CHAPTER IV

The emergence of commercial and agrarian elite groups during the Early Historic period

I - i

The present chapter takes up for study two of the most important groups that emerged in the Early Historic society. In a narrow sense, the emergence of these two groups may be called the culmination of the institutional development in the Early Historic society. This is because, in all three Macro Zones (Andhra, Tamilnadu, Sri Lanka), the Early Historic period is characterized by an intense development in craft/commercial specialization and expansion in the agrarian sector. Apparently, this led to a structural transformation effecting the status quo of the Early Historic society. The old elite represented by clan chieftains who initially monopolized the exchange vortex and the agricultural tracts had to contend with the newly emerging elite groups in the craft/commercial and in the agrarian sectors. This period also witnessed a rapid expansion in habitation centres and the emergence of a settlement hierarchy associated with urbanization. Both in the commercial as well as in the agrarian sectors, the level of specialization resulted in a proliferation of specialists servicing these sectors and a noticeable trend towards professional hierarchization was becoming apparent. Initially the economic factor, rather than social origins, determined the relative position of individuals or groups within the newly
evolved class society. This reason itself gave much fluidity to social mobility. However, by the 2nd/3rd Cent. A.D. the commercial and agrarian elite groups themselves had transformed into a relatively compact social class. In the cultural sphere these groups played an equally crucial role. As much as the political elite was responsible initially for diverting the Great Tradition in a vertical direction, the mercantile and the agrarian elite can be identified as the actual carriers of the Great Tradition to the grass-roots level. They were largely responsible for sustaining and popularizing the Indo-Aryan culture giving the basis to a cosmopolitan civilization that engulfed the whole sub continent and Sri Lanka during the Early Historic period.

The discussion so far indicates that the Proto Historic Megalithic folk had already initiated an exchange network whereby certain types of raw material and resources moved to distant regions. Similarly, specialization on particular crafts was already in existence though full-time production had not emerged. These regions were controlled by petty chieftains who had access to resources and they also came into contact with the agents of the metropolitan state or long distance trade operators.

The primary attraction of the southern Deccan, south India and Sri Lanka was that they were the repositories of raw material and natural resources. It may be suggested that items such as gold (from Karnataka) reached the Harappan sites (Marshall 1939: 29-30, 524, 526; Ratnagar 1981:108).1 It is also suggested that

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1 It is suggested that gold from Karnataka was taken up to West Asia (Maloney 1968:230-31). Textual evidence from west Asia indicates that prior to 6th Cent. B.C., items such as (containers for) perfumes, beryl, boiled rice and peacocks which were
in the subsequent period, the southern region was not unknown to the Vedic folk (Srivastava 1968:82). This was, however, not knowledge derived through a regular process of contact. In the post 6th Cent. B.C. period dakṣināpatha was becoming more familiar to the northern urban centres (ibid. 71-72, 82-86). It is most obvious that in the craft centres of the north there was a large demand for raw material. Maloney in fact suggests that during the Proto Historic period an exchange circuit formed a network of movement along the coast of India and it also linked up with Sri Lanka (Maloney 1968). It is however possible that a more intensive interaction developed between the north and the south only after the 4th Cent. B.C., along the coastline sea route and the central Deccan land route. It was such routes along the coast or the inland route leading to the south that have been recommended by the Arthasastra (vii.I2.21, 25), which also informed the north of the rich resources in the south, such as pearls (Artha. II.II.2).

The simple single mast vessel may have been used in these exchange operations along the east coast. I Coins, pottery and

Cont'd ... f.n. from p. 441 products of south India may have reached the Middle Eastern Countries (Rabin Chaim 1968: 432-440).

I. The catamaran is a primitive craft which is simply constructed by lashing together 4-5 logs to look like a raft. It is cheap, unsinkable and is extremely convenient for small scale fishing operations even under conditions of strong wind and heavy surf. This craft is popularly used in lagoons, deltaic channels and along the shallow coasts extending from southern Orissa to northern Sri Lanka and significantly coincides with an area having the Dravidian group of languages (vide Hornell 1920:140, 152-5; WCIP I961:III, 120-2; WII I962:iv, 86-88; Sophar 1965:5-19; Raghavan I961:II5-I20; for transport by water during the Sangam period vide Singaravelu I966: 64-69).
inscriptions carrying the single mast vessel symbol have been unearthed in west Bengal, south India and Sri Lanka, from Proto and Early Historic contests. It is interesting to note that beginning from the deltaic area of the Ganga (which alone has nearly 36 BRW sites) a series of coastal sites on the lower Mahanadi, Vennadhara, Krishna, Pennar, Kaveri and Tambapanni carry Megalithic-BRW Proto Historic habitation vestiges. Therefore, resources probably moved to and fro in a chain fashion, from delta to delta, as the single mast crafts were not equipped for long distance travel.

However, relatively deep sea fishing and fairly long distance travelling in the south east coastal area was undertaken until recent times by the Negapatanam seven log type, which is the largest type of the catamaran. These Negapatanam type crafts were used between the Kaveri delta and Sri Lanka to obtain melia dubia (Sin. lupumidelle) logs for boat making. Periplus records the existence of such vessels called sangara (made of single logs bound together) along the coast of Damirica (Schoff 1972:46).

This was obviously the double mast vessel (which is commonly known to the Early Historic long distance sea farers) depicted in the 1st Cent. B.C. seals in west Bengal (Maloney 1968:160) and on the Sātavāhana coins (Elliot 1886/1970; Rason pl. v. No. 96) found along the south east coast. It is also interesting to note

I. Such symbols were found on Punch marked coins from a 3rd Cent. B.C. layer in West Bengal (Maloney 1968:160), (Pāṇḍyan issues of the) south Indian Punch-marked coins, and as a post firing graffiti mark on Megalithic BRW (c. 5th/4th Cent. B.C.) at Tirukkampuliyur (Mahalingam 1966:24 no. 3) and as a non Brahmi symbol on a 7th Cent. B.C. Barata (Paratavar) inscription in Sri Lanka (Paranavitana 1970:No. 270 Pl. xxv).
that traditions associating the Nāgas with coastal areas, sea voyages, oceanic resources (e.g. pearls) and inland resources (e.g. gems) occur along the eastern coast of India and in Sri Lanka (Mookerji 1957:78-80; Subramanian 1932).

The best archaeological pointer to the north-south exchange interaction is the distribution pattern of the NBPW in the Deccan taken along with the occurrence of Buddhist monuments and Punch-marked coins at select sites in the same region. Contrary to popular belief, it appears that specialized commercial groups or their intermediary agents (the Nāgas?) had already linked the north and the south during the pre-Asokan period.

I. Early Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka often carry the personal name Nāga, which is Prākritized as Nāga (Paranavitana 1970). It is interesting to note that the Sanskrit word Nāga means mountain/rock, precious stone and jewel (Emeneau et Burrow 1962:42 No. 221). The Dravidian word nakai/naka/naga, which derive from the Indo-Aryan stream, also convey the same meanings (ibid.). While we have already pointed out that Cudi (in the Dravidian group of languages) means 'lustrous gem' (supra p.385), an early inscription from Periya Puliyankulan (in Sri Lanka) mentions an individual by the name Cudi Nāga (Paranavitana op.cit. No. 343). This evidence taken along with the literary traditions associated with the Nāgas, indicate that they were carriers of precious commodities produced in the south to petty exchange centres located along the east coast. On the other hand it may not be pure speculation to suggest that they also carried important raw material from the north to the south along the same route. Interestingly, nakam in Tamil means cobra, serpent, elephant as well as black lead, zinc, prepared arsenic (TL I931iv. 2195, 2197, 2220). The primary producing area of copper and tin in eastern India is the triangle touching southern Bihar, northern Orissa and the western district of west Bengal (vide Chakrabarti 1979). Ancient Vāṅga coincides with this particular region. Similarly, in Tamil, vahgam means Bengal and in addition lead, purified lead, tin, zinc or red-lead and vanka-vaśmam means carbonate of lead (TL I936vi-3451-52). Interestingly in the Sangam texts vahgam means silver as well as boat i.e., a mode of conveyance (Subrahmanyam I966:725). Thus vahgam and nakam carry synonymous meanings. The occurrence of bronze objects within the Megalithic context of south India (e.g. Adichchanallur) may be noted in this context.
Taking up the lower Krishna valley, there are several NBPW yielding sites. However, at Kesarapalle only one sherd was found at the upper levels of the Megalithic-BRW layer in Period II (Sarkar 1966:43-4) and at Chebrolu, NBPW sherds were found from surface collections. On the contrary, vast quantities of NBPW occur at Amaravati and Dhānyakaṭa. At Dhānyakaṭa, the NBPW succeeds the Megalithic-BRW (IAR I964-65:2). Interestingly, the excavations at Amaravati revealed a BRW-NBPW layer, which is believed to be pre-As'okan (Sarma 1975:62). C-I4 dates from Dhānyakaṭa and Amaravati give 405 B.C., 325 B.C. and 250 B.C. for the layers having NBPW (Agrawal et Kusumār 1966:446; Agraval et al. 1977:229). Interestingly, sites connecting Tamralipti with the lower Krishna have not yielded the same quantity of NBPW. While NBPW is found at Tamralipti, Sisupalgarh yielded only three sherds of NBPW and that too in the post-Rouletted levels (Lal 1949:68, 79). We may note that Sisupalgarh (ibid.) and Salihundam (Subrahmanyam 1964:21) have yielded Megalithic-BRW from the lowermost Iron Age occupational level. It is significant that at Salihundam a silver Punch marked coin was found within the Megalithic-BRW context (ibid.).

A second route apparently reached the lower-Krishna region across central Deccan. The link site in this route can be located at Pauni (82 k.m. south east of Nagpur) where the earliest phase of the stūpa is associated with BRW and NBPW (Deo et Joshi 1972: I5, 23, 25, 60 Fig. 7). The pre-Maurya Megalithic-BRW habitation site is less than 2 k.m. from Pauni (ibid. 62). Due to the lack of intermediary sites yielding NBPW between Tamralipti and the lower Krishna (Amaravati/Dhānyakaṭa), it is suggested that the
NBPW reached the lower Krishna valley through the central Deccan route touching Pauni (ibid. 60). Secondly, it is also suggested that the earliest occurrence of NBPW beyond the Gangetic valley may have preceded the Maurya expansion (ibid. 61–62). Though the second suggestion of Deo and Joshi rests on firm ground, the first may require greater substantiating evidence. Our discussion below will indicate that Dhānyakṣaṭaka was a primary link site and a centre of redistribution. It is therefore not impossible that during the 4th cent. B.C., long distance trade operators were making direct voyages along the coast from Tamralipti to the entrepôt at Dhānyakṣaṭaka. The NBPW therefore, reached this southern port in large quantities via such a commercial network operated by northern merchants specializing in long distance trade.

In this connection numismatic evidence may give us more information. It is pointed out that at many archaeological sites, the earliest occurrence of Punch-marked coins is associated with the NBPW strata (Ray 1959). This is largely true of north India and the Deccan. There are also indications that the coinage of the north permeated to the southern Deccan and even to south India during the pre-Maurya period. In these regions, the silver Punch marked coins are often found at sites located along rivers as well as coastal areas, which again indicate the network along which they

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I. According to C-14 dates available for the earliest NBPW levels, at Ujjain and Besnagar (IAR 1967–68:70; Ramachandran 1975:19) 450 B.C. emerges as a central date. This is not too wide off the mark from the dates ascribed to Dhānyakṣaṭaka and Amravati. It is also incorrect to credit only the Mauryan expansion in particular for the wide distribution of this ware. In the light of a series of much earlier C-14 dates '... there is a reasonable link between the spread of early Buddhism, trade and this deluxe ware, perhaps from the pre-Maurya period' (Deo et Joshi 1972:61–62).
In the southern Deccan, an analysis of three Punch-marked hoards (Karimnagar, Gulbarga and Raichur) revealed only 'Pre-Maurya' and 'Maurya issues', these being suspected to have been buried at different times in the Mauryan period (Gupta 1961:2). The ratio between the pre-Maurya and the Maurya issues in the Raichur hoard is 4:1. It is suggested that these were deposited anticipating an impending Maurya attack in this region (ibid. 2-3). In another case study, a general observation on 2,846 Punch-marked coins in the Madras Museum revealed that nearly 20% belong to the 'Pre-Maurya' variety (Altekar 1960:786). An analysis of the Eyyal hoard (in Kerala) revealed that 17% of the Punch-marked coins belonged to the 'Pre-Maurya' variety (Unnithan 1963:28). Further south, at Kottayam in Kerala, while 73 silver Punch-marked coins belonged to the 'pre Maurya' variety, 89 were 'Maurya' coins (Gupta 1966:8).

The significance of Amaravati and Dhānyakatākā can be viewed within this context. Located in the delta region, having wharfs and navigational channels for commercial purposes (Ghosh et Sarkar 1967:168-177; IAR 1962-63:1), it is possible to characterize these as 'ports of trade' (after Polanyi). Such ports originated in neutral places where silent trade or a simple form of barter took place (Revere in Polanyi 1957:38-63). It is therefore possible that this settlement at Dhānyakatākā may have acted as a point of contact giving access to the Krishna valley. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain the isolated occurrence of the NBPW with BRW

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I. Punch-marked coins identified as 'Pre-Maurya', 'Maurya' is hypothesised by various numismatists who use their own classification method for this purpose. We have only taken up their views as corroborative evidence.
from the earliest levels on an extensive scale only at these two sites (situated opposite each other) in the lower Krishna.

The port of trade has been characterized as, 'a mechanism for transferring goods from one system to another, is typically associated with redistributive systems, and typically involves the collection of commodities which lend themselves to political control (corn, slaves, precious metal) and the distribution of luxury goods to a limited privileged class' (Humphreys 1978:56).

Dhānyakaṭaka is located in close proximity to diamond mines situated on the opposite bank (Burgess 1882:pl. II). There are sources yielding high quality copper near the Krishna river in the Guntur District (Foote 1916:129). A goldsmith's mould was unearthed in Phase II (still the BRW–NBFW phase) (IAR 1963–64:4; I964–65:2) and may indicate that gold from Karnataka continued to reach the lower Krishna valley.² Interestingly, the very name Dhānyakaṭaka i.e. 'store/mountain of grain' may point to the original function of this place as a centre of exchange where paddy played an important role.³

In fact the very term kaṭaka or kaṭaka may have derived from kada 'to pass through, traverse, proceed, pass' (DED 929)<katai

I. Some of these mines yielded Early Iron Age pottery (Foote 1916:124).

2. The megalithic burials in Nargarjunakonda revealed gold beads and other ornaments of gold (Subrahmanyam 1975:194).

3. The association of early coastal sites with paddy is not uncommon. The name of Salihundam which is a coastal site (near Kalingapatnam) may be derived from Salipataka/Salikaṭaka, which means 'the hill of rice' (Subrahmanyam 1964:3–4). In the following section we shall indicate such instances in association even with coastal sites of Tamilnadu.
'end, limit, boundary, entrance, gate, place, shop, market, shop located in a place' (DED 958; PPTT 205). All these etymological derivations indicate movement, location and a place of exchange. Similarly, the earliest group of inscriptions at Amaravati calls Dhānyakataka a negama i.e. nigama (vide Chanda 1919–20:262 No. 4; Ghosh 1979:101 No. 6). The formation of the word nigama is from ni + gama, where ni means 'meeting' or 'coming together' prefixed to gama (Rhys Davids et Stede 1959:354). Thus kaṭaka and negama have a common meaning and it also reflects the actual situation of Dhānyakataka as an entrepôt where people moved in and out and was located between two socio-economic systems prevalent in the north and in the south.

It is therefore, not surprising that the resident elite group comprised of the metropolitan state agent, their local collaborators, and long distance trade operators (supra Table No. 4, for the Pre Sātavāhana political and administrative elite in Macro Zone I). At Amaravati, a granite upright pillar having the Mauryan polish, revealed an inscription by a kumāra (Ghosh 1970:101 No. 3). Palaeographically this inscription falls into the same category of those limestone sūdī inscriptions found in Period I–B at Amaravati, dated to the Maurya period. The most important inscriptions found from this level are those of rājakumāri Samiliya, Senagopa Mudukutala and panika sēṭṭhi Cūlananda (Sarma 1975:66 pl. viii No. 74). There is another granite upright pillar found at Amaravati recording a donation made by a sēṭṭhi (named Maukasa), systematically engraved as in the Girnar edict of Asoka (ibid. 70, pl. II No. 556).

In this connection we may suggest that the sēṭṭhi individuals
who recorded their endowments during the contemporary period as the *kumāra*, can be considered as merchant-bankers from north India associated with long distance trade operations. As our study indicates, with the exception of the Bhattiprolu inscriptions, the term *setthi* does not occur in Andhra from the Early Historic period until the late Sātavāhana period. On the contrary, *vapiya* of *vapika* is used for merchant and *herapika* for dealers in gold or coined money (infra pp. 467-). Further to this, considering the level of socio-economic development, it is extremely doubtful whether these regions could have local *setthis* i.e. merchant-bankers as early as the 4th/3rd Cent. B.C. Our study indicates that the task of operating the production-distribution network during the initial period was managed by the local political elite.

The very occurrence of *NBPW* along with *BRW* during Period IA and IB at Amaravati points to an involvement by specialized groups in this trade mechanism. For instance, Period IB, which is identified as the Asokan period at Amaravati, shows an increased occurrence of *NBPW* over Period IA and it also has *NBPW* of all shades viz. golden, silvery, steel-bluish and black, indicating an intensification of trade during the Maurya period (Sarma 1975:61).

In addition, the introduction of coined money from the north, obviously occurred with the arrival of northern merchants. It is pointed out that money can be used in three different ways viz. as a medium of exchange, as a standard of value and as a means of payment (Polanyi in Dalton 1965:175-203). Judging by the occurrence

I. The solitary occurrence of a *setthi* is found at Bhattiprolu (Buhler 1894:328:No. viii), and these inscriptions belong to the post Ist Cent. B.C. period. In any event, the non-occurrence of *vapika* at Bhattiprolu is very significant.
of the 'pre Maurya' variety of Punch-marked coins, it may be assumed that before trade and production expanded in the southern Deccan, northern merchants may have used the silver Punch-marked coins as a standard of value. Since silver is rare in the south, its intrinsic value may have prompted the local groups to exchange their items for these coins. It is pointed out that money can be introduced in societies where it has exchange use within a limited sphere without creating a market economy (ibid.). Therefore, the circulation of this high value currency may have been initially restricted to certain localities and even to a limited social group.

During the Maurya and the post-Maurya period, a more popular use of coined money developed in the lower Krishna. Money used for exchange purposes 'develops not from random barter by acts of individuals, but in connection with organized external trade and internal markets' (ibid. 195). The greater occurrence of NBPW, more frequent visits by sethis linked to long distance trade, a more organized development of production units in the form of gôsthi within the nîgama may have conditioned this situation. The occurrence of a goldsmith's mould, glass bangles, ear-rings etc. in Phase II at Dhânyakâtsaka (IAR 1963-64:4; 1964-65:2) points to the existence of a consumer and luxury production-distribution vortex during the Maurya period. The significance of this nîgama as a market town is seen by the occurrence of a large hoard of Punch-marked coins (nearly 8000 coins), which is believed to have been deposited during the end of the 3rd Cent. B.C. (Gupta 1963:141-9). Kosambi believes that this hoard was deposited during the reign of Bphadratha (1966:52). It is obviously the familiarity with these coins that may have resulted in the occurrence of certain symbols
on the donative records. For instance, the fonative record of the Kalavairagama (inscribed on a granite) pillar is palaeographically similar to the kumara inscription and to the letters engraved on potsherd No. 73 found in Period I-B (Sarma 1975:75).

Interestingly this inscription carries a nandipada symbol in this instance, the nandipada may have been purely a representation of a ritual/auspicious symbol. Yet the frequent occurrence of this symbol on north Indian coins cannot be overlooked (Allan 1936/1975; Gupta 1961; 1963). Another inscription belonging to the earliest group at Amaravati carries the symbol described as a 'triangle-headed standard' (vide Ghosh 1979:101 No. 5, Pl. II).

This symbol again is clearly associated with the north Indian coins (Allan op.cit.) and also occur on the Hatigumpah inscription of Kāravēla. However, it must be emphasised that the highest stage of using coins (representing different denominations and its profuse occurrence) seems to have developed in the post Ist Cent. BC, more specifically during the Roman-Sātavāhana period in the southern Deccan. This developmental pattern is true of south India too.

The most cognate and the actual linkage between the earliest local entrepreneurs (represented by the political elite) and the long distance trade mechanisms occurred at the urban centres of production. Infact the structural formation of these units of production indicates the nature of this interaction, the actual economic strength of the political elite and the infrastructural basis it provided for greater expansion in craft and commercial

I. At Bhattiprolu, two sheets of pure gold from casket I carries two identical nandipada symbols similar to the one on the Kalavairagama inscription (Rea 1964:pl. I. iv nos. 2-3).
activity in the post 1st Cent. B.C. period.

It is suggested that gāma in the north Indian context were settlements of kin, professional or occupational groups, and could also form an integral part of the nigama (Wagle 1966:21). This appears to have been the pattern in the lower Krishna valley. Judging by a series of village settlements such as Kalavaira gāma, Kudūra, Nahapita gāma mentioned in the earliest groups of inscriptions at Amaravati (supra p.249 Table No.3), it clearly shows the early formation of the nigama at Dhānyakaṭaka. One inscription in fact mentions a community named Vitapala from the gāma of Nahapita (Ghosh 1979:102 No. 14). On another occasion an individual from Thabaka kula (family involved in copper crafts?) is mentioned (Chanda 1919-20:263 No. 7).

The nigama as a production-distribution centre may have attracted different interest groups to take up residence there. The occurrence of the term gōṣṭhi in association with the nigama signals this situation. Such gōṣṭhi organizations existed at Dhānyakaṭaka and Bhattiprolu during the pre-Christian period (Ghosh et Sarkar 1967:175; Buhler 1894:326-329). Thus, the gōṣṭhi and the nigama may have acted as a convenient mechanism integrating the pre-existing clan based units of production to suit the new production relations through a new division of labour, finally giving an integrated identity to the resident community as nigamaputa.

It is possible that some of the clans or families who performed specialized tasks in the pre-existing situation, may have subsequently identified themselves as a gōṣṭhi within the nigama. In the Bhattiprolu inscriptions, we come across a
community by the name Arahadina goṣṭhi (Buhler 1894:329 No. ix). Another calls itself the Ayasaka goṣṭhi (ibid. No. x). It is suggested that this committee represented ironsmiths (Hettiarachchi 1973:45). A third committee is known as the Simha goṣṭhi (Buhler op.cit. 328 No. vi). Probably, this name may have been

Table No. 16 Committees, communities and groups mentioned in the Bhattiprolu inscription.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Casket No.</th>
<th>Ins. No.</th>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Individuals and Personal names/s</th>
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</thead>
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<td>2</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>goṣṭhi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sāmaṇa, Jetha, Bharata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>Gōshālaka</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kūra</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>goṣṭhi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sāmaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>V</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hiraṇakāra Gāmaṇī</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Simha-gōṣṭhi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kubiraka rāja (panukha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Arahadina- goṣṭhi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Incised crystal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nātugāma</td>
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<tr>
<td>(do.)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Ayasaka- goṣṭhi</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I. At Sanchi Arahadina occurs as a personal name (Buhler 1894a: I01 No. 44; I06 No. 83; I07 No. 90).
applied due to the prowess associated with that animal. Interestingly, the head of the nīgama, Kubiraka rāja, himself was the pamukha of this gōsthi. The lion may have even represented the totem symbol of this group in a pre-existing clan/tribal situation (Hettiarchchi op.cit.). It is not altogether impossible that the lion symbol may have been related to economic prosperity.

The early excavations at the Amaravati stūpa yielded a seal of lapis lazuli. It carried a figure of a lion (facing left, holding a staff/sword) and an early Brahmi legend reading bhūtīsama ('the extreme limit of riches') (Rea 1905–06:II8 pl. xlix No. 12).

Interestingly, the pamukha of the gōsthi was rāja Kubira and his name also carries the meaning prosperity. We may also note that the lion was also featured in the subsequent period on Sātavāhana coins. The lion therefore may have represented prosperity and riches in this context. In another inscription, we come across an individual from the community called the Gōshālaka, who was also a member of yet another gōsthi (Buhler op.cit. 327 No. III). It is quite possible that this community itself may have been integrated within the gōsthi. The occurrence of a hiṟapakāra gāmani is again an interesting feature (ibid. 328 No. v). The association of gāmani with professional/specialists - residential - kin group leadership is not unknown in the Early Historic context (Paranavitana 1960–61:1–7; Perera 1978). We also come across the term mātuqāma (a group of women) in another inscription at Bhattiprolu (Buhler 329 No. x). The exact nature of the relationship these individuals had with each other is not known. Yet, the occurrence of this particular inscription on the incised crystal carrying the term Āyasaka gōsthi, is significant.
The continued and ever increasing association between the local political elite and the commercial network appears to have enhanced the economic base, supplementing their hegemonic power to control the primary producer, evolving an efficient infrastructure for the purpose of manufacture and channeling the surplus production to external and even internal markets. The occurrence of a donative record belonging to a local chieftain titled Dhamma reṇā Asokasiri at Salihundam during the 2nd/1st Cent. B.C. period is significant (Gadre 1955-56:87-88). The location of Salihundam close to the port town of Kalingapattanam, a link-site in the coastal trade route, is important in this context. The occurrence of silver Punch-marked coins within the Megalithic-BRW context here is very significant (Subrahmanyan 1964:21). Further to this, we may also take note of the suffix siri associated with a personal name. Sīrī from sri means noble, best etc. It is also another attribute given to goddess Lākṣmi, patron female deity of wealth and prosperity, who played a significant role as a cult figure amongst the merchant community. In the subsequent period sīrī was taken up by the Satavāhanas and their successors including the contemporary local elite groups. Pituda, the market town destroyed by Khāravela, was originally controlled by Ava raja, (Sircar 1965:214) and it was most probably located near Masulipatam in Andhra (Sircar 1939:48-49).

The political and economic consolidation of the local political elite, in the post Maurya period, can be demonstrated best from the evidence available from the Bhattiprolu inscriptions (Buhler 1894:326-329), with supplementary evidence from the early
inscriptions of Amaravati. The political elite, seems to have exercised a control over labour and surplus through a vertical extension of authority along the production and the settlement hierarchy.

Let us first take up the internal production hierarchy. According to the Bhattiprolu inscriptions, at the helm of the hierarchy, within the *nigama*, was *rāja Kubira*, who is called *pamukha*. He was also the *pamukha* of the Simhagōsthī which may have had some superior status than the other gōsthī organizations there. At a level below *rāja Kubira* were at least three designations viz. *gāmāpi, jēta* and *seṭhī*, who held rank status within the *nigama* by virtue of their functional role in production-distribution units of the economy. Next in the hierarchy, on the basis of an early inscription from Amaravati, was the *āvesanika*

Table No. The settlement and production hierarchy. 1st Cent. B.C., lower Krishna Valley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>rāja</th>
<th>(pamukha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>nigama, pura</em></td>
<td><em>gāmāpi, jēta, seṭhī</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gōsthī</td>
<td><em>āvesanika</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gāma/ūr</em></td>
<td><em>(dilpin)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kula</td>
<td><em>(kammika)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. It is however uncertain whether *jēta* always had an equal status at par with the *gāmāpi* and *seṭhī* (Srivastava 1968:213-214).
or the foreman (Ghosh 1979:103 No. 38). The existence of the Śvesanika logically implies that he oversaw a group of artisans or craftsmen i.e. silpīn and also kammaka (kammakāra) or hired labour. The vertical extension of the control and authority over the primary producer by the rāja is demonstrated in one instance. There is a clear reference in an inscription to relic caskets donated by one gosthi, the work of which i.e. manufacture, was done on the orders of rāja kubiraka viz. '... majūsa cha shamugo yena kubirako rāja anki' (Buhler 1894:329 No. ix).

The probable extension of authority along the settlement hierarchy is another interesting feature. Perhaps, it is not an exaggeration to state that the earliest administrative nucleus organized by the local political elite, in the lower Krishna region, functioned within the nigama e.g. the nigama committee mentioned in the Bhattiprolu inscriptions (Buhler 1894:328 No. viii). At one level, internally, this committee may have had some authority over other committees or the gosthi. At another level, the committee of the nigama or pura had control over other smaller settlement units, probably for the purpose of extracting surplus labour and production. Most probably, the villages mentioned in the earliest inscriptions at Amaravati may have been such satellite settlements under the hegemony of Dhānyakāṭaka. Probably, a similar situation may have existed in association with the nigama at Bhattiprolu, which had its agrarian-villages sustaining the non-

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1. The early inscriptions of Andhra do not mention silpīn or kammaka. The existence of these two groups has to be inferred. It is interesting that a 1st Cent. B.C./A.D. inscription from Sanchi mentions the term kāmika (kārmika) or worker (Buhler 1894a:98 No. 10).
producing groups as well as the craftsmen and workers. Hence, as pamukha of the nīgama, kubiraka had a distinct advantage of controlling or having authority over the production and settlement hierarchy. In fact the significance of the lēkhaka (scribe or record keeper) and the bhāndāgarika (treasurer or keeper of the store house) must be evaluated within the above context (see Table No. 4).

I - ii

The development of the indigenous, commercial and agrarian elite i.e. gahapati, vaniya, sethi (setthi), herānīka can be attributed to a greater intensification of craft and trade activity and an expansion in agriculture in the post 2nd/1st cent. B.C. period. The agrarian base had already stabilized in the lower Krishna basin to a considerable extent that it was producing sufficient surplus to sustain non-agrarian resident communities during the Mauryan occupation and possibly for export purposes i.e. from Dhāanyakatāka. Most probably, there was clan ownership and some degree of control by the clan chieftain over land and its produce. It is significant that we do not come across the term gahapati in the earliest inscriptions of Amaravati.

The development of private ownership in land may be shown as the most crucial factor leading to greater social change based on unequal property rights. Depending upon the relative fertility of

I. One of the most consistent elements that accompanies sedentarization and agrarian production is firstly, a very slow disintegration of the communal character and the stabilization of production relations associated with the householding group. In a pre-
of the land and the degree of labour input along with the availability of implements of production (for agriculture), irrigation facilities and draught animals — the productivity of the land holdings tend to have a differentiated character in terms of output. Certain clan/household groups with differentiated development of resources based on land and agriculture came to establish themselves as an intermediary group between the ruling political elite and the primary producers in the agricultural sector.

The fact that gahapati, vāṇiya, āśāhī, herāṇikā are not directly associated with the political — administrative groups in their earliest donative records, may indicate their probable independent origins as socio-economic groups, depending less upon a political base. It is likely that such individuals, especially the gahapati and vāṇiya, originally emerged from the clan or tribal groups, which indicates that there were certain individuals other than the political elite within the clan or the tribe who had the potential to mobilize resources. In fact the earliest inscriptions

Cont'd .... f.n. from p. 460 urban context, the basic livelihood in the agrarian tracts is primarily based on land and its produce viz. the very survival of the household depends on its ability to retain the land. The household therefore plays a crucial role in advancing agriculture in its land and producing a surplus so as to sustain itself and the rest to be exchanged or disposed as tribute/tax to a dominant group of rulers (Wolf 1966:3-4). This may be called a stage when the primary producers becomes a dependent peasantry who are producing for a superior authority and where land usage is acquired through lineage affiliation (vide Dalton 1972:385-416).

I. Gahapati (gṛhpati) literally means 'lord/head/master of the household'. The attempt to equate social groups with ritual status and to locate the gahapati in the third group i.e. vāṇiya requires caution as the application of this equation cannot be justified in the south (also see R. Thapar 1974:95-123). Though in its original context gahapati implied 'householder', it could be extended to cover the headship over occupational groups based on the kula and perhaps inclusive of the gōtra as well (Wagle
at Amaravati refer to a Thābaka kula (Chanda I919-20:263 No. 7).

Similarly, we also hear of a Cūla, who identifies himself as a member of the Fakōṭaka clan (Ghosh I979:1O2 No. 24). It is precisely from such situations that the gahapati emerged in the post 1st Kent. B.C. period. The occurrence of a gahapati from the Fakōṭakas, who are known to the 3rd Cent. A.D. inscriptions as the Vākāṭakas, is a case in point (Chanda I919-20:267 No. 27). Another interesting feature is that with the occurrence of the gahapatis in inscriptions from the 1st Cent. B.C., there is a near disappearance of the collective donations made by clans and gāmas, which were relatively common during the previous era.

It is possible to suggest that the initial accumulation of wealth in the hands of the gahapatis derived from agricultural activity, hence they were largely rural based, though urban based gahapatis are not unknown in Andhra. This requires further elaboration.

Taking up the background of the gahapatis in north India, Fick goes on to point out the close association of this group with land and cultivation, though their involvement in other professions such as carpentry or weaving was not unknown (I920:253). It is also suggested that the gahapatis may have represented the group responsible for the development of villages in the new areas, who acted as financiers to the cultivators and traders and perhaps had semi-official status (R. Thapar I961:65-66). The urban-based setthi-

Cont'd ... f.n. from p. 144, I966:151-156). The gahapati inscriptions invariably mention the kula, the nuclear family and the extended family. One inscription even uses the term jāti (Sivaramamurti I977:279 No. 35). This clearly implied a wider kin group (Wagle I966:159) and it is not surprising that from the later Sātavāhana period, more specifically the Ikṣvāku period they begin to mention kula and gotra names.
gahapatis, who were persons of distinction even during the time of
the Buddha grew in wealth and broadened their sphere of activities
through the srēṇi and the nīgama, especially during the Maurya and
the post Maurya period (vide Majumdar 1969:41, 75 ff;

This agrarian-rural connection of the gahapati can be deduced
from several inscriptions in Andhra. A late Sātavāhana inscription
from Amaravati records the donation of an upright pillar by the
daughter of gahapati Chandamuka, in association with one Bāha
who is identified as a halika (hālīka) (Chanda 1919-20:274 No. 55).
Hālīka is a ploughman, obviously a resident in the agrarian tracts
and may have had economic and social ties with the gahapati. This
connection is more apparent from an inscription in western India
at Sālarvadi (Karle) which refers to a kuṭubini, (her husband)
a halika kuṭubika and (their son) a gahapati (Luders 1973:No.1121).1
In Orissa an inscription from Udayagiri-Khandagiri cave datable
to the 1st Cent. B.C., mentions a halakhi who donated a cave (Banerji
1915-16:162).2

It is also apparent that though the gahapatis chiefly made

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1. An inscription from Kanheri (western India) calls the same
female gharīni in one inscription (Luders 1973:No. 1018), a
bhogī in another (ibid. 1013) and in yet another, a nun (ibid.
1014). The term bhogī is associated with land and the right to

2. A 3rd Cent. A.D. inscription from Gurzala (District Guntur)
mentions a deity of the city named Halampura (Sastri 1941-42:
123-25). This literally means 'plough city'. It is interesting
to note that the excavation at Kesarpalle (District Krishna)
revealed structures (in association with 3-4 Cent. A.D. pottery)
that may have been used for storing grain (Sarkar 1956:51-
52).
their donations at urban centres (Amaravati, Vijayagiri), they were largely residents of village (gāma or īr) settlements, at least in those located close to cities. The earlier mentioned daughter of gahapati Chandamukha is described as a resident of Thurughūra (Chanda op.cit.). Another inscription mentions one gahapati Rāhula from Hiralūra (Sivaramamurti 1977:302 No. 120) and yet another inscription from Amaravati carries the following line '... gāme vāthavasa gahapatisa Vākātakasa gahapatikini ...' (ibid. 304 No. 126). We also come across an inscription from Nagarjunakonda where the famous upāsika Bodhisiri states that her father-in-law gahapati Revata was a resident of Govagāma (Vogel 1929-30:22-23). We have already indicated that īr (from īr) is synonymous with gāma, indicating a village settlement in the agrarian tracts (supra p.241). A late Sātavāhana inscription (of the reign of Śrī Pulamāvi) may give us additional information on this aspect (Suktankar 1917-18:153-155). This inscription clearly mentions a gahapati, a resident of the village Vepuraka who caused a reservoir (taṭāka) to be excavated (khānita) in this village (which was under the supervision of Kumaradatta, the gaulmika) located in the Janapada of Sātavāhanihāra (administered by Mahāsenapati Skandanāga). We have already indicated that this village located in the (Adoni Taluk of ) Bellary District was probably a frontier region administered by a Mahāsenapati. It is then possible to suggest (as R. Thapar has done for north India) that, this is an instance where the gahapatis contributed in the extension of agriculture in newly opened up areas. In this context it is incorrect to consider that the efforts of the Ikṣvākus (presumably reflected in the epithet 'Pa satasahasa hala satasahasa')
had any connection with the emergence of this agrarian elite. It is more correct to consider that the Ikṣvākus probably extended a certain amount of royal patronage to such peripheral areas which were already opened up by the pioneering efforts of the gahapati groups in the pre-Ikṣvāku period.

There were however, gahapatis who resided at urban and port centres, at least during the Ikṣvāku period. An inscription during the time of Vīraspurisadatta records the line "... Dhamakakā cava vasa Samghila gahapatina ..." (Chhabra I959-60:91). The gahapatis also had socio-economic ties with other urban groups. For instance, on one occasion a gharani joins another lady from Pugaratha (Sivaramamurthi I977:279 No. 35) while another gharani associated herself with an upāsaka from Dhānyakaṭaka (ibid. 279 No. 36). In a third inscription, we come across a specific reference to a vañjia Samuda who is identified as the son of gahapati Samgha. Samuda and his wife, a gharani, are mentioned as residents of the adhisthāna (administrative capital) in Pukiratha (ibid. 298 No. I02). An inscription from Ghantasala mentions a vañjia and his son a gahapati who were residents of Kaṭakasala, the port city (Vogel I957-58:3-A). In fact, a whole series of inscriptions connecting the gahapatis and the vañjia indicates such a situation. Conversely, we also hear of a wife of a merchant making a donation to a pindaṭīka monk residing in a village (ibid. 298 No. I03). Considering the urban-rural and the gahapati-vāniya, setthi, heraniya interaction, this free movement connecting settlement units is not a surprising one.

I. This is apparent in several other inscriptions as well. For instance, an inscription from Amaravati mentions a Mahāśāvāla i.e.,
It is precisely from this agrarian base that the gahapati group originally drew their wealth. Interestingly, the largest number of gahapati inscriptions are found in the post 1st Cent. B.C. and one is tempted to make a connection between their period of socio-economic affluence with the intensification of craft and commercial activity and the political occupation of Andhra by the Sātavāhanas.

In her study, Chatterjee clearly indicates the development of urban centres and associated craft groups in Andhra during the post 1st Cent. B.C. (1976:147-203). It is our contention that a fair portion of the wealth accumulated with the gahapati families were invested in trade and commerce, which paid rich dividends and gave them greater material prosperity. A series of inscriptions carry strong evidence on the socio-economic and kinship ties binding the gahapati setthi/vaṇīja, herāpika, navika and kogṭhāgārika groups.

We are able to derive the following information related to the gahapati, setthi/vaṇīja and navika groups from the Sātavāhana-Ikṣvāku inscriptions.

1. Gahapati (son a) Mahānavika (Vogel 1947-48:3-E)
2. Gharanīya (husband a) Mahānavika (ibid.)
3. Gahapati (father a) Vaṇīya (ibid. 3-A).

Cont'd ... f.n. from p.465 greatherdeman (Sivaramamurti 1977:295 No. 91). A second inscription on a conch shell from Salihungad mentions a Gōvala (Subrahmanyam 1964:121). It is obvious that such groups may have had a pastoral background in the past and were resident in rural areas, though they patronized urban religious centres.
5. Gahapati (son a) Vāniya  (ibid. 298 No. 102).
6. Gharaniya (husband a) Vāniya (ibid.).
8. Gahapati (son and d-i-l) Vāniya/ Vāṇikiniya Vātiya/Vārtiya/Vārtikiniya

It is clear that members of the gahapati group ventured into mercantile activity and they married into gahapati families, thus gaining access to more wealth. In one case, the son of a gahapati undertook voyages as a master-mariner and married from a gahapati family. The location of this Mahānāvika’s inscription at Kanṭaka sela, the great port city, is therefore natural. In another instance, we observe a situation where the father, a gahapati is mentioned as a resident of Dhānyakaḍa, while the son, a vāniya who married into a merchant family resided at a pattana, located near (present) Uppugundur which was apparently closer to the sea during the Early Historic period (Chhabra I959-60:189). From the post Christian period, in Andhra and western Deccan, the gahapati families did not exclusively depend upon agriculture to amass wealth. Trade and their linkage with exchange activity related to gold and cash brought in more wealth into their hands.

In this context the herajika and other related groups may give us an insight to this economic interaction between the commercial and the agrarian elites of this time. At the first instance one may link this term with goldsmiths. However, there are specific

I. In making donations, at Kuda: a gahapati is associated with a setṭhi and a gahapati is associated with a Sārthavāha (Luders 1973 No. I056, I062). At Mahanad, again a gahapati is associated with a setṭhi (ibid. No. I073). At Kol, a gahapati and his son, a setṭhi is mentioned (ibid. I075).
terms that have been used for goldsmith in the Deccan viz. Kanheri: suvargakokara (Luders I973: No. 986), Junnar: suvargakara (Burgess I876-I879:94 No. I3), Bhattiprolu: hiragakara (Buhler I894:328 No. v). The clan name of the famous Mahatalavara family, Hiramaka, certainly does not give the meaning goldsmith. It is interesting to note that hiragyika in the northern texts (e.g. Divyavadana, Mahavastu means goldsmith, while in the Visuddhimagga, a southern text, it means banker and money changer (Rhys Davids et Stede I959: 733). We are therefore inclined to believe that heragika (from hiragyaka) in this context means 'a person dealing in gold, gold coins/or bullion. It is significant that at Kanheri and Junnar (western Deccan) both suvargakokara and heragika occur in inscriptions (Luders I973: Nos. 986, 993, IIO3, I177, I179), which substantiates our argument in favour of the identity we have assigned to the heragika.

Our argument is further confirmed by the close association the heragikas had with the other commercial and agrarian elite groups. We give below a table indicating this association and also certain other allied groups in it.

I. It is significant that at Pauni, inscriptions bearing the terms vapiya and heragika occur around the 1st Cent. B.C. which clearly pre-dates their appearance to those in the lower Krishna valley (for inscriptions vide Deo et Joshi I972:41 Nos. 29-30).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>(son a)</td>
<td>Herañika</td>
<td>(Sivaramamurti 1977: 294 No. 86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vaniya</td>
<td>(son a)</td>
<td>Herañika</td>
<td>(ibid. 296 No. 97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gharaniya</td>
<td>(son a)</td>
<td>Herañika</td>
<td>(ibid.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vanika</td>
<td>(brother in-law a)</td>
<td>Kothakārika</td>
<td>(Vogel 1929-30:22-23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td></td>
<td>(a tulakica i.e. one who weighs gold?)</td>
<td>(Sivaramamurti 1977: 298-9 No. 104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Vaniya</td>
<td>(wife of merchant)</td>
<td>Vaninīya</td>
<td>(ibid. 299 No. 108)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dhanikasathanikāya</td>
<td>(wife of rich caravan leader)</td>
<td>Dhanikasathanikāya</td>
<td>(ibid. 299 No. 108)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table clearly indicates that not only did the gahapati group generate capital in the agricultural sector but reinvested it in commercial activity and also had some control over capital (in the form of coins or bullion) during this period.

The Kothakārika obviously functioned as a person who stored up wealth (cash or bullion) or even their surplus grain. It is evident that the intensification of the cash nexus in the post-1st Cent. B.C. period led to a strong economic role played by this group.

Apart from the various new types of coins that came into circulation with the Sātavāhana hegemony, the bullion provided by the Roman

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I. The Pali term dhanika means creditor. When this is combined with Sathanika or Sarthavāha, it means a merchant-banker or settī. This was a joint donation by the Vaniya and Dhanikasathanikā.

2. Even during the time of the Buddha the gahapati/kutumbika group was involved in money lending (Fick 1920:257).
traders supplemented an intense cash nexus during this period.

The eminent position secured by the Punch-marked coins as a high-value universal currency maintained its position even after the post-Maurya period. It is interesting that 'Maurya' and 'post-Maurya' issues of Punch-marked coins have been found in the Dharwar region (Murthy 1975:33-34). With the retreat of the Mauryas, local ruling houses in the southern Deccan issued lead coins, which were a low-value currency meant for local transactions (Wheeler 1947:287; Murthy op. cit. 43-46). This also indicates the growing interest maintained by the political elite over the lucrative trade activity.

During and even after the emergence of the Sātavāhanas, the Punch-marked coins enjoyed a primary position circulating as a universal high-value currency in the south which is a clear indication of the regional interaction via commercial activities. The Punch-marked coins in fact were minted at the commercial mint town of Kondapur during the Sātavāhana period (Sahni 1973:47; Gupta 1961:132-135). The Nasthullapur hoard was associated with the coins of Augustus and Tiberius, indicating a deposition around the 1st Cent. A.D. (ibid. 29; Gupta 1965:175). At Chandravalli, strata 7 (middle Andhra level) yielded a silver Punch-marked coin from a stratified context (Wheeler, op.cit. 288-9).

The expansion of the Sātavāhana power to the eastern Deccan was a clear encroachment on the resources and commercial routes of this region. The unification of the two coasts controlled by an

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I. Though the Sisupalgarh Punch-marked coin-mould is supposed to belong to forgers, the fact that it was forged as late as Period III (c. 300 A.D.) is significant (Lal 1949:99)
overall authority provided the necessity for a second universal coinage (Lahiri 1972:62 ff). A Sātavāhana minting site existed at Nagarjunakonda (Sarma 1973). Though Lahiri maintains this to be the earliest universal coinage in the south, the Punch marked coins prevailed before the Sātavāhana coins. The Sātavāhana coinage consisted mainly of minor metals viz. copper, potin, lead. There is no record of gold coins, and rare silver coins were issued only by three or four Sātavāhana kings (Sarma 1972:75-100). The high frequency of low value currency issued by the Sātavāhanas indicates a further intensification of commercial activities in the local areas in commodity circulation. The issue of the ship type coin and the bilingual coins found in the south-east coast (Rapson 1967:22-23 Pl. v; Mirashi 1941:43-45; Sarma 1973; Sircar 1963) clearly establishes the interest shown by the ruling houses in trade exchange and commerce at the local level. The continuation of certain symbols found on the Brahmi inscriptions and BRW pottery on the coins of the Sātavāhanas (Rapson op.cit.) and even by Khārvēla points to a close association with the craft and commercial groups and an interest in commerce by the ruling class.

Supplementing the internal trade exchange vortex was the arrival and expansion of the Roman trade in southern India. The southern Deccan had by the early Christian era become an importer and exporter of luxury items, a situation which was different during the Mauryan period, where the south acted more or less as an exporter.

Eleven out of twenty five findspots of Roman coins in the south

I. Khārvēla's path of expansion moved along the southern coastal route and towards the commercial centres of southern Deccan.
are located in Andhra and a majority of them belong to the post-Ist Cent. period. The influx of the Roman gold saw an additional universal high value currency supplementing the Punch-marked coins. This is clearly indicated by the cancellation of the issuing authority of the Roman coins and the restriking of minute Punch mark on Roman coins (Gupta, op.cit. I965:68-70). Interestingly, mixed hoards always carry only Punch-marked coins and Roman coins and never the Sātavāhana coins, which is indicative of the high-value status of these coins. This situation apparently coincided with the expansion of direct Roman contact with the ports in Andhra and the installation of Roman factories in the east coast during the post-Ist Cent. A.D. period (Wheeler I946; Nagaswamy et Majeed I978; Maloney I968; Chatterjee op.cit.). The notices of classical authors especially of those who belong to the Ist Cent. A.D. and after show an increase in the knowledge about the east coast. Even after the emergence of the Ikṣvākus who also issued their own coinage imitating the Sātavāhana issues (Chattopadhyaya I977:7-9; Subrahmanyam I962), epigraphical notices referring to the use of dinārī by the guilds during the Ikṣvāku period (Sircar I961-62: 2I0-II; I963:84-7) attest to the persistent value of the Roman coins. In the Andhra region, the emergence of the heraṇika coincided with the development of this cash nexus, especially during the post Ist Cent. B.C. period and after.

Under such favourable material conditions, the commercial and the agrarian elite consolidated their socio-economic position to their advantage. It was therefore not surprising that these affluent gahapati-vapīja families showed great munificence in patronizing the Buddhist establishments and had the financial capacity to
stand at par or even excel royalty in making donations. For instance, gahapati Budhisiri, the son of Dhamma vaniya, donated a sēla maḍapa, a vādikā, and a torana to the Buddhist establishment at Kaṇṭakasēla (Vogel I947-48:2-A, B, C). The best example however comes from Naṣārajunakonda where the donations of the pious upāsika Bodhisiri, which were far beyond the donations made by the political elite. It is interesting to note that upāsika Bodhisiri was a descendent of two very affluent families. Both, her grandfather and father were vaniyas, while her maternal uncle was a kothakārika and her father-in-law a gahapati (Vogel I929-30:22-23). In order to substantiate our argument we give below details of her endowments.

I. Cetiya-grha with flooring slabs and a cetiya at Culadhammagiri, Vijayapuri.

2. Cetiya-grha at the Kulaha vihāra.

3. Bodhi-rakkha pāsāda at the Sihala vihāra

4. One cell at the Mahādhammagiri hill

5. A maṭapa pillar at the Mahāvihāra

6. One padānaḍāla at the Dévägiri hill

7. One tank, verandah and maṭapa at Pūrvasāila vihāra

8. A stone maṭapa at the eastern gate of the Mahācetiya at Kaṇṭakasēla.

9. Three cells at Hirumutuwa

10. Seven cells at Pāpīṇa

II. Stone maṭapa at Puṇḍpagiri hill

I2. A stone maṭapa at ... vihāra (Vogel I929-30:22-23).

The direct ownership they had over resources enabled them not only to indulge in conspicuous consumption of this nature, but also reinvest in the economic sphere, such as excavating reservoirs for
agricultural activity (Sukthankar 1917:18:153-155). It is perhaps this strong economic position that may have made them so important to the state. There is reason to believe that the amātya mentioned in the Dharnikota Dharmacakra pillar inscription (during the reign of Puñamāvi) was a grandson of a kutumbika (Sastri 1937-38:259).

Parallel to this we find the vaniya/setthi group also consolidating themselves in the production-distribution mechanism. Firstly, it is clear that they had entrenched themselves in urban centres. The fact that a vaniya's wife and the wife of a banker-caravan leader (Sivaramamurti 1977:299 No. 108) associated themselves in a donation shows the linkage between the local merchants and long distance traders. This also fits in with the specialized commercial activity conducted by merchants. In fact as early as the 3rd/2nd Cent. B.C., we find this situation where an inscription from Amaravati refers to setika panika (Sarma 1975:66) i.e. a merchant-banker dealing in betel leaves, which was most probably exported as a delicacy. The importance of this item of trade is seen when we hear about a panika śrēpi (guild of the dealers in betel leaves) from a 3rd Cent. A.D. inscription at Nagarjunakonda (Sircar 1963: B4-7). In another inscription we come across a gadhika vaniya i.e. dealer in perfumery (Sivaramamurti 1977:303:No. 124). Interestingly, the father of this particular merchant is known as Dhamila vani(ya), which is an obvious reference to a merchant from Tamilaham. We may take note of the strong commercial tradition that prompted the Satavahānas to issue bilingual coins to supplement trade along the Coromandel coast. We may also note that the merchants were obviously involved in the luxury trade and their production base was also geared to this trade. For instance we hear of a
puvika śṛṇi i.e. 'guild of confectioners' situated at Nagarjunakonda (Sircar op. cit. B4-7).

By the Śātavāhana-Ikṣvāku period, the commercial elite had taken over the control of the śṛṇi units and the nigama organizations. There are at least three references from this period which confirm the above view. From a late Śātavāhana inscription we come across the lines '... sethipamukhasa bhadaniyamasa ...' (Sivaramamurti I977:294 No. 87). During the Ikṣvāku period the inscriptions mention '... seṭhi pamakaha nigam(e) ...' (Sircar I963:B 4-7) and 'kulika pamukha ...' (Sircar I961-62:210-II). Thus, the craft cum commercial centres which were originally under the political elite in the pre-Ist Cent. B.C. period, were conclusively under the control of the commercial elite during this time. The very fact that a Nagarjunakonda inscription mentions four śṛṇi units (situated in the Ikṣvāku capital) under the control of the nigama (Sircar I963:B4-7) points to the tremendous power wielded by the commercial elite. Further to this, the nigama acted as a banker (Sircar I961-62:210-211 C) and this again shows the control they exercised along with the heranikas over the movement of capital.

The elitism apparent in this case is very significant. The

I. The hierarchization within the guild prevailed from the earliest period. An early inscription from Amaravati mentions an āvesanika (foreman) (Ghosh I979:103 No. 38). By the Ikṣvāku period they were affluent enough to raise a chhāya stāmbha for an āvesanika who was foreman to coppersmiths (?) at Nagarjunakonda (Sircar I963:16 -I). Contemporary inscriptions also mention specialized craftsmen such as pasanika (stone cutter), cāmmakāra (Sivaramamurti I977:302 No. I19; 28I No. 41) and selavādhāki (Vogel I929-30:22-23). The symbol occurs on an unworked lower portion of a drum slab, and it carries a 3rd Cent. A.D. inscription. It is suggested that this was a mason's mark (Sarma I975:67 pl. xi).
agrarian-commercial elite had probably consolidated their own enclaves within the urban centres. These enclaves were known as \textit{vadhamana} (\textit{vardhamāna}), which means 'grows, multiplies, prospers, increases'. For instance, Dhama \textit{vapiya} and his son \textit{gahapati} Budhisiri were residents of Ukhasirivadhamāna of Kantakasola (Vogel 1947-48: 3). Similarly, at Vijayapuri there was an enclave by the name \textit{Sethivara-vadhamāna} (Sircar 1963:i9), which was obviously a place of residence for the merchant-bankers viz. \textit{sethi} + \textit{vara}, \textit{vara} 'shelter, residence'. Another inscription from Nagarjunakonda mentions a '... Vichayapure Mahārāja Vadhamāna ...' (ibid. I9), i.e. royal enclave.

Another important factor indicating the growing elitism among this group is the necessity to establish social exclusiveness by the 2nd Cent. A.D. when they begin to record their clan origins and even genealogies. This is apparent from the late Sātavāhana period (Sivaramamurti 1977:283 No. 51).

2. Gahapati \textit{Vākāṭaka} (ibid. 304 No. 126).
6. Samana Kulaputa \textit{(IAR I954-55:23)}.

This was an effort to trace back some lineage connection with particular clan groups. The Vākāṭaka-Pakāṭaka connection is a case
THE EXTENDED KIN GROUP OF UPASIKA BODHISIRI AND HER ENDOWMENTS, IN THE REIGN OF

MĀṆIPTA SIRI - VĪRAPURISADĀṬA, C. 3rd CENT. A.D. (A.D. 240 - 260)

Gānapathi Revata + Budhamnikā
RESIDENT AT GŪVĀŚAMA

Revatānikā Hāgamāna Karumbudhina Chamdamukha Budhamnaka + Upāṣikā Mūla Budhamnikā Mūlamnikā Nāgabodhinikā

Māhanūla Chūlamūla Chūlačāmedamukha Māhāčāmedamukha Vīramnikā Nāgamāna Vīramāna (THEIR WIVES BHADASIRI AND MISHI)

Mūla Vanīya + Budha Vanikē (GRAND FATHER)? + ..... Bodhi

Budha Vanika + (MOTHER)? Bhada Bodhismāma Chamda Bodhika Kōthākārika

(Second Apsidal Temple Inscription F, Vogel 1929 - 30: 22 - 23)
in point. Similarly while upāśīka Bodhisiri traces her genealogy
to Mūla vaṇīya (Vogel I929-30:22-23), another individual mentions
that his father was a vaṇīya and grandfather a gaḥapati (Chhabra
I959-60:191).

II – i

The establishment of a village level production-distribution
network, inter-regional resource movement, the emergence of
permanent habitations in the fertile lower valleys in the post-5th
Cent. B.C. period, the location of petty-exchange centres along the
coast and the uneven accumulation of resources in the hands of
chieftains were the most important developmental aspects that
occurred during the late Proto-Historic period. These aspects are
extremely relevant to the ensuing study on the emergence of the
commercial and agrarian elite groups in Macro zone II (Tamilnadu).

The locational zones of the Vēḷir chieftains, which coincided
with the lowland and alluvial tracts including the coastal

I. There is reason to believe that several individuals who made
large scale donations were probably affiliated to the commer-
cial-merchant elite groups. With the exception of two cases
(Sivaramamurti I977:284 No. 55; Khan I969:4) in no other place
do we have descendents mentioning their connections. In one
case, an individual made a permanent endowment of five villages
and 150 dīnārī and deposited it at the nīgama led by the kulika
(Sircar I961-62:210-II). Another individual at Vijayapuri
made a donation of a saḷiḷa maṇḍapa, bara dāḷā (store rooms)
and a saḷī (Sircar I963:8-10). This individual also mentions,
that he made a series of endowments at naḷaṁvāra, girivāra
and negamėvāra (ibid.). In yet another case, a 1st Cent. A.D.
inscription from Amaravati mentions an individual who donated
three elephants for the construction of rails at the Mahāvihāra
(IAR I975-76:60).
megalithic clusters, showed potential traits of developing into nuclear centres in the post-4th/3rd Cent. B.C. period. Not only have these sites been mentioned in the Sangam texts, often archaeological evidence reveal that they had occupational layers extending from the Proto-Historic to the Early Historic period (Maloney 1976:1-4; Champakalakshmi 1975-76:110-122).

It is interesting to note that such habitation nucleii were located in territorial areas of the Vēḷir chieftains, which also contained micro ecological zones having various raw material. On the basis of archaeological and textual evidence, we have already pointed out the existence of a broad spectrum subsistence pattern where several production techniques co-existed in these regions, but depending on the resources, there was also localized specialization. In all probability, by the end of the Proto-Historic period, certain centres occupied by the Vēḷirs had turned out to be petty exchange centres.

To illustrate a few nucleated centres (which were controlled by Vēḷir and non-Vēḷir groups) we may take the following in a south north orientation. Korkai was the strategic point which was the gate way to the Tambapanni valley and its many habitation sites. The sea around this area was the chief repository for pearls and conch shell. The invaluable salt was also found in this area. The Paratavar specialised in maritime industry and the fame of this locality was known in the Mauryan court by the 3rd Cent. B.C. Madurai located in the middle Vaigai valley was in a fertile paddy cultivating area. It was a junction for the routes leading to the Tambapanni valley, the Podiyil hills and the coastal sites, some of them famous for the rice grown there (Madurai 72-73). Kodumbai
near Pudukottai was another Velir centre en route to Madurai from the Kaveri valley. Kaveripattinam (Puhar) was the entry point to the Kaveri valley, where the C-I4 dates provided 315 B.C. for the wharf, which in turn gives an earlier date for the beginning of this site. Uraiýur, described as a place heaped with paddy (Aham 615), was located on the fertile Kaveri valley and controlled the routes reaching from the west (Coimbatore), and was also a Velir stronghold. Within the Kaveri valley and along the north-east coastline there are many habitation sites (with thick BRW deposits) in zones identified with the Velir or the earliest agrarian elite of south India. In the northernmost end was the port of Vírai (Arikamedu), another centre of the Velir, who apparently controlled the tract of land upto the present Vellore region. Further north along the coast was the land of Ilantiraiyan, who controlled port towns (PPTI 501).

If we take into account the notices in the Sangam texts, there was apparently a high concentration of resources i.e., paddy, precious stones and metal, cattle, elephants etc. that seem to have accumulated not only with Velir chieftains but also with the non Velir chieftains as well (vide Table no. I ). Most of these resources circulated within the inter-tribal sector or even to extended regions via the chieftains who were located at these petty exchange centres. It is, therefore, not surprising that a fair amount of silver Punch-marked coins belonging to the 'pre-Mauryan' issues have been found in south India. Of the Punch-marked coins of the Madras Museum (2,846) 20% were 'pre-Mauryan' issues, in the Malabar coast the Eyyal hoard revealed 17% 'Pre-Mauryan' Punch-marked coins and further south of it, in another find of Punch-
marked coins, 73 were 'Pre-Mauryan' and 89 were 'Mauryan' issues (supra pp.344).

It is precisely this wealth that was channeled to a larger exchange network which became more evident in the post-4th Cent. B.C. period. The legends and traditions associated with Agattiyar, the Yādavas of Dvāraka, the Nāgas of the coastal areas (Maloney 1968) point to such elements of early connections. This is useful to establish that even from the pre-5th Cent. B.C. certain areas of the south were not isolated entities. Such contacts provided the extended regions with information on the south for which we have more concrete evidence from the Ashokan edicts, the literary sources (viz. Arthasastra, Indica, the Sri Lanka Chronicles), south Indian Brahmi inscriptions and numismatic sources, establishing a more regular pace of contact from the post-3rd Cent. B.C. period.

Interestingly, the Sangam texts speak of 'wealthy and prosperous men engaged in two pursuits esteemed above all else' (Madurai I20-I22). Most obviously, these two professions were agriculture and trade. It is therefore useful to understand the mechanisms by which these two professions came to be respected and the meaning implicit here in the context of socio-economic relations.

The wide range of professions especially in the field of crafts that emerged by the 2nd-1st Cent. B.C. is a clear indication (as in the case of Andhra) firstly, of the nature of services demanded within the Early Historic society, secondly, the transformation of the pre-existing localized specialization into full-time

I. The Punch-marked coins found in megalithic tombs cannot be placed in a proper chronological context, though they may belong to a pre-Christian or an early Christian date (Das 1947:205-6; 1966:205-6).
specialization for an exchange market and thirdly, the subordinat-
on of labour and the development of private ownership in land and
other resources. Such a situation became possible, as we saw
earlier, by the beginnings of a marketable surplus in agriculture,
where resources gradually became concentrated in the hands of indi-
viduals rather than in clan groups, the former being strongly
enforced by a class stratification which was consolidated through
political domination giving coercive power to such individuals
(*vide* Chapter III).

The political upsurge in the post 3rd Cent. B.C. Tamilaham was
basically to establish hegemony over communities (labour) and
resources (raw material and land) which was contested by the new
ruling class (Mūvēntar) and defended by the original agrarian
(Vēlir) and the pastoral elite. The latter had flourished in an
egalitarian and a rank society. They succumbed to the new politi-
cal elite who were gradually gaining direct or indirect access to
strategic resources and the exchange mechanism.

The primary feature associated with land in the post 3rd Cent.
B.C. period seems to be the development of interest groups where
each attempted to exercise some degree of control over land and its
resources. It is in this context that the Vēlirs came to face the
challenge of the Mūvēntars. Apparently this original agrarian
elite witnessed an erosion of their primary source of wealth
through two processes. First, at the upper level, the political
pressure brought upon by the Vēntar saw their independent territo-
rial units i.e. kudi and nādu, being gradually absorbed into the
larger territorial units represented by the kingdoms. A corre-
ponding absorption of the Vēlir into the services of the kings and
matrimonial alliances saw primary resources circulating within this amalgamated ruling class. This process of amalgamation did take some time as we hear of certain Vēḷirs who were yet independent and resided outside the primary nuclear areas.

At a lower level, the development of new land relations, at least in the fertile tracts, undermined the very structure of the clan-based societies that had maintained a mechanism of circulating resources and the household products to the chieftain as well as the regional exchange mechanism. The development of private ownership in land and the emergence of a land holding and landless group saw the clan-based society giving way to a class structure. The ecology of Tamilaham necessitated the requirement of irrigational facilities, which in turn resulted in a differentiation in the productivity and output in agriculture (supra pp.41-7). Even if we consider the reservoirs associated with the megalithic sites in the north-east to be the outcome of communal labour, by the time the Sangam texts were composed there are references to chieftains, the Vēntar, associating themselves with irrigation (supra Chap. II).

In any event, though the Vēḷir had tracts of land and they, as well as the Vēntar gifted land to poets (vide Kailasapathy 1968:222-3), we do not get a clear insight into the degree of their control over labour in the agricultural sector. More than their subordination to the Vēntar, the Vēḷirs gradually lost their hold on the surplus, due to the emergence of the vēḷēlar or the rich peasant group who could be equated with the gahapati of Macro Zones I and III. They obviously emerged from the peasant groups who resided within the clan-based villages under the chieftains. Therefore it is specifically stated that their only occupation was agriculture (Tel. Porul;
It is suggested that the term Veligama originally implied 'power of managing or controlling the land', while they themselves were known as Velailars (Singaravelu 1966:34 Note 1). This term Veligama in later texts (e.g., Kural 81:2; 212:2 etc.), came to mean generosity or helpfulness (Subrahmanian 1966:801), which may have been a quality associated with rich agriculturists. The Velailar often carry the title kilan and a prefix which is often associated with a place of residence, and it is suggested that kilan means 'the possession or rights over a place' (Dorai Rangaswamy 1968:151-2). It is interesting to note that the term Velailar also implies the 'controllers of flood' (Kanakasabai 1956:113).

"The word Velailar comes from the root vellam, the flood or the water courses, which the Velailar directed into proper channels... the words Vellalar, Veligama and Velailar are derived from their art of irrigation and cultivation ..." (Dorai Rangaswami op.cit. I52), which may indicate the impact of irrigation in creating differentiation in land productivity and a subsequent economic inequality leading to social differentiation. However, it is suggested that there was a distinction between the Velailar groups as 'those who maintained themselves by causing (land) to be ploughed' and 'those who maintained themselves by ploughing (land)' (Sastri 1975:87).

The existence of a group of rich peasants logically implies the existence of poor peasants. There were the agricultural worker or the tiller who was known as ulavar in the fertile tracts.

I. It is also pointed out that the Velailars engaged themselves in six occupations related to agriculture and the rural economy, especially when new land was opened up for settled agriculture. These occupations were cultivation, smithy (iron), pottery, weaving, domestication of animals and hospitality (vide Champakalakshmi op.cit. II9).
(Subrahmanian 1966:144) and *punavan* in the dry cultivating (tipai fields) areas (PPTI 587).

By the 1st Cent. B.C./A.D. period, it is precisely such rich peasants as heads of households who rose to an eminent position. It is noteworthy that after defeating the pastoral Aruvalars (Kurumbars), Karikala parcelled out the land to 24 *kottam* (districts) and 79 *nādu* and gave it to the families of the *Vēlālar* (Kanakasabai *op.cit.* 28-29). This could be seen as an instance of patronage extended to the new agrarian elite by the *VENTar*, perhaps with a view to undermining the *Vēlir*. It is therefore not surprising that a greater intensification of labour did enable a large surplus to be produced and we hear of the great mansions of the *Vēlālar* located at Kāveripāttinam (Champakalakshmi *op.cit.* II3). They may have been responsible for marketing the paddy filled in boats at Puhār (Pattinap 26-28).

II - ii

It is obvious that in *Tamilaham* the merchants made progress locally where they received greater opportunities for specialization with the development of long distance trade. In this connection, the location of *Tamilaham* between the Krishna valley and Sri Lanka gave these merchants an added advantage.

It is possible that such contacts may have developed in *Tamilaham* at a relatively early date when localized communities associated with maritime activities were absorbed into this trade mechanism. Apart from the *Nāgas*, who have a tradition of commercial activities along the eastern coast (Maloney 1968), the Paratavar may provide
us with an excellent example for this mechanism.

The Paratavar mentioned in the Sangam texts are the ancestors of the present day Paravar community concentrated mainly in the Tirunelveli - Ramanad coastal area (Thurston I909:vi. I40-I55). It is suggested that the term Paratavar derives from para 'to expand/expansion' > paravai 'the sea' (Dorai Rangaswamy I968:I30). During the Sangam period there were pockets of Paratavar spread along the east coast of Tamilam. One such settlement was located at Kalar, on the confluence of the Kaveri, which was under the chieftainship of Matti (Aham. 6, 2II, 226, 376). Again we hear of the southern Paratavar chieftains at the estuary of the Tambapanni, near Korkai (Maduraik I35-I38; Aham 350.I3). Sources associate this community in areas with chank-pearl diving and fishing (vide Hornell I914:65; Aham 200, 210). This group of the Paratavar lived under impoverished conditions.

A second group among the Paratavar were the rich merchants who formed a section of the elite etthi (setti) community in Tamilam. They were essentially an urban group residing at port towns and conducted a lucrative luxury import and export trade in conch shell bangles, spices, gems, horses etc., and possessed stately mansions, ware houses, ships and chariots (Maduraik 315-323; Perumban 319-324; Aham. 86). It is possible that the Paratavar of Tamilam were the same as those who are called Barata in the early inscriptions of Sri Lanka (infra pp.54-6). The nature of their involvement in the commercial vortex clearly indicates that they conducted long distance trade. The change in their community name to Barata and the patronage to Buddhism, on the other hand, is a case illustrating this acculturation to the Great Tradition and the
acceptance of a northern religious ideology. Interestingly, they are not mentioned in the south Indian inscriptions of the contemporary period, but are more frequently mentioned in the inscriptions of Sri Lanka. This may indicate their wider interest with maritime trade than internal trade. There is a solitary occurrence of a Barata, from a casket inscription at Bhattiprolu (Buhler 1894:372). Therefore, as we mentioned before, such specialized merchant groups may have linked the products of the Vēḷir chieftains and other resources to the southern Deccan (probably to the Krishna delta), which may have been carried further north by other merchants.

With the exception of the Paratavar, there is little information about the origins of any particular community specializing as merchants, i.e. vanigal (vanigal), cetti (setthi). Certain references in the Sangam texts indicate instances where individuals went to distant places to amass riches (Aham 93:1-2; 187:1-5; III:1-2, 15). By inference it may be said that they were undertaken as services to a chieftain or to participate in trade. Yet, the sources inform us that a class of merchants specialized in such activities and in all probability may have been linked to the Vēḷir or Vēḷālar who accumulated wealth from agriculture. We have already mentioned the occurrence of Vēḷālar mansions at Puhār (supra p.485). Young

I. It is interesting to note that several notices in the Sangam texts indicate that going in search of wealth was directed to the north. viz. to the north where the Nandas have buried their treasures in the Ganges (Aham 265.1-2; 23); gone beyond the country of Erumai (ibid. 253.9-20); gone beyond the country of Erumai (ibid. 253.9-20); gone beyond the Venkatam (Aham 83.9-10); gone beyond the lofty mountain of the Vadvaka (Nar. 212.5-7); gone beyond the country of the Čera (Aham 389.10); to the land of Nanai (Nar. 391.607). The northern direction obviously was the rich lower Krishna region which was the primary commercial/craft centre of that period.
Kovalan bestowed upon Māthavi, the wealth amassed by his ancestors (Silap. Canto 3). A variety of white rice grown in Tondi (a port town) was well known in Tamilāham (Kurun 210:233; Nar I95:5-6).

These instances show that paddy cultivation was significantly associated with certain centres (e.g. the origins of Bhānyakaṭaka).

The groups involved in agriculture by the 2nd-1st Cent. B.C. were the Vēḷāḷars who also took an interest in commerce.

In the post-2nd Cent. B.C. period, epigraphical literary and numismatic evidence indicate that these merchants traversed Tamilāham especially along the nuclear areas moving up to the hills buying and selling goods, and that they undertook commercial voyages along the coast to Andhra and to Sri Lanka.

Table No. 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Specialization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Mankulam</td>
<td>kāvīty - merchant prince of nikama (No. 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Alankarmalai</td>
<td>pōnkolāvān - goldsmith (No. 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. do.</td>
<td>ūpūvānīkaṇ - salt merchant (No. 34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. do.</td>
<td>pāṇītsavaṇīkaṇ - sugar merchant (No. 37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. do.</td>
<td>kōluvaṇīkaṇ - iron-monger (No. 38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. do.</td>
<td>aṟuvaṇīkaṇ - cloth merchant (No. 43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. pukalur</td>
<td>...vaṇīkaṇ - ...merchant (No. 63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. do.</td>
<td>pōṉvaṇīkaṇ - gold merchant from Karūr (No. 66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Mamantur</td>
<td>tacaṇ - stone mason (No. 71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Aractical</td>
<td>maṇiyvaṇīkaṭaṇ - lapidary/dealer in precious stones (No. 72)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Arikamedu

kaikōḷa - weaver (inscribed potsherd) (Wheeler 1946:II4 No. 16)

symbols: { (No. II); (No. I2); (No. 30); (No. 34, 38); (No. 37); (No. 43) (Mahadevan 1966).
The early Tamil Brahmi inscriptions state that (as early as the 2nd Cent. B.C.) major production centres in the form of guilds existed, at least in the Pāṇḍyan country. The Mankulam inscription introduce us to nikāma (nigama) of Vel-ari located in this region. Interestingly, the head of the nikāma was a merchant prince (kāvitiy). It is significant that the term Vel may well imply Vel and the nikāma may have consisted of Velir who resided here and controlled a centre of production-distribution under a merchant-prince. I Community donations are not unknown during this period, which indirectly implies the integration of communities as single residential groups. For instance, an inscription at Mettupatti, in the same region mentions an endowment made by the residents of Tiṭil (Mahadevan 1966:No. 26). In any event, the case of Vel-ari shows that the traditional agrarian elite had clearly ventured into commerce. In this context, it is useful to recall the occurrence of a potsherd inscription mentionin an Āvi (Āy) at Arikamedu. The ancient Vīraipāṭinām of the Vēlir (supra pp.479-80). Several other inscriptions indicate various specialized items of trade carried by the merchants. This again points to the existence of long distance trade (e.g. gold) where the local merchants were linked to external sources.

It is also interesting to note that such forms of specializa-

I. To this day the Vēlir at Srivaikuntam (Tirunelveli) reside in a separate habitation in an enclosed area. They are called Koṭṭai-Vēlir 'the Vēlir of the Fort'.
tion may have intensified with the expansion of Roman trade in this region.

The Pattinap, Maduraik, and Perumbap give a vivid description of the merchants of this period and their specialized trades in the Pándya and the Cōla lands. They corroborate the epigraphical evidence to a considerable extent. These three texts mention the travelling merchants who moved through hamlets in their carts carrying salt, announcing their arrival and selling products obtained from the hills and the sea. There were the merchants in splendid mansions with good stocks of food who resided in port towns and traded in things obtained from the hills, the plains, the sea and wealthy lands. At such port centres, according to these texts, there were specialists who polished pearls and cut chank for bangles, goldsmiths involved in such crafts and potters who supplied the city with their products (also Puram. 256). Such items were purchased by merchants of the town (ibid. 328). What was collected by them was in turn sold to foreign merchants who came in ships bringing gold, horses (in order to buy salt), tamarind, salted fish, gems and pearls. A place like Puhār was in fact an entrepôt, where it received from inland areas pepper, sandalwood, pearls, food and coral, which were subsequently recirculated.

The circulation of coins linking the internal and the external markets have to be viewed in this context. We have already indicated the probable arrival of Punch marked coins in the far south during the pre-Maurya period. The involvement of the Pándyas (who monopolized the pearl/chank fisheries) in this commercial network and the existence of a nekama as early as the 2nd Cent. B.C. may have necessitated supplementary currency for transactions with the long
distance trade operators. The Pandyan issue of the (south Indian variety of) Punch marked coins may have been an effort to introduce a supplementary coinage.

The silver Punch-marked coins of this issue are found at Bodinayakkanur (Madurai dist.) in the upper Vaigai valley (Aravamuthan 1944:1-5). These coins contain the 'fish' symbol. Silver coins with this symbol have also been reported from Srivai-kuntam to Korkai, (Loventhal 1884:406). A slight variation of the same symbol but on (die-struck) copper coins have been reported from Sri Lanka at Kantarodai in the Jaffna peninsula (Codrington 1924:19-20). With the exception of a suspected specimen from Arikamedu (Loventhal or.cit.), the rest have been found exclusively south of the Vaigai. It has also been suggested that the silver coins in this series were of higher denominations while the non-silver ones were of a lower denominations which found their way even to Sri Lanka (Biddulp 1966:23), which also indicates an intensification of exchange activity. In this connection it is useful to note that coins were minted at Kaṭṭi, where coin moulds bearing the Ujjain symbol and Brahmi letters have been unearthed from excavations (IAR 1970-71 p. xlix).

A study of the Roman coins in south India (Wheeler, 1946:116-I24; Warmington 1928/1974; Gupta 1965) also indicates that the

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I. It is interesting to note that particular Punch-marked coins found in south India (Bodinayakkanur, Mambalam, Vambavur) contain symbols that are very similar to the graffiti marks on the Megalithic pottery of south India (Mahalingam 1966:24-25). One may suggest that this would indicate the symbols of particular craft groups that may have been minted under one symbol of the Pāṇḍyas. Therefore, it seems that the Pāṇḍyas did get involved in the trade mechanism of southern Tamilnadu to the extent of controlling it to their advantage.
earliest occurrence are associated with the south west coast (in Kerala) extending east to the Coimbatore District, perhaps in exchange for beryl and spices. On the other hand the occurrence of early Roman coins along the Coromandal coast, is sparse, indicating a low circulation of these coins in the early Christian era in this sector. In the same areas, Punch-marked coins however occur in high numbers. The relatively low occurrence of Roman coins (post-Nero issues i.e. 54-68 A.D.) may have been due to three reasons. The debasement of Roman coins may have been one. We have already pointed out that the early Roman coins were used as a high value currency and were reissued with incisions of Punch-marked symbols on them. Secondly, the Satavahana domination of the east coast and their effort to enforce the Sātavāhana currency vortex is very clear by the issue of the ship type bi-lingual coins (supra pp.478-9). This may have witnessed the use of the Sātavāhana coins as lower denominations and the pre-existing Punch-marked coins as the high value currency. The high-value Roman gold coins were obviously sucked into the Sātavāhana territory as bullion. A third reason may have been the inauguration of Roman emporiums along coastal Tamilnadu, where large scale commodity exchange was carried out in preference to currency transactions, especially during the period when the Roman coins were debased.

Considering the above network of operations, it is not surprising that merchants in Tamilam were closely associated with the long distance trade network. The Mahāvamsa (xxi:10-II) calls the earliest invaders from south India Damilas and identifies them as horse merchants. The earliest inscriptions of Sri Lanka also mention Dāmila vāṇijha, Dāmila navika, and Dāmila gahapati making
donations to Buddhist monks (Paranavitana I940:54-56; I970:No.s. 356-57, 480). A study of the Baratas in the subsequent section will throw more light on this aspect. Pre Christian inscriptions from Andhra, at Amaravati mention the term Damila and at Bhattacharlu we come across the term Barada (Sivaramamurti I977:303 No. I24; Buhler I894:327. III). The Amaravati inscriptions mention a Dhamila vapiya and his sadhika vapiya (perfumery). There is also a reference to a Dhamila as a charini in western India at Kanheri (Luders I973:No.s. 1018, 1014). The Sangam texts in fact refer to Madattiyar (Mahasarthavaha) and Manalhan (the great merchant leader) and this reflects powerful commercial magnates involved in long distance trade (vide PPFL: 667, 671).

Thus the developments in Macro zone II during the post 3rd Cent. B.C. indicate similar dynamics related to crafts, commerce and agriculture, that had operated in Macro Zone I.

III - i

The conclusive establishment of new property and production relations and the parallel development of full time specialization, the establishment of new settlements, intrusions to raw material yielding areas, agricultural expansion and an intensification of the exchange vortex had a strong bearing upon the emergence of new socio-economic groups during the Early Historic period in Sri Lanka. The primary groups were gahapati/kutumbika, vagiia, gamika and the intrusive Barata/Bata groups. I In addition, this epoch also

I. Inscription number, indicated otherwise, is from Paranavitana 1970.
Witnessed the proliferation of individuals associated with specialized areas in crafts, financing, storage and other functions which are allied professions affiliated to the agrarian cum commercial economy.

We have already indicated that *gahapati* (*gapati* in the early inscriptions of Sri Lanka) literally means the head of the household, though, it is more rational to view the *gahapatis* as individuals who headed occupational groups based on the *kula*, perhaps inclusive of the *gotra*, which necessarily did not assign a ritual *jati* status and therefore the difficulty in equating it with socio-economic status.

It is interesting to note that the structural formation of the agrarian economy was based on the twin aspects related to the techniques of production viz. irrigated agriculture and swidden cultivation (*supra* pp.46-47). It is natural that the former had an advantage over the latter and in turn resulted in an economic disparity between groups involved in these two systems of agricultural production. Therefore, over 80% of the *gahapati* inscriptions are located in the primary agricultural zones covered by the present districts of Anuradhapura, Pollonnaruwa, Kurunegala, Batticloa-Amparai and Hambantota, where irrigated agriculture

I. Parker (1909:429 No. 25; 43 No. 32) and Ellawala (1969:46-47) hold the view that the *gapatis* possessed an additional title called 'Dame/Devanapi' (*Dharma/Devānapriya*). This title according to them was used by the royalty and the well-to-do groups in early Sri Lanka. The title Devanapiya was exclusively used by the first 'dynasty' which ruled from Anuradhapura (*supra* pp.46-47). Secondly, in one case where the inscription has been read as *Dame Devanapi gapati Visakaha lene*; it has been corrected as *Dameda Vajīja Gapati Visakaha lene* (No. 356-7).
dominates to this day. In this connection, we may take note that some of the parumakas, who can be considered as the original agrarian elite, may have been the earliest members to establish a link between the agrarian sector and craft-commercial activity. In fact we cannot forget the later parumakas who themselves seem to have originated from the new agrarian elite and not as scions of clan chieftains. The control, both (new and old) parumaka groups had over agrarian tracts, irrigation, raw material and the clan labour-pool, gave them an advantage over others to move into strategic positions related to crafts, trade and even financing. It is perhaps such parumakas who are known to the early inscriptions as pa. Tabara Vela, pa. Tabo Tisa, pa. vaninha Tisa, pa. Gopala of vosthi Kaboje, kanyvata (navigator) pa. Maha Asoka, duta-navika pa. Tisa (Nos. 319, 750, 515, 990, 977a, I054-55).2

Out evidence indicates that the eldest male headed the family. With the exception of one case, all gahapati individuals happen to be males. Even in the case of the female gapatana (Skt. gahapatanai) (No. I005), her husband and father were actors and the husband also was a gahapati.3

1. It would be fallacious to assume that every householder necessarily displayed the term gahapati. The term kutumbika which has been equated with gahapati, is mentioned in a solitary inscription (No. 233). Another significant feature to be noted is the non occurrence of these two terms in the later Brahmi inscriptions.

2. It is a member of the powerful parumaka family of Vasiti, who held the important designation rupa-vapara i.e. dealer in coined money (supra p. 40 Table no.15).

3. Ellawala's attempt to establish another case of a female gahapati cannot be accepted as his view is based on an incorrect translation made by Parker (Ellawala 1969:47; Parker 1909:482 No. I8; 437 No. 50).
Judging by the greater majority of males (sons, grand children and in-laws) associated with the gahapatis, it may be inferred that a male son (perhaps the eldest) generally succeeded the father in functioning as the head of the household. There is at least one definite case where, both, son and father are mentioned as gahapatis (No. 840-842). It is however unknown whether the inscription was engraved during the life time or after the demise of the senior member. The inscription noted above by Parker is also another instance.

The above evidence may perhaps point to a good deal of cohesion that may have existed between the nuclear family and the extended family. There are several instances where the kula (family) has been associated with the gahapati group in donations. This may indicate that the kula engulfed the extended family to the degree that there may have been joint families (Nos. I95/I97, I45, 282, 370, 973).

It is possible that the extended family units lived in the same locality. Therefore at times they called themselves after the locality in which they resided or by a specific name which was applied to the clan. Thus we come across gahapati Ojaka Tisa of

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1. In another interesting case, an inscription from Vessagiriya (Anuradhapura), reads the following: 'sonutara kulaha marumakane sumanaha pute sonutara lene' (No. 83). Though Paranavitana translates marumakana as grandson, it means nephew/son in-law. Thus Sonuttara married from the family of Sonuttara (kula), which was most probably his maternal family i.e. a cross cousin marriage. In keeping with the system of peyaran, he obviously took his grandfathers name, Sonuttara.

2. The early inscriptions often associate the suffix vapi (vāpi) i.e. reservoir, to the name of the village, indicating its agrarian character e.g. Digavapi, Kadavapi, Nakodapikavapi (Nos. 480, II5I, II32).
Toṭagama (Skt. तिर्था ग्रामम्, gahapati Uti and Guta (father and son) of Rakitagama, another gahapati from Nelagama, and even a gahapati named Kotaya Vela (Nos. 642, 7II, 840, 778). Indicating perhaps the clan name, we hear of the Kabojhiya Mahapugiya (No. 533) from southern Sri Lanka and gōta Kabojha from north-west Sri Lanka (No. 990). We are unaware whether these two were one and the same or two separate guilds. Another inscription mentions, a gahapati gahakasa Vemarukana/Vemurukana Siva (No. 679). Though the meaning of this term is uncertain, since it is used in the genitive plural, the term may indicate Siva's clan or tribe.

III - ii

It is possible to suggest the existence of a gradation, on the basis of uneven distribution of resources, among the gahapati group.

I. According to Paranavitana, Koṭaya was derived from Skt. Kōṣtha > Kōṣṭha > Kotaya, which means commander of a garrison in a fort. Giving due consideration to the name Veļa which is of Dravidian origin, Kotaya may also have a Dravidian derivation. The DED (I704) has indicated Kotai to mean mountain. In the Sangam Age the granary is Kotṭu (PPTI 335), which has its Sanskrit parallel in Kōṣṭha. Kotṭi also meant assembly in the Sangam context (ibid.), which is again found in (Skt) as gōṣṭha - (Pali) gotha. Considering Veļa's status either with an assembly or a granary/treasury; for other instances mentioning the gahapatis with place names vide, Nos. 642, TII, 840, 778.

2. There is little ground to believe Paranavitana that this group arrived from north-west India and belonged to the earliest group of colonizers. This may have been a local development and a local group.

3. Paranavitana translates this term as 'descendents of Bhima, who are of the wolf (totem)' considering the derivation to be from 'Bhima-Vṛkṣakānaṃ'.

* as a gahapati, the kotaya pre-fix may imply his association.
In this connection, it may be noted that there was a highly affluent group who had accumulated vast amounts of wealth during the Early Historic period.

The Mahavamsa (xx.I5-I6) refers to five hundred issaras and five hundred vessas who were ordained under Mahinda and where they took up residence was called Issarasamanaka Vihare and Vessagiri respectively. In both cases the texts have used "... Issaraputta mahabhoja mahavyasa", "... Vessajana mahabhoja mahavyasa ..." (Extd. Kav. xx.23-25), which would mean the 'issaras/vessas possessing much wealth and fame'. Geiger in his edition of the Mahavamsa has translated issara as 'nobles', and vessa obviously as vaisya.

On the basis of the Mahavamsa Tika (Vam 407) and lithic records (Paranavitana 1934-41:128-I36), it has been suggested that the Issarasamanaka Vihare and Vessagiriya are one and the same. The Mahavamsa, obviously being a later record, may have considered the 'issas' (the ones who are wealthy or the aisvaryas) and the vessas to have been two groups. However, there are other sources which may indicate that issas belonged to social and economic groups associated with the 'third caste group'.

It is stated that while some literary sources of Sri Lanka have associated the setthakula with the arrival of the Bodhi tree, some other literary sources describing the same, substitute the setthakula with kutumbikula or vessakula. Thus in the literary context, setthi, vessa and kutumbika have allied meanings (Hettiarachchy 1972:78).

Kutumbikas are also described as 'addho mahadhano mahabhogo' i.e. holders of great wealth and possessions (Sahassa 83-9I). There are many references to the kutumbikas, especially those of south-
east Sri Lanka and their great wealth (vide Ellawala 1969:48; Hettiarchchoy 1972:78). In our view, during his attempt to organize a standing army, Duṭṭhadāmāṇi’s father depended much on the kutumbika families and as a consequence, some of them were given parumaka titles and appointed as generals (supra pp.32-95). Related to this particular event, on two occasions, kutumbikas have been called issaras (Mv. xxiii. 55, 61). Similarly, Hettiarchchoy points to references in the Rasavāhinī where this source on the one hand uses the term issara in place of kutumbika (1972:78-79). On another occasion, while a particular individual is called a gahapati in one source, the same person is known as an issara gahapati in another source (Ellawala 1969:30). The last reference may hint at the use of issara as a qualifying term to denote a more affluent gahapati. This is confirmed in another reference in the Sīhalavattabhupakarapā (p. I66-Suvānapupphābhavatherassavatthu). This story narrates how an individual who was born in a gahapakula after having done good deeds, increased his meritorious acts and was reborn in a issarakula in his next birth. Interestingly, the Mahāvamsa hints at issaras controlling villages and it records that Duṭṭhadāmāṇi defeated an issara at Nālisobbha Nālika along the river Mahaweli during his northern campaign (Mv. xxv II-12).

In this connection, it may be possible to establish a connection between the issaras mentioned in the texts and the ada group mentioned (26 instances) in the early inscriptions. Interestingly, 17 of the ada inscriptions are concentrated in the south east quarter of Sri Lanka.

Paranavitana has suggested this term to be etymologically connected with (Skt.) āyugya/āyusmat - (Pāli) āyasma and the
translation to be 'venerable' which has more or less been applied to monks (1970:cv). He has indicated an instance where an individual called Tissañyuta has been called asa and Thera in two different inscriptions (No. 572-573). We have also noticed a possible instance where one Siriguta has been called asa and Thera in two different inscriptions (Nos. 529, 535). However, Paranavitana is not clear whether this term was used by both, laymen as well as monks.

There is a possibility that the term asa (with its variation asiya and ase) may have derived from aisā which in turn derived from isā. Interestingly is' > isā > āsāvra/aisvāra > (asa) means lord, ruler, and also wealth. Aisvārya in Pali would read as issariya. In the Sangam context āsāvra reads as Ṛgā, which means the wealthy one as well as āsāvra, i.e. God, Siva (PPTI I26). Therefore, the word (Skt.) aisvārya and (Pali) issariya could well be expressed as asa, asiya and ase in the early inscriptions.

Table No. 20 Asa affiliations with other socio-economic groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table No. 20</th>
<th>Asa affiliations with other socio-economic groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parumaka</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bata</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamika</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Accountant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are therefore of the opinion that the asa group were a more affluent section of the gahapati/kutumbika group, having derived their status from the high concentration of wealth. If the Mahāvamsa
narration, (on the manner in which the Issarasamansaka vihara received its name) can be accepted, it clearly shows how these affluent groups wished to maintain a distinct identity and exclusiveness from the rest of the clergy even after they went from a 'household to a houseless state'. Under such circumstances, it is not altogether impossible that these individuals continued to use their lay identity or the term amha even after they entered the priestly fold. In a subsequent section, a similar situation can be seen in association with certain other affluent groups as well (infra pp.52-6).

III - iii

The emergence of the samika group in the 2nd/1st Cent. B.C. may be considered as a direct result of the expansion in the agrarian base and the existence of a predation within the agrarian elite. In our opinion, while the more affluent members of the agrarian elite were associated with the political hierarchy at the upper and medium levels as parumakas, at the grass-roots level, the samikas played a crucial role as the most vital link between the political hierarchy and the nuclear production-administrative unit.

Early writers considered the term (Skt.) grāmika (Pāli) samika to mean 'villager' (Parker 1909:442; Bell in ASAnR 1911-I2:97 No. 21). The early inscriptions indicate that this was positively an administrative title held at the local level, which was associated with the village councillor.

These inscriptions record nearly 140 samikas during the Early
Historic period. It may be noted that a good number of gamikas (in 30 cases) succeeded to the title held by their fathers.

Secondly, there are at least three cases where the third generation has been mentioned. Thirdly, in certain cases, more than one son of a gamika had taken up the title, e.g. two sons (No. 535), three sons (No. 622-25). Neither the inscriptions nor the literary sources indicate how the appointment of the gamikas took place.

It may be tentatively suggested that the gamikas had their origins within the emerging agrarian elite at the village level, which was a post 3rd Cent. B.C. development.

The very fact that the designation begins to take on a hereditary character is indicative of two factors. Firstly, the gama as a socio-economic unit had established itself as crucial to the administrative structure of the agrarian-based society of Sri Lanka. This development had its incipient origins from the 3rd Cent. B.C. when political expansion was initiated in the post 150 B.C. period, the consolidation of the village as the basic unit of production achieved greater dimension. Often, the residential location of the gamika is indicated as a gama in the inscriptions (Nos. 128, 309, 315, 534, 596). There are however instances when they associated themselves with urban groups. For instance, the daughter of a gamika joined the city guild of Aba Naga in making a donation (No. 962).

Within this situation, it was the gahapati/kutumbika group involved in or commanding agricultural land, crafts and commerce which gained stability. In a developing society during the ancient period, these groups would have obviously provided the leadership at the local level. Hettiarachchy correctly points out that it was
the official designation as *gamika* that distinguished this group from the ordinary *gahapatis* (I972:10). Perhaps those *gahapatis* from leading households possessing great riches may have emerged as the administrative heads of the localities.

To take up their economic position, the following evidence may indicate a relatively strong position the *gamikas* held in this sphere.

The economic base of the *gamikas* was largely located in the rural areas. An inscription from north west Sri Lanka records that a *gamika* donated two shares (*du-patāka*) to the monks (No. I49). A second inscription mentions his son (not a *gamika*) who donated six allotments or shares (No. I50). This obviously refers to a transfer of the right to enjoy the produce rather than its ownership. A third inscription from southern Sri Lanka mentions the construction of a *vapi* at Maragama by the daughter in-law of a *gamika* and his son was a *ganaka* (No. 576). This shows the linkages the *gamika* group had with the agrarian economy. It is therefore not a coincidence when a *gamika* had the personal name *naguli* (ibid. No. 972). An inscription in the lower Mahaweli calls one *gamika* a *todika* i.e. ferry-keeper (No. 309), indicating perhaps his control over communications in this region. Another inscription from the same period calls a *parumaka* a *tota bojhaka* (No. 860).

Economic consolidation of the *gamika* group may have been supplemented by the growing traits of hereditary acquisition of this title. The case of *gamika* Siva's lineage is an interesting one. Gamika Siva's son was *gamika* Kaboja and the latter's (three) sons also took the title *gamika* (Nos. 622-25). It is obvious that each one of them may have been a councillor of a village. It is
significant that the inscription of the Mahaputi Kabojha is located in the vicinity of the inscription of gamika Kabojha in south east Sri Lanka (No. 553), though a clear association between this gamika group and the guild is not unknown. In another case however, it was the daughter of a gamika who joined the city guild of Aba Nagara in a joint donation (No. 962). It is apparent that by now wealth had concentrated within such families. The ability of the son to donate more revenue allotments than his father (No. 150) may point to a greater concentration of wealth in the hands of the former. Such concentrated wealth no doubt required one gamika to have his own badagarika to store his wealth in safe-custody (No. 916).

It is precisely this strength of the gamikas at the local level that may have prompted the political elite at the upper level to appoint them to administer certain crucial areas geared to extract the surplus production. An inscription from southern Sri Lanka mentions two individuals (father and son) who were the ganaka (accountant) of the village named Pasandariya (Nos. 619). This shows that an accountant was located at the village level. Though we do not hear of any gamika functioning as a ganaka, on one occasion the son of a gamika is called a ganaka (No. 576). Quite logically we hear of gamikas who were ayakas (revenue collectors) and badagarikas (store keeper) (Nos. 39, 289, 309, 429). In this connection, on certain occasions the gamikas functioned under independent chieftains (supra pp. 420-2). They also directly served the ruling king or his provincial officers e.g. gamika Abaya

I. The Siwałavathupakarana (p. 107-10 Meeteyyavatthu) records a Kambojagama in the Rohana janapada (south east Sri Lanka).
serving Abaya Maharajha (No. 429), gamika Tisá serving senāpati Jhuvaya (No. 500), gamika Mahatistasá serving Naha Aya (No. 289).

It is significant that the gamikas do not associate themselves with the gahapatis in making donations. On the other hand we hear of instances when a gamika married the daughter of Pitamaharajha (No. 913-14). The fact that this gamika had his own bājakarika indicates his economic strength (No. 916). On another occasion, a parumaka married the daughter of a gamika (No. 853) and it was this same lady who associated herself with the city guild of Aba Nagara in a donation (No. 962). There is one other instance where a parumaka married the daughter of a gamika (No. 578). Similarly, on two occasions, the sons of gamikas are called Bata (Nos. 92, 544). However, on several occasions, the gamikas associated themselves with parumakas, Batas and even with a minister in making donations (Nos. 323, 337, 475, 952, 1001, II6, I28, 797). Interestingly, the gamikas restrict their association only to these groups, which goes to show their exclusiveness even from the rest of the agrarian elite.

III - iv

One of the most interesting developments related to the agrarian elite is their socio-economic linkages with the craft and commercial complex. In other words, this implies the linking of the rural-based new elite groups to urban centres, consequently leading to the unequal distribution of wealth resulting in a gradation within the gahapati/kutumbika group.
Table No. 11 clearly points out to this overlapping situation where the gahapatis are in agriculture and craft-commercial sectors. This requires further investigation. Archaeological evidence from Kantarodai, Anuradhapura and Tissamaharama indicates that these sites housed blacksmiths, beadworkers, lapidaries, potters and specialists working on other metals as well (Pieris 1917; 1919; Begley 1967; S. Deraniyagala 1972b; Parker 1984). Specializations of this nature, according to stratified evidence, become more apparent during the Early Historic period. At Tissamaharama, remains of finished and unfinished products of different crafts were associated with the dwelling quarters (Parker 1984:29-30). This obviously points to the involvement of the households where the heads/leaders of such groups came to be known as gahapatis. The earliest inscriptions record donations made by gahapatis involved in specialized fields e.g. mapikara, topasa, kabara, kubala. Gahapati topasa Sumana associated his kula members in making a donation (No. 370). In addition, there were instances when gahapatis associated themselves with other craftsmen (vide Table No. 21 C-4).

With the intensification in production, the nuclear and the extended family came to be organized into regular professional groups in their field of specialization. The earliest beginnings of this process may have occurred at the village level. Village units such as Brähmagama, Kṣatriyagama, Candālagama are mentioned in the Mahāvamsa in association with the pre-3rd Cent. B.C. situation (Mv. vii.44; x.20; xix 36; xvii.59; x.93). The earliest references to craft or professional villages in the sources however coincide with the Elara-Duttaṅgaṇa period (C. 175-150 B.C.). The literary texts record the existence of Kammantaṇa (Mv. xxiii.)
### Table No: 21

**A** - Agricultural and craft specialization associated with the *gahapati* group.*

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>Naguli</td>
<td>(Naguli) ('ploughman') (421)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>Diga Naguli</td>
<td>(Naguli) ('ploughman') (484)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>Majhima</td>
<td>kabara ('ironsmith') (301)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>Tiśa</td>
<td>manikara ('lapidary') (546)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>Suvana</td>
<td>topasa ('tinsmith') (370)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>Majhi</td>
<td>kubakala ('potter') (SLS 1983: 11.29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B** - Trade, commerce, financing, etc., associated with the *gahapati* group.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Gahapati</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
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<td>Dameq ga.hapati</td>
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<td>vanijha</td>
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<td>Siva</td>
<td>gopaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>Cuda (son) a</td>
<td>kotagarika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>Veša</td>
<td>kotaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>Utara</td>
<td>Barata</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**C** - Kin and socio-economic affiliations with other groups.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin</th>
<th>Socio-economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parumaka - son (630)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bata - brother (592) - 123, 310, 711 (two Batae), 807. - son (800) 893, EN (1974:13-4).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One potter</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One ivory worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two lapidaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**D** - Other related aspects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gahapati</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cuda a</td>
<td>naga (actor)</td>
<td>(1005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ojaka Tiśa (son) a</td>
<td>naga (actor)</td>
<td>(642)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuda a</td>
<td>dameda</td>
<td>(EN op.cit.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4-5), Vaddhakigama (Vam. 606; Sihv. I2), Manikarasama (Ny. xxxv. 46-47), Kumbhakarasama (Vam. 483), Kappikarasama (Sihv. I2), Tammanarasama (ibid.). Two early inscriptions also refer to a Manikarasama and a Pehekarasama or Paekarasama (Paranavitana 1983: I05-7; 1970: No. II45).

Such developments may have been the result of the resident kula transforming itself into groups taking up to full-time specialization (in a particular craft). These units are known to us as the puga or goja in the early inscriptions. For instance, we hear of the Dipikulika pukiya (No. 320). The inscriptions mention some of these organizations as resident groups. For example we may cite 'Tubada vasaka pusiya ...' or 'Alipavatahi pusiya ...' (Nos. I35, I38). What may have originally been clan-based groups most probably went to form organizations such as kabojhiya mahapuja or goja kabojha (Nos. 553, 990). The Tatavaya puga (weavers guild) may have had a similar development (No. 696a). In this context it is significant that the gapaka i.e. accountant, of the (incorporated?) Vemaruka was a rahapati (No. 679), which indicates the direct role of rahapatis in such organizations.

The location of these inscriptions also indicates that craft villages were actually production centres feeding a broader network of distribution, linked to the internal consumer groups as well as the long distance trade network. This interaction is best demonstrated by taking up the following evidence. The occurrence of a BRW sherd inscribed 'gapati Sivasa' at Tissamaharama (Parker 1909: 461-62) and the inscription situated at the place popularly known

I. The fact that a paramaka is mentioned as the head of goja kabojha, may indicate the pre-existing clan basis of this group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Accountant, Treasurer, Storekeeper, Dealer in gold/coined money</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) - Accountant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Maha-ganaka</td>
<td>Vahali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ganaaka</td>
<td>Cali Tisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ganaaka</td>
<td>Nuguва</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ganaaka</td>
<td>Rohaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ganaaka</td>
<td>Tisa (Father)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ganaaka</td>
<td>Tisa (son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ganaaka</td>
<td>Raki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ganaaka</td>
<td>Siva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ganaaka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Ganaaka</td>
<td>Duta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) - Treasurer/Store Keeper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Badakarika</td>
<td>Tisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Badakarika</td>
<td>Anudiya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Badakarika</td>
<td>Sena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Badakarika</td>
<td>Anuradha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contd ... Table No: 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Son</th>
<th>Maharajha</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Pranita Badakarika</td>
<td>Sumana</td>
<td>Parumaka</td>
<td>serving</td>
<td>(1035)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Badihara</td>
<td>Mita</td>
<td>Parumaka</td>
<td>son, a</td>
<td>(296)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Badakarika</td>
<td>Saga</td>
<td>Parumaka</td>
<td>Parumaka-Brāhmaṇa</td>
<td>(1109/10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Badakarika</td>
<td>Ahali</td>
<td>Amātaya</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1192)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Koṭagarika</td>
<td>Utara</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(214, 226)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Koṭagarika</td>
<td>Calu</td>
<td></td>
<td>Father, a</td>
<td>(215)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Koṭa</td>
<td>Veļa</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td></td>
<td>(778)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(C) - Dealer in gold/coined money

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Father, Parumaka, Amatya</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Taladara</td>
<td>Naga</td>
<td></td>
<td>(80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Taladara</td>
<td>Sumana</td>
<td></td>
<td>(593)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Rupadaha</td>
<td>Tisa</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>(940)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4.  | Rupa vapara| Hamika     | Dora Kani               | (1205) }
as the 'Tamil householders terrace' at Anuradhapura (Paranavitana 1940:54-56; 1970:94), clearly establish that there were urban-based gahapati groups during the Early Historic period.

Their connection to the commercial and financing fields is even more interesting. One inscription records a joint donation made by kas̄ka and a vanijha (No. 660). Kasaka in Pāli is plough-share the equivalent is found in naguli, which was taken by paramakas, ramikas and by the gahapati as well. In any event, we have indicated references from the Deccan highlighting the halika and merchant connection (supra pp.43). Kasaka (kassaka) obviously does not imply the tiller in this case and it denotes 'wielder of the plough' i.e. the one who owns the means of production. We also have direct evidence indicating the gahapati involvement in trade and commerce. In the inscriptions we come across gahapati who are called a rupadaka rupadāyaka (superintendent of the mint), ganaka, kōṭagārika (a gahapati's son) and even a duta (Table No.22, B-2 to 7). We may also note that an early inscription referring to a kutubika (at Mahāsalagamuwa) carries the symbol which is found on early coins. (This inscription is mentioned by Paranavitana 1970:No. 233 though the symbol is recorded in Nicholas vol.II:12).

The early inscriptions mention parumaka as well as other individuals (without any designation) called vanijha (vanija). However in the case of gahapati-vanijha, the inscriptions also

I. It may be noted that there were merchants who specialized in other products such as spices. The Mahāvamsa records that during the time of Dutthagamani a merchant from the city went to the hills in his caravans to obtain ginger (xxviii.21). A late Brahmi inscription from Sigiriya mentions a dealer in tamarind (No. 1186).
have the term *dana*, which denotes Damila or those from Tamilaham. The best example is the Tamil householders inscription. This particular inscription is engraved on a terraced platform, each carrying the name of a *gahapati*. The highest part has the inscription of *gahapati* Karava, described as a *navika*, who apparently held an eminent position among this group. This group obviously had connections with foreign trade and may be identified as the affluent *setthigahapati* who resided at urban centres. We also come across another *dana* karava *vagijha* (No. 356-357) from Periyapuliyanikulam, which was an active craft and commercial centre during the pre-Christian era (supra pp 405-6) and in yet another inscription, a *vagijha* who was married to a *dana* lady (No. 480).

In a subsequent section we shall establish that the external trade work was largely dominated by the south Indian community known as the Barata (Paratavar) who conducted brisk trade basing and integrating themselves within the island community (infra, pp. 441-26). The occurrence of one *gahapati* Utara who is known to the inscription as a Barata, is a case in point (No. 643).

With their growing affluence, it is possible that the individual members of the agrarian elite, who were originally primary producers, gradually turned out to be a non-producing class well before the early Christian era. It is significant that the late Brahmi inscriptions do not make a single reference to craft specialization associated with the agrarian elite. Contrary to this, we come across the earliest occurrence of slaves (*dasa*) in the late Brahmi inscriptions. An inscription mentions that *dasas* were provided to *sangha* (No. II 39, also see Gunasingha 1960-61:47-59; Wijesekara 1974:1-22). It is precisely such labour and craft villages (as
### Merchants, Mariners, Envoys

**(A) - Merchants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vañijha</td>
<td>Visakha - Dameśa Gahapati</td>
<td>(356-357)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vañijha</td>
<td>- wife, a Dameśa</td>
<td>(480)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vañijha</td>
<td>Tisa - Parumaka</td>
<td>(515)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vañijha</td>
<td>Sumana</td>
<td>(585-591)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vañijha</td>
<td>Siva</td>
<td>(660)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Vañijha</td>
<td>Tisa</td>
<td>(897)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vanika</td>
<td>Ahala</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Panadaka</td>
<td>Cuḍā Haneya</td>
<td>(Paranavitana 1983:6-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>(Abala Vapasa)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1128)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**(B) - Mariners, Envoys**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Navika</td>
<td>Kāraṇa - Dameśa Gahapati</td>
<td>(94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Navika</td>
<td>- (of Bhojakaṭa)</td>
<td>(105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kaniyata</td>
<td>Maha Asoka - Parumaka</td>
<td>(977a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dutā-navika</td>
<td>Tisa - Parumaka</td>
<td>(1054-55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dutā</td>
<td>Data - Gahapati</td>
<td>(295)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>(One travelling to Barukaca)</td>
<td>- Parumaka</td>
<td>(1183)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
guilds, corporate bodies) that performed the specialized tasks that were originally conducted by the agrarian elite. By the time Buddhaghosha compiled his texts (4-5 Cent. A.D.), the very professions followed by the agrarian elite (such as potters craft, weaving, makers of arms, metal work, carpentry), are termed as hina-sippa because people of the so-called low castes followed these professions (Sg.Vil. 930). On the other hand, the late Brahmi inscriptions mention a series of private individuals who held tracts of land and reservoirs during this period (vide Paranavitana 1970:pp. 87-100 ff; 1983). This clearly indicates the unequal distribution of wealth, giving a permanent basis for class distinction.

IV - i

In Sri Lanka the development of craft and commercial specialization (of which gahapatis were shareholders) saw the simultaneous establishment of more permanent material linkages with the society and economy of southern Deccan and south India. The infrastructural basis for this craft and exchange vortex was developing from the Proto-Historic period. We have already indicated the existence of traditional exchange routes connecting different ecological zones in order to supplement the movement of resources from the source areas to centres of production. Secondly, the parumaka group had already taken the initiative of launching upon craft and commercial ventures (supra. pp.386), closely followed by the new agrarian elite groups who associated themselves with the exchange vortex through units of production and financial avenues. In the post
### Table No: 24

**Artisans mentioned in the Early Brahmi inscriptions**

**A) Lapidaries**

1. **Maṇikara**  Muloguta  
2. **Manala**  Tiya  - (? Brāhmaṇa - (with apprentice)  
3. **Maṇikara**  Tisa  
4. **Maṇikara**  Tisa  - Gahapati  
6. **Maṇikara**  Data  - with other artisans and with a Bata and gapati, of the King Macuḍi)  
7. **Maṇikara**  Cuda  
8. **Maṇikara**  - of the King Macuḍi.  
9. **Maṇikara**  Naga  

**B) Metalsmith (ironsmith, coppersmith, tinsmith)**

1. **Kabara**  Tisa  
2. **Kabara**  Majhima  - Gahapati  
3. **Kabara**  Tisa  
4. **Kabara**  Dina  
5. **Kabara**  Naka  - Anujeta of guild.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Reference No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tabara</td>
<td>Vela</td>
<td>Parumaka</td>
<td>(319)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tabakara</td>
<td>Tisa</td>
<td></td>
<td>(350)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tabakara</td>
<td>Tisa</td>
<td></td>
<td>(351)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Taba</td>
<td>Tisa</td>
<td>Parumaka</td>
<td>(750)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Topasa</td>
<td>Sumana</td>
<td>Gahapati with kula</td>
<td>(370)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(C) Others (potters, weaver, ivory carver, maker of bows, carpenter/architecture, armourer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Reference No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kubakara</td>
<td>Sona</td>
<td>with other artisans/Bata/Gahapati</td>
<td>(807)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kubala</td>
<td>Cita</td>
<td></td>
<td>(934)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kubakala</td>
<td>Majhi</td>
<td>Gahapati</td>
<td>(SLS 1983:II.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pehekara</td>
<td>Majhi</td>
<td>brother, cavalry officer</td>
<td>(931a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pehekara</td>
<td>Matta</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1160)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dañaka</td>
<td>Sumana</td>
<td>with other artisans/Bata/Gahapati</td>
<td>(807)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Danukaya</td>
<td>Gupta</td>
<td>Father Parumaka-Brähmana.</td>
<td>(1136)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Vâdaka</td>
<td>Sona</td>
<td></td>
<td>(634)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Vâdaka</td>
<td>uvati</td>
<td>with a Bata</td>
<td>(657)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nagara Vudika</td>
<td>Bharaniguta</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1032)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Vamakara</td>
<td>Tisa</td>
<td></td>
<td>(84)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Unless indicated otherwise, reference numbers are from Paranavitana 1970 in Table Nos:
Ist Cent. B.C. period craft and commercial activity show signs of intensification, especially with the growth of Roman trade in south India which had its share of influence upon the socio-economic and administrative groups in Sri Lanka.

It is perhaps useful to follow the line of development in the craft and commercial field in relation to the associated elite groups by having an idea of the production sector. The data enumerated in Table Nos. 22, 23, 24 indicate that the Early Historic society in Sri Lanka was intensely involved in the craft-commercial complex of that time. For instance let us take up one example. The frequent occurrence of *manikara* and even the emergence of *manikaragama* may have been due to several factors. The ability to penetrate the primary mineral stone yielding areas in the hills with greater success, the availability of better produced iron and steel implements necessary to explore the tough rock formations, the emergence of more affluent groups internally, can be identified as the main factors. Consequently this created a greater demand for precious stones which was supplemented by the export of mineral stones to south India, and from there to the Roman Empire. There is a near coincidence between the mineral stones found from the Early Historic levels at Mantai, Kantarodai, Anuradhapura and Tissamaharama and those listed in the *Mahāvamsa* and by Warmington as the varieties exported to the Roman Empire from Taprobane (*vide* Paranavitana 1936:10, 22-23, S. Deraniyagala 1972b:134-139; Pieris 1919:45, 62; Godakumbura 1968:171; Bronson 1970:4; Begley 1976:193; Boake 1887:III; Carswell et Prickett 1984; ASAnR 1907:269, 29-31; Parker 1884:47, 60; Warmington 1928/1974).
It is likely that most of these craft groups were organized as guilds especially during a period when production had to be standardized and regularized. Thus the original clan group was easily transformed into a group of full-time specialists. This is reflected in the puga, which is the most common term indicating such incorporated groups of craftsmen or artisans. The existence of mahāpuga clearly indicates incipient gradations reflecting a relative difference in the scales of operation between the puga and the mahāpuga. Though we do not hear of nigama organizations in early Sri Lanka, one may assume that they were present within the island. For instance, we come across gota organizations. The gota and puga were an integral part of the nigama. It is likely that incorporated city organizations such as the Aba nagara or Uti nagara, were nigamas. In this connection, the occurrence of the term Āṭakula with Uti nagara is known to the Indian inscriptions as (Skt.) Āṭa kula or (Tamil) Āṭēṭṭu and it means the committee of eight members (of the village assembly) which formed an administrative board in a supervisory capacity over revenue matters (Sircar 1966:32). Āṭa kula at Uti nagara most probably performed such functions over the city. It is therefore not surprising that invariably a responsible officer (parumaka, gamika, amātaya) was treasurer (bājakarika), where at least some of them may have been associated with guilds.

Though professional hierarchization most obviously existed during the early period, it was probably enforced with greater vigor in the early Christian era. In the early Brahmi inscriptions (which are largely pre-Ist Cent. B.C.). We hear of one lapidary who had an ativasika (antevasika) i.e. apprentice (vide Table No. 14). In
Table No: 25

Corporate bodies and associated members

1. Gana kodaka (Director of Corporation) Data (86)
2. Tubada Puga (135)
3. Puga at Alipavata (138)
4. The Gana (201)
5. Dipikulika Puga (320)
6. Kabojhiya Mahapuga (553)
7. Madukasaliya Puga (662)
8. Vemaruka - Ganaka, Gahapati. (679)
9. Tatavaya Puga. (The corporate of the weavers) (696a)
10. Ata kulaha (The Committee of eight members) of Uti Nagara. (538)
11. The Puga. (726)
12. (The citizens) of Aba Nagara (and a Beta) (959)
12a. (The citizens) of Aba Nagara (and the daughter of a Gamika). (962)
13. Gota kobojhiya - Its chief, Parumaka Gopala. (990)
14. The Puga - (i) Mahatavara (President). (1152)
   (ii) Jeta (Alderman)
   (iii) Donated three categories of revenue.
15. The Puga. Its Jeta Paduguta. (1182)
16. Sadaviya Puga - (i) Jeta and Cara (Journeyman) Tisa (1198)
   (ii) Anujeta Naga, the Kabara (Ironsmith).
18. Peheka Nagama (1145)
the later Brahmi inscriptions this hierarchization is very apparent. The gradation was arranged as mahātavara > jeta > anujeta. The Indian inscriptions mention instances when the mahattara (mahātavara) presided over the Aṭā kula administrative committee (Sircar 1966:191). Jeta and anujeta also had their specialization. For instance, the jeta in one instance was a cara (< carana) i.e. journeyman or the specialized craftsman/artisan who undertook long distance travel. On another instance, anujeta is called a kabara or blacksmith which establishes his professional specialization. Such individuals also had their own economic resources, which was apparently not controlled by the puro. For instance, the jeta of one puro offered three categories of revenue to the sangha (No. II52). It is recorded that this jeta was a resident of Padagama which implies that these benefits were ceded from this village.

Considering the fact that one gota had a parumakas as its chief; another, a gahapati as its ganaka, a third making joint donations with a Bata and also with a daughter of a ganika, and a series of parumakas and gahapatis who were ganakas, badakarikas and dealers in gold and coined money, it is apparent that the commercial and the agrarian elite had closer links with these organized units of production than what one notices on the surface. For example, when a gahapati was the superintendent of the mint (rupadaka) his authority over the craft and commercial group was ensured by virtue of this official position. In this connection it is extremely significant that a terracotta mould for manufacturing Punch-marked coins was unearthed from Str. 4A (B.C. 250) at the Anuradhapura Gedige (S. Deraniyagala 1972b:49 pl. 2 C-d).

It is from this background that we have to view the dynamics
of the external trade mechanism that organically linked itself to the socio-economic structure of Early Historic Sri Lanka. A survey of the merchant and sea-faring groups noted in the inscriptions as vajja, navika, kapiyata, duta on the one hand shows that they were to some degree connected with the parumaka and the gahapati groups. What is more interesting is the Damada connection that is quite obvious in the case of this commercial elite. It is therefore appropriate to take up for discussion the Damada and Barata groups recorded in the early inscriptions. It will not only indicate a strong external element in the commercial operations but also the nature of their interaction with the island community, which extended beyond pure economic relations.

The Barata inscriptions are primarily concentrated in the north, with the exception of a solitary inscription in the south east. While several scholars have attempted to discover the source word of Barata, a wide range of meanings are also attributed to this term viz. brother, lord, worker etc. (vide Wickramasinghe 1912:140-I; Parker 1909:426 No. 5; Bell 1917-18:204; Paranavitana 1970: cv; Ellawala 1969:41). Paranavitana was of the view that both Barata and Bata derived from common terms and were used by both the clergy and laymen (Paranavitana op.cit.). It was Maloney who located the Barata in a proper historical context and identified them with the Paratavar of south India (1968:112).

It is difficult to ascertain the origins and the cultural identity of the Paratavar, though it is quite likely that they may be the descendents of Mesolithic groups who were associated with

I. There are 22 individuals bearing the term Barata.
coastal Tamilnadu. During the Sangam period we have already pointed out to the existence of two groups of Paratavar, the affluent mercantile group and the backward fisherfolk (supra pp.486-7). The latter were involved in fishing, pearl and chank diving and resided in impoverished hamlets. The affluent Paratavar resided at port towns and conducted brisk trade in luxury items such as conch-shell bangles, gems, spices and horses. The texts describe their fine mansions, ware houses, ships and chariots (Maduraik 315-323; Perumāṇ 319-324; Amam 86). The Paratavar were clearly a section of the powerful etthi (setthi) group in Tamilaham and the most affluent of them were known as Barata kumarar i.e. merchant prince (Silap Canto vi.156).

The south Indian exchange connection with Sri Lanka most obviously extends to the Proto-Historic period. The occurrence of chank and pearl shell remains all along the north west and in the Jaffna Peninsula (vide Seneviratne I984:278), indicates the movement of resources via south India to other regions in the Peninsular. Similarly, the occurrence of carnelian in worked and unworked form Str. 3B (pre 3rd Cent. B.C.) at Anuradhapura (S. Deraniyagala I972b: I34-I39), points to its arrival as raw material from the southern Deccan before the Early Historic period. Sri Lanka does not possess this particular mineral stone.

Perhaps the commercial vortex integrated Sri Lanka to the regular long distance trade network with the establishment of the Maurya hegemony in the southern Deccan. This is attested by the occurrence of a terracotta mould for manufacturing Punch-marked coins in Str. 4A at Anuradhapura Gedige (S. Deraniyagala I972b:149) and the discovery of north Indian Punch-marked coins (vide...
Codrington 1924/1975; Parker 1884) and also the copper imitation of (the Pāṇḍyaian issues of the ) south Indian variety of Punch-marked coins, in the Jaffna Peninsula (Pieris I919:50).

It is not a coincidence that the earliest recorded invasion from south India occurred around B.C. 200 and it is associated with Sena and Guttaka, who are called only Damila in one text (Dv. xvii.47) and described as 'Assanāvikaputthā dasa Damilā Sena-Guttaka ...' in the Mahāvamsa (xxi.10). The Sangam texts associate trading with the Paratavar. This may indicate the power wielded by merchants involved in long distance (luxury) trade and their integration to the Great Tradition represented by the Indo Aryan Culture.

There are Barata inscriptions in northern Sri Lanka, with depicting the single-mast ship (with the nandipāda at its helm) and another carrying the following symbols (No. 270 pl. xxv; No. 368). These symbols indicate oceanic travel and mercantile (guild) activity. Thus the joint donation by a Barata and a perumaka, who is described as a dutaka (envoy) in an early Brahmi inscription is natural (No. I049), as envoys were

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I. It may not be a coincidence that individuals having Dravidian personal names are associated with the horse in Early Sri Lanka. An early Brahmi inscription mentions one Parumaka Vela who is called an ada adeka (superintendent of horses). The Mahāvamsa records the association of a horse from Sindh with Velusumana, a commander of Duṭṭhagāmini (xxiii. 68-72).

2. Remains of a domesticated horse was found from the Proto-Historic levels at Anuradhapura during the 1985 excavation (Pers. Com. S. Deraniyagala).

3. Turnour's edition of the Mahāvamsa records that Sena and Guttaka directed the Malwatu oya (Kadamba nadi) to flow closer to Anuradhapura in order to perform sacred rituals associated with water (Nv. I837:100). This may indicate that these merchants from Tamilāhām not only took up Indo Aryan names but also followed Brahmanic rituals (vide Seneviratne I984:287).
often employed from the ranks of merchants to further political or commercial interests between two countries (Mv. ii. 26). There is also the instance of a parumaka dūta-navika (Nos. 1053-55). It is not altogether impossible that the earlier mentioned Damedā gahapati and navika ārāva may have been Baratas. A Damedā Semana, who joined them in this endowment was a resident of Ilabarata which may have been a place of residence for Baratas (No. 94). In any event, we come across an inscription in south east Sri Lanka which mentions gahapati who is called a Barata and also records the Dravidian kinship term marumakana to introduce his nephew/son in-law (No. 643). The gahapati-vapija connection associated with those arriving from south India is very clear when an early inscription records a donation made by gahapati Visākha, who is called a Damedā vapija (Nos. 356-7). Such inscriptions not only indicate that the Baratas took residence in the island but they even went as far as the south east quarter of the island.2

The interaction of this intrusive element with the local groups is more apparent if we consider the Bata group to be synonymous with the Barata (vide Paranavitana 1970: cv). On one occasion we hear of a joint donation made by a parumaka and a bata-kumara (No. 190). This may have well been a barata-kumarar, known to the south Indian texts. Another inscription speaks of a

I. An early inscription also mentions a son of one Barata while another records his kinsmen (No. I46, I0II).

2. The Sihalavatthupakarana records such travels connecting south east Sri Lanka with south India. In the Pāñcapetavathu (pp., 39-40), this text describes how a monk, a resident of Rōhaṇa janapada (south east Sri Lanka) went to Anuradhapura and on to Mahātirtha and set sail to Kaveripattana in order to reach the Uttarāpatha to worship the sacred Bōdhī tree in north India.
joint donation by a Bata and a Damega gahapati (EM I974:No. I3.4). Three other inscriptions associate the Batas with a group of craftsmen and a corporate body. The first of these, records the associates as a gahapati, potter, ivory worker, lapidary and a carpenter/architect (No. 807). A second inscription also associates a vagaka (carpenter/architect) with a Bata (No. 657) and a third records a joint donation by the (citizens of) Aba Nagara and a Bata (No. 959). Further to this, an early inscription also mentions one Bata Naga rajha (No. 934), which may indicate the strong political position acquired through economic strength by the Batas (supra pp.12-3).

Table No. 26

Socio-economic groups affiliated to Batas

a) Kin affiliates

Parumaka : father (3), son (I), brother (I)
Gahapati  : father (I), brother (I)

b) Social affiliates

Parumaka  : I5 + I* + I*
Amātya    : I
Senāpati  : I*
Asā       : 3
Gahapati  : 5
Gamika    : 4 + I*
Craftsmen: I (potter), I (ivory worker), I (lapidary), I (architect)

City-guild: I

(Figures marked with asterisk indicate other members of the family, wife, sister or son, who associated themselves with the Bata group.)

As an intrusive group, and their association with commerce and the high degree of economic affluence they acquired seems to have given the Barata/Bata group access to interact with the other elite groups within the Early Historic society. They had kin affiliations with the parumakas and the gahapatis and maintained social affiliations with the parumaka, amata, senapati, asa, gahapati and the gamikas. In this sense they may have formed a link group connecting the old elite with the new (vide Table No. 26).

In a subsequent section we will discuss the manner in which the Barata/Bata group finally integrated themselves within the island society and identified themselves in total terms with the religio-cultural milieu of Early Historic Sri Lanka (infra pp. 623-25).

This chapter therefore clearly establishes the important role played by commerce as an integrating force. The emergence of the gahapatis (and associate groups) as the new agrarian elite, their socio-economic linkages with the urban centres and the craft-commercial complex in turn resulted in the integration of resources as well as the regional penetration of a common culture (Indo-Aryan tradition in this case). Perhaps the emergence and the development of the agrarian and commercial elite groups can be counted as the most significant phenomenon related to the social ideology of Buddhism and the evolution of its specific character in south east India and Sri Lanka.