Chapter I

Buddhism in the pre-Pala Age

What is now known as Bengal (i.e., Bengali-speaking areas in India and Bangladesh of present day) was divided into a number of territorial divisions under different names in ancient and early mediaeval India: Gauda, Vanga, Samatata, Harikola, Chandradvipa, Vanga, Pundravardhana, Varendri, Sashka, Tamralipta and Suhma. Evidently the limits of these territories varied in different periods of history chiefly owing to political vicissitudes. Of these terms Gauda and Vanga became popular in the course of time and used to denote in their wide senses, West and North Bengal and South and East Bengal. In other words, there were two broad politico-geographical divisions called Gauda and Vanga, the remaining regions being collateral connected with either of them. Thus Pundravardhana, Varendri, Sashka (with Dakshina and Utara sectors), Tamralipta and Suhma were parts of the Gauda division, while Harikola, Chandradvipa, Samatata and Vanga belonged to the Vanga division.

Geographically contiguous and politically intertwined with Gauda-Vanga (i.e., Bengal) during this period was the province of Magadha (now represented by

1. For details see HAB, Ch.I.
the Patna and Caya districts. The beginnings of this
almost inseparable relations between those two provinces
are traceable in the Gupta period. Sri-Gupta, who founded
the Gupta dynasty at Pateliputra (Patna), towards the
close of the 3rd century A.D., is believed to have hold
away over a part of Bengal, now represented by the
Kaldah region. His great-grandson Samudragupta (c.335-
375 A.D.) seems to have incorporated practically the
whole of Bengal, except Samastāta (roughly equivalent to
Eastern and South-Eastern Bengal). If Chandra of the
Nehoraul pillar inscription is identified with Chandragu-
psta II, it has to be presumed that Voiga which became
independent meanwhile, was reconquered by the son of
Samudragupta. Whatever might have been the actual process
of the conquest of Bengal, details of which are lacking,
it is certain that during the reign of Pushāragupta I
Punjgraverdhana or North Bengal (i.e., Rajshahi division
of pre-partition days) formed an important administrative
division of the Gupta Empire and it remained to be so
in subsequent days, as for instance, in the reign period
of Ladhagupta (475-500 A.D.) and another Gupta ruler
(probably Vihiragupta, who ruled around 523-544 A.D.).
Like North Bengal or Punṣāvarṇhāna, Samastāta (Eastern
and South-eastern Bengal) also seems to have been gradually
incorporated into the Gupta empire, for in the year 507-8
A.D., it was ruled by Mahārajachakrāja Vainyagupta,
apparently a member of the Imperial Gupta family. Politically, therefore, Bengal was closely associated with Magadha during the Gupta period from the close of the 3rd century to the middle of the 6th century of the Christian era.

With the decline and downfall of the Gupta empire and the consequent political disintegration of Northern India, Bengal shook off the foreign yoke and two powerful independent kingdoms, viz., Vanga and Sauna, were established in the 6th and 7th century A.D. The independent Vanga-Samata kingdom was ruled by a line of rulers comprising Gopachandra, Bharmaditya and Samachandra, all of whom assumed the full imperial title of Mahārajādhīrāja. They ruled some time between 525 and 575 A.D. From his Mallasarul copper-plate it is known that at least one of them, Gopachandra, held sway also over parts of west Bengal (Vardhamana-bhukti or the Burdwan district and Bandabhukti mandala or southern and south-western part of the Midnapur district). Gopachandra even extended his authority over northern Orissa, as is known from his Jayranpur inscription. How and when this independent kingdom of Vanga-Samata came to an end is not known to us, but it is not unlikely that the rise of the other kingdom, viz., that of Sauna under Sasanka (c.600-37 A.D.) dealt the final death-blow to it.
Sasanka is the first known king of Bengal to have spread his supremacy over territories far beyond the geographical frontiers of that province. With his capital at Karnasuvorna (near the Chiruti Railway Station, Murshidabad district), Sasanka built up an extensive kingdom of the same name comprising not only of Northern and Western Bengal, but also of the regions of Magadha and Kalinga and probably had gradually extended his authority up to Damara before he decided to strike an effective blow to the Vardhana rulers of Pāṇḍava in alliance with Devagupta, the ruler of Mālava. Leaving aside the details the fact remains that the Cauda kingdom was connected with Magadha during the reign of Sasanka. This time, however, it was Bengal which got upper hand over Magadha making it a part of its body-politic.

The Cauda empire petered out soon after the death of Sasanka and for more than a century, roughly from 650 to 750 A.D., Bengal was overpowered by anarchy and confusion. What happened in Bengal was but a part of the history of a politically disintegrated Northern India after the demise of Harsha-Varahamihira around 647 A.D. While Magadha was included for a short time in the empire of Harsha and thereafter in the kingdom of Śātityasena (c.650-75 A.D.) of the Later Gupta dynasty, Cauda-Vanga successively passed on to the hands of one Jayaraja, an

2. According to some scholars he flourished before Sasanka.
unknown ruler of a dynasty called the Feba, Yasóvarman of Fanauj, Lalitāditya of Tashmir, the Bhadga, the ﬁhash, the Peta and the Devas. It may be mentioned here that the poetical work entitled Šaudasaha states that the Lord of Gouga, who was slain by Yasóvarman, was also the king of Nagadha and thus it is presumable that in the second quarter of the 8th century when Yasóvarman raided in Eastern India, Gouga and Nagadha were united under one ruler and probably it was the ruler of Gouga who had Nagadha under his sway rather than vice versa.

Taranātha tells us of another ruling family called the Chandra who had been ruling in Vanga and occasionally also over Gouga as early as the middle of the 7th century A.D. and its last two rulers Govichandra and Lalitachandra reigned during the last part of the 7th century and the first part of the 8th century A.D. Lalitachandra was a substantial ruler and it was probably during his reign that Yasóvarman invaded Vanga. His death, however, as Taranātha would have us believe, was followed by a period of anarchy and confusion, which was put an end to by a certain Gopala, the founder of the Pala dynasty.

3. Some of those ruling dynasties like the Bhadga and Deva will be mentioned later in the context of the history of Buddhism.
As regards the period of introduction of Buddhism in any of the above-noted territories of Bengal, we are still in the dark. Dependent Buddhist records of an early period do not furnish any positive evidence that it was current during the life-time of the Master. It is significant that the early Pali texts do not include the name of any Bengali community in the list of claimants for the share of the mortal remains of Buddha after his Parinirvana who came from different parts of India and assembled at Pudinagara (modern Pusa in U.P.), the place of the event. Similarly, the Jācārā Sūtra, an early Pali text, does not mention the name of any region of Bengal in its list of sixteen mahāśāla atinas which flourished just before the advent of Buddha. Whatever the tradition we have regarding the prevalence of Buddhism in Bengal during the life-time of its founder is set with in later texts like the 'Travola' of Yuan Chwang and Pan-Sam-Jiu-sang by the Tibetan monk Sampa. Thus the statement of the Chinese pilgrim that Buddha undertook

4. There is a story in the Divyavadana, retold in the Buddhavamsa-padaṇa Falinālada of later days, that Buddha visited Pundravardhana in connection with the marriage of Dhamagaddā, the daughter of his disciple Sudatta of Kosala, with a young man of Pundravardhana. It is said to have received a respectful and hearty welcome from the local people. But the story does not prove the prevalence of Buddhism in Pundravardhana.

a missionary tour in Pundravardhana and his messages reached Samatata and Karasuvarna, has not yet been confirmed by any archaeological or any earlier literary evidence.

It has been suggested on the basis of the literary evidence that Buddhism made some advance in Pundravardhana, if not in other parts of Bengal, during the reign of Aśoka (c.272-236 B.C.). A tradition recorded in the Divyāvadāna indicates that Buddhism was flourishing along with Jainism in Pundravardhana during the reign of the Mauryan emperor. The same text extends the easternmost limit of the Buddhist Madhyadesa (Polū-Majjhimaṇḍa) to Pundravardhana, beyond which ordination was not sanctioned. Yuan Chüang refers to the tradition of erecting numerous stupas in Pundravardhana and other regions of Bengal by Aśoka. All these literary traditions are, however, unconfirmed by any archaeological evidence and the non-discovery of an edict of Aśoka or any remains of a stupa erected by him within the confines of Bengal is surprising indeed. Hence

6. According to this tradition, the Jain upasakas (lay followers) of Pundravardhana had painted a picture showing Buddha falling at the feet of Aśoka, and on learning this incident Aśoka massacred as many as 12,000 upasakas of the city on a single day. See Divyāvadāna (ed. by Cowell) p.427.


it can be reasonably doubted whether Buddhism succeeded in making any advance in Bengal during the reign of Asoka.

The post-Asokan period and the early centuries of the Christian era present a somewhat different picture in this regard. Among the donors who helped to construct the first and the second gates of the great Sanchi stupa, the names of a few Bengalees appear in the accompanying inscriptions. An epigraph from Nagarjunakonda tells us that the people of Bengal were converted to the Buddhist religion by Ceylonese monks during the 2nd and 3rd century A.D. It appears therefore that Buddhism entered Bengal before the close of the pre-Christian era and that it was well-established by the beginning of the 5th century A.D. is borne out not only by the account of Fa-hien, but also by the discovery of several Buddhist images of 3rd-4th century A.D. at Chandraketugarh (district 24 Parganas, West Bengal).

As said above, Bengal was a part of the Gupta empire for a long time and the religion of the Hekter

9. FI, II, p.103, Insc. no.102; p.360, Insc. no.217. The names are Dhanyeta (Dhamodatta), a woman devotee from Purandaradana and Pushyandana (Pashyandana), also from Purandaradana.
10. Ibid., XX, p.22. Also IND. VII, p.692.
11. Indian Archaeology, 1957-59, p.72, pl.Ixxxvii A.
did not face any difficulty in its onward progress on account of the religious catholicity of the Gupta mon-
archs. Indeed, evidence is not wanting to show that the Gupta emperors right from Sri-Gupta to Vainyagupta did not hesitate to patronise or to facilitate its growth in their realms. Thus it is learnt from the account of I-ts'ing that Mahāroja Sri-Gupta built a temple called 'Temple of China' at a place close to a sanctuary called Mi-li-hia-si-hia-po-no, the latter being about forty yojanas to the east of Pālavā, following the course of the Ganges. I-ts'ing further tells us that the Gupta king donated 24 villages as an endowment for the maintenance of the temple and a separate building was constructed for the accommodation of foreign scholars and visitors, most of whom came apparently from China, as indicated by the nomenclature of the said temple.

Interestingly enough, there is a picture of a stupa in an illustrated manuscript, dated 1015 A.D., at the Cambridge University Library with the label "Mahāsthā-
parā stūpa of Verandā." On the basis of the combined testimony of I-ts'ing's account and this illustrated manu-
script, the site of the stupa was once located at Purandha-

13. Ibid.
but now it has been located at Maldah. The 'Temple of China' and the adjacent Vihāra, which were built by Śrī-Gupta, were therefore situated at Maldah and the fame of the both as well as of the stūpa used to attract a large numbers of scholars and visitors, particularly from China, long before Fa-hien set his feet on the soles of Bengal.

While Mahārāja Śrī-Gupta was a patron of Buddhism, nothing definite is known as to whether his successors extended their support to this religion. But it is reasonable to assume in view of their religious catholicity that the growth of the religion of the Master was unimpeded in Bengal. This is indirectly proved by the account of Fa-hien, since this Chinese pilgrim saw Buddhism in a flourishing condition at Śrenālīpita (modern Temuib in Midnapur) towards the end of the reign of Chandragupta II; as the pilgrim reports, there were twenty-two monasteries with resident monks and he himself stayed


16. Sudhakar Chattopadhyay, who correctly explained I-tsing's statement in question, pronounced this view. See XIII, pp.137-38. R.C. Majumdar also endorses this view of Chattopadhyay, HAB, p.37

17. That Chandragupta II and Pumārājula I did indeed support Buddhism will be evident from the Panchi Stone inscription of the time of the former and the Mankiwar image inscription of the reign of the latter. No less than five Gupta rulers, contributed to the development of the Nalanda Mahāvihāra.
there two years, when he wrote out his stūpas and drew pictures of images. The only Gupta ruler who needs special mention in the history of Buddhism in Bengal proper is Vaishāgupta. It is learnt from his Cremation copper-plate grant of 139 Gupta Era corresponding to 506-7 A.D., that he donated the land on the request of his vādādeśa or dependent officer in order to rest all the expenses for worshipping Buddha in the monastery of Avalokiteśvara which was built by the said officer in honour of Ashērya Cantīdeva, the propagator of the Vaibhūvika school of Vaibhāṣyam Buddhism. Other purpose of the gift was to provide fund for the supply of food, medicine and other requisites to the inmates of the monastic establishment and to meet the expenses for repairing the building of the monastery. This charter of Vaishāgupta thus clearly demonstrates that despite his own Saiva persuasion, Vaishāgupta in keeping with his family tradition of religious tolerance not only allowed the propagation of Buddhism in his kingdom, but also bestowed his royal patronage for its growth and aggrandisement. Vaishāgupta's predilection for Buddhism

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18. Logge's translation, p.100.

19. U.P.: VI, pp.45-50. D.C. Bhattacharya who edited the plate (ibid) made the date equivalent to 506 of the Christian era, R.C. Banak (IBER, p.223) and R.C. Rajumder (IBAR, p.40) place this record in 507-8 A.D.
will be further apparent if we identify him with Tathagatagupta (or Tathagataraja) who has been mentioned by Yuen Chwang as one of the benefactors of the great Palana Mahavibhra. That Buddhism flourished in Bengal, though not in the same degree as it did in Magadha, will be attested by a few Buddhist sculptures as well. The earliest of them, recovered from Rajabari, belongs to the Gupta period.

As said above, the independent dynasty of Vanga-Somatata and Guuda were built on the ruins of the Gupta empire. The history of the royal dynasty of Vanga-Somatata is known from the inscriptions and coins issued by its members like Copachandra, Dhrisritiya and Saméchandra, who are believed to have ruled between 525 and 575 A.D. While the bull-emblems attached to their copper-plate charters issued by them show that these Eastern Bengal rulers were devotees of Siva, it is not possible to say whether they inculcated the religious catholicity which was characteristic of their Gupta predecessors. One can only say, however, to some extent, that the conditions of Buddhism prevailing before their emergence and after eclipse are compared, it will be found that this religion did not suffer any setback in the Vanga-Somatata area.

21. PSE, p.23, fig.5.
Had it been otherwise, Xuan Chuang would not have seen the flourishing condition of the religion he professed in the 7th century A.D., when he paid a visit to this region.

The other royal dynasty emerged in Cauda under the able leadership of Kesānka. Within a few years of his accession to the throne Kesānka made his presence felt not only in Bengal proper, but also beyond its geographical frontiers. A staunch enemy of Barhoavardhana of Śrīśrava-Kamuj, Kesānka has been painted in the blackest possible colour by Dhanabhata and Xuan Chuang, both of whom enjoyed the patronage of the Vardhana ruler. The records directly pertaining to the Bengal king being meagre a correct estimate of him has not been possible. A few coins of Kesānka, which are now available, bear on their obverse an effigy of Mahādeva on bull (Bandi) and thus it appears that the king was a āśīva in his religious belief. His personal religion is also attested by the Mahābhārata, which describes him as Āvāśavo or 'one belonging to the Brahmanical order. This text as well as Xuan Chuang's account depict him as a persecutor of Buddhism. The Chinese pilgrim, patronised by Barhoavardhana, in course of describing the

22. LCE, pp.320ff, pl. XIX A 8-10.
23. For details, see IDE, Ch. 53.
anti-Buddhist activities of Sasanka maintains at one place: "Sasanka, the enemy and persecutor and oppressor of Buddhism, cut down the Bodhi tree, destroyed its roots down to the water and buried what remained". Elsewhere he says that Harshavarman "received the message from the image of Bodhisattva for accepting the kingship in order to raise Buddhism from the ruin into which it had been brought by the king of Haranauvarna". Still at another place he mentions that "Sasanka having tried in vain to efface the footprints caused the stone to be thrown into the Ganges". Similarly, the Mahavamsulakane tells in a prophetic vein: "The person, some (i.e., Sasanka) who will be a heroic king in countries on the bank of the Ganges up to Benares, will destroy beautiful images of the Great Teacher (i.e., Buddha). Relying on

25. Ibid., I, p.343.
26. Ibid., II, p.92.

the heretics, he will also cause to be burnt many holy
trace (or relic). Then this irascible, greedy, self-
sufficient and ill-esteemed man will break down all
monasteries, gardens and shrines and also the dwellings
of nirgranthas on earth and thus put an obstacle to
their religious profession”.

It is true that Sasanka was a devotee of Siva,
but his Siva affiliation does not necessarily prove his
hostility towards Buddhism. Anecdotes about his oppre-
sion of the Buddhists or his inimical attitude to them
are encountered only in the writings of the Buddhists
like Yuan Chwang and the author of the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa
who were prejudiced against him and hence it is difficult
to determine how far Sasanka was hostile towards Buddhism.
The above-noted statement of the Chinese pilgrim that
Harsa was induced by Bodhisattva to ascend the throne
for salvaging Buddhism makes it clear, however, that the
religion of the Hāsa was already on the wane and
Sasanka’s support of Saivism accelerated the process
of its decline. Some scholars, who do not brush aside
altogether the evidence of Yuan Chwang and the Mañjuśrī-
mūlakalpa, have suggested that Sasanka’s anti-Buddhist
policy was due to the activities of the Buddhists in
his kingdom which were directed against him in league
with his Buddhist arch-enemy, Harshavarman, of Pravut-
Thanesvar. 28 Though this theory is yet speculative in

nature, it is not altogether unlikely. In view of the recorded instances of anti-state activities by Buddhists in our history, the inference that similar things happened during the reign of Śāṃkha, as a result of which the Gauda monarch was forced to put his Buddhist subjects under curb, is likely.

The period following the death of Śāṃkha (around 637 A.D.) till the rise of the Pālas in the middle of the eighth century was one of anarchy and confusion. The account of Yuan Chwang seems to indicate that the bonds which once united North and West Bengal were loosened and these became independent kingdoms shortly after Śāṃkha's death. Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa soon conquered these kingdoms and Harshavarudhama annexed the Magadha sector of Śāṃkha's kingdom. As said above, Magadha along with Gauda thereafter passed on to the hands of the Later Guptas and Gauda-Vanga came to be successively ruled by Jayana, the Khaḍgas, the Nāthas, the Vatas etc. Not only the political history, but also the religious history of Bengal of this period (c. 650 A.D.-750 A.D.) is relatively obscure. Materials relating to Buddhism are not altogether rare and culled from different sources, they

29. The Buddhists of Sind rendered substantial help to the Muslim invaders of the country in the eighth century, see Chachnama (Fredunbeg's translation, pp. 72, 89, 105 etc.).
tend to show that this religion had its mainstay in
Vanga-Somata, i.e., Eastern and South-east Bengal.

In the second half of the 7th century Vanga-
Somata witnessed the emergence of a line of Buddhist
kings with Phadga as a part of their raced. The
history of this dynasty, usually designated as the
Phadga dynasty, is known from two copper-plates found
at Ashrafpur (30 miles north-east of Paccu) and an
inscribed image of Harvard discovered at Beulabdi (14
miles south of Comilla). Names of three rulers, Phadga-
dyana, his son Jatahedge and the latter's son Dovakhdga,
have been known from these epigraphical records. They
also allude to the queen and son of Dovakhdga, viz.,
Prathavati and Rajaraja, also called Rajarajabhotta. The
recent discovery of a copper-plate at Belban Vihara at
Mainamati near Comilla in Bangladesh has disclosed the
name of one Balabhota and it is not unreasonable to
consider him as a member of the Phadga dynasty which had
exercised its authority over the findspot of this record.

30. R.C. Majumder connects these Phadga with the Phadga
of Nepal and thinks that the Phadgas probably immi-
grated from Nepal (1938, p. 79), but this view does not
carry conviction. The Phadgas appear to have been an
indigenous Shabatiya family of East Bengal.


33. The plate of Balabhota is unpublished. For a reference
to it see F.A. Khan's Mainamati (1965), as
well as Harrison, 2967, pp. 21-25.
Paleographically, too, the Kaimurati plate of Falathota is related to the Mañga epigraphs and it is quite probable that Falathota was a successor (if not a son) of Vajarakshabha. The reign-period of these four Mañga rulers usually is placed between 650 and 700 A.D. 34.

The Ashrafpur copper-plate charters (one of them bears the regnal year 13 marked as A, the date in the other is illegible and it is marked as B) were issued at the behest of Devakhaḍga from his camp at Formentovasa (identified with Badkanta, a police station in the Comilla district), and both were written by a Buddhist scribe named Forastiya. The name of the dūtaka in plate A is illegible, while that of the dūtaka in plate B is Vajraśravasya. Lord budhha has been invoked in the opening verse of both the plates. In a verse in the plate B Bhadrapura has been credited with military successes after he had shown devotion towards the Dūtaka (i.e., Budhha), his Dharma and his Faṅgha. Devakhaḍga, his son and successor, and the donor of these two grants, is stated in the Doubedi image inscription to have been "a maker of donations" (dāmapatiḥ), "majestic" (pratīmi) and "possessing a sword which could subdue his foes".

34. C.H. Lākhor (the editor of the Ashrafpur plates) and R.D. Banerji assigned the Ashrafpur plates to a later date. For Lākhor's view, see HAE, Vol. I, pp. 85-51 and for Banerji's view, see his Bengal of Bengal, p. 67.
The donor in both the Ashrafpur plates appears to be the revered Buddhist teacher, sengchentra, and his monastery, for the support of which the proceeds of the land were earmarked. The event of this donation was made known to all vihavanatins and other administrative agencies and the house-holders of the villages concerned. The gift, as recorded in Plate A, was made by Devakhadagga for the longevity of his son Sajarathabtta (mentioned as simply Sajaraja perhaps for the sake of poetical exigency). In the words of the second charter (i.e., Plate B) the said grant was ratified by Sajaraja for the sake of ratratraya (the Buddhist triad) with a view to destroying "the fears of three beings". It also refers to the four monastic institutions (vihara-ulhrika-chatushtaya). This second copper-plate refers to one king Dipatnaramagavara (the overlord) and one person named Balirakhadaga, as being the first disposers of some lands to other donors, but which are now made into gifts again by the heir-apparent Sajarajabatta. The servant image inscription, which contains the names of the three above-noted kings, states that Mahadevi Prabhavati, the queen-consort of Devakhadga, caused the image of the goddess to be plated with gold out of devotion. Her son, Sajarajabatta, figures as a pious Buddhist in the second Ashrafpur plate and it is not unlikely that he is the same person whom Seng-chi35, a Chinese pilgrim-priest,

35. Seng-chi's statement occurs in I-tsing's account. See "Life of Fa-hua T'ang" edited and translated by Seal, pp.xi-xii.
alludes to as नाजरेजा and describes as 'a king of समताता' and as "an upasaka who greatly revered the three objects of worship and devoted himself to his religious duties". Though we are not absolutely certain about Kalabhata’s relation with नाजरेजा or, for that matter, with the Bhadgas, it is reasonable to believe that he belonged to this family. Apart from the fact that his copper-plate has come from the area of the Bhadgas, the seal attached to this charter in the characteristic Buddhist emblems, Dharma Chakra flanked by two doors, a fact which clearly shows that he professed the faith of the Bhadgas. The paleography of his charter bearing affinity with the Ashrafpur and Deulbodi epigraphs also goes in support of our contention.

What has been said above therefore clearly establishes that the Bhadgas of Vaiyã-Tematata were devout Buddhists and apparently did their best for the furtherance of their religious faith. Yet they were not bigots. The figure of the crouching bull, the युहर of the Hindu god G acceptance in the seal of the Ashrafpur plate (E) shows that देवके दि was a man of catholic outlook. His queen, Prabhavati, went a step further and expressed her reverence to a Brahmanical goddess by causing an image of Sarasvati plated with gold. It was this spirit of religious tolerance which was displayed by the more
illustrious successors of the Phodgas, namely the Pala monarchs of Bengal and Bihar.

While the Tippera (now Comilla) copper-plate grant of Pamanta Lokaratna36, disclosing the existence of a line of feudatory chiefs ruling in the Comilla region, in the second half of the 7th century does not possess any bearing on the contemporary history of Buddhism, the another copper-plate found at Faisaln37, a village 13 miles west of the Lalna railway station in the Comilla district, spells out a Catholicity which marked the religious life of Bengal during the period.

36. JR, Vol.XV, pp.301-15. R.C. Prashad, who edited this Inscription, restores the date in it as 344 and refers it to the Gupta Era and thus obtains the date 663-64 A.D. The paleography of the copper-plate is in accordance with this date. It discloses the existence of a line of five feudatory chiefs of the Comilla region including Lokaratna. The overlord (paramaratna) to whom Lokaratna owed allegiance, more or less nominal, was probably a Phodga ruler.

37. JR, Vol.XXIII, 1947, pp.321-61. The Inscription records the name of the father of Fricharama-Sati as Jivadharmi, Laranatha as well as Jivadhammi and Fricharami were virtually independent. It may be mentioned here that Paramaratna, the place of the issue of the Faisal grant, finds mention along with the Riangad river which used to encircle it, in the Rasamhong copper-plate of Fricharam of the 10th century.
Issued by a Paraśa-Gātabhrapada semi-feudatory ruler, Śrīdhārana-dēvi, styled Samatatāvāra, from Devaparvata (somewhere in the Kaimasati hills), the Pālian copper-plate charter states that Śrīdhārana’s Chief Minister of Peace and War, Jayantīka, prayed to him 25 māhātās of land, situated in Cuptinātana and Vatadīvika vihārana, for the purpose of dividing the granted māhātās of land between two different kinds of religiously worshipful objects; his purposes included the provision for the garlandas, incense, light and unguments for the great self-obeisant and all-knowing lord Tathāgata (Buddha), the defraying of the expenses for the study and recitation of the Dharma, of which the way was taught by the lord, the provision of various requisites like robes and food-lumps for the noble Sangha, a distribution of certain portions of the granted land to some learned Brahmānas for performing the five great sacrifices (mahāyajñas). Śrīdhārana-dēvi granted the land simultaneously for the purpose of worshipping the Buddhist Tiryākṣa and also for the maintenance of sacrifices by learned Brāhmānas and thus set an example of the traditional Indian spirit of religious toleration.

Another Buddhist dynasty flourishing in this period, presumably after the Phāgas and the Pātas, was that of a certain Bhavadeva. The history of this family has been reconstructed on the basis of three copper-plates,
two of which have been recovered from the Selhan Vihara of the Hathmati region near Comilla. The third copper-plate, now in the Asiatic Society, also reportedly hailed from the same region. Palaeographically these records are assignable to the 7th-8th century A.D. The Selhan plates have not been published, but we are told that in one of them the name of the founder appears as Santideva. The Asiatic Society Plate, issued by Shavadeva, traces the genealogy to Viradeva, the grandfather of Shavadeva, the father of the latter being Amaradeva. Thus the family comprised four members: Santideva, Viradeva, Amaradeva and Shavadeva. All of them bore the epithets and imperial titles like Parameswara, Paramabhattacharya and Mahārājaśāhī. The Asiatic Society Plate of Chavadeva records that one Vihutideva requested the king through Mahāsānta Vardadhara to grant land for Vahjamati Vihāra. The request was compiled with and a plot of 7\(\frac{1}{2}\) nāthaga lying in four villages within Vahanātelu-Vishaya was granted to the said monastery. It is interesting to note that the same vihaya figures in the Labhafour plates through Mahāsānta Vardadhara to grant land for Vahanātelu-Vishaya was granted to the said monastery. It is interesting to note that the same vihaya figures in the Labhafour plates

33. Both the Hathmati plates bear the Buddhist Dharmachakra-deer symbol. F.A. Khan has published extracts from these plates in his Hathmati (Parschi, 1965), pp. 19ff. The extracts are not much helpful.


40. Ibid.
of the Khaḍga kings referred to above, and another viśaya sounding similar in name, Guptināṭana, has already been encountered in one Kīlan plate of Sridhārana Rāta, also mentioned before. The site of Peranatana has, however, not yet been ascertained, but it was apparently somewhere in the Comilla district of Bangladesh.

Like the Khaḍgas and the Rātas, the family of Bhavadeva also professed Buddhism and supported its cause. It is significant to note that not a single grant made exclusively in favour of a Brahmanical cult has yet been discovered from the Vanga-Samastā region over which the Khaḍgas, Rātas and Devas were ruling in the 7th-8th century.