman was the successor of Balavarman who was as great as a person and powerful as a king and he also had a moon like face.

The Shung-Shu refers to the sending of an embassy to China
in 428 A.D. by an Indian king called Yu-Chai (with the eye or the face like the moon) who was the lord of the Kapili country. Yu-Chai appears to be a nickname and Kapili, is identified with the Kapili river flowing through the Nagong District of Assam. The Kapili valley is still called Davāka which may be identified with the kingdom of Davaka mentioned in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta. The embassy may, therefore have been sent by the king of Davāka, (not Kalyāṇavarman of Prāgjyotisha) whose face or eye looked like the moon. In this regard more factual evidence may be collected from the source of Chinese history of Chang-Chu. From this source it is gathered that a king of Ko-Pi-Lee (Kopilee kingdom) named Yu-Chai deputed two royal messengers in 428 and 466 A.D. to the country of China. Dr. P.C. Choudhury has identified Yu-Chai with Kalyāṇavarman, a king of Kāmarūpa, and he was from the Varman dynasty. Instead of raising a debate on the details of who that Yu-Chai was, it would be of great help to note some useful information from this source of the Chinese history. Here in this source the royal messenger was said to have been deputed from the kingdom of Kopilee, and not from Kāmarūpa or from the Brahmaputra Valley. On the other hand proof relating to the political independence enjoyed by the kingdom Kopilee in the mid-fourth century A.D. could be elected from the almost contemporary Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta, though, of course, the name ‘Dabaka’ was inscribed a bit differently. From this it follows that there is a general likelihood that the king

15 Barua, K.L., EHK P. 31
of Daṅaka, Yu-Chai by name belonged to the early part of the 5th century A.D. Moreover, ordinarily a royal messenger introduces himself to the king to whom deputed by citing the name of his country and not naming a part of it (provided it is supposed that the kopilee valley was included in Kāmarūpa) Besides, had the royal messenger been deputed from Kāmarūpa he would probably have introduced himself to have been from the Brahmaputra valley the bigger one than the Kopilee. From this it becomes obvious that there was a kingdom in the Kopilee valley and it maintained its independent status perhaps till to the 6th century A.D.

Ganapativarmāṇ (450-475 A.D.) :

Kalyāṇavarmāṇ was succeeded by his son Ganapativarmāṇ. The following verses are attributed to Ganapativarmāṇ in the Dubi and the Nidhanpur grants.

In the Dubi inscription :

"..............In Gandharvavati was born the king (i.e., the master of the earth) Gaṇendravarmāṇ who was similar in lustre to the Sun (i.e., the enemy of darkness)." (V. 20, IAA., P. 22)
In the Nidhanpur inscription:

"From him (Balavarman) queen Gandharvavati begot a son Ganapati (by name), who was incessantly raining gifts (dānavarṣaṇa), was endowed with innumerable qualities, for the extermination of the Kali age (i.e., strife) like Lord Gaṇapati, who has an incessant flow of ichor (dānavarṣaṇa), is endowed with innumerable qualities for the extermination of strife (Kali)" (V. 11. IAA., P. 51).

He appears to have just ruled peacefully and it seems that his rule was not important from the point of view of territorial expansion. Verse 22 of the Dubi inscription further says that this king after enjoying the earth as Janaka, gathered an assembly of people, placed the kingdom in the hands of his accomplished son and retired to the heaven (IAA., P. 22).

Mahendravarman (475-500 A.D.):

The following verses are attributed to Mahendravarman in the Dubi and the Nidhanpur copperplates grants.
In the Dubi grant:

"He, the son of Yajñadevī, Mahendravarma by name, who was the vanquisher of the enemy and similar to the king of gods in valour and similar to the moon in lustre, enjoyed the kingdom and protected his subjects like his own progeny duly" (V 23, IAA, P. 22).

"Having conquered the earth with the ocean as the girdle and subduing the enemy through, power, the king performed a number of sacrifices like the great Indra and also got a 'Sacī like consort in Suvraṭā'. (V 24, IAA P. 22)

In the Nidhanpur inscription:

"His (Gaṇapativarman) queen Yajñavati brought forth a son Mahendravarman who was the support for the sacrificial rites like the fire, the very foundation for sacrificial rites, in the manner of the friction wood (araṇī) which is also the source of sacrifices (Yajñavati)". (V 12, IAA. P. 51).

In the seal attached to the Dubi grant, he has been described as the performer of two horse sacrifices.
All these verses clearly give emphasis on Mahendravarman being a very powerful ruler who performed two horse sacrifices (aśvamedha) and extended his sway up to the 'Ocean'. I.e. Bay of Bengal. Till 428 A.D. Davāka (Dabaka), an important kingdom of this part of India was still an independent kingdom and Prāgjyotīśa-Kāmarūpa had been enjoying nominal subjugation of Davāka. The epigraphs reveal that compared to Balavarman, the reign of both Kalyāṇavarman and Ganapativarman were more or less eventless; of course, they maintained the status of Prāgjyotīśa-Kāmarūpa. It appears that Davāka during this time made an attempt to dissuade herself from the clutches of Prāgjyotīśa-Kāmarūpa, but to no avail. In 428 A.D. the king of Kia-pi-li or Dabaka or Davāka sent a friendly mission to the Chinese emperor. The epigraphs clearly refer to both these kings being engaged in fighting against some unidentified kings. The king of Davāka seems to be the most prominent among these enemy kings. And finally, an expansionist like Mahendravarman, annexed Davāka into the kingdom of Prāgjyotīśa-Kāmarūpa and afterward tried his luck in the west Bengal than under the Later Guptas. After annexing Davāka Mahendravarman performed the first aśvamedha sacrifice. It is noticeable that Balavarman did not annex Davāka. He conquered some other local chiefs and enjoyed Davāka's nominal subjugation.
which was surely a tactful diplomatic act. If he annexed Davāka at that point of time he would surely have performed the asvamedha sacrifice. So it may be said that Mahendravarman annexed Davāka into Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa and became the first ruler to perform the asvamedha sacrifice. It is a glorious event in the history of ancient Assam. According to D. C. Sircar, it was Nārāyanavarman and not Mahendravarman who performed the horse sacrifices and in their performances, his son Bhutivarman or Mahabhutivarman then the Crown Prince, took active part since Nārāyanavarman was at that time very old 16. But Sircar has not denied that the Varman rulers from the time of Mahendravarman on word, taking advantage of the decline of the Guptas, adopted the policy of expansion towards the west so that they could build a niche for themselves in all India politics 17. In this connection we must remember Balavarman's attempt in establishing diplomatic relationship with Kāśmirā. So it was natural that the Varman rulers later on would try to expand their kingdom at the cost of the empire.

P. C. Choudhury puts Mahendravarman's reigning period (450-485) A. D. between Skandagupta's rule (455-467 A. D.) and Buddhagupta's rule 18 (477-495 or 500 A. D.) During this period the Guptas lost control over much of Bengal. Most probably, South east Bengal passed into the hands of Mahendravarman who after

16 | TCHA, P. 101.
17 | Ibid.
18 | Choudhury, P. C. HCPA, P. 152.
conquering these parts performed his second horse sacrifice. He has also pointed out that the contemporary situations in Bengal favoured Mahendravarman as it had no local power at that time 19. This has also been pointed out by him that Mahendravarman might have come into conflict with Gupta emperor Buddhagupta in connection with the occupation of Pundravardhana in North-Bengal and was defeated at the hands of the latter whose occupation of the region between 477-496 A.D. is proved by his Damodarpur plates 20.

Again, by the beginning of the 6th century A.D. i.e., about 507 A.D. (GE 188 = 507 A.D.), South east Bengal passed into the hands of the Guptas as Gupta emperor Vainyagupta's Gunaighar inscription refers to him as having his sway even upto Tripura 21. Therefore according to P.C. Choudhury, Kāmarūpa's sway over South east Bengal occurred about 470-480 A.D. 22

It is accepted that Mahendravarman and Gupta emperor Buddhagupta came into conflict against each other in a series of fights where by Mahandravarman became successful in establishing his sway over South east Bengal about which the Dubi grant refers to Mahendravarman holding his sway upto the 'Ocean'. To commemorate the most significant victory, he performed aśvamedha sacrifice. On the other hand Pundhravardhana or North Bengal was

under Buddhagupta as is corroborated by his Damodarpur plates, Sarnath inscription and Eran epigraph.

Thus a great beginning had been made by Mahendravarman in respect of bringing our land politically close to the Indian sub-continent. Mahendravarman's reign is also very important from another point of view. We have a direct source to his period. The Umāchal rock inscription dated 5th century A. D. has been left by him. Though, in the inscription, the name of the king is referred to as Surendravarman, it has been accepted by all historians that Surendravarman and Mahendravarman were the same person.

Thus we may say that Mahendravarman was the first Kāmarūpa ruler who not only conquered a large tract (South east Bengal), but also maintained his hold over it and his effort proved futile in the coming two centuries, during his successors especially Bhūtivarman and Bhāskaravarman.

**Nārāyanavarman (500-515 A.D.):**

Mahendravarman was succeeded by his son Nārāyanavarman. The Nidhanpur grant (V. 13) states that he was born "for the stability

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23. I bid.
24. IAA, P. 3
(of the rule) of the world, who like Janaka (or his father) was well
versed in the principles of the philosophy of the (Supreme) self."

Again the Dubi grant (V. 26) states that "In her (Suvratā)
who was like Aditi, Chakrapani-Nārāyaṇa, assuming a humanform
with the same name, became the king, surrounded by Gods, with a
view to ending the six-fold demerits of his subject."

The grants, therefore, testify to his many sided qualities and
virtuous life, and state that he did sway with the evils of the time by
maintaining a comparatively peaceful order in the kingdom. Most
probably Nārāyaṇavraman lost control over a vast portion of South
east Bengal when Vainyagupta was ruling over the Gupta dominions.
Vainyagupta had his sway upto Tripura in the east is proved by his
Gunaighar inscription, (G.E. 188-507 A.D.)

Bhūtivarman or Mahābhūtivarman (515-555 A.D.) :

The Dubi and the Nidhanpur grants have not specifically
described Bhūtivarman's activities in details, but have given emphasis
on him being a man of supernal abilities. The Nidharpur grant has
described him as the sixth mahābhūta (basic element). The Dubi
grant describes him as follows.

"Then this illustrious king, who was like the king of gods, famous for his valour.... having performed a horse sacrifice retired to the abode of Indra". (IAA, P. 23) (V. 31).

All these verses give emphasis on Bhūtivarman, a great conqueror, the performer of one asvamedha sacrifice must have avenged the defeat of his father at the hands of Vainyagupta and again extended Pṛāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa's western frontier up to the ocean, thus giving a permanent shape to his grand father's glorious conquests. However, it is to be noted, during Bhūtivarman's reign, the gupta empire had already vanished into oblivion. In the erstwhile Gupta dominions rose several petty states ruled by local rulers. Bhūtivarman defeated these local rulers and re-conquered South east Bengal. Bhūtivarman in the absence of the mighty Guptas would try to advance further on the western direction. The Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskaravarman which was a renewal of the revenue free grant of land, originally made by Bhūtivarman proves this statement.

K. L. Barua\textsuperscript{26}, one of the pioneer authorities in ancient Assam history has drawn the furthest limit of the western frontier of Pṛāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa in Bhūtivarman's time. According to him modern Purnea district of eastern Bihar was included in the western part of Bhūtivarman's kingdom. P.C. Choudhury has drawn

\textsuperscript{26}J SEHA. P. 9.
Puṇḍravardhana or North Bengal as the western frontier of Bhūtivarman's Kingdom. In this connection, a discussion on the location of the donated land of the Nidhanpur inscription is necessary. The Nidhanpur grant reads as follows (IAA, P.P. 53, 54) ...... who (Bhāskaravarman) commands the present and the future district officers as well as the courts of Justice in the district of Candrapuri. Let it be known to you that the land of the Mayūrasālāma-lāgraḥāra lying within this district granted (earlier) by issuing a copperplate charter by king Bhūtivarman has become liable to revenue on account of the loss of the copper plates. So by the Mahāraja (Bhāskaravarman), having informed the senior respectable persons and having issued orders for making a fresh copper plate grant, the land has been awarded to the Brāhmaṇas, who have been enjoying the grant, in the manner of bhūmichidra so that no tax is levied on it as long as the sun, the moon and the earth will endure. Here the names of the Brāhmaṇas are as follows..... (lines 34 to 54).

Seven shares (aṁśāḥ) are (allotted) for the purpose of bali (worship), caru (oblation) and satra (hospitality). The produce of the land found as an extension of the Kauśikā river, will go to the Brāhmaṇas, the donees of the grant; but the land, found as an extension (due to the drying up) of the Gaṅginī shall be equally shared by the Brāhmaṇas as recorded. These are the boundaries: to

27| Choudhury, P.C., HCPA. P. 160
the east lies the dry Kaušikā, to the south-east, that very dry Kaušikā, marked by a hewn fig tree, to the west now the boundary of Gaṅgini, to the north west a potter's pit and the said Gaṅgini bent eastward, to the north a large jātali tree, to the controlling tradesman Khāsoka and the dry Kaušikā. The officer issuing hundred commands is Śrī Gopāla who has received the five great Šabdas. The officers who mark the boundaries are the headman of the Candrapuri (named) śrī-ksikunda, the dispute settler (nayākaranika) Janārdana-svāmin, the controlling officer (vyavahāri) Haradatta and the clerk (kāyastha) Dundhunātha and others. The Master of the treasury is the Mahāsāmanta Divākaraprabha. Tax collector is Dattakāra-pūrṇa. The copper smith (i.e., the maker of the plates) is Kāliyā (lines 126 to 136).

Since after the burning of the plates, these newly written letters are different in form (from the letters of the earlier grant) they are not (to be suspected as) forged (V. 28). K.L. Barua, first of all has taken stand on the river Kaušikā. He identifies Kaušikā (Kauśikī) with modern Kośī in the Purnea district of Bihar 28. That means Bhūtibvarman conquered a part of eastern Purnea from the contemporary Gupta ruler and granted lands to 200 Brāhmaṇas on the bank of the Kaušikā i.e., Kośī obviously to commemorate his victory 29. It appears that the scribe wrote Kaušikā for Kauśikī, the ancient name of river Kośī. Kośī is a river which had several dried

29. I bid.
up channels. Till 19th century these were known as Marā-Kōśī (Marā-dead) or the Buḍhī (ancient) Kośī. K. L. Barua has drawn this information from Dr. Francis Buchanan's Account of Purniya (Purnea). According to Buchanan's report on Purnea, who prepared the report mostly by ethnography in the beginning of the 19th century, the district of Purnea incorporated in itself a much larger area towards the east upto the Karatoya and Rangpur on the northeast (1809-14). This district of Purnea in antiquity was the eastern part of Mithila while the western part was Tirhut (Tirahut) or Tirabhuki. On the other hand, the river Kośī unlike its present straight north-south way into the Ganges, in ancient times, had a big eastward bend before finally falling into the Ganges.

Together with the above mentioned factors K. L. Barua on the basis of the strikingly close racial, linguistic and cultural affinities between Mithila and Kāmarūpa has further opined that the whole of Mithila was under the old kingdom of Kāmarūpa between 6th and the 8th centuries. According to Akbarnama of Abul Fazl, the western boundary of Koch king Naranārāyana's kingdom was Tirhut. K. L. Barua has accepted this contention. But this is not suffice to hold such a bold view as to Kāmarūpa covering the whole of Mithila. This will need further research.

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30] I bid.
31] I bid.
32] I bid. P. 5
33] I bid.
34] I bid.
35] I bid.
However the fact that river Kośī which had many abandoned courses towards the east makes our belief confirmed that the said Kauśikā river having dried up courses towards the east is certainly the modern Kośī river which flows through Purnea. If we accept Buchanan's contention that in remote antiquity Kośī passed towards the east until it joined the Brahmaputra having no communication with the Ganges, then it becomes all the more straight and simple to identify Kośī with Kauśikā. However, the account in the Nidhanpur inscription of the river Kauśikā and the river Gaṅgini and the dried up river beds of Kośī of Buchanan's account - 'Plain of the District of Purniya' are enough to show that Kośī was śuśka (dried up) Kauśikā. Thus, Bhūtivārman conquered, if not the whole of Purnea certainly the eastern part. Now this is also beyond doubt that Bhūtivārman brought Puṇḍravardhana or North Bengal under his control. It is quite likely that this area got incorporated in the Puṇḍravardhana bhūkti.

Several historians like N. K. Bhattasali, J. C. Ghosh and R. G. Bhandarkar hold that Candrapuri-viṣaya belonged to Pañcakhaṇḍa of Sylhet, where the Plates were found, taking the Śuśka-Kauśikā to be a dried up channel of the Kusiarā river which flows through Sylhet. But the learned scholars have not shown properly the ground in the identification of Śuśka-Kauśikā with Kusiarā except the Phonetical similarty which is also not clear.

36 IA A. P. 60.
37 I bid.
However, they say that Gaṅginī of Nidhanpur copperplates was situated in Sylhet itself because in sylhet, rivers are commonly called 'gang' 38.

The Khalimpur inscription of Dharmapāladeva (circa 802 A.D.) and the Tezpur grant of Vanamālavarmadeva help a lot in this regard. The donated land in the Nidhanpur grant is said to have constituted the Mayūrasalamalāgrahara. In the Khalimpur grant, the name of an āgrāhāra is Māḍha-Śālmali which is said to have been within the Pundravardhana bhukti. The close similarity of the two names definitely points to the fact that the two agrāhāras belonged to the same area. Māḍha of the 8th century A. D. is the vulgar form of 'Mayūra of the 6th century A. D. This inscription also mentions a Gaṅginikā as belonging to Pundravardhana just as the Nidhanpur grant has mentioned about a Gaṅginikā as belonging to Candrapuri-Visaya. This location of Mayurasalamalagrahara in Candrapuri Viṣaya tallies well with the location of Candrapuri Viṣaya given in the Tezpur grant of Vanamālavarmadeva of the succeeding Śālastambha dynasty. It has been said that the granted land was situated to the west of Trīṣrota (Teesta) and had Candrapuri as the south eastern boundary. Thus, this area simply falls under Pundravardhana is generally taken to have comprised the modern districts of Dinajpur, Maldah, Rajshahi and western parts of Bogra and Rangpur 39. It is possible that Candrapuri-Viṣaya comprised a

38. I bid.
39. I bid. PP. 61-62
much larger area than the Candrapuri of Vanamala’s time and incorporated in itself a portion of eastern Mithila. All the above discussion are enough to prove that Bhūtivarman extended Prāgjyotisa Kāmarūpa as far as eastern Purnea.

Bhūtivarman conquered a part of modern Purnea as well as a part of Bhutan and Morung (now in Nepal) by 525 A. D. before the invasion of Yaśodharman in 533-534 A. D. According to K. L. Barua this tract was under Prāgjyotiṣa Kāmarūpa till the time of Susthiavarman when Mahāsenagupta invaded Kāmarūpa, defeated the former and occupied the tract to be reoccupied by Bhāskaravarman later on. Otherwise it would not have been possible for Bhāskara to assist a Chinese mission with troops which could not have passed through a hostile territory. But according to him, Sylhet did not form a part of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmrūpa as Sylhet or Srihatta had always been mentioned in ancient works like Hiuen-Tsiaŋ’s account (Silhichatolo), the Yogini-Tantra, and in Sādhanamālā, separated by the Garo, the Khāsi and the Jaintiā hills from the Brahmaputra valley has had no easy communication links with Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. However, he has not denied the probability of Mymensing being a part of ancient Assam, because this area was easily accessible from Guwahati, Kamatāpur or Kochbihar through the river Brahmaputra which flowed through this district till 18th century A. D. P. C. Choudhury, has given

40. SEHA. P. 72-74.
41. Choudhury, P. C., HCPA, P. 151-52
several reasons to establish that Bhūtivarman conquered only upto North Bengal and donated land there. But regarding the probability of conquest of Sylhet by a Kāmarūpa king prior to Bhāskaravarman, he has discussed only one solid factor. An inscription dated 600 A. D. has the expression, 'Śrihaṭṭādhisvarebhyah'. According to him 'The reference is very doubtful'. It is in the prasasti of the temple of Lakhā Ṁandala at Madhā in Jaunsār Bawār. It records the dedication of a temple of ‘Śiva’ (V. 20) by Īśvara, who belonged to the royal race of Simhapura, for the spiritual welfare of her head husband, Śrī Chandragupta, son of a king of Jālandhara. The Prāṣasti in the centre, bears some irregular letters, probably of a later date which seem to read ‘Śrihaṭṭādhisvarebhyah’. The epithet has nothing to do with Sylhet, for both Simhapura and Jālandhara lay in the Punjab. It is likely that it stands for the supreme lord ‘Śiva’ the presiding deity of ‘Śrihatta’, for whom the temple was erected by Īśvaradevi. The name Śrīhatta is derived from Hatakesvara ‘Śiva’ who is said to have been worshipped by the Nāgar Brāhmans who lived originally in the region around Kāśmirā. In any case, finally the expression may best be taken to have a religious imprint, and it has nothing to do with the independent status of Sylhet, during either the reign of Bhūtivarman or that of Bhāskaravarman. At best, this may be taken to imply that traditionally Sylhet was not a part of Prāgjyotisā-Kāmarūpa.

P. C. Choudhury⁴² argues that Bhūtivarman’s conquests in

⁴² I bid.
Pundravardhana can not be placed before the exploits of Yasodharman or earlier than 545-550 A. D. (because in the period between 543-544 A. D. Pundravardhana was ruled by a governor, appointed by a Gupta ruler, Paramabhatṭāraka mahārajādhirāja Prathivipati). Moreover, the later Guptas namely, Krisnagupta, Harṣagupta, Jīvitagupta and Kumāragupta III, (the latter being a contemporary of Iśanvarman (Mankhāri), were ruling between 510-554 A. D. in some parts of Magadha; however, it is doubtful whether Gauḍa constituted a part of their territory. In the Haraha epigraph, Jīvitagupta is said to have come into contact with the 'haughty foes, living in the sea-shore'. And he is said in the Aphaṣad epigraph, to have "Churned that formidable milk ocean, the cause of the attainment of fortune, which was the army of the shining Iśanavarman, a very moon among king". These two instances obviously refer to the fights of these kings with some petty rulers of western and southern Bengal, where independent kingdoms had been founded during the first half of the 6th century A. D. These kings were Dharmadīlya known from Faridpur grant, Gopachandra known from Faridpur grant, Vijayasena known from Mallasarul grant and Samācharadeva but their sway did not reach North Bengal. By giving these arguments P. C. Choudhury has come to the conclusion that before 543-44 A. D., Bhūtivarman did not conquer Pundravardhana. According to him, at best it can be said that either Jīvitagupta or Kunāragupta III came into conflict with Bhūtivarman after the invasion of Yasodharman, but 'it is unlikely

43. Sastri, H. P., EI, XIV, PP. 110f; Cited in HCPA, P. 165.
that Bhūtivarman could make himself the master of Eastern India as did Bhāskara'.

According to K. L. Barua in 525 A. D. Mahābhūtivarman conquered the area of Pundravarshana and Eastern Mithila. But after nearly ten years, he lost it to Yaśodharman of Malwa. Later, after Yaśodharman's departure, he again reoccupied the area. This seems to be a very complicated theory. On the other hand, P. C. Choudhury maintains that Bhūtivarman conquered territories in the Pundravarshana bhuki around 550A. D. Because, Yaśodharman is supposed to have led his expedition to the east in 533-34 and the Apshad inscription proves that in 543-44 A. D. Pundhavarshana was ruled by a Gupta ruler. Then the Bādagaṅga rock inscription, where Bhūtivarman is said to have performed an Asvamedha sacrifice, is dated 553-54 A.D. That is, Bhūtivarman, taking advantage of the departure of Yaśodharman and the decline of the later Guptas, by this time much experienced in politics as well as in warfare, led Kāmarūpa's victorious arms into the northern part of Pundravarshana and there to Eastern Mithila where he is said to have granted a large fertile tract between the dried river Gaṅginikā and the dried Kauśikā to 200 Brāhmaṇas to his utmost mental satisfaction. By this action, he celebrated his victory as well as consolidated his position in the conquered territory. It may be surmised that before this dream-conquest, Bhūtivarman, consolidated his position in the neighbourhood of Prāgjyotisā-
Kāmrūpa as well as in south eastern and south Bengal. In both the Dubi and the Nidhanpur grants, he has been highly praised as a powerful king who might have waged countless fights against all the enemies. In the Haraha epigraph, Jīvtiagupta is said to have fought against some petty rulers ruling near sea shore. Thus, it seems that both the Later Guptas and Bhūtivarman tried to extend their respective territories at the cost of these petty rulers.

Bhūtivarman's grandfather Mahendravarman first brought South-east Bengal as far as to the sea shore under Kāmarūpa's control. No doubt, Bhūtivarman followed his grandfather's expansionist policy and waged numerous fights against 'all his enemies'. It is also a well-known historical fact that the Kāmarūpa rulers had a craze for victories in the west. Thus, in the first half of the 6th century A. D. Bhūtivarman had been waging wars against 'Kings' in Western and Southern Bengal.

Thus, the above discussion on the long reign of Bhūtivarman may be taken to establish the fact that he had done a great job by establishing Kāmarūpa's authority over South-eastern part of Southern and a part of North Bengal and Eastern Mithila. In the foundation laid down by Mahendravarman, he added one more stepping stone for further greatness of the Kingdom of Prāgjyotisha-Kāmrūpa under Bhāskaravarman.
Chandramukhavarman:

Bhūтивarman was followed by Chandramukhavarman. The following verses are attributed to him in the inscriptions-

'This largely mighty lord of the world (i.e., the king, Chandramukhavarman) after having duly caused the wailing of the strong (antagonists), and damage of the pride of his enemies, having conquered the earth with the ocean as her girdle, having performed sacrifices frequently, and gratifying the supplicants with gifts and friends with fortune established his son in the charge of the earth and retired to the same abode as that of Indra. (V. 37. Dubi copperplates) (IAA P. 23)

The Nidhanpur grant simply refers to Chandramukhavarman as a good king who was the son of Vijñānavati and father of Sthitavarman.

It appears that Chandramukhavarman retained Mahābhūтивarman's conquests in the west. After ruling for sometime, he abdicated the throne in favour of his son, Sthitavarman and soon he died.
Sthitavarman:

The Dubi copperplate inscription speaks highly of the personal qualities of Sthita-Sthiti or Sthiravarman but nothing is expressed in it regarding his political activities.

In the Nidhanpur grant, Sthitavarman is referred to only as a 'king of unfathomable nature'. It is mentioned that the "Brāhmaṇa..... performed the unfailing coronation ceremony and also peace gaining auspicious deeds along with the sound of the conch shell and the dundubhidrum and the king enjoyed it all like the lord of the gods. (V 40 Dubi IAA P. 24)

"He was a man of restrain and his feet, red with the rays of the crest jewels of many a prostrating vassal king assumed the beauty of two land-lotuses" (V. 48. Dubi grant. IAA. P. 24) "The illustrious (king) named Śrī Sthiravarman after spending some days in the old city (taśminpūrē) built up a new city on the bank of the holy river (i.e. Brahmaputra) along with the citizens, the servants and also her relatives". (V. 49. Dubi grant IAA. P. 24)
These verses show that Sthitavarman was a man of knowledge and well versed in the Veda. He performed his coronation ceremony according to Vedic rites, the first of its kind in the early history of Kāmarūpa. He constructed a capital city on the bank of the Brahmaputra and he had under him a large number of feudatory rulers, who may have been the rulers of Tripura, Sylhet, Davāka, Cāchār or even of South-east Bengal. The construction of the capital city may mean renovation or extension of the old metropolis of Prāgjyotisapura. The Nālandā clay seal credits him of performing two horse sacrifices, which indicates the growing power and prosperily of the kingdom. It is possible that during the early part of his reign, the feudatories in the eastern fringe of the kingdom and South east Bengal rose in rebellion. But Sthitavarman celebrated his victory over them by the performance of the first Aśvamedha in about A.D. 570. It is also possible that the sons of Ṣanavarman Maukhari and the Later Guptas who were struggling for supremacy in Magadha and probaly in Gauḍa harassed Sthitavarman in north Bengal, when the later tried to extend his power to the frontiers of Bengal and Magadha in about 575-80 A.D. The limits of Kāmarūpa in Puṇḍravardhana were probably kept intact, and the victory of Sthitavarman was celebrated by his performance of the second Aśvamedha by A.D. 580. This victory of Kāmarūpa at the cost of the Later Guptas probably explained the invasion of

44. J Choudhury, P.C., HCPA. P 156.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
Mahāsenagupta during the reign of Sūṣṭhitavarman.\textsuperscript{47} N.K. Bhattasali rightly remarks that the performance of two horse sacrifices by Mahendravarman, one by Bhūtivarman and two others by Sthitavarman indicates the growing prosperity of the ruling family of Kāmarūpa. \textsuperscript{48}

\textbf{Sūṣṭhitavarman and Supratiśṭhitavarman:}

Sūṣṭhitavarman, the son of Sthitavarman, was a learned man as is envisaged from the following verse in the Dubi copperplate inscription- 'He swammed across the large and very deep ocean of the subjects of studies, perturbed by huge currents, having waters in the form of Grammar, Sharks (timi) in the form of polity, alligators in the form of Sāṁkhya, resonant with the chirping of the cranes (Sārasas) in the form of Mīmāṁsā, fanned on all sides by the wind in the form of Logic, full of the series of waves in the form of explanations and covered by the foams in the form of nyāya'. (v 55, Dubi grant, IAA, P. 25).

Although, Sūṣṭhitavarman has been mentioned in the Dubi copperplate inscription as a powerful king, the verses (62-67) are basically attributed to his two intelligent sons- Supratiśṭhitara and Bhāskara who were equally good in warfare. V. 63 says that

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} I.H.Q. XXI, PP. 19 f.
Supratisthita proved himself to be “of awful countenance in the battle-field”. Thus, he joined in the battles even as a prince. The Aphsad stone inscription of Ādityasena (c. 672 A. D.). IAA., Intro. P. 15) says that the fame of Mahāsenagupta arising out of the feat of his defeating Suṣṭhitavarman used to be sung widely on the banks of Brahmaputra. This victory of the Gupta king had a political consequence, for he recovered the whole of the Puṇḍravardhana and the Kāmarūpa boundary was pushed to the Teesa-Karatoya.49 A hint is found in the Nidhanpur copperplate grants about the defeat of Suṣṭhitavarman. It is said that he (Suṣṭhitavarman) “gave away the goddess of royal fortune, like the earth, to supplicant (V.19)”

Most probably, Mahāsenagupta went back with a war booty and a tribute. This Kāmarūpa invasion was followed by another one which took place in Susprasṭhitavarman's time just after Suṣṭhitavarman's death. This invasion was made by king Saśaṅka of Gauḍa.

The verses in the Dubi copperplate inscription reads thus-

"----- of the two sons, endowed with royal qualities, mainfest on this earth through merits one illustrious son was named Aridamanendra who was both good-looking and of awful

49. Choudhury, PC, HCPA. P. 160
countenance in the battlefield and was as amiable as the moon to the friends". (V 63, IAA, P. 26)

"-------- the other illustrious one was named Śri Bhāskaravarman, and both of them were dear to the line of the Varmans" (V 65, IAA. P. 26)

Thus, it is clear that both the princes joined in some war and proved their mettle in the battle field.

Verse 68 in the Dubi copperplate inscription:

"The father having disappeared in other world (i.e. heaven) for mingling up with the person of Indra, and the army of the Gauḍas, very powerful in the water having gradually arrived, the two sons, though they were only in their youth, but yet endowed with the growth of a large and challenging valour, appeared on the spot with all ease, even with a handful of soldiers like Bala (i.e. Balarāma) and Acyuta (i.e. Kṛṣṇa)" (IAA., P. 27).

It seems that Suśhitavarman died shortly after the war, in which his two sons joined themselves actively, or in that case after Mahāsenagupta's invasion. Inspite of his failure to recover the lost
possessions of Kāmarūpa in Bengal he built a prosperous capital and increased the military strength of the kingdom.⁵⁰

Śaśānka's Invasion of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa:

A period of political instability also began in Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa following Mahāsenagupta's invasion. This invasion was followed by Susthitavarman's death. And taking this very opportunity, a formidable enemy, named Śaśānka brought here the Gauda army, no doubt, to saturate his thirst for territories. The new and the youthful king Supratiṣṭhita did not get the required time and resources to prevent the advancing army. Verse 69 in the said inscription reads thus: "Then having arrived at the battlefield like those two (i.e. Bala and Acyuta) in the battle of Bāna-Asura, the two brothers endowed with vanity and unconquerable strength of the army, Pierced elegantly the foreheads of a large number of very mighty elephants, belonging to the Gauḍas, who also killed a number of their own enemies, in the manner of (Kārttikeya) Piercing the Krauṇca hill, with arrows as sharp as the bolt of Indra and drawn as far as their ears." (IAAP. 27)

Thus, the two young sons of late Suṣṭhitavarman for the sake of their motherland jumped into the battlefield. They used various

⁵⁰. Choudhury. P.C.,HCPA PP. 161-63
types of weapons like arrows, śaktis, wheels, prāsas and swords. But unfortunately, ultimately they were taken as prisoners to Gauḍa. (V 70-71, Dubi Charter). It is stated that after sometime, both Supratiśṭhita and Bhāskara were sent back to their country. According to Dubi grant it was because of their good conduct, they were set free.

Soon after being set free, Supratiśṭhita died most probably due to certain illness. Then, as is inscribed in the Dubi grant, the mantle fell on the younger prince Bhāskaravarman who was like 'the Sun (Bhāskara) possessed of huge lustre'. (V 72, IAA P. 27)

**Bhāskaravarman**: Bhāskaravarman was the last known king of the Varman dynasty. The aforesaid passage about his father Suṣṭhitavarman makes it clear that Bhāskaravarman ascended the throne at an uneasy time. The accession of Bhāskaravarman on the throne forms a brilliant chapter in the history of early Assam.

The loss of Puṇḍravardhana resulting out of Kāmarūpa's defeat at the hands of Mahāsenagupta greatly marred the political and military glory of the kingdom. That the battle cost the life of his father might have been a matter of concern to Bhāskara. With his
youthful energy and vast military resources, Bhāskara could not tolerate the gradual rise into prominence of Śaśāṅka, the king of Gauḍa. On the other hand after ascending the throne of Thaneswara and Kanauj Harṣavardhana took a vow to destroy Śaśāṅka and marched to Gauḍa. On his way he met the messenger of Bhāskaravarman, Haṃsabega and concluded an alliance with this king from the east obviously against their common enemy Śaśāṅka.

Thus was formed an offensive and defensive alliance between two independent monarchs of northern and eastern India. The new alliance proved to be a source of concern to the Gauḍa king, for while Harśa's cousin and general Bhandi attacked him from the west, Bhāskara fell upon him from the east. It appears that unable to face this two-fold attack, Śaśāṅka fled to the south and consequently Gauḍa with its capital city Karṇasuvārṇa came to the possession of Bhāskara. To celebrate the occasion, Bhāskara issued from his victorious camp at Karṇasuvārṇa the famous Nidhanpur grants reconfirming the land-grants made by Bhūtivarman in Pundravardhana.

D. C. Sircar takes Bhāskaravarman's presence in Karṇasuvārṇa definitely to be a direct result of an invasion probably

51. HC tr. P. 216-233.
52. Barua, K. L., EHK P. 44
led jointly by him and Śrī Harśa sometime after Šaśāṅka's death. P. N. Bhattacharya, too, thought on the same line that it was a joint victory and Bhāskara did not rule over Karṇasuvarṇa, but to celebrate the victory, he immediately (606 A. D.) issued that charter, it was Harśa who actually got hold over it. R. C. Majumdar, too, says "It would have been highly impolitic on the part of Bhāskaravarman to issue a formal royal edict from a place which belonged not to him but to a mighty king like Harśa. Under these circumstances, it seems to resonable to hold that Bhāskaravarman invaded Šaśāṅka's terrtory all alone. The news of the advance of Harśa's army under Bhandi towards the east to punish Šaśāṅka might have contributed a lot in his defeat against Bhāskaravarman.

This magnificent victory over Šaśāṅka raised Bhāskara's position to a new height. He retained his conquests until his death. The importance of this victory is well reflected in the Nidhanpur charter even though it was connected with the granting of land-
"Let there be welfare to all. (This charter is issued) from the (royal) residence of Karṇasuvarṇa, the royal palace (Skandhāvana = Capital city) which was acquired (upātta) proerity in respect of the meaning (anavartha) of the word 'Victory' (Jaya prefixed to it), owing to the possession of splendid ships, elephants, horses and foot-soldiers' (lines 2-3, IAA, P. 50). Thus this victory was connected with

54. KŚ, PP. 5, 9f.
55. History of Bengal- P. 78.
Bhāskara's possessing of splendid ships, elephants, horses and foot-soldiers. By this victory, Bhāskaravarman gave a permanent shape to Bhūtivarman's conquest and avenged his own defeat at the hands of Śaśāṅka.

Bhāskaravarman conquered Karnasavarṇa and from there he issued a land charter in the district of Chandrapuri, situated in Eastern Purnea. Thus Puṇḍravardhana came under his direct control. In the Ārya-Mañjusrī-mūlakalpa, Puṇḍra is described as Śaśāṅkas capital\(^{56}\) against which Harṣavardhana waged war with the latter. It appears that this work referred to Harṣa's early campaign against Śaśāṅka when Bhāskara, too, from the eastern direction attacked Gauda. And actually it was Bhāskaravarman's army which marched against Puṇḍra, situated adjacent to Kāmarūpa's traditional boundary.

Bhāskara's occupation of both Karnasuvarna and Puṇḍravardhana is proved by his Nidhanpur grant. The areas of South-east Bengal, including Sylhet, Tripura and parts of Samatat were included in the kingdom of Bhāskara as stated by J.C. Ghosh,\(^{57}\) Bhattasali \(^{58}\), A.C. Chaudhury\(^{59}\) and others on the basis of the discovery of the Nidhanpur grant; while P.N. Bhattacharya \(^{60}\), K.L.

\(^{56}\) Ibid.
\(^{57}\) I.H.Q., VI, PP. 60-71
\(^{58}\) JASB, I, PP. 419-27
\(^{59}\) Srīhatter Itivṛtta IV. P. 74
\(^{60}\) KŚ. Intro. P. 17
Barua\textsuperscript{61} and others state that Sylhet lay outside Kāmarūpa. South­
east Bengal including Sylhet, Tripura, parts of Dacca, Mymensing and other regions were already under Bhūtivarman.\textsuperscript{62} The Tippera grant of the feudatory chief, Lokanatha, throws a new light on Bhāskara’s sway over Sylhet and Tripura.\textsuperscript{63} Bhāskara’s political sway was over these regions is testified by Hiuen-Tsian\textsuperscript{64}. The Nidhanpur grant also mentions a number of his feudatories. He vanquished hundreds of kings in battle, who spoke in praise of him\textsuperscript{65}.

The clay seal of Bhāskaravarman, discovered at Nālandā, provide further historical material about the boundary of Kāmarūpa, which reached even beyond Bengal.\textsuperscript{66} D.C. Sircar suggests that, after the death of his powerful friend Harṣa, Bhāskaravarman occupied parts of Bengal and Bihar, and that the seals belonged to the period of Kāmarūpa occupation of Nālandā. But the suggestion regarding the occupation of Bihar in 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 Bhāskaravarmans stay in south Bihar in the year 643 A.D.\textsuperscript{67}. K.L. Barua thinks that both Harṣa and Bhāskara, on their march from Rajmahal to Kanauj, visited Nālandā together with Hiuen-

\begin{itemize}
\item Barua, K.L., EH\textcopyright K. P. 59
\item Bhattasali, JASB, I, PP. 419-27
\item Choudhury P.C., HCPA. PP. 177-78
\item Life, Intro. PP. XVI-XVII
\item EI”, XII, P. 78
\item Choudhury, P.C., HCPA P. 179
\item Sircar, D.C., I.H.Q., XIX, PP. 272-81
\end{itemize}
Tsiang, and to commemorate their visit, left their respective seals there.\textsuperscript{68} N.N. Dasgupta states that when Bhāskara “extended his conquestes upto Nālandā region-the discovery of his seal at Nālandā is not an accidental phenomenon.”\textsuperscript{69} P.C. Choudhury supposes that Bhāskara’s kingdom included the whole of Assam, great portions of Bengal and some portions of Bihar or atleast the Nālandā region.\textsuperscript{70} 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-Tsiang.\textsuperscript{71} The discovery of seals at Nālandā does not prove that Nālandā was under Bhāskara’s sway.\textsuperscript{72} Dr. Spooner\textsuperscript{73} has brought to light seals of three different dynasties discovered at Nālandā.

According to Hiuen-Tsiang the kingdom was “more than a myriad li in circuit and its capital about thirty li.”\textsuperscript{74} “To the east of Kāmarūpa the country was a series of nills and hillocks without any principal city, and in reached the south-west barbarians (of China)”. “The pilgrim learned from the people (of Kāmarūpa) that the south-west Sjuchuan were distant about two months journey. In the south east of the country were wild elephants which ranged

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{68} Barua, K.L.,EHK. P. 65
\item \textsuperscript{69} Cited in HCPA P. 179
\item \textsuperscript{70} Choudhury, P.C.,HCPA. PP. 179-82
\item \textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{72} Choudhury, N.P., Hiuen-Tsiang PP. 81-82 (f.n.)
\item \textsuperscript{73} Banerji, R.D., JBORS, V, PP. 302-4
\item \textsuperscript{74} Watters, II. P. 186
\end{itemize}
in herds." 75 From Pundravardhan, the pilgrim travelled east above 900 lee, crossed a large river, and came to Ka-mo-lu-po (Kāmarūpā). The large river, which in the Tang-shu is known as Kolotu, is identified with the Brahmaputra by Watters.76 Cunningham identifies it with the Teesta. The capital is identified with Guwahati, and the river with Karatoypā.78 On the other hand the Chinese accounts have described Bhāskaravarman as the king of Eastern India. Again, Hiuen-Tsiang remarks that the rulers of Kāmarūpā had the sea-route to China under their protection79. This was the region, which had been conquered by the Varman rulers several times, first by Mahandravarman and then by Bhūtivarman. Bhāskaravarman who also had the mission of reconquering his forefather's conquests must have also dealt with Samatata. It is quite likely that the Brāhmaṇical royal family of Samatata acknowledged Bhāskara's overlordship. That is the reason why Harṣavarman never felt the need to march either against Pundra or Samatata. Thus, it can be said that the epithet 'King of Eastern India' as applied to him by the Chinese sources, is not without any significance. He was the king who had control over North-East India, North Bengal, South-East Bengal and a part of Bihar. The account of Hiuen-Tsiang testifies that on the east of his kingdom touched the borders of China and Burma.80 In any case, it was larger than the Kāmarūpā defined in the Yoginitantra as extended from the Karatoypā to the Dikkaravāsini.

75] Ibid.
76] Ibid PP. 185-87.
77| Ancient Geography of India, PP. 572-73
78| Majumdar, S.N., Cunninghams Ancient Geography of India, PP. 572-73
80. Choudhury, P.C.;HCPA. P. 198
CHAPTER III

Section - B

KINGS OF ŚĀLASTAMBHA DYNASTY

Bhāskaravarman perhaps died a celibate because no successor to him was mentioned in any inscription or literature. We do not get any reference to his wife or his marriage from Harṣacarita or the accounts left by Hiuen-Tsiang or any of the contemporary records. It also appears that disorder and chaos emerged shortly after Bhāskaravarman's death, and taking the advantage of the anarchism, the kingdom of Kāmarūpa was usurped by Śālastambha, who founded a new line of kings in Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa. A valuable information has been given in the Bargāon copperplate inscription of Ratnapāla. "Thus, as a course of destiny, the kingdom, ruled by the kings of the family of Naraka in succession, has been occupied by mlecchas. In his (i.e., Śālastambhas) line also there were famous kings like Vigrahastambha numbering two times ten" (i.e. twenty) (V.9, IAA. P. 161). Verse 10 also is worth quoting in this connection: "When the twenty first king of that line, named Tyāgasimha, retired to heaven without an heir, his subject, thinking 'once again a king of the Bhauma dynasty (i.e. of the family of Naraka) would be more suitable for us" nominated "Śri Brahma pāla capable of shouldering the burden of the world,' as the king, because of his relationship (with the family of Naraka)" (IAA, P. 161). Thus Śālastambha has been remembered by a king of posterity belonging to a different dynasty, and that too, after 200 years.
Śālastambha has been called the "Lord of the Mlechchas". The term Mlechcha generally denotes the Non-Aryans, while the name 'Śālastambha' indicated clearly that this Non-Aryan chief belonged to an Aryanised tribe. It seems that this chieftain or his predecessors were under the suzerainty of the Varmans.

Popularity of Naraka's legend, like the Varmans, also tempted the Śālastambhas to link their dynasty with this epic hero who was invariably connected with this land. It seems that all the three Kāmarūpa ruling dynasties racially belonged to the same branch. If the Pālas had racially belonged to a different branch, they certainly would have traced their origin from other source. The Hāyunthal grant clearly designates the Śālastambhas as Mlechcha and simultaneously also connects them with Bhagadatta as his scions.

It is an important question that, how and when Śālastambha founded a new dynasty in Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. K. L. Barua, imagines of a Mech or Mlechcha revolt which had placed its leader Śālastambha on the throne on the death of Bhāskaravarman and, in doing so identifies Avantivarman of Visākhadatta's Mūdrarākṣasa with Bhāskara's immediate successor ¹. He has taken Śālastambha to be the governor of a supposed Mech Country ². On the other hand P. C. Choudhury, though concludes that Mūdrarākṣasa's

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². Ibid.
Avantivarman was the Devavarman of I-Tsing's account and that Devavarman was a relative of Bhāskara or belonged at least to a collateral branch of the Varman family who had been ruling in the Nālandā region as a governor of Bhāskaravarman, rules out that Śālastambha's becoming the king of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa was the result of a Mech revolt. Because, the word 'Mlechcha' does not essentially denote a tribe called Mech. On the basis of the evidence of I-Tsing, Choudhury puts him in the Nālandā region as its ruler allied to the Varmans or a governor of that area appointed by Bhāskaravarman. Even though Mudrārākṣasa indirectly points out that Avantivarman was a Kāmarūpa ruler through the mention of the expression Varaha incarnation of Viṣṇu, Choudhury takes Devavarman to be a Varman ruler on the basis of the similarity of the surname 'Varman' and has concluded that Avantivarman who was initially in the Nālandā region, after Bhāskara's death came to Kāmarūpa and ascended the throne as Bhāskara didn't have a direct heir to succeed him. P. C. Choudhury again identifies Śālastambha with Mādhava of Hara-Gauri-Saṅhvada, a 18th century local literary work. Mādhava is described as having come from the west. Thus Śālastambha, alias Devavarman alias Avantivarman, alias Mādhava was not an usurper but the immediate successor of Bhāskaravarman. N.N. Vasu takes Śālastambha to be the founder of a new dynasty.

3. Choudhury. P.C. HCPA, PP. 194
4. I bid.
5. I bid.
6. I bid.
7. I bid.
8. I bid.
who, too claimed descent from Bhagadatta. D.C. Sircar describes Śālāstambha as an aboriginal chief founded a new dynasty named Mlechcha dynasty.

Besides Ratnapāla's grant, Śālāstambha has been mentioned in the inscriptions left behind by his three illustrious successors, namely Harijjaravarman, Vanamālavarmadeva and Balavarman III.

"All are powerful and high-spirited (v-1) Oh! pārthiva, your future descendants will, for this reason, be called mlecchas. (v-2)..... of king Bhagadatta....... After this Śālāstambha, the killer of enemies, became the ruler of the earth (v-3). After the tiger-like king retired to the heaven, his very strong son Vjaya......." (v-4) (Hāyunthal copperplate. Inscription. 1 AA, P. 91).

In Uttarbarbil grant, Śālāstambha is said to have ascended the throne after a number of kings of Vajradatta's family (v-9, 1AA. P. 133).

In all these grants, Śālāstambha has been praised as the great founder of this dynasty. He has been called a scion of the legendary Bhauma family of the Naraka-Bhagadatta-Vajradatta. Another

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9 Vasu. N.N., SHK. P. 155.
10 TCHA. Vol. 1. P. 124
common thing is that he has been praised as a great conqueror and an able ruler. Śālastambha carried on the old policy of extension of the frontiers of Kāmarūpa in the west. The possessions of Bhāskaravarman in the Nālandā region were inherited by him. The account of I-Tsing (672-73) leaves us in no doubt regarding the occupation of the Nālandā region by Devavarman alias Śālastambha. There are other genuine data on record to show that his successors, particularly Harṣadeva could retain their hold not only over North-Bengal but also in the west as far as Magadha. It appears certain therefore that Avantivarman or Śālastambha retained the eastern part of Magadha with perhaps the whole of Northern Bengal including Sylhet and some portions of South-east Bengal.12

One significant aspect is that Śālastambha and his descendents are credited with having the lordship over Uparipaṭṭana which they had got from their progenitor Vajradatta. It is said that Vajradatta got the right over 'Uparipaṭṭana' from Lord Śiva as a king of boon so that his progeny could rule this place and Prāgjyotiṣa in future. Uparipaṭṭana is identified with the hilly regions (Upari-Upar = above) lying on the northern (upari) boundary of Kāmarūpa, however, its literary meaning is "the other town above" or it can be said that its meaning is the other town. This place may also be said to have situated in an area lying outside the traditional boundaries of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa (Upari : extra or additional). Thus,

11. Choudhury, P. C., HCPA. P. 195
12. I bid P. 196.
Salastambha seems to have ruled over Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa proper
and as the Salastambha capital was at Haḍappesvara (modern Tezpur),
this area was under the control of Ślāstambha. Evidently
Salastambha may be said to have hailed from Tezpur region. It is
possible that 'Uparipattana' was identical with Haḍappesvara. That
is, Haḍappesvara was the other biggest city of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa
besides Prāgjyotiṣapura, the old capital.

Vijaya and his successors:

The Hayunthal grant describes Vijaya, the second king to
ascend the Salastambha throne as the 'very strong son vijaya, who
subdued the enemies, became a great king of the earth' (v-4, 1AA.
p. 91)

The charters of Vanamalavarmadeva do not mention about
Vijaya. The grant of Balavarman III has a reference to this king, in
a casual manner.

"After the demise of several kings of his (Śalastambha) family
like Pālaka and Vijaya, there appeared on earth a moon amongst
the kings named Harijara, a veritable menace to his enemies" (v 10,
Uttarbarbil and Nowgong grants, 1AA, P. 134). Ratnapāla's Bargaon

13 Choudhury P.C., HCPA. P. 194.
grant has the following lines:

"Thus, as a course of destiny, the kingdom, ruled by the kings of the family of Naraka, in succession has been occupied by Śālastambha, the Lord of the mlecchas. In his (Śālastambha) line also there were famous kings like Vīgrahastambha numbering two times ten" (v 9, 1 AA, P. 161).

This line doesn't specifically suggest Vījaya as the 'famous' king although it is possible that Vīgrahastambha was Vījaya only. We may presume that the epithet 'Stambha' (pillar) suffixed to the name of the king was a fashion among the mlechchas in the 7th-8th centuries. King Vījaya might have taken another name 'Vīgrahastambha' (the pillar of war) indicates 'Vījaya' or victory only. It appears that the Śalāstambhas started using the title 'Varman' or 'Varmadeva' only lately from the time of Sri Hārṣavarmadeva. This shows that the Varmans and the Śalāstambhas were two different families. On the other hand, the names of even the earlier Śalāstambha rulers like Vīgrahstambha or Vījaya and Pālaka, suggest their amalgamation with the Aryan culture. The Hāyunthal copperplate grant also records the three successors of Vījaya, namely Pālaka, Kumāra and Vajradeva, who "became kings and disappeared in succession" (v-5, 1 AA. P. 92). We donot 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 14.

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

"Śri 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."

This Kumāra is identified with the Kumāra mentioned in the inscription of Harjjarā 15. Shortly after Kumāra’s reign Pundravardhana, which was occupied by Bhāskaravarman, was lost 16. But unfortunately no detailed records are found.

This casual reference to these three kings and the absence of their names in the other grants indicate that they ruled more or less peacefully, no major event occurred in this period.

15. Ibid.
Śrī Harṣa or Harṣavarmadeva:

Śrī Harṣa or Harṣavarmadeva ascended the Śālastambha throne after Vajradeva whose reign forms another glorious chapter in the history of Kāmarūpa. This king has been called Harṣavarmadeva in the Hāyunthal copperplate inscription of Harijjaravarman and Śrī Harṣa or Harṣa in the Tezpur and Parbatiyā copperplates of Vanamālavarmanadeva. He was a prominent ruler which is clear from this line in the Hāyunthal inscription.

"The virtuous and highly qualified king, who became famous........ with his own children and never oppressed them", (v-6,1AA. P. 92). The term 'virtuous' and 'highly qualified' definitely means that Harāṣavarmadeva mastered himself both in military and administrative aspects that he was a famous king. That is, he was quite a familiar name in other parts of India. This line gives weight in the identification of Śrī Harṣadeva of the Paśupatinath temple inscription of Jayadeva II of Nepal, dated 748 A.D. and Śrī Harṣa of Saṅgad inscription of Rāstrakuta king Dantidūrga (S.E. 674 = 752 A.D.) 17 with Harṣavarmadeva, the Śālastambha king.

The Paśupatinath temple inscription of the Nepal King Jayadeva II states thus:..... "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 (Bhagadatta rājakulājā) and daughter of Śri-Harṣadeva, Lord of Gauḍa, Odra, Kaliṅga, Kośala and other lands, who crushed the heads of hostile kings with the club like tusks of his ruling elephants" 18. Though in this passage Śri Harṣadeva has not been described as the king of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, from the chronological point of view it is quite clear that he was the king of Prāgjyotiṣa only.

Bhāskaravarman had already built the platform of an aggressive Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, and it was Harṣavarmadeva who approximately within ninety years of Bhāskaravarman's death once again showed Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa's ambitious aggressive designs to the contemporary Indian Staes. He had a role model in Bhāskaravarman, and must have used North Bengal as the base for his operations in North-Central India. Due to want of any dated record, we can not say conclusively that North Bengal was under the control of the earlier Śālastambha rulers. It seems, Harṣavarmadeva tried to revive the lost glory of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa by conquering territories in North India. He won over the rulers of Gauḍa, Odra, Kaliṅga, Kośal and also some other lands. This was the highest peak of military glory of ancient Assam, when its arms extended its sway to, besides Gauḍa, a great part of orissa, part of Magadha and the northern part of the Madras state (Present Tamil Nadu), including

South Kośala. Even though for a brief period, Kāmarūpa did become "the suzerain power over nearly half of northern India from Sadiyā in the east to Ayodhya in the west and from Himalayas on the north as far as the Bay of Bengal and Ganjam to the South". Unfortunately, he had to cut short his ambitious military project as very soon he was defeated by Kirtivarman, the Western Chālukya king. P.C. Choudhury opines that it happened before 748 A.D., the date of Paśupatinath temple inscription. But in the Samgad inscription dated 752 A.D. stated that Dantidurga overcame the powerful army of Kirtivarman II of Badami which had been expert in defeating "the Lord of Kāñci, the king of Kerala, the Cholas, the Pāṇḍyas, Śri Harṣa and Vajrata". Kirtivarman II succeeded Vikramaditya II whose viceroy Avanijanāśraya Pulakesiraja of Lāṭa, the northern most province of the Chālukyas, had earned the credit of saving South India from falling into the grip of the Arabs in 725 A.D. Thus, this may be held that Kirtivarman II ruled sometime in the middle of 8th century A.D. Now it is clear that this Chālukya king was a contemporary of Harṣavarmadeva. In this regard one more thing to be taken into consideration is that in 752 A.D., Śri Harṣa has been placed above the rulers of Kāñchi, Kerala, the Cholas and the Pāṇḍyas as the names of these rulers are not mentioned in the said inscription. On the other hand, it appears that Śri Harṣa was a famous personality having control over a number of States and

19. Ibid. P. 215
20. Ibid. P. 220
21. IA, I. 1882, P. 114
that is why the scribes of both the Pašupatinath temple and the Saṅgad inscriptions had not deemed it necessary to mention his paternal kingdom. So it may be presumed that, Haṛṣavarmadeva, although conquered a number of important states in his expedition, he faced defeat at the hands of the Chālukya prince, Kirtivarman II between 748 A.D. and 752 A.D. and soon after this defeat the conquered territories raised themselves up against Prāgjyotiśa-Kāmarūpa's suzerainty and regained their independence. However, no State dared to invade Kāmarūpa even after Haṛṣavarmadeva lost his conquered territories, Haṛṣavarmadeva died as a great ruler as it is evident from the above mentioned inscription.

It may be also be explained that as Haṛṣavarmadeva lost his conquests within a short span of time, the scribes of Prāgjyotiśa-Kāmarūpa of later years did not name the conquered territories, they have simply projected Haṛṣavarmadeva as a great ruler having expertise in both warfare and administration. That he was a great administrator is proved by the fact that even after his loss in his ambitious expedition, he had managed the administration of his State well and left behind him a well organised and powerful state for his son Balavarman II. Considering chronology of the contemporary events and the date of the Tezpur Rock Inscription of Harjjaravarman (510 Gupta Era = 829/830 A.D) 23, it can be presumed that approximately he ruled for some forty years from 730-770 A.D.

Balavarman II and his successors:

Harṣavarmadeva's son and successor Balavarman II has been mentioned only in the Hayunthal grant of Harjjaravarman. The Hayunthal grant states thus: "When this monarch (Harṣavarma) ascended the Heavens, his powerful son Balavarman became the king, but he also had to be subject to death" (V-7, IAA, P. 92). From this single line, it is too difficult to draw the life-sketch of Balavarman II. The absence of his name in the other inscriptions and this little information may motivate us to draw one conclusion that he was the worthy successor of Harṣavarmadeva, but ruled for a year or so. It seems that he had to bow down before death, due to some disease, or it is also possible that as Harṣavarmadeva ruled for a long period, he (Balavarman II) ascended the throne at an advanced age and soon he died due to old age. However, he left behind him a secured state to his progeny though he had ruled for a very short period.

The Hayunthal grant speaks of two unworthy Śālastambha scions by the name of Cakra and Arathī in v-8 after writing about Balavarman II in v-7. Verse 8 reads thus: "Alas! in that family, which was as white (i.e. pure and famous) as the lily, the moon and milk, there were born two princes, named Cakra and Arathī, who were both ill-tempered and who were skilled in the act of disrespecting the words of their preceptors. The sovereignty was
therefore, exercised by the son of the younger brother." (1 AA P. 92).

Thus according to this source Cakra and Arathi who seem to be the direct heirs to the throne were not given the right to rule because of their sheer misdeeds. Instead, the son of the younger brother (Arathi) was made the king. The next two verses (vv 9-10, 1AA p. 92) have vehemently praised one lady, named Jivadevi. In the verse 11 it has been declared that she (Jivadevi) gave birth to Śri Harijara, "the would be king of the world, who was pleasant looking and powerful like a lion" in the same way as Kuntī and Subhadra, gave birth to Yudhiṣṭhira and Abhimanyu, respectively. The next three verses (vv 12, 13, 14) describe the illustrious career of Śri Harijara.

Thus, a study of the Ḥayutahal copper plate inscription indicates that after Balavarman II, the throne was offered to Śri Harijara who appears to be the son of Jivadevi and Arathi. But according to D.C. Sircar, and others, the above mentioned son of Arathi was one Prālambha, about whom the 'Tezpur and the Parbatīya copper plates of Vanamālavarmanadeva have referred to.
The Tezpur copper plates reads thus:

"In his (Bhagadatta) family there occurred a king with the wonderful name Prālambha, who was the slayer of the heroes of the enemy force and whose foot-stool used to be illuminated by the rays of the head-jewels of the (defeated) kings." (I AA. P. 101) (V.7. Tezpur copperplates).

"He used to delight the ends of the quarters with good qualities like his predecessor kings beginning with Śālastambha and ending with Śrī-Harṣa." (V. 8 Tezpur copperplates) (IAA, p. 101).

"Aratha, the brother of this king, who was supreme amongst all kings by virtue of being matchless in respect of valour and spirit of sacrifice, who having an occasion to face the enemies, all alone, retired to the heaven like a hero. (I AA. P. 101) (V.9. Tezpur copperplates).

The Parbatiya copper plates reads thus:

"In his (Vajradatta) family was born a king of Prāgjyotiṣa, with the majestic name Sālamba, who destroyed the warriors of the enemy side and whose foot-stool used to shine with the lustre
of the jewels in the heads crests of the kings." (v.7. IAA P. 121).

"Now there become a king named Arathī, unparalleled in valour and magnanimity, who proved an warrior for many an enemy and who was the brother of the king (i.e. Śālambha) who was rich with the line of kings (i.e. with the lineage of his predecessors beginning with Śālastambha and ending with Śri Harṣa, who have coloured (i.e. brightened) all the quarters upto their boundaries with their own rāga (colour of love) for the whole host of the good kings of the past" (vv 8-9, I AA p. 121)

Thus, the Hāyunthal grant places a powerful king named Balavarman on the Śālastambha throne at the death of Harṣavarmadeva, whereas, the two gants of Vanamāla places one powerful king with the wonderful majestic name Prālambha or Śālambha on the throne after Harṣavarmadeva. On the other hand according to the Hāyunthal grant, sovereignty was bestowed upon Harjjara instead of Cakra and Arathi. But the grants of Vanamāla, have placed two brothers i.e. Prālambha or Śālambha and Arathi successively on the throne after Harṣa's death. They have also stated that after Arathī's death in the battle field, his son Harjjara ascended the throne. Thus we have seen that the informations left behind by Harjjjaravarman and those of Vanamālavarmadeva do not seem to tally with each other.
The next important king of the dynasty was Prālambha, the son of Arathī, 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 Āl̥lastambha ended with Śri Harṣa, which does not seem to be correct. The Bargāon grant (V. 10) conclusively proves that all the twenty one rulers of the family of Āl̥lastambha belonged to the same line. Again the Nowgaon grant of Balavarman (V. 9/10) further proves that Harjjara (a successor of Prālambha) belonged to the line of Āl̥lastambha. Both the grants of Vanamāla refer to his war-like activities. He was the mighty lord of Prāgjyotiṣa, the destroyer of all enemy heroes and was the possessor of the good qualities of his predecessors (Parbatiyā plates V. 7/8). It is probable that Prālambha tried to revive the lost prestige of the kingdom and succeeded in establishing a comparatively peaceful reign after some of his weak predecessors. Prālambha's wife was named Jivadevi or Jivada. Prālambha was succeeded by Harjjaravarman. In the Hayunthal grant also Cakra and Arathi have been criticised because of their 'sheer misdeeds.' They were certainly not the persons who would abide by that decision without any opposition. However all the three aforesaid inscriptions agree with each other that Śri Harjjara was the son of Jivadevi, a chaste lady.
Harjjjaravarman:

Harjjjaravarman ascended the throne by the last decade of the 8th century A.D. or the first decade of the 9th century A.D. Both the Ḥāyunthal copper plate and the Tezpur Rock inscription of Harjjara's time have established that Harjjara was a king of great repute. In addition, the Tezpur and the Parbatīyā copper plates of Vanamālavārman have given quite a vivid and straight cut description of Harjjjaravarman's personality and career.

The Tezpur copper plates states thus: "He (Arathi) had a son from her, named Harjjara who was a king of kings (i.e., nṛpendra), whose feet used to be worshipped by the heads of the kings and who used to be embraced by Lakṣmi herself." (v. 11, I AA p. 102). "He was a Yudhiṣṭhira in the discussions on dharmma; a Bhīma amongst the enemies, a Jīśu (i.e., Arjuna) in the battlefield. Even being one, he was thus associated with many and he thoroughly attained the status of a man of polity" (v-12, I AA. p. 102)

"This king has all the qualities of my husband, Cakrapāṇi (Viṣṇu)......" (v-14, I AA P. 102). "Lakṣmī having the chief queen of the king, being fully agreeable to his mental make-up and being the best amongst the women with the names Śri mattārā" (v-15, I AA. P. 102)
"This king, the stool for the resting of whose lotusfeet used to be rubbed by the crests of all the (subordinate) kings, had from this queen a son illustrious like the moon, a king being famed with the name Vanamāla." ............ (v-16, I AA, P. 102)

The Parbatiya plates state thus: "That king had a son born to her (i.e. to Jivadevi); he was the greatest of kings, Śri Harjjara, whose two feet used to be adorned by heads of the kings, and who was embraced by Śri (i.e., the goddess of fortune) out of her own accord" (v 11, I AA, P. 121) "He was (identical with Yudhiṣṭhira in religious discourses, and with Bhīma to the host of enemies and (with) Jīṣṇu (in the battle-field). Thus, even being one, he gained identity with all the sons of Kuntī by virtue of several good qualities as stated above." (v 12, I AA, P. 121) Both the grants of Vanamālavarmadeva thus highly speak of Harjjaravarman. The most noticeable fact of these descriptions is that he has been praised not only as a valorous king but also as a subject loving good administrator and a diplomat. That is why, he has been compared to Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and Arjuna all at a time in their respective fields of efficiency- exactly a man of polity. Again this has been clearly stated that king Harjjaravarman had a whole host of subordinate kings whose crowns used to have friction with the 'lotus-feet' of this king. He has been, described as 'greatest of kings' whom 'Śrī', the goddess of fortune embraced of her own accord.
The Häyunthal grant provides a solid information regarding the powers of Harjjaravarman. It states, "The kings anxious to conquer territories, having fought against one another in sub-mountain tracts, accepted him as the mediator"... (v 12, I AA P. 92)

These kings were obviously the tribal chiefs ruling over the hilly tracts in the North-eastern side of the Brahmaputra valley.

The Tezpur rock inscription presents a royal order directing rowing of boats in the mighty river Brahmaputra.

"Om : Let there be welfare to all. A straight dispute has been presented on a day when Śri Sucitta the great feudatory king and chief of the army staff, was on the chair of the judge (for judgement in the court) of the prospering victorious kingdom of Mahārajadhīraja parameśvara paramabhaṭṭāraka paramamaheśvara Śri Harjjaravarmadeva, who has the pride of the valour of the powers of his own army who is stationed in the city of Hadappaśvara (line 1-4, I AA, P. 85)

"The fisherman Naukuksi, Svabhakṣasādhani, Naurajja, the owner of (the place named) Nākkajosa, (etc, on one side) and Sāvarni, Śri Chitragharadatta, Bhaṭṭajiu, Dinajī, Lāhilijhā and Dalākavavā of the southern direction (i.e., southern bank of river)....
These army officials, the feudatory Śilakuṭṭakavaleya, Somadeva, the son of Śahkarabhaṭṭa of the family of Pañcakula and others (on the other hand were involved in the dispute in respect of a right to use the water-ways) (lines 4-7)

"This Charter determines the boundaries as follows: 

In the east the region of the hill is called Salilakṣārabhakṣa and in the west Nākkajosa. In between these two boundaries there lies the water passage for free rowing of boats. Five buṭṭikās should be realised (as a fine or as a tax) from him who would make any movement (i.e., would row the boat) outside this water area specified for rowing (of the civilians)" (line 7-9), IAA, P. 85)

This is the only instance of royal order inscribed on a rock or any other material which has come to light. Regarding the importance of this source, we may quote M.M. Sharma: "engraving of a royal order on a rock just by the side of the river Brahmaputra publicly further warrants the conjecture that the inscription was of the nature of a public notice in respect of a toll-tax or prohibition relation to the movement of civilian boats. This was possibly necessitated by the strategic situation of the capital just on the bank of the river concerned"24. The importance of water way of the

Brahmaputra shows that this waterway had been utilised to full extent for both military and business purposes. This indicates that Harjjaravarmadeva maintains close politico-economic contacts with the rest of India. On the other hand, he was the first king of this dynasty to use the imperial titles- 'Mahārāja-dhirāja-parameśvara paramabhaṭṭaraka-parama-mahēśvara.' No such imperial title has been used with the name of any other Śalastambha king, not even Harsavarmadeva. This policy of taking imperial titles together with actual power helped Harjjaravarman in raising the prestige of the Śalastambha royal house in the minds of the subjects as well as the neighbouring principalities. The kingdom of Harjjara extended as far as the lines of forest near the sea-shore, or sea-like waters. (copper Plate grant of Vanamāla) This probably means that Sylhet and Mymensing bordering on the low-lying sea-like country, were under his sway.

The Hayunthal grant is important for another reason also. It discloses the fact that the Śalastambha kings made their capital at Hadapesvara leading to the conclusion that the royal family belonged to the region around modern Tezpur. Harjara built a lofty temple for Hetuka Sulin and rows of stately buildings in the capital city at Hadapesvara. Extensive ruins of temples and buildings in and around Tezpur along with the existence of a big tank called Harjarapukhuri bear testimony to Harjara's patronage of art and architecture and his attention to public works.

Vanamālavarmadeva:

Harjjaravarman's son and successor was Vanamālavarmadeva. Vanamāla has left behind him three important inscriptions viz. the Dīghaligaon copperplates found at village Dīghalī in Kaliabor in Nagaon district, the Tezpur copperplates and the Parbatiyā copperplates.

Vanamālavarmadeva has been described, unlike his father Harjara in Hāyuṇthal inscription, simply as a mahārājadhīrāja in the Tezpur copperplates. But in the Parbatiyā plates, he has been described as a paramesvāra-parama-bhaṭṭaraka-mahārājadhīrāja. The mention of the simple 'mahārāja dhirāja' in the Tezpur plates clearly indicates that he had not adopted the greater imperial title when the grant was made. So it is clear that before adopting this title, he won a number of battles. While discussing about the location of the donated land, Mayūrasālamalā-grahara in Chandrapurivisaya in the Nidhanpur grant, we have shown that this area was situated in the Puṇḍravardhana-bhūki and that Chandrapuri-Viṣaya of Bhāskara's time was much larger than that of Vanamāla's time. The absence of the name of the dried up river Kauṣikī or Kauṣikā in the Tezpur inscription makes it difficult to hold that like Bhūtivarman and Bhāskaravarman, Vanamāla also occupied a part of Purnea. But it is no doubt that the whole Puṇḍravardhana bhūkti or a large part of it was under the control of Vanamālavarmadeva. The limits of his
kingdom are described as extending to the lines of forests and bordered by the ocean. This implies, if not an exaggeration, extension both in the north and south-east probably including Samatata. In the Tezpur inscription, it is said that the donated village, (Abhisuravañakah) was situated on the western side of the river Trisrota (modern Teesta), and had Chandrapa (u) ri as its south-eastern boundary (v.33, I A A, P. 105). The weakness of the Pala rulers might have led to this expansion of the Kamarupa kingdom probably bounding the river Karatoya in the west including South-east Bengal and Pundravardhana in North Bengal. The most important thing about Vanamālavarmāna that has come to light is that he abdicated the throne in favour of his son Jayamāla, alias Virābāhu due to old age. This information has been supplied by the grants of Jayamāla's successor Balavarman III. "That valorous illustrious, lotus-eyed king Vanamāla also observing his son to have attained youth and to be endowed with modesty handed over to him the (Royal) umbrella, as white as the moon, along with the pair of cowries and became merged in the (heavenly) glow of Maheśvara (i.e. retired to heaven) through the process of fasting" (vv 16-17, I AA, P. 134) It may be presumed that Vanamālavarmānadeva must have ruled for a long period.

Jayamālavarmānadeva:

Jayamālavarmānadeva succeeded his father Vanamālavarmānadeva in the latter's life time. As no record has so far been found left
behind by this king, we are dependent on the grants of his son and successor Balavarman III who ruled, in the last quarter of the 9th century A. D.

It is said that 'after assuming the kingship, Jayamāla married a lady named Ambā who was similar to himself in respect of lineage, beauty and age' (v 18, the Uttarbarbil grant, I AA P. 134) The fact that he married after becoming king, makes it clear that kingship was conferred on him by his aged or sick father on a comparatively young age. We may presume that he only consolidated the conquests of his father, and did not make further extension. Verse 24 of Uttarbarbil grant, I A A P. 135 proves that Jayamāla had maintained territorial integrity of the state.

Balavarman III:

Balavarman III was the last important king of this dynasty. He has left us three records-the Uttarbarbil grant, the Nowgong grant and the Ulubāri grant. According to his grants he assumed the title of Mahārājadhirāja - parameśvara -paramabhaṭṭāraka, which indicates his power and domination. His grants referred to about his enemies, whom he conquered. (Nowgong grant v.v. 24 f). But the identification of the enemies is missing. He probably made fresh conquest in Bengal defeating the Pāla ruler Nārāyanpala 26. This is

proved by his land donation in Hensiva within the Dijjina viṣaya lying to the west of Teesta or Karatoya in Puṇḍravardhana 27. His grants proved his powerful position among the contemporary rulers of the region. No account is available of the successor of Balavarman III. There is a long gap in the historical account of the period between the reign of Balavarman III and Tyagasimha, the last king of the family.

The Śaṅkara-Nārāyana and the Hari-Hara stone image
Inscriptions found at Deopani in Golaghat District of Upper Assam provide us with two more names of the Śālastambha kings viz. mahārajadhīrāja Śri Jīvara and mahārajadhīrāja Dīglekhavarman, not mentioned in the genealogy of the Śālastambha kings given in their inscriptions discovered so far. Scholars like P. C. Choudhury and M.M. Sarma, have placed these two kings as successors of Balavarman III 28. But both these kings have not given any clue to the fact that they belonged to the Śālastambha house. There is no reason to explain as to why these two kings, both of whom appear to be quite religious do not appear in the list of the ancestors of the Śālastambhas. On the other hand they do not bore the imperial title of paramesvara-paramabhattaraka-mahārajadhīrāja which had been so common to the Varmans, the Śālastambhas and the Pālas. They boasted as the lord of Prāgiyotiṣa. So it can safely be said that they

27. I bid. P. 223.
were local rulers. It is very much likely that local rulers whenever there was a slackness of authority in the kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa had claimed their independence.

According to the Bargaon inscription of Pāla king Ratnapāla that the house of Salastambha had twentyone kings ruling in Prāgjyotiṣa and that the last of them was Tyagasiṁha. The verse goes thus : "When the twenty-first king of that line, named Tyagasiṁha retired to heaven without an heir, his subjects, thinking 'once again a king of the Bhauma dynasty would be more suitable for us,' nominated Śri-Barhmapāla, capable of shouldering the burden of the world as the king because of his relationship (with the family of Naraka)" (v. 10, I A A P. 161)

This information regarding the Salastambhas found in the inscription of a king belonging to the succeeding dynasty seems to be true. This inscription may be ascribed to c 1035 A.D. Taking this view into consideration it has been generally concluded that Brahmaṇpāla might have assumed the lordship of Prāgjyotiṣa by the end of the 10th century A.D. 29 On the other hand the last known ruler of the Salastambha dynasty was Balavarman III who had ruled in the last quarter of the 9th century A.D. and was the 11th king in number. Another ten kings were to rule within hundred years before Brahmaṇpāla's assumption of power. It is to be accepted that the last

29 Lahiri. N. PAA. Page 80.
ten unknown rulers ruled for average ten years each a brief period. This might have been due to internal feuds among the possible claimants which was sure to weaken the dynasty. But strangely, Ratnapāla's copperplate inscription does not hint at such occurrences in the last decades of Śālastambha's rule. We may presume some kind of unrest in the last years of Śālastambha rule. As is evident, Tyagasiṁha died heirless and that is why, the subject, rather the nobles chose an efficient noble or a powerful man named Brahmāpāla as a future king of the state. On the other hand if Tyagasiṁha died heirless, there must have been some other claimants belonging to the ruling family. But the subjects chose a man belonging to different family. It is also possible that Brahmāpāla himself influenced the selection process through his power and influence.

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The last of the first three historical dynasties to rule in Pragjyotisa-Kamarupa for several hundred years was the lineage of the Pala. The earliest known Pala record - viz, the Bargoon copperplate grant, was issued in about 1035 A.D. by Ratnapala, the second Pala ruler to ascend the throne of Pragjyotisa-Kamarupa. But this grant gives no indication of his old age, it can, in the same breath, be said that it was issued in about 1035 A.D. According to our system of chronology, leading to the conclusion that Ratnapala ascended the throne in about 1010 A.D. On the basis of this evidence (i.e. Bargoon copper plate inscription) it can be said that his predecessor, Brahmapala, the founder of the dynasty, definitely appeared on the scene between 990 A.D. and 1010 A.D., taking him to rule Pragjyotisa-Kamarupa for about twenty years, as he evidently ascended the throne after the death of Tyagasiṃha, the twenty-first king of the Salastambha dynasty. The origin of the founder of the Pala line is given in the grant to the family, indicating that Brahmapala was of the same Bhauma dynasty to which Puṣyavarman and Salastambha belonged¹. In the Khanamukh and the Subhaṅkarapāṭka copperplates of Dharmapala, the fifth Pala ruler, Brahmapala and his achievements have been described thus :-

1. Choudhury, PC, HCPA. 227-28
“In that royal family there happened to be a king, of the celebrated name Brahmapāla, who was like a Kulācalaka and was similar to Indra. He was thought of by the enemies, and by accomplished persons as well, with fear and admiration, respectively.” (V. 4, IAA, P-230) In the Gachtal copperplate grant of Gopālavarman, the fourth ruler, he has been described thus: “As a moon of that very ocean in the form of that family (the Bhauma-Nakara), a moon amongst the kings named Brahmapāla, took birth (like the moon rising from the ocean); he had a pure birth, he was sober, cold (in temperament) and he was the best of his family.” (V 12, IAA, P.214)

Both the Gauhati and Guwākuchi grants of Indrapāla, the 3rd king in succession, however, have simply mentioned Brahmapāla as the father of Ratnapāla, who was the most illustrious of all the Pāla kings. But V.11 in the Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla reads thus- “That Brahmapāla has defeated his enemies in the battlefield all alone is nothing strange, for, there is indeed the example of Har (Siva), Hari, Bhiṣma and many others (in this respect)”- thus thinking, when his soldiers observed him (i.e. Brahmapāla) and saw that he remained in his own place, and (yet) his enemies were fleeing away in eight directions, they (themselves) become astonished. (V.11, IAA, P.162)

Brahmapāla has been also addressed as mahārāja-dhiṛaja. The
Bargāon grant clearly states that Sri Brahmapāla was nominated by the people to take the reigns of administration of the country. So it may be presumed that, he, through his powers had expressed his desire to rule the country and influenced the decision in offering the kingship to him, and received the position of Tyāgasiṁha after the death of the latter in a peaceful manner. Tyāgasiṁha was not a holder of the title of mahārajādhirāja, indicating a gradual decline of the power of the kingdom of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa under the Śālastambhas after the death of Balavamran III. It is likely that Brahmapāla, after becoming king had consolidated his position. The clear reference to Brahmapāla as ‘the moon amongst the kings’ indicates that he won over all his enemies and rebuilt the platform from where his successors, particularly Ratnapāla, made several successful attempts in integrating the old glorious kingdom of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa. So the real credit goes to Brahmapāla. Brahmapāla’s contemporary Pāla emperor of Bengal was Mahipāla I (C 988-1038 A.D.) Mahipāla I’s reign was a period of restoration of the imperial Pālas. So it may be said that, Brahmapāla, being fancied by Mahipāla I and his great ancestors named his family as the Pāla family of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa. He made himself busy mainly with the activity of consolidating his dynasty so that in due course of time, this Pāla family might earn a name in North India politics. The extension of the kingdom during Brahmapāla’s reign in the west is doubtful; it is likely that Brahmapāla had no authority over North Bengal. The Śālastambhas, after Vanamālavarma, lost authority over greater Kāmarūpa. It appears that the ‘kings’ mentioned
in connection with Brahmapāla in the Kāmarūpa inscriptions belonged to the Brahmaputra valley were mostly autonomous chief but among them were also several independent ones who surely would have raised themselves up in various places. Brahmapāla put a stop in the rise of the new independent kings and completely brought others under his control. In this way Brahmapāla and the top officials of Prāgjyotisa - Kāmarūpa successfully overcame a possible crisis in the history of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa.

Ratnapāla :

Ratnapāla was the first powerful king of this dynasty which is indicated by his imperialistic title Paramesvara-Paramabhattāraka-Mahārājadhirāja. The copperplate inscriptions of the Pāla rulers namely the Coratbari grant, the Bargāon grant and Suwālkuchi grant of Ratnapāla himself, the Gauhati and Guwākuchi grants of Indrapāla, the Gachtal grant (c 1080) of Gopālavarmadeva, the Khanāmukh, the Subhaṅkarapāṭaka copperplates of Dharmapāla focus on the life and achievements of Ratnapāla. The Coratbari grant was issued in 1021 A.D. by which Ratnapāla granted land in the Havrṅga-Viṣaya to one Siddhapāla, a Brāhmaṇa by birth, in his eleventh regnal year. Like wise, Ratnapāla issued the other two land charters in his 25th and 26th regnal years in 1035 A.D. and 1036 A.D. respectively. This time frame put his year of accession in 1010 A.D.

The Coñātbarī grant supplies information about the city of Haḍapyaka (sic. Ḫaḍpāsvara). But the Bargaon grant informs us that Ratnapāla used to reside in the befittingly named city of Durjjaya. This means that he shifted his capital from Haḍappāsvara to Durjjaya sometime between 1022 A.D. 1035 A.D. All the three copperplate inscriptions of Ratnapāla indicate that he followed a policy of aggressive militarism and that his reign was an eventful one and the king ruled for a long period. On the other hand also in all his three copperplate inscriptions, Ratnapāla has been addressed as the mahārājadhīrāja-Paramabhattāraka-Sri Ratnapālavarmadeva. The title fits into his policy of aggressive militarism. It appears that seeing the rule of his dynasty secured, Ratnapāla took up an aggressive foreign policy followed by the powerful Śālastambha rulers specially Śri Harṣavarmadeva and Vanamālavarmadeva. Likewise, Ratnapāla too, started issuing land grants to the Brāhmaṇs with numerous immunities.

Ratnapāla’s inscriptions recognise the fact that Gauḍa (North Bengal) was having an independent king of its own. On the other hand several Kāmarūpa rulers made their power felt as far as the ‘Sea’. But Ratnapāla’s inscriptions in no way give the hint that he took his victorious arms up to the ‘Sea’. But the adoption of the full imperial title by Ratnapāla probably refer to his suppressing the rebellious chiefs within Kāmarūpa proper or in North Bengal3. In the land grant of his grandson Indrapāla, he is described as the

3 Choudhury, PC., HCPA P. 234.
“mighty crusher of his enemies”. (Gauhati grant V.15), the most striking revelation of the Bargāon grant is that Ratnapāla lived in a new city, named Durjjayā. No wonder, Ratnapāla deemed it necessary to shift his capital from Haḍappesvara to a different site to give his dynasty completely a new well fortified identity. Most probably the city of Durjjayā was founded in an area which lay between Prāgjyotisā and Haḍappesvara, the two erstwhile capital cities of Prāgjyotisā-Kāmarūpa. His Bargāon grant records that the excellent fortification of Durjjayā was a source of anxiety to a number of contemporary Indian powers like the rulers of Gurjara, Gauḍa, Kerala and Deccan. (Bargāon Grant V.34-35) Some scholars opine that Ratnapāla actually came into conflict with these powers⁴. That he defeated a king of Gauḍa named Rājyapāla in a great war by the strength of his own arms is evident from verse 16 of the Gauhati inscription of Gopāla. The reference of Gauhati grant in this regard appears more reasonable and makes Ratnapāla a political entity. He was a force to be recognised as he maintained the balance of power. It was likely that there were some minor clashes between Kāmarūpa and Gauḍa where the former was having an upper handed dominion. The decline of Pāla rule in Gauḍa after Mahipāla⁵ gave an opportunity for the extension of the influence of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa. His son Purandrapāla, who died as Yuvaraja had married Durlabha, a descendent of the royal race of extreme kingdoms, conquered by the victorious arms of Jamadagni’s son

⁴ Basu, N.N., SHK, I, P.167
⁵ Majumdar, R.C., History of Bengal I, PP. 136
(V. 13, Gauhati grant). This reference implies that Ratnapāla's kingdom might have touched the extreme north-eastern region now covered by the Arunachal Pradesh.6

The capital city of Durjjayā was inhabited by hundreds of wealthy people and was a place of resort for the learned men, religious preceptors and poets. (lines 28-33 of the Bargāon grant). This indicates that Ratnapāla greatly encouraged trade and commerce as well learning and education.

**Indrapāla**:

After the death of Ratnapāla, the throne of Kāmarūpa was inherited by his grandson Indrapāla. His father's name was Purandarapāla who seems to have died as a prince because of illness. We have two records of him (Indrapāla), the Gauhati and the Guwākuchi grant issued in the 8th and 21st year of his reign respectively. This proves that he also had a fairly long reign of about 25 years.

In the seals attached to the Gauhati and the Guwākuchi copperplate grant, Indrapāla has been designated as Prāgjyotiṣadhhipati mahārājādhirāja Śri Indrapālavarmadeva as in other cases. In both the grants he has assumed the full imperial title of Paramaesvara- Paramabhattaraka-mahārajādhirāja indicating his

6. Barua, S.L. ACHA, P. 123
equivalent status with his grandfather, Ratnapāla, among the kings of the eastern region.

The most interesting fact of Indrapāla’s reign also has been shown in the Gachtal grant of Gopālavarmān, that Indrapāla “once had an occasion to meet the king of Vāṅga, named Kalyānachandra, who was the son of Śrī-Chandra and possessed undefeatable arms which earlier had the distinction of demolishing the strong king of Gauḍa, Indrapāla then took his place at the head of a cluster of boats, covered by fluttering golden wheels and chowries and in no time defeated him. (i.e., Kalyāṇa chandra) and annihilated him along with his fame.” (V.20, I AA, 215)

It is noticeable that Ratnapāla conquered a part of Northern Bengal. Hence, this king of Gauḍa was someone else. And now, Kalyāṇachandra made an attempt to conquer that portion of Gauḍa which was under Indrapāla (V. 20). Thus by his brilliant conquest Indrapāla extended the frontiers of his kingdom in the west to include major portion of modern Bengal. This is shown by his Guwākuchi inscription which records the donation of a plot of land in Pandaribhumi to a brāhmaṇa hailing from Savathi or Sravasti in Bengal.

Another striking information supplied by this inscription (Gachtal grant) is that king Indrapāla married a Rastrakuta princess named Rājyadevī. Nothing more is given about this princess or about
the political relation between the Rāṣṭrakutas and Prāgyotisa-Kāmarūpa.

**Gopālavarmān:**

Indrapāla was succeeded by his son Gopāla, whose mother Rājyadevī was a Rāṣṭrakuta princess. The Gachtal copperplate inscription found at Gachtal near Dabaka in Nagaon district, claims to have been issued by Gopālavarmadeva of the Pāla Dynasty. About his accession, the records speaks thus: “His father having gone away long back to meet the divine lustre of Śiva, the earth took shelter in his victorious arms, enthused with strength, and was reminded of the lordship of Rāma, the vanquisher of Rāvana, over the whole world, after Dasāratha had retired to the abode of gods” (V.24, 1AA, p.215).

The Gachtal grant proudly declares Gopālavarmadeva to be a paramesvara-paramabhaṭṭaraka-mahāraja-adhiraja, in the same status with his two immediate predecessors. The king had a personal charm, merit and intelligence, munificence as well as success in war to his credit (Khanāmukh grant V-8). It appears that he consolidated his father’s conquest in Pundravardhana.

His Gachtal inscription records his donation of land to a

7. Choudhury, P.C., HCPA. p. 239
Brāhmana in the village Khārikona-Koñchi within the Viṣaya of Bāḍāsojambubā. This Viṣaya may be identified with Bāḍāsepattan of the Uttarbarbil Plates of Balavarman III and Bāḍa Viṣaya of the Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva, a later king of Kāmarūpa. As names of the villages ending with the suffix ‘Koñchi’ are found in the district of Kāmarūpa only, it can be surmised that the donated land was somewhere in that district and probably in and around modern Barpeta sub-division which might be a later form of the word Bāḍāsojambubā, Bāḍāsepattan or Bāḍa (Viṣaya).

A very important feature of the Gachtal copperplate inscription (V-13) is that it provides us with the name of a city called Hadapyaka. Although it is a new name of a city, it might have been identical with Hadappesvara, the capital of the Śalastambhas. The city of Hadapyaka occurs in line 26 of the Corātbari grant of Ratnapāla, while the name of the same city also occurs in the grant in line 36 as Hadappesvara. Thus it is possible that Hadapyaka was identical with Hadappesvara and the same continued to be a second seat of government for the Pāla family who ruled the city of Śri Durjjayā.

Harsapāla:

Gopālavarmadeva was succeeded by his son Harsapāla. King Dharmapāla’s three copperplate inscriptions, namely the Khanāmukh, Subhaṅkarapāṭaka and Puṣpabhadrā charters provide us with the

8. Ibid.
9. Cited in ACHA (S.L.)
available information about Harṣapāla.

The following are the verses attributed to Harṣapāla “From his (Gopālavarmān) was born a son, named Śrī Harṣapāla who was source of sustained joy for his father, and whose name used to be sung by noble men.......” (V.8, Khānāmukh grant, 1AA.p.213) “In the battlefields he, by breaking with weapons the foreheads of the enemy elephants, repeatedly made offering of drinks to the demons on all sides, who being thirsty drank up hurriedly the lukewarm blood mixed up with a profuse quantity of froth.” (V.10., Khānāmukh grant, 1AA p. 231). It is possible that Harṣapāla became involved in a war with Jātāvarman, the king of Bengal. The rising power of Kāmarūpa, was a cause of serious concern for the neighbouring powers, and Jātāvarman may have attempted at regaining the lost possession in Bengal. According to the Belava grant of Bhojavarmān, Jātāvarman snatched away portion of the kingdom of Pundravardhana and land was donated in the region. The result was the loss of an important portion of the kingdom in Pundravardhana. Vikramāṇkadevacarita of Bilhana refers to a war between the Chalukya prince Vikramaditya and the king of Kāmarūpa. This Vikramaditya is identified by P.C. Choudhury with Chalukya Vikramaditya VI (1076-1126) who is said to have over run Magadha, Aṅga, Gauḍa and Kāmarūpa. It is possible that

10. Cited in HCPA. P. 240
11. Choudhury, P.C., HCPA. P. 240
12. Vikramāṇkadevacarita, Chap. III Slokam 74
13. Choudhury, P.C., HCPA. P. 240
Harsapala may have been involved in war with him^{14} somewhere in North Bengal or in the frontier of Kāmarupa in the west; but it is unlikely that the raid resulted in the occupation of any land either in Gauḍa or in Kāmarupa^{15}. During the reign of Harsapala, Kāmarupa underwent a contraction of her territory in the west, which was shortly re-acquired by his successor.

The V. II of the Khanāmukh grant states that king Harsapala's queen was Ratna and they had a son named Dharmapāla, the issuer of the Khanāmukh grant (1AA p. 231) The same is repeated in the Subhaṅkarapāṭaka grant. In the Puśpabhadṛā grant, the composer attributes not a single verse independently to Harsapala. It states thus: "the king (Gopālavarmān) who was renowned for his lustre, had a queen named Nayanā of adorable fame. They two had a son named Harsapāla, whose fame used to be sung in the three worlds." (V51AA, p.263).

Dharmapāla:

Harsapāla's son Dharmapāla was the last important ruler of the dynasty. He has left us three records. Of these, the Khanāmukh and Subhaṅkarapāṭaka grants were issued in the first and third year of his reign respectively. The Puśpabhadṛā grants is undated. On the basis of a number of factors, it has been suggested that this grant

^{14} Barua, K.L. EHK. P. 142 ; KS. intro. p. 38
^{15} Choudhury P.C. HCPA P. 240
was issued in the year c. 1130 A.D.

There is an interesting verse in the Khanāmukh grant which states thus: “Their son was King Śrī Dharmapāla who was the lord of the girdled by the oceans and the ornament of the three worlds; though he was devoted to dharma he also protected the cause of Kāma and artha in proper time.” (V.12, IAA p. 231)

Thus Dharmapāla was a powerful king. He restored the lost glory of the kingdom by making conquest in North Bengal and probably towards the Sea in the South-west of the kingdom. Except the Varman kings and Vanamālavarman of the preceding dynasty, no other king so far, has claimed himself to be the “Lord of the earth girdled by the oceans.”

These conquests he had been achieved just after his accession to the throne. The Khanāmukh grant issued in the very first year of his reign records his grant of land in the village Meru adjoining Dighalaṇḍi in the Pūrajī Viśaya. By the Śubhaṅkarpāṭaka grant he made land gift to a Brāhmaṇa of Krosāṇja in Śrīvasti within Dijjinā Viśaya, identified with modern Dinajpur. From the second grant, it can also be surmised that both Śrīvasti and Dijjinā lay within the bounds of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa. That after the temporary loss of Pundravardhana during the time of Harsapāla,
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. Dharmapāla’s lordship over the region ‘girdled by the ocean’ may point to his political sway towards South-east Bengal adjoining the sea. Dharmapāla thus succeeded in pushing back the western boundary of the kingdom beyond the river Karatoya.

King Dharmapāla is said to have transferred his capital to a new city, called Kāmarūpanagara, in the Puṣpbhadra grant. “In Kāmarūpanagara there was a king, befittingly named Dharmapāla, the swan in the form of whose fame could shine even having been confined within the worn-out cage of this world.” (V 20, 1AA p.265) Significantly in the other two earlier grants, there is no reference to any capital city. That means, he must have changed his capital at a later stage of his reign. There is a difference of opinion regarding the location of the place. While some identify it with Kamaṭāpur, others consider it to be simply an extension of the old city of Pāggyotisapura to the northern bank of Brahmaputra. But the wide existence of remains of temple, roads, buildings, fortifications and moats at North Gauhati, the fine-spot of the Puṣpbhadra grant at Rangmahal about two miles north of Rajāduar (king’s gate), the incision of the inscription of Kanai-Varasi

17. Ibid P.242-43
18. Choudhury, P.C., HCPA. P. 243
19. KŚ, Intro. 29-30
20. Choudhury, P.C., HCPA. P. 245
Rock at Rāja-duar, commemorating the destruction of Bakhtiyar's army in Kāmarūpa in 1127 Saka (1205-1206 A.D.) and other incidents lead us to conjecture that Kāmarūpanagar stood for North Gauhati\textsuperscript{21}. Further, Kāmarūpar Buranji mentions a tradition that a king named Dharmapāla had his seat of government there\textsuperscript{22}.

According to a popular belief still current in North Guwahati, the world will come to an end the day the Puspabhadra river is dried up. This shows that once this Puspabhadra river must have had played a key role in the life of the people who lived therein. Interestingly, the fine spot of the Puspabhadra grant is the dry bed of the river in a place called Athgaon near Rangamahal. In this connection M.M. Sharma, offers two place names of the area viz. Rajduar (actually Rajaduar) meaning (the royal gate) and Raṅgmahal (the pleasure palace) as indicating that the king's palace existed there\textsuperscript{23}. Under these circumstances, it is possible that Dharmapāla's new capital city was situated at North Guwahati.

Jayapāla:

Dharmapāla was succeeded probably by Jayapāla whose name occurs in the Silimpur inscription in connection with making a tulāpurusa gift to a Brāhmaṇa named Prahāsa in Symbaka village.

\textsuperscript{21} Gait. E.A., AHA. P. 35; Barua. K.L., EHK. P. 93
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} IAA, P. 224
of Pundra, which the latter refused\textsuperscript{24}. This gift, Jayapāla possibly made in the first part of his reign, when he had held control over Pundravardhana. But it was probably during his time and evidently after the issue of the Silimpur grant that he was defeated by king Rāmpāla of Bengal. This event is mentioned in the Rāmācharita by Sandhyakara Nandi, wherein it is stated that a general of Rāmapāla named Māyana conquered Kāmarūpa\textsuperscript{25}. But it appears that Rāmapāla didn’t occupy or conquer Kāmarūpa proper but only snatched away her possessions in North Bengal\textsuperscript{26} over which he appointed Tiṅgyadeva.

After the death of Rāmapāla, his son Kumārapāla ascended the throne of Gauda. During Kumārapāla’s reign the last king of Bengal, Tiṅgyadeva revolted. Kumārapāla having heard of the disaffection to 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 Budhadeva against Tiṅgyadeva and after defeating and killing him became the ruler of Kāmarūpa\textsuperscript{27}. 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 “Mahārājadhirāj-

\textsuperscript{24} El. XIII (V.22) PP. 289-95
\textsuperscript{25} Memories of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, V.PP. 93 f.
\textsuperscript{26} Choudhury, P.C., HCPA. p 250 ; Barua, K.L., EHK. P. 04
\textsuperscript{27} EI. II, P.347
Parameśvara-Paramabhaṭṭāraka (Kamauli grant issued by Vaidyadeva) and thus, though only for a short period he established a Brāhmaṇa dynasty in Kāmarūpa. So it was Vaidyadeva who could make conquests in Kāmarūpa proper.

The invasion of Māyana may be placed between 1125-30 A.D. It appears that after Vaidyadeva’s possession of the capital city in or about 1130 A.D., the Pāla line of kings in Kāmarūpa became extinct. Jayapāla either died fighting with Vaidyadeva or took to flight.

The Kamauli grant was issued from Hamsakonci, in his (Vaidyadeva) fourth regnal year, and it records the gift of two villages, namely Santipāṭaka and Mandara, to a Brāhmaṇa named Sridhara, situated in the Viśaya of Bāda in the maṇḍala of Kāmarūpa included in the Prāgyotisabhukṭi. He was not only a great hero, but also a consummate scholar. He was a devout worshipper of Viśṇu. He established his capital in Vaidyagarh. Thus Vaidyadeba established a new line, and was known as Arimatta, who is credited by the chronicles with the erection of many fortifications, not only in modern Kāmarūpa, but also in Visvanāth and Ratnapura in Majuli in Upper Assam.

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28. Barua, B.K., ACHA. P. 40
29. Barua, K.L., EHK. P. 126-27
30. Ibid.
31. Vide, Choudhury, P.C., HCPA., P. 251
The successor of Vaidyadeva are not known. Dr. H.C. Ray thinks that Vaidyadeva was succeeded by his brother Buddhadeva. The discovery of the Tezpur copper plates of Vallabhadeva dated S.E., 1107 (A.D. 1185), however, reveals a new line of kings. They are Rāyārideva, Udaykarna 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. 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. R.D. Benerji puts the dynasty of Vallabhadeva in its proper place, and identifies Vallabhadeva’s line as the rulers of Kāmarūpa. Ray, Vasu and Bhattasali take them to be the immediate successor of Vaidyadeva or one of his descendants, and took possession of Kāmarūpa. The father of Rāyārideva was not a king. Both the father Bhāskara, and the son were brave generals. The Tezpur plates trace the genealogy of Vallabhadeva from Bhāskara (lineage,

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32. Ray, Dr. H.C., Dynastic History of North India I, P. 258
33. El. V., PP. 181-88
34. KŚ. Intro. P. 42 (f.n.5)
35. I.H.Q. PP. 197-98
36. Banglar Itihas, P. 317
37. Ray, Dr. H.C., Dynastic History of North India I, P. 56
39. ‘New lights on the History of Assam’, I.H.Q., XXII, PP. 1-14
40. Tezpur Copper Plate Grant. V.V. 3-4, Vasu, op. cit. pp. 230-3141
not immediate successor) whom Bhattasali tries to identify with Bhaskaravarman. All these above kings do not trace any relation with Vaidyadeva.

Rayarideva, surnamed Trailokyasimha, ‘an ornament of kings in Bhaskara’s race met in battle and defeated the king of Vanga’. Bhattasali finds here a reference to his (Rayarideva) encounter with Vijayasena of Bengal. Rayarideva established himself as an independent ruler. Next came Udayakarna, who was succeeded by Vallabhadeva.

According to the Deopara epigraph of Vijasena, “he impetuously assailed the Lord of Gauḍa, put down the prince of Kamarūpa and conquered Kalinga”. The Madhainagar grant of Lakṣmanasena credits him with the subduing of the king of Kamarūpa. It appears from these two Sena inscriptions that the Sena expeditions were in the nature of punitive ones aimed at political domination rather than extermination of the Kamarupa royal family. Although in the trial of strength Lakṣmanasena got some upper hand against Kamarūpa ruler Vallabhadeva but against the Turkish invader Bhakhtiyar Khiliji, it was the Kamarūpa king Vallabhadeva who gave a successful fight and turned the corner in the struggle against the Sultanate and its forces in 1202 A.D. That Vallabhadeva was a powerful king as eulogised in the inscriptions which say that Vallabhadeva possessed versatile, peaceful and

41. Ibid.
military qualities. Ray and Bhattasali hold that the campaign led by Muhammad-bin-Bakhtiyar in 1202 A.D. to Tibet\textsuperscript{42} was annihilated in Assam either by Vallabhadeva or his successor.\textsuperscript{43}

This victorious event was recorded on a stone slab at Kānāībaraśi east of northern Guwahati in the following words:

\begin{quote}
Śāke turaga yugmeṣe madhumāsa trayodaśe
Kāmarūpam samagatya Turāśkāh Kṣayamāyayuh
\end{quote}

"On the thirteenth of Caitra in the Śaka year 1127 (corresponding to the 7th March, 1206 A.D.) the Turks coming to Kāmarūpa were destroyed."\textsuperscript{44} But the reigning king is not mentioned there. K.L. Barua supposes that the king Kāmarūpa was on Prithu\textsuperscript{45} or Bartu. He has been identified with Prithu Rāja of the local traditions and Viswasundaradeva of the Gachtal inscription of Nowgaon.\textsuperscript{46} The name of Prithu occurs in the Kāmarūpar Buranji as well, whose author takes him to be same person with Jalpeswara, a Saivite king, who built the Śiva Temple of Jalpesh in Jalpaiguri, as mentioned in the Yogini Tantra (II/68). He was ultimately overthrown by Nasiruddin.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{42} Bhattasali, 'Muhammad Bakhtiyar's Expedition to Tibet', I.H.Q., IX, PP. 50-62
\textsuperscript{43} Bhattasali, I.H.Q., XXII. PP. 4-6
\textsuperscript{44} KŚ, Intro. PP. 44 ; Bhattasali, 1 H.Q., IX, PP, 49- 50|
\textsuperscript{45} Barua, K.L.,EHK P. 134
\textsuperscript{46} Choudhury P.C.,HCPA. P. 256
\textsuperscript{47} Cited in HCPA. P. 256
The Ambari stone inscription (Gauhati) discovered a few years ago, however mentions the name of a king, Samudrapāla. The inscription is dated 1154 Saka / 1232 A.D. P.C. Choudhury, who has deciphered it is of the opinion that Samudrapāla was a member of the Pāla line of kings and that these kings continued their rule till about the middle of the 13th century.48

The next Muslim invasion was that of Ikhtiyar-uddin-Yuzak circa 1256-57 A.D.49. The reigning Kāmarūpa ruler was probably Sandhya, as mentioned in the Gurucarita of Rāmacaran Tharuka, and it was he who defeated Yuzbak.50 Soon after these invasions the old kingdom of Kāmarūpa seems to have split-up into several independent principalities. At the same time, the Ahom penetrated into the Brahmaputra valley and pushed back the successor of the old dynasty towards the west. Probably, the ruler of the dynasty shifted his capital to Kamata 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. This ended the ruling of Hindu dynasty of Bhauma-Nanaka at Prāgijyotisha-Kāmarūpa.

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48. Choudhury, P.C., HCPA P. 256
49. Raverty, I.P. 263; cited in HCPA. P. 257
50. Ibid.