Chapter 4
Rise of Sub-regional Kingdoms and New Form of Rural Social Networks: c. A.D. 550-800

After the Gupta period, with some overlap with its last phase, Bengal region witnessed the formation of sub-regional kingdoms in Vaṅga, Rāḍha and then Gauḍa, while such a formation in Samataṭa attested by Gunaighar inscription of Vainyagupta, dated GE 188 (507 A.D.), intensified from the middle of the seventh century. In Vaṅga, Rāḍha and Gauḍa, the formation of sub-regional kingdoms went hand in hand with continuance and change in local participation in the process of land purchase and donation. In Samataṭa, the intensification of the formation was related to the settling of large number of brāhmaṇas en masse in the periphery and complexity of land relations in the centre. Following the chronological order, I will first discuss the situation in Vaṅga and Rāḍha. As in the former chapter, I shall describe each case and people involved as a preliminary statement.

1. Cases in Vaṅga and Rāḍha

Around the middle of the sixth century, the rule of three kings, Dharmāditya, Gopacandra and Samācāradeva over Vaṅga is attested by their copper plate inscriptions. All of them wield the title of maharajadhiraja, which denotes their sovereign status.1 In the case of Samācāradeva, gold

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1 There is controversy over the chronological order of Dharmāditya and Gopacandra. D. C. Sircar considered the former predating the latter on palaeographic ground, following Pargiter (SI, 1, p. 370, note 1), while R. C. Majumdar held the opposite view as he took mahārāja Vijayasena mentioned in the Mallasarul grant of Gopacandra as identical with his namesake mentioned in Gunaighar grant, and considered Gopacandra as the earliest of them. R. C. Majumdar, History of Ancient Bengal, Calcutta, 1971, pp. 42-43. As the identity of Vijayasena is not necessarily clear, I provisionally follow the opinion of Sircar.
coins issued by him are also known. At least Gopacandra’s dominance extended to Ra⁹ha and even Daⁿḍa-bhukti, stretching over present Medinipur district of West Bengal and Baleswar district of Orissa, as is indicated by two copper plate inscriptions in which his name is mentioned. All their inscriptions show the involvement of some sections of the rural society with the process of land purchase and donation, and also the issue of copper plate inscriptions.

The first to mention is the Faridpur grant of the time of Dharmaditya, dated year 3. The record refers to the reign of mahārājādhīrāja Dharmaditya, at the time of the rule (adhyāsaṇa-kāla) of mahārāja Sthanudatta, who got the position from the king’s favour, and when viṣavapati Jājāva is entrusted with Vārakamaṇḍala-viṣaya by Sthanudatta (II.1-4). There is no mention of the issuing authority and address, though the former may be the adhikarana of the viṣaya, as its seal is soldered to the grant. The procedure mentioned is as follows: the adhikarana and people accompanied by eighteen viṣaya-mahattaras, whose names are mentioned, were approached by sādhana (military officer) Vātabhoga (II.4-7). He conveyed his wish to purchase a plot of land from them and donate it to a brāhmaṇa, and asked them to accept money from him and give him land in the viṣaya (II.7-9). After ‘we’, denoting people approached by Vātabhoga, discussed his petition and got united (I.9), the following facts were verified by pustapāla Vinayasena. First, in the aforementioned viṣaya, there is the custom of eastern sea (prāk-samudra-maryyādā) and land is sold at the rate of four dināras for one.

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3 Jayarampur and Mallasarul grants.
5 SI, 1, p.363.
6 Appendix 3 Table 4.
7 I followed Sircar’s interpretation of ‘akātyer=ḥūtvā’ as ‘aikātmye bhūtvā.’ SI, 1, p.364.
8 This may indicate the same local custom, which is mentioned as ‘the
Second, cultivated land whose boundary marks are fixed is sold in accordance with the rule of copper plate (tāmraptāṭa dharma), which probably means the status as donated land with revenue exemption (ll.9-12). It was also verified that there would be acquisition of the one sixth of merit for the king (ll.12-13). Then the agent, who was not indicated clearly but may have been the adhikaraṇa and people accompanied by visaya-mahattaras according to the context, considered the applicability of petition and supported it by the action conforming to the intentions of the petitioner (ll.13-15). Then three kulyavāpas of land in Dhruvilāti was sold in accordance with the rule of copper plate by ‘us’, who received the petition, in front of Vātabhoga after he gave twelve dināras in front of them and they divided the land by eight by nine nalas based on Śivacandra’s cubit (hasta) (ll.15-17). The land was given as a perpetual enjoyment to Candrasvāmin, who belonged to Bharadvāja gotra and studied six Vedāṅgas of Vājasaṅeya school, by Vātabhoga with the expectation of favour reaching his next life for the welfare of his parents (ll.17-20). Then the above-mentioned and future sāmantas and kings having learned śāstras were required to protect this land grant (ll.20-22). Finally, landmarks demarcating the borders of donated land are described (ll.23-25).

The second is another Faridpur grant of the time of Dharmāditya without date. The time of the event is referred to as the reign of mahaśrīdhirāja Dharmāditya, at the time of the rule of mahaśrāFEATURE: Feature of the text: Custom of purchase in the east (prāk-kriyāmnāka-maryādā) and ‘the custom of behaviour in the east’ (prāk-pravṛtti-maryādā) in the other Faridpur copper plates of the time of Dharmāditya and Gopacandra respectively. SI, 1, p.368, 1.13: p.371, 1.16. Though its contents are not clear, it may include the rule of proper land price in the transaction of land sales and donations. In fact, there is no mention of sāmantas in the inscription apart from this. L4, 39, pp.199-202, SI, 1, 367-369. The condition of the plate is bad and there are several sections which cannot be deciphered properly. I mainly followed Sircar’s reconstruction in such cases.
Navyāvakāśikā, and while vyāpārakārāndaya Gopālasvāmin, who was additionally entrusted with Vārakamandala-visaya by Nāgadeva, is managing it (ll.1-6). The issuing authority and address are not mentioned in this document. The procedure recorded is as follows: the adhikarana headed by jyeṣṭha-kāyastha Nayāsena, and mahattaras of several visayas accompanied by Somaghoṣa were approached and informed by a brāhmaṇa Vasudevasvāmin (ll.6-8). He conveyed his wish to purchase a plot of land from the aforementioned people and donate it to brāhmaṇa Somasvāmin, who belonged to Kāṇva-Vājasaneya school and Lauhitya gotra, for the increase of merit of his parents and himself, and asked them to do him favour according to the rule (ll.9-12). Then they discussed his petition and it was verified by pustapāla Jammabhūti that there is the custom of purchase in the east and land is sold at the rate of four dināras for one kulyavāpa, and that one kulyavāpa of fallow land with additional vāpas from the land belonging to mahattara Thoda should be given after accepting two dināras and three rūpakas added by six gaṇḍakas from Vasu(deva)svāmin (ll.13-18). After being divided by the eight by nine nalas based on the cubit of acknowledged and righteous Śivacandra, the land was sold to and purchased by Vasudeva brāhmaṇa (= Vasudevasvāmin) (ll.18-20). Landmarks demarcating the borders of donated land are also described (ll.20-23).

The third is the Jayarampur copper plate inscription of the time of Gopacandra, dated year 1. Though its find spot belongs to present

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11 The meaning of this official designation is not clear. Sircar speculates that this term means 'one in charge of the boxes of documents relating to administration.' SI, 1, p.368, note 1.
12 He is called 'Vasudeva-brāhmaṇa' in another portion of the grant, ll.19-20.
13 I followed the reconstruction by Sircar as 'tad=arhanty=asmad-vijāpya- vaśād=yathā prasādam karttum=iti' for the unclear sentence in line 12.
14 EI, 39, pp.141-148, S. Tripathy, Inscriptions of Orissa vol.1: Circa Fifth -Eighth Centuries A. D., Delhi, 1997, pp.174-179. Both editions of the inscription are bad and a photograph attached to the former is not clear. Accordingly, there are many parts I could not read properly and whose
Baleswar district of Orissa, I include it within the purview of my analysis as the locality concerned here belonged to Daṇḍa-bhukti, which sometimes constituted a part of Vardhamāna-bhukti. The time of the event is referred to as the reign of Gopacandra, with elaborate eulogy (ll.1·10). It is addressed to the present and future six officials, that is, kārtāṅrtika, uparika, kumārāmātya, rājanaka Vijayavaramman, visayapati, officer appointed by him (tad-āyuktaka) and others who live on the favour of the king gathered at Śvetavālikā-vithi (ll.10·12). It is issued by mahāmahattaras, mahattaras and pradhānas from villages and hamlets (grāma-vātaka) including twenty agrahāras and other donated lands, which are ‘our’ residence, and by an adhikarana (ll.12·13). The procedure recorded is as follows: ‘we’, denoting the aforementioned mahāmahattaras and the adhikarana, were approached by mahāsāmanta-mahārāja Acyuta (ll.13·14). Seeing that agricultural and homestead land was donated for deities, brāhmaṇas, matha, vihāra and residence by many good people by making copper plate grant with perpetual tenure after purchasing it from them (i.e., the receivers of the petition) by one hundred units of money, and considering uncertainty of life, he wanted to make donation for the following purposes: the construction of a vihāra at Bodhipadraka-vihāra; the practice of bali, caru, incense, flower and lamp rituals; the provision for offering food, beddings, seats, preparation for disease, medicine and utensils to the bhikṣu-saṃgha (ll.14·19). And he asked them to give him Śvetavālikā-grāma through purchase, by making copper plate grant (ll.19·20). Then ‘we’ required that the agricultural and homestead land of the village should be given to him, as the village is located in the periphery adjacent to the sea, and there would be acquisition of the
one sixth of merit by the king and so on (ll.20-23). Then it was verified by pustapâla Bhogibhâga (l.23). It is followed by unclear sentences which said that kumārāmātya rājanaka Vijayavarmman was appointed by mahāsāmanta mahārāja Acyuta, who was entrusted with Daṇḍa-bhukti, and some Śvetavālikā-vithi vyavahārin was appointed by Vijayavarmman (ll.23-24). It may mean that these appointments could be made only after Acyuta, himself an applicant for land, had actually acquired the land, though his acquisition of land is not clearly mentioned. Then Śvetavālikā-grāma including the whole parts was made ready, accompanied by the sales transaction, by people beginning with viśay-ādhikarana-mahāmahattara Grhasvāmin, including twelve mahattaras, pradhānas and a kāyastha belonging to six villages and three karanikas and two pustapālas (ll.25-29), and given to the Mahāyāna bhikṣu-samgha belonging to Bodhipadraka in southern direction for the increase of merit of parents, himself and all the sentient beings (ll.29-30). At that time, it was given to mahāsāmanta Acyuta after pustapāla Candra, dharmakaraniṇa Ajatāśṭya and sthāyapāla Khaga of Bhārolāṅgolā-vithi explained that all the tribute would be exempted but there would be annual tribute of one hundred aripipāda-cūrnikās, which may be the currency unit counted in cowrie shells (ll.30-31). This provision may indicate that this is a kara-śāsana, a grant which allows enjoyment of land in lieu of annual payment of some tribute. After border landmarks were

17 The edition of this part is especially poor and the meaning of many parts is not clear.
18 This point is suggested by B. D. Chattopadhyaya through the personal correspondence.
19 This portion is not clear. As to names of people and villages to some extent legible, see Appendix 3 Table 7.
20 B. D. Chattopadhyaya, 'Currency in Early Bengal', p.53.
21 As to kara-śāsana, see D. C. Sircar, 'Krāya-śāsana and Kara-śāsana' in idem, Studies in the Political and Administrative Systems in Ancient and Medieval India, Delhi, 1974, pp.66-74.
minutely described (ll.31-37), it was instructed that sārīra\textsuperscript{22} should be established by 'us' after dividing the multitude of raised land (uddeśa) and something, probably the protection of donation, should be done by 'you', which may denote officers mentioned at the beginning, who have done favour for the maintenance of another (donation), after informing visav-ādhikarana (ll.37-39). Then they warned a person belonging to 'our' family (asmat-kulya) and others of the grave sin which they would commit by behaving in another way, i.e., not observing the terms of donation (ll.39). This grant was heated for soldering the seal by pustapāla Bhogabhaṭṭa, written by kāyastha Māṇadatta and engraved by Cīluka (ll.50-51).

The fourth is the Faridpur grant of the time of Gopacandra, dated year 18.\textsuperscript{23} The time of the event is referred to as the reign of mahārājādhirāj Gopacandra, at the time of the rule of mahāpratihāra vyāparakāranda dhṛtamūla kumārāmātya uparika Nāgadeva in Navyāvakāśikā, while viniyukt Vatsapālasvāmin is managing the administration of Vā rakamaṇḍala-visaya (ll.1-6). The issuing authority and address are not mentioned, though the former may be the adhikarana of the visaya as is indicated by the seal.\textsuperscript{24} The procedure recorded is as follows: The adhikarana headed by jyeṣṭha-kāyastha Nayasena, and mahattaras and pradhāna- vyāparins,\textsuperscript{25} were informed by a petitioner who seems to be Vatsapālasvāmin (ll.6-10).\textsuperscript{26} He conveyed his wish to purchase one kulyavāpa of land from somewhere in the place named Mahākottika at some price, and to donate it to bhaṭṭa Gomidattasvāmin, who belonged to Kāṇva-Vājasaneya school and

\textsuperscript{22} Meaning of this term in this context is not clear. As it means ‘body’ or ‘bone’, it may be some object demarcating the donated land.

\textsuperscript{23} Id, 39, pp.203-205, SI, 1, 370-372. Pargiter read the date as 19 while Sircar read it as 18. I adopted Sircar’s reading.

\textsuperscript{24} SI, 1, p.370.

\textsuperscript{25} Though their names are listed, only a few are legible due to corrosion. For their names, see Appendix 3 Table 4.

\textsuperscript{26} This is indicated by the following description, though his name is illegible in this particular portion.
Lauhitya gotra, for the increase of merit of his parents and himself (ll.10·14). And he asked ‘you’ (plural), probably denoting mahattaras, to give it by accepting money from him, who belonged to Bharadvaja gotra (ll.14·15). Then they discussed his petition and pustapāla Nayabhūti roughly verified that the custom of activity in the east is known and the land is sold at the rate of four dināras for one kulyavāpa (ll.15·18). After the viṣaya-adhikarana chose members of adhikarana (adhikaranikarjana) as kulavāras, which possibly mean arbitrators, and they divided the land by eight by nine nālas based on cubit of acknowledged righteous Śivacandra, one kulyavāpa of land was sold to Vatsapālasvāmin (ll.18·20). Then it was given to bhatta Gomidattasvāmin with inheritance by son and grandson following the rule (ll.20·21). Finally, landmarks demarcating the borders of donated land are described (ll.21·24).

The fifth to mention is the Mallasarul grant of the time of Gopacandra, dated year 33. The time of event is referred to as the reign of mahārājādhirāja Gopacandra (ll.2·3). It is addressed to the fourteen present officers concerned with Varddhamāna-bhukti, that is, kārtākrita, kumārāmātya, cauroddharanika, upārika, odraṅgika, agrahārika, orunasthānika, bhogapatika, viṣayapati, officer appointed by him (tadʾāyuktaka), hiranyasāmudāyika, pattalaka, āvasathika, officer belonging to the procession of god (devadroṣi-samvaddha) and so on (ll.3·5). Issuers of the grant consist of five mahattaras, one bhatta, three people without any

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27 Some part, especially line 11 which pertains to the place name, is illegible. ‘[Bhā]radvāja-sagotra-[bhalvanto’ in line 14 can mean ‘you, who belongs to Bhāradvāja gotra’, but it is rather odd as a compound and does not match with the context. Following Sircar, taking it as a mistake for ‘sagotrebyo’ and interpreting it conditioning ‘asmatto’, may be better. SI, 1, p.371, l.14.
28 SI, 1, p.371, note 5. I also followed Sircar’s reading of ‘adhikaranakajjana’ as ‘adhikaranikajjanān.’
29 EI, 23, pp.155·161, SI, 1, 372·377. As to date, N. G. Majumdar read it as samvvad 3, while Sircar read as samvva 30 3. EI, 23, p.161, SI, 1, p.377, l.25. I followed Sircar’s opinion.
title, three *khādgis* (swordsmen) and one *vāhanāyaka* (superintendent of plough) of eleven villages and *agrahāras* belonging to Vakkattaka-vīthi, and *vīthy-adhikarana* (ll.5-8). The procedure is as follows: 'we', the issuers mentioned above, were approached by *mahārāja* Vijayasena. He conveyed his wish to purchase eight *kulyavāpas* from them at Vettragartta-grama belonging to the *vīthī* according to the rule and donate it to Vatsapālasvāmin, who belonged to Kauṇḍinya *gotra* and Bāhrvca school for his practice of five daily rituals (*paöca-mahāyajñā*) with perpetual validity and enjoyment by lineage of son and grandson, for the increase of merit of his parents and himself (ll.8-10). 'We', the acceptant, verified about his request that there is acquisition of the one sixth of merit by the overlord (*paramabhattāraka*) and union with fame and happiness for themselves, and his wish should be fulfilled (ll.10-12). Then they accepted some *dināras* given by Vijayasena and divided eight *kulyavāpas* at 'our' Vettragartta-grama in the *vīthī*, through their *vārakrtas*, meaning probably arbitrators (ll.12-13). The land was given to Vijayasena after it was confirmed that it was proper donation and should be established honestly in the income of *vīthī* (l.13). Then it was given to Vatsapālasvāmin by the king, that was, Vijayasena, with copper plate (l.14). After the description of landmarks demarcating the borders of donated land (ll.14-16), there was order directed to anybody born in the family, probably of Vijayasena, not to disturb the border demarcation and enjoyment of the *brāhmaṇa* accompanied with practice of five daily rituals, with warning of grave result accruing from it (ll.16-19). It was told at the end that the messenger was Subhadatta and that the grant was inscribed by *sāndhivigrabika* Bhogacandra and heated for soldering a seal by *pustapāla* Jayadāsa (l.24-25). The seal of *mahārāja* Vijayasena is soldered to the document.31

30 As to their names and villages to which they belong, see Appendix 3 Table 5.

31 *SI*, 1, p.372.
The sixth is the Ghugrahati grant of the time of Samacaradeva, dated year 14. The time of the event is referred to as the reign of mahārajādhirāja Samacaradeva, when antarāṅga-ūparīka Jīvadatta, who was appointed to Suvarṇa-vīthī, is in Navaṇāvakāśikā, while visayapati Pavitraka, pleased by Jīvadatta, is managing affairs in Vāraka-maṇḍala (ll.1-5). There is no mention of issuing authority and address. The procedure recorded is as follows: adhikarana headed by ṣaṃhata-adhikarāṇika Dāmuka, and people beginning with six named viṣaya-mahattaras, many other pradhānas and vyavahārins were approached by brāhmaṇa Supratikasvāmin (ll.5-9). He conveyed them his wish to be given a piece of fallow land (khīla-bhū-khaṇḍalaka) exhausted (or sunk) for long time for practice of bali, caru, sattra and enjoyment as a brāhmaṇa after making a copper plate grant, and asked their favour (ll.9-12). After receiving his petition, the aforementioned and other vyavahārins agreed and verified that there would be no acquisition of merit and profit for the king from the land with holes inhabited by wild animals, while there would be share of merit and profit for the king if the land was enjoyed, and that the land should be given to the brāhmaṇa (ll.12-15). Then after they appointed karāṇika Nayanāga, Keśava and others as kulavāras, the remaining portion of Vyāghracorakā with four borders indicated, except three kulyavāpas of land donated with copper plate before, was given to Supratikasvāmin (ll.15-17). Landmarks demarcating the borders of donated land are also described (ll.18-20).

From the end of the sixth century to the first half of the seventh century, the rule of the two kings, Śaśāṅka and Jayanāga, who had Gauḍa as their main territory and Karṇasuvāra as their centre is attested by a few

32 EI, 18, pp.74-86.
33 As to these people, see Appendix 3 Table 4.
34 Karṇasuvāra is identified with Rajbadidanga in Murshidabad district. For the partial excavation of the site, see S. R. Das, Rājbādīdāṅga: 1962
copper plate inscriptions, gold coins issued by them, and the account of Hsuan-chang. Among their inscriptions, Egra grant issued during the reign of Śaśānka contains minute information about local participation in the process of land purchase and donation, comparable to the copper plate inscriptions mentioned above.

The Egra grant of the time of Śaśānka was found at Panchrol near Egra in East Medinipur district. At the beginning, it mentions the reign of mahārājādhirāja Śaśānka over the earth (ll.1·5). It is issued to honourable present and future kārttākr̥ti ka, upārika, bhukti patta līka, kumārāmātya, viṣayapati and officers appointed by them in Eakatākakṣa-viṣaya, and officers of bhāndāgāra (treasury) and their adhikaraṇas at bhāndāgāra (ll.5·7), by thirty four influential people belonging to twelve villages and the viṣaya. They are twelve mahāmahattaras of five villages, one mahattaras of a village, two bhaṭtas of two villages, five people of four villages prefixed with only village names, and finally, one mahāmahattara, one mahāpradhāna, four pradhānas, three karanikas, three pustapālas and two sthāyipālas of the viṣaya (ll.8·17). The procedure mentioned is as follows: the aforementioned thirty four people were informed by antaraṅga Doṣatuṅga of his wish to donate the land to bhaṭṭa Dāmasvāmin, belonging to Kausika gotra and three pravaras of Kausika, Āghamarśa and Vaiśvāmitra and learning three Vedas, as perpetual grant, with aksayanīvṛti tenure, to be protected in all aspects, for the increase of merit of his parent and himself (ll.17·20). He said to them that one hundred droṇavāpas of land should be given to him after making


35 Mukherjee, op. cit., pp.10·15, 40·42.
37 EI, 40, pp.133·138.
38 For their names, see Appendix 3 Table 6.
copper plate grant and dividing it in Kaparddipadraka (ll.20-21). Then it was verified and decided by the mutual verification of the aforementioned people after listening to the words of the dharmasamhitā that there is no increase of king’s wealth but acquisition of the one sixth of merit for him from the division of the land fallow for long time and devoid of manure, and that the land should be given from the kośa (treasury) in accordance with the custom of donation with copper plate at the rate of four pana39 for a dronavāpa (ll.21-26). After dividing one hundred dronavāpas by ash, charcoal and so on, it was given at the northwest part of the village (ll.26-27). Landmarks demarcating the borders of donated land are minutely described (ll.30-36).

Two copper plate inscriptions from Medinipur mentioning the reign of Śaśānka offer information about activity of the adhikarana in this region.

Medinipur grant of the time of Śaśānka, dated year 8,40 referred to the time of event as reign of Śaśānka when mahāpratihāra Śubhakirti is protecting Dānḍa-bhukti, with elaborate eulogy (ll.1-7). It is issued by Tāvira-karaṇa, synonymous with Tāvīr-adhikaraṇa as is indicated by the attached seal,41 united with brāhmaṇas (vipra) and pradhānas, to the present and future adhis, probably abbreviation of adhikaraṇikas (ll.7-8). It is said that Śubhakirti gave forty dronas (of land) and one drona of homestead land at the village Kumbhārapadraka in Ketakapadrika uddeśa to brāhmaṇa Dāmyasvāmin belonging to Bharadvāja gotra and Mādhyandina school, for the increase of the merit of his father, after purchasing the land from them according to the rule (ll.8-11). Then the warning to a person who would be born in their family and anybody else about grave sin follows (ll.12-13).

39 Pana mentioned here may be unit of silver currency, in the form of ingot or dust. Mukherjee, op. cit., pp.13-14.
40 JRASBL, 11, 1945, p.9; SI, 2, pp.24-25.
Another Medinipur inscription dated year 1942 also referred to the time of event as reign of Śaśānika, when sāmanta-mahārāja Somadatta is governing Daṇḍa-bhukti with Utkalā-deśa, with elaborate eulogy (ll.1-7). It is issued by Somadatta’s minister (amātya) Prakīrṇadāsa to the whole karana of Tāvira accompanied by people (loka), after giving homage to all the future kings (ll.7-9). It conveyed the announcement of Somadatta that the village Mūhā-Kumbhārapadraka was given to Bhaṭṭeśvara, who belonged to Kāśyapa gotra and who was an Adhvaryu priest, and it was excluded from all the mandala (ll.9-13). The last clause may mean that this donated village was excluded from the jurisdiction of the local administrative units. He also warned a person who would be born in his family and anybody else about grave sin (ll.13-14). The following portion is not clear.

On the other hand, Vappagoshavata copper plate inscription of Jayanāga is a royal grant and there is no mention of adhikarana. The time of event is referred to as the reign of mahārājādhirāja Jayanāga, who stays in Karnaśuvāra, when sāmanta Nārāyanabhadra appointed by him is enjoying (i.e., ruling) Audumvarika-viṣaya and vyavahārī-mahāpratihāra Śūryasena is managing it (ll.1-4). It is said that following contents is the order of the king given by the sāmanta (l.4): Vappaghośavāta grāma was given by ‘me’, the king, to bhaṭṭa Vrahmavirasvāmin, who belonged to Kāśyapa gotra and Chāndoga school, for the increase of merit of his parents and himself, with tenure of permanent donation (aksayani-dharma) (ll.4-6). ‘You’, probably denoting Śūryasena, were ordered to give copper plate grant accompanied by the seal of viṣaya and the village whose border was fixed (ll.6-7). The minute description of the border landmarks follows it, though the last portion of the plate is illegible due to corrosion (ll.7-14).

42 JRASBL, 11, pp.1-8; SI, 2, pp.26-27.
43 EI, 18, pp.60-64.
2. Changes in Local Participation: Emergence of New Form of Rural Social Networks

All cases cited above except the last two indicate the continuance of the participation by some sections of local population in the process of land purchase and donation, and appearance of their activity on the copper plate inscriptions. The *adhikarana* and people associated with it still wield authority to make decision in the process. Even dignitaries like military officer,\(^44\) administrator,\(^45\) subordinate rulers\(^46\) and intimate subordinate of the king\(^47\) need to approach them to purchase land. On the other hand, there is change in membership and way of participation from the earlier period.

First to be recognised is the exclusion of *kutumbins* from the process. As is indicated in the previous chapter, presence of *kutumbins* in rural society is duly recognised in the address of grants,\(^48\) and their participation in the process as petitioners,\(^49\) part of decision makers\(^50\) and executors of practical part of donation like land measurement and border fixation\(^51\) is rather obvious in the copper plate inscriptions belonging to the previous

\(^44\) *sādhanika* Vātabhoga in the Faridpur CPI of the time of Dharmāditya, year 3. *SI*, 1, p.364, l.7.
\(^46\) *mahāsāmantamahārāja* Acyuta in the Jayarampur CPI, *IO*, p.175, l.14; *mahārāja* Vijayasena in the Mallasarul CPI, *SI*, 1, p.374, l.8: *mahāpratihāra* Subhakirti in Midnapore CPI of year 8, *JRASBL*, 11, p.9, l.8.
\(^47\) *antarāṅga* Doṣatūṅga in the Egra CPI. *EI*, 40, p.137, l.17.
\(^48\) The Kalaikuri-Sultanpur, Baigram, Jagadishpur, Paharpur CPIs, Damodarpur CPI of GE 163 and Nandapur CPI. *SI*, 1, p.352, l.2; p.355, l.2; *EDEP*, p.61, l.2; *SI*, 1, p.360, l.3; p.333, l.3.
\(^49\) The Baigram, Jagadishpur CPIs and Damodarpur CPI of GE 163. *SI*, 1, p.356, l.3; *EDEP*, p.61, ll.3-4; *SI*, 1, p.333, l.4. For the probability that *grāmika* Nabhaka is one of *grāmika·kutumbins*, see Supra, pp.87-88.
\(^50\) The Dhanaidaha, Kalaikuri-Sultanpur, Jagadishpur CPIs and Damodarpur CPI of GE 163. See Appendix 3 Tables 1 and 2, *SI*, 1, p.333, l.3.
period. But their absence in the whole process is conspicuous in the copper plate grants mentioned above. The Jayarampur, Mallasarul and Egra grants, only which have the parts mentioning address and issuing authority, are issued by local participants to number of officers mentioned with their titles. As to petitioners, four are dignitaries as mentioned above and other two were brāhmaṇas. The people participating in the decision making on land purchase and donation are limited to more influential section of the society like mahattaras, as I will discuss minutely. Here, I may detect sidelining of kutumbins from important affairs of the rural society.

In contrast to the absence of kutumbins, the presence of mahattaras and their active participation in the process is conspicuous in almost all the inscriptions cited above. But there is difference in their representation and way of participation according to the locality in which the process is witnessed. The localities concerned are Vārakamaṇḍala-विषय in Vaṅga and the area located to the west of the river Bhagirathi, including Rādhā.

Transactions in Vārakamaṇḍala-विषय are mentioned in all the three Faridpur grants and the Ghugrahati grant. In case of the Faridpur grant of the time of Dharmaditya, dated year 3, and the grant of the time of Gopacandra, even the recorded events occurred in close proximity. In these cases, the visay-ādhikarana is headed by the elder (jyeṣṭha) kāyastha or member of adhikarana (adhikarana). As is indicated by the term ‘elder’

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52 Vasudevasvāmin in the Faridpur CPI, no date, Ibid., p.368, l.6, p.369, ll.19-20; Supratikasvāmin in the Ghugrahati CPI, EI, 18, p.76, l.5.
53 The land in Dhruvilāṭi donated in the former grant was adjoined by Śilakuṇḍa on the west side, while the land donated in the latter was franked by Dhruvilāṭi agrahāra on the east and Śilakuṇḍa-ग्राम on the west. SI, 1, p.366, l.16, l.23-24, p.367, l.25; p.371, l.21-23; p.372, l.24. It is highly possible that Śilakuṇḍa dried up in time being and then new village was established there.
54 jyeṣṭha-kāyastha Nayasena in Faridpur CPIs of the time of Dharmaditya, no date, and the time of Gopacandra. Ibid., p.368, l.7: p.371, l.6.
55 jyeṣṭha-ādhikarana Dāmuka in Ghugrahati CPI, EI, 18, p.76, ll.5-6.
prefixed to their titles, members of *adhikarana* may include other *kavyasthas* or similar clerical functionaries headed by them. The appointment of *adhikaranikajana* and *karanikas* as *kulasvāras* in the Faridpur inscription of the time of Gopacandra and the Ghugrahati inscription may endorse inclusion of such groups in the *adhikarana* and the continuity of their function in the practical part of donation.\(^56\) Thus the *viṣay-ādhikarana* in these cases can be considered as an office mainly constituted by clerical groups. This change may allude to the higher position of *kavyastha* group in the rural social hierarchy of this region, in contrast to their counterpart in the Gupta period North Bengal, who were not members of *adhikarana* nor involved with decision making, in spite of their presence.\(^57\)

On the other hand, *mahattaras* and other influential people of the locality act as receivers of the petitions together with the *viṣay-ādhikarana*, not as members of the organisation.\(^58\) *Mahattaras* are foremost among them as they are mentioned in the first place and some of them are mentioned with their names, in contrast to the other categories. Their character as landholder is indicated by the reference to the land belonging to *mahattara* Thōḍa in the Faridpur inscription without date.\(^59\) As to other categories, *pradhāna*, literally meaning ‘principal’, may be local influential people similar to *mahattara*. *Vyāpārin* and *vyavahārin* are used synonymously in the Faridpur inscription of the time of Gopacandra and the Ghugrahati inscription.\(^60\) As the description ‘above written and other *vyavahārin*

\(^{56}\) *SI*, 1, p.371, l.18; *EI*, 18, p.77, l.15.

\(^{57}\) Supra, pp.91-92.

\(^{58}\) Appendix 3 Table 4.

\(^{59}\) ‘śrimān mahattara Thōḍa-[samvaddha]-kṣettra-khaṇḍalakāt’, *SI*, 1, p.369, l.17.

\(^{60}\) ‘pradhāna-vyāpā[ri]n’, *Ibid.*, p.371, l.9, ‘pradhānā vyavahā[ri]*nas=ca’, *EI*, 18, p.76, l.19. *Vyāpārin*, derived from vy-ā-ṝ prá, ‘to be occupied or engaged in’, and *vyavahārin*, derived from vy-ava-ṝ hṛ, ‘to be active or busy, work’, shared the connotation of engagement or dealing. Thus their interchangeable use in the same context is understandable.
the Ghugrahati inscription connotes that six viṣaya-mahattaras mentioned in it are included in this category, it can be a general category of local people involved with management of some local affairs around the adhikarana. They may also belong to dominant section of the locality like samvyavahārin discussed in the previous chapter. The fact that they are mentioned with mahattaras and pradhānas endorses it.

As to the way of participation and function, the first to note is that they participate in the process at the viṣaya level. Especially, mahattaras are represented as ‘mahattaras of viṣaya’ in all cases except the Faridpur grant of Gopacandra, in which relevant part is not clear. It indicates their participation at the supra-village level based on the lower administrative unit like vithi mahattaras and kutumbins of Śrṅgavera-vithi in the fifth century. Their representation by the single category of viṣaya-mahattara may also indicate the solidarity with temporary suppression of inner difference at least among mahataras whose names are mentioned, as I discussed in the cases of vithy-adhikarana in the previous period. The existence of difference and power relation among mahattaras is alluded to by the case of mahattara Thōḍa. His involvement with the decision making is not clear, while his land was expropriated by the adhikarana and mahattaras for the sale and donation. He had to comply with their decision backed by a pustapāla, either through agreement or enforcement.

The regularity of their participation is not clear, and only two people,
Anācāra and Ghoṣacandra who appear in two of the Faridpur inscriptions, seems to have participated in the plural cases. But the fluctuation of the number of people whose names are mentioned may rather allude to an irregular assembly convened whenever an application comes to adhikarana. Compared with it, the membership and participation of adhikarana members like kāyasthas seems to be more regular.

Second, mahattaras function in collaboration with the adhikarana. Both of them are receivers of petitions and represented as 'we' or 'us' as an entity in those inscriptions. They discuss or receive the petition together and even get united, according to the description in the first Faridpur grant of Dharmaditya. In case of this inscription, they execute the practical part of land sales, that is, accepting money from the petitioner, dividing the land and giving it to him. Though it is not clearly mentioned, the case of the second Faridpur plate can be the same. On the other hand, arbitrators called kulavāras are especially appointed and execute such practical parts of transactions in cases of the Faridpur inscription of the time of Gopacandra and Ghugrahati inscription. Some adhikaranikas are appointed by the adhikarana as kulavāras in the former, while karanika Nayanāga, Keśava and others are appointed by the receivers of the petition, that is, the adhikarana and all the vyavahārinis, according to the context of the latter.

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66 Appendix 3 Table 4. Their names are underlined.
67 'etad=abharyawanam=adhikṛty(a)', SI, 1, p.364, l.9; 'etad=āvābhyarthānam=adhikṛty(a)', Ibid., p.368, l.13; 'etad=abhya*ṛthanam=adhikṛty(a)', Ibid., p.371, ll.15-16.
68 'enad=abharyawanam=upalabhya', EI, 18, p.76, l.12.
69 'aikātmeya bhūtvā', SI, 1, p.364, l.9, note 9.
70 Ibid., p.366, ll.15-17.
71 Ibid., p.369, ll.18-19.
72 Ibid., p.371, ll.18-19; EI, 18, p.77, ll.15-17.
73 'visay-ādihikaraṇa=ādihikaraṇaka-jāīana-kulavārān=prakalpya', SI, 1, p.371, l.18. For the reconstruction of 'adhikaraṇaka-jāīana' as 'adhikaraṇika-janā', see Supra, p.111, note 28.
74 'karanika·Nayanāga·Keśav-ādin=kulavārān=prakalpya', EI, 18, p.77, l.15.
As is known from these references, they are clerical members belonging to the *adhikaran*. It may indicate some kind of specialisation or functional division between *mahattaras* and clerical groups, which are clearly discernible in this later phase. What is important is, however, the exclusion of *kutumbins* from this process. The implementation of order and execution of the practical part of donation were the occasions in which some kind of right over village land retained by *kutumbins* were detectable and they could negotiate such a right with the outside authority through *adhikaran* as an arena, in the Gupta period North Bengal as I discussed above. The fact that such an execution is also implemented by the *adhikaran* and *mahattaras* indicates not only the loss of one arena of negotiation for *kutumbins* but also the sweeping authority of *mahattaras* and clerical group like *kayasthas* over local issues.

There is another clerical group whose involvement is discernible as in the former period. *Pustapālas* continue to fulfil the same duty to verify the conformity of the petition to the local custom in the three Faridpur inscriptions. They verify the prevalence of the local custom called 'custom of eastern sea', 'custom of purchase in the east', or 'custom of behaviour in the east' and the sales of land at the rate of four *dināras* for one *kulyavāpa*. In the inscriptions of the time of Dharmāditya, they also verify the sale of land according to the rule of copper plate and acquisition of the one sixth of the merit for the king, and the detail of land sale like how much money should be accepted from the petitioner for a certain stretch of land belonging to a certain person. In contrast to them, verification in the

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75 Supra, p.84.
76 'prāk-samudra-maryyādā', *SI*, 1, p.364, l.10.
inscription of the time of Gopacandra is rather simple and described as 'rough verification of pustapāla Nayabhūti.' In the Ghugrahati inscription, even the reference to pustapāla is missing and the verification of the profit and merit for the king is done by the vyavahārins, who may include mahattaras and other people working with the adhikarana or rather receivers of the petition in this context. These cases show the continuance of pustapāla involvement in the early phase, but at the same time gradual reduction of their importance and the appropriation of their function by the nexus of upper peasants and clerical groups in the later phase.

The cases in the west of Bhagirathi show different social categories among rural elite groups and the way of their representation. In the Mallasarul inscription, which belongs to Vakkattaka-vithi in Vardhamāna-bhukti, people including thirteen named members and vithy-adhikarana issue the grant and receive the petition, as is mentioned above. First to take note is the fact that the adhikarana is mentioned after those people, in contrast to the cases of Vārakamāṇḍala-viṣaya. It may allude to relatively higher authority of those people, probably local notables, compared with the vithy-adhikarana. Second to note is that those named members are mentioned in relation to the eleven settlements. Their titles and names are prefixed by village names in derivative form denoting belonging, or village names suffixed with agrahāriṇa. As it is used side by side with village name in such a derivative form, the last term may mean 'of agrahāra' or 'belonging to agrahāra', and denotes belonging to a settlement whose name ends with agrahāra. Thus, the settlements to which those

82 I followed Sircar's reconstruction as 'Nayabhūtes=tu sthūl-avadhāraṇayā.'Ibid., p.371, ll.17-18, note 4.
83 EI, 18, p.76, l.12-p.77, l.15.
84 Appendix 3 Table 5.
85 In regular or Vṛddhi form with suffix -iya. N. Tsuji, Sanskrit Bunpou (Sanskrit Grammar) (in Japanese), Tokyo, 1974, p.218.
86 It may not be a synonym of 'agrapāra' suggested by Sircar, as the context
members belong are indicated here. It alludes to a different way of participation, in which the belonging of each member is rather emphasised than glossed over as are the cases in Vārakamandalavisaśyaya.

The people represented are an influential section of the rural society. Apart from mahattaras and bhatta, which is an honourable title of brāhmaṇa, khādgin and vāhanāyaka are included in the list. Khādgin, a derivative from the word khadga, 'sword', may mean 'swordsman.' They can be a kind of military officers or guards holding sword as symbol of their position.\textsuperscript{87} But the fact that they are not mentioned among the officers listed in the address section of the inscription but mentioned with mahattaras in relation to certain settlements rather indicates their closeness to the rural society and local notables. As they represent each village in the assembly, they may be local influential people performing some kind of military function in the locality, possibly with some land holdings. Vāhanāyaka may mean either 'superintendent of plough' or 'superintendent of transport', according to Sircar.\textsuperscript{88} He extends the former interpretation as far as 'the officer in charge of king's Khāś Mahālī', though there is no evidence to support such an interpretation.\textsuperscript{89} Though the character of the office is not clear, the way of their representation similar to khādgins may also indicate their closeness to the rural society.

As is pointed out by Chattopadhyaya, the village Vettragartta, in which the donated land is located, is not represented by these people.\textsuperscript{90} Among the villages to which these people belong, Godhagrāma and

\textsuperscript{87} Sircar takes it the same as 'khādgika', which probably denotes a palace guard. \textit{IEG}, p.153.
\textsuperscript{88} \textsl{SI}, 1, p.374, note 2, \textit{IEG}, p.358.
\textsuperscript{89} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{90} Chattopadhyaya, \textit{Rural Settlement and Society}, p.49.
Vaṭavallak-āgrahāra are adjacent to Vettragarttā and constitute the landmarks of eastern, southern and northern borders.\footnote{SI, 1, p.375, ll.14·15.} while Khāḍajotikā, Vakkattaka and Śālmālivātaka may be located nearby these villages.\footnote{For the identification of some of these settlements with their modern counterparts and their location, see C. Gupta, ‘Bengal Art and Bengal Inscriptions: An Approach towards Co-relation -- A Case Study with Punchra: A Village in the Vardhaman District, West Bengal’, JBA, 7, 2002, pp.83·100, p.87.} But Āmragarttikā, which is the landmark of western border,\footnote{SI, 1, p.375, 1.15.} is not represented by mahattaras and other notables. It may indicate the existence of hierarchy among settlements, some of which are represented while others are not. On the other hand, settlements represented here are not restricted to the vicinity of the concerned village and may cover a wider geographical stretch.

The way of representation in the Jayarampur inscription, which belongs to Daṇḍā-bhukti, shows similar tendency. It is issued by mahāmahattaras, mahattaras and pradhānas, unnamed in the beginning, from several settlements, which are also unnamed, and an adhikarana.\footnote{See Appendix 3 Table 7.} It is said in the later part of the inscription that people beginning with viṣay-ādhikarana-mahāmahattara Gṛhasvāmin, probably the same as people mentioned as issuers, made preparation for land sale.\footnote{Ibid, p.176, ll.25·29.} The thirteen names placed after Gṛhasvāmin are listed with village names and titles prefixed to them, while five names follow them have only their titles.\footnote{Appendix 3 Table 7.} The titles wielded by the former include mahattara, pradhāna and its probable scribal mistake prathāna, and kāyata, probably a mistake for kāvastha.\footnote{Ibid.} There is a person mentioned without any title, named Vandhasvāmin, who may be a brāhmaṇa according to his name.\footnote{Though śūṣaṇa and Dharmmaprāṇa of Śvetavālikā do not have any}
additional title, 'vettrakarmaṇi-mukhiya', which may mean 'leader of cane workers' or a place name within the village Hulavāṇaja, apart from prathāna. As these titles, except kāvastha, connote local notables mainly constituted by the upper section of peasants, the way of participation and representation of the people prefixed with village names show strong similarity to the case of Mallasarul inscription. On the other hand, the latter includes karanikas and pustapālas. Together with the inclusion of kāvasthas, it shows the collaboration between upper section of peasants and clerical groups in the rural society.

The appropriation of the function of pustapālas, which is witnessed in the cases in Vārakamaṇḍalavāsa, is also discernible in this region. The verification is done by 'us', the receivers of the petition in case of the Mallasarul inscription.99 Pustapālas prepare the donation with mahattaras in case of the Jayarampur inscription and Bhogabhaṭṭa, one of them, is involved with the preparation of the document, 100 though pustapāla Bhogībhāga, who is not listed with them, makes some verification.101 This case amounts to the incorporation of pustapālas into the nexus of upper peasants and clerical groups. The execution of the practical part of donation by arbitrators is also witnessed in the Mallasarul inscription as in the later phase in the aforementioned visaya, though they are called vārakṛta, not kulavāra in this case.102

The case revealed in the Egra inscription, which belongs to Ekatākakṣa-visāya located in present Medinipur district but as late as the beginning of seventh century, shows the continuance of similar tendency and

titles either, their title seems to be mentioned in the obliterated part preceding their names. IO, p.175, ll.27-28.
100 'etanya (etac=ca) śasanam tāpitam pustapāla-[Bhogabhaṭṭena], IO, p.178, l.50.
101 IO, p.176, l.23. The content of this line is not clear.
change. In this inscription, thirty four named people including *mahāmahattaras* wield full authority as issuers of the inscription and receivers of the petition, while *visay-ādhikarana* is only mentioned in the seal. Among them, twenty people are prefixed with names of the villages to which they belong, with titles of *mahāmahattara*, *mahattara*, *bhatta* or without any of them. Remaining fourteen people are categorised as *vaśayik-anāma*, 'of *vasaya*, without name.' From the comparison of the styles, it can be easily guessed that *anāma* here means that they do not have any village names prefixed to them. As they are mentioned after people who have village names prefixed, their position seems to be weaker than the latter probably because they do not have the position strong enough to represent each village, while they belong to the same *vasaya* and wield some influence in it. The people mentioned in this category include *mahāmahattaras*, *mahāpradhānas*, *pradhānas* and clerical groups like *karanikas*, *pustapālas* and *sthāyipālas*. I may detect here incorporation of the clerical group into the assembly of local influential people witnessed in the other cases. The fact that the verification is mutually conducted by these people indicates the incorporation of the clerical group, which results in the absorption of their function.

The way of representation in this inscription shows some similarity to the two cases cited above in the point that the identity of *mahattara* and other local influential section is closely associated with rural settlement. On the other hand, the increase of categories of local influential groups and difference between some with village affiliation and others without it indicate the further development of differentiation and hierarchical formation among the groups of higher peasants or landholders, while the exclusion of ordinary peasants is fully established. The incorporation of clerical groups also points to progress of the collaboration between higher

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103 Appendix 3 Table 6.
104 ‘(a)smābhira=yair=upari=likhitake(ai)r=anyony=avadhāra=avadhṛtam’, *EI*, 40, p.138, ll.22-23.
peasants and them.

Another trait common to these three cases is incorporation of \textit{brāhmaṇas} into the category of \textit{mahattara} and other landholders. While the title of \textit{bhatta} clearly suggests it in the Mallasarul and Egra inscriptions, \textit{mahattaras} with name ending 'svāmin' or 'śarmman' in all the three allude to it. They may be \textit{brāhmaṇa} landholders as Chattopadhyaya interpreted, though their connection with \textit{agrahāra} settlements is not so clear.105

The cases discussed above show difference in the way of representation between Vaṅga and the west of Bhagirathi. In the former, \textit{mahattaras} and other local influential group are represented as belonging to \textit{viśaya}. In the latter, these notables, at least stronger section of them, are represented as belonging to particular rural settlements. While the organisational principle in the former consists in the identity of \textit{viśaya} and the suppression of difference among members, the difference accrued from titles and settlements is rather emphasised in the latter. This regional variation may be related to the difference of landholding and power relation among these groups. In the former area, the land holding of a \textit{mahattara} may be limited to a portion of a village, as is shown by the case of \textit{mahattara} Thōḍā,107 and none of them may have decisive position in each village. In this situation, they need to build up collective authority and the difference is still suppressible. In the latter area, each member has power strong enough to represent a village alone or by a few. Backed by their power in each village, they may not need such a collective authority and rather vie with each other for authority, while they still need to collaborate in settling local issues. The difference among them may be widening and become irreconcilable. As a result, their relation with villages is kept and emphasised in the context of land purchase and donation.

105 Appendix 3 Table 5, 6 and 7.
107 \textit{SI}, 1, p.369, l.17.
On the other hand, there are several tendencies common to both sub-regions. The sweeping authority of the *mahattaras* and other local influential groups shown in their involvement with the local affairs excluding *kutumbins* is one of them. While it indicates establishment of the dominance of higher section of peasants over *kutumbins* and their ascendancy as a whole, the difference and hierarchy among these *mahattaras*, which may accrue from the difference of the access to landed property, results in the increase of categories and the representation associated with rural settlements. Another tendency is collaboration between these *mahattara* groups and clerical groups, who are members of *adhikarana* or incorporated into assembly of influential people. These tendencies allude to the emergence of a new form of rural social networks based on the alliance of the upper strata of peasants and local clerical elites like *kāyasthas*.

Another social network whose growth proceeds side by side with it is a social network of *brāhmaṇas*. As is discussed above, they are included in the categories of *mahattara* and other local influential groups and thus constitute a part of landholders. In this position, they are also participants of alliance among rural elites. On the other hand, they have started to claim a distinct identity as *brāhmaṇas*. One symptom is minute descriptions of the *brāhmaṇa* donee with indicators of identity like *gotra*, *pravara* and Vedic school, in contrast to the previous period. The cases of *brāhmaṇas* who purchase land to donate to the other *brāhmaṇas*, which are not observed in the previous period either, suggest a new tendency. In the Faridpur inscription without date, *brāhmaṇa* Vasudevasvāmin purchased and donated land to *brāhmaṇa* Somasvāmin belonging to Lauhitya *gotra* and Kāṇva-vājasaneyya school. 108 In the Faridpur inscription of the time of Gopacandra, Vatsapālasvāmin, who was *viniyuktaka* and belonged to

108 *SI*, 1, p.368, l.6, ll.10-11.
Bharadvaja gotra, purchased and donated land to bhatta Gomidattasvāmin belonging to the same gotra and school as Somasvāmin. In these cases, brāhmaṇas with the same indicators of identity, possibly even kinship relations, are settled by other brāhmaṇas including office bearers. As donors may keep relation with donees, I may detect construction of social network among brāhmaṇas in this particular area covered by Vārakamandala-viṣaya.

3. Dominant Rural Groups and their Interaction with Political Authority

As is discussed in the previous section, the emergence of a new form of rural social networks based on the alliance of higher peasants or landholders including brāhmaṇas on the one hand, and local literates on the other, is discernible in the middle and western parts of Bengal in this period. The interaction between the rural dominant groups who constitute this new network and the political authority shows another dimension of change witnessed in this period.

The political authority which appeared in this period was represented by kingship formed at sub-regional level and their administrative apparatus consisting of officers and subordinate rulers. The presence of the sub-regional kingship, which had political centre within the region, may have been stronger than the Gupta kingship, which controlled North Bengal with some distance through their lower administrative functionaries. This is endorsed by the extensive list of officers informed of the land purchase and donation in Jayarampur, Mallasarul and Egra inscriptions, each of which includes six, fourteen and seven official titles. They include higher officer like kārtākṛtika, administrators like uparika, kumārāmātya, viṣayapati, pattalaka, revenue and tax collectors like

109 Ibid., p.370, l.5, p.371, ll.13-14, 19.
110 Supra, pp.108, 111, 114.
111 Probably an officer who reports the king about important matters. IEG, p.149.
odrangika, orunasthānika, hiranyasāmudāyika, lower rank rulers like rājanaka and bhogapati, officers of treasury (bhāndāgār-ādhikāra), police officer (cāuroddharānāka), superintendent of agrahāras (agrāhārika), and a kind of religious functionaries like āvasathīka and devadroni-sambaddha.

The fact that notifications are made to these officers, not to kutumbins and other residents of the concerned village as in the previous period, suggests a change of the power relation in rural landscape. The bypassing of kutumbins from the important affairs of land purchase and donation can be a result of the establishment of sweeping authority of mahattaras and other rural notables in this period. As their authority established, they did not need inform, involve and negotiate with kutumbins on this issue any more. On the other hand, the redirection of notification to officers shows the emergence of another negotiating ground for them. While they keep authority over the important issue in the rural society, they now need concurrence of these officers, who are strengthening their presence.

The presence of the ruling section including officers and subordinate rulers is discernible in other aspects too. In the Faridpur inscription of the time of Dharmaditya, dated year 3, the sāmantas and kings were requested to protect the donation, though none of them figured in the transaction.\textsuperscript{112} It makes a clear contrast to the similar injunction in the earlier grants, in which burden of the protection of grant was laid on the shoulders of kutumbins and other residents.\textsuperscript{113} The petitioners of land purchase were also officers and subordinate rulers, except two brāhmaṇas.\textsuperscript{114} Such cases were observed in cases of the Dhanaidaha and Nandapur inscriptions in the previous period\textsuperscript{115} and they can be interpreted as cases in which local administrators of lower administrative units had personal stakes and

\textsuperscript{113} Supra, pp.57, 60, 62, 64, 65, 66.
\textsuperscript{114} Supra, p.117.
\textsuperscript{115} SI, 1, p.288, ll.7, 11: p.382, l.2.
interest in rural society. But the cases witnessed in this period rather
deserve to be called the thrust of their power into the rural society, as they
almost exclusively approach *adhikarana* and are backed by stronger
presence of kingship and their administrative apparatus.

An example endorsing this interpretation is the Mallasarul
inscription. Its content conforms to the format common to the other land
purchase documents, and *mahattaras* and other rural notables with *adhikarana* acted as issuers of the document and receivers of the petition by *mahśāmanta mahārāja* Vijayasena. But at the end, it mentions the
messenger (*dūtaka*) with the writer and the heater of the copper plate
inscription, and the seal attached to the grant is *mahārāja* Vijayasena's,
not the seal of *adhikarana* like other cases. The mention of messenger is
rather common to royal grants like the Gunaighar inscription, and
*sāndhvigrahika* who wrote the inscription is rather a high rank officer under
a king or subordinate ruler. From these points, it appears that Vijayasena
practically executed preparation and issue, or even implementation, of the
grant with his subordinates, while he kept formality of petition and land
purchase. Even the validity of the document depends on his authority
embodied in his royal seal. Here, I may detect even the encroachment into
the authority of the assembly of rural notables around *adhikarana*. They
should now deal with the intervention of these political authorities and this
situation would explain the reason why the counterpart of negotiation is
shifted from *kutumbins* to these authorities. At the same time, however, the
power between both sides keeps a delicate balance as the *adhikarana* and
associated people still wield authority to make decision and Vijayasena

116 Supra, pp.97-98.
117 *SI*, 1, p.373, l.5-p.374, l.8.
118 "dūtakaḥ Subhadatto likhitam sāndhvigrahika-Bhogacandrena tāpitam
should follow the protocol.

The process of tilting of this delicate balance is discernible in the two Medinipur grants. In the earlier grant, dated year 8 of the regnal era of Śaṃśaṅka, the adhikarana of Tāvira with brāhmaṇas and pradhānas still issued the grant,121 and mahāpratihāra Šubhakirti, who governed Danda-bhukti, purchased the land from them.122 In another grant dated year 19, however, Prakirnāda, a minister (amātya) of sāmanta-mahārāja Somadatta who governed the same Danda-bhukti accompanied with Utkaladeśa, unilaterally conveyed to the same adhikarana united with people (loka) the message of Somadatta about his donation of the village.123 Thus within these eleven years, the balance finally tilted to the side of political authority, at least in Danda-bhukti. The fact that kings and subordinate rulers became sole authorities to issue copper plate grants and that the grants recording land purchase and participation of the members of rural society never appeared again indicates the similar situation in the other sub-regions.

The Vappaghoshavata inscription, a royal grant belonging to Rādha and the period just before or after the reign of Śaṃśaṅka, also shows some trace of this transition. It is a royal grant whose content is the order of mahārājādhirāja Jayanāga given by sāmanta Nārāyaṇabhadra, who ruled Audumvarakaviśaya, to vyavahāri-mahāpratihāra Sūryasena, who managed the same viśaya.124 The political authority described here is a well defined hierarchy of a king and subordinate rulers. On the other hand, Sūryasena was ordered to give a copper plate grant with the seal of viśaya and thus viśaya was considered as issuing authority.125 The use of the title vyavahārin wielded by Sūryasena with the title pratihāra is also suggestive. The former

121 JRASBL, 11, p.9, ll.7-8.
122 Ibid., ll.5-6, 9.
123 Ibid., p.8, ll.7-14.
124 EI, 18, p.63, ll.1-4.
125 ‘viśaya-mudrālāṅkrita-tāmraśāsanaṁ’, Ibid., 6-7.
title, which was used as a general category of local people involved with management of some local affairs around the adhikarana in the earlier period,\textsuperscript{126} is now wielded by a subordinate ruler. Or it can be speculated that Sūryasena had belonged to the group of local notables and later got the position of a subordinate ruler through the association with political authority.

Another possibility which I can suggest about political authority in this context is some overlapping between rural notables on one side and officers and subordinate rulers on the other side. The authority of mahattaras and other notables backed by their power in villages shown in the cases of the western parts makes them not so different from petty subordinate rulers. It is possible that some of them, who established their power through competition and differentiation among them, tried to get stronger power and authority through the association with kingship and its administrative apparatus and succeeded to join in the lower rank of administration or rather subordinate rulers, though there is no clear evidence except an uncertain case of Sūryasena mentioned above.

4. Samataṭa: Sub-regional Kingship and its Organisation of Rural Society

The history of Samataṭa, the eastern fringe of Bengal, became discernible again in the middle of the seventh century, after around one and a half centuries from the time of the Gunaighar inscription. The political situation in this period is comparable with contemporary Vaṅga and Rāṭha: the formation of sub-regional kingdoms and hierarchy of subordinate rulers. But the layers of subordinate rulers and power relations among them, between them and their overlords, were more complicated. On one hand, Bhāskaravarman, the king of Kāmarūpa with full-fledged sovereign title of mahārājādhirāja, resumed endowment to brāhmaṇas made by his ancestor

\textsuperscript{126} Supra, pp.119-120.
Bhūtivarman following the petition of his subordinate ruler mahārāja Jyeṣṭhābhadra. On the other hand, Lokanātha and Śridhāraṇarāta respectively received petitions by their subordinate rulers, while they themselves held the position as subordinate rulers. The relation between Lokanātha and his overlord is described in the seventh and eighth verses of his Tippera grant. His service to the overlord is shown by the description of having wisdom as a minister (saciva) and his valour, preparedness and skilfulness in giving counsel for policy in the battle with Jayatungaوارσα, 'in which the army of the supreme lord went to destruction many times.' The ninth verse of the same plate mentions that Jivadhāraṇarāta, father of Śridhāraṇarāta, conceded his own viṣaya with army to Lokanātha, who got an auspicious document (śrī-pattā), probably denoting a grant by their overlord. This case can be interpreted as a case of conflict between subordinate rulers and intervention by their common overlord.

With such a multi-layered and complicated form of political authority, the land grant and the issue of copper plate inscriptions became a monopoly of the kings and the stronger section of subordinate rulers, and the involvement of local notables like mahattaras with decision making through the adhikarana is not observable in this region in the period of present

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127 El, 19, p.118, 1.7-8 (pl.3).
129 Mentions of Lokanātha's relation with 'śrī-paramēśvara', see Ibid., p.30, l.12-p.31, 16. Śridhāraṇarāta wielded the title 'prāptapāñcamahāśabda', Ibid., p.37, l.14.
130 'si(sa)civa·prajā', Ibid., 2, p.30, l.12.
131 'yasmim=chri-paramēśvarasya vahuso yātam kṣayam sainikam// durlanghya Jayatungaوارσα·salma*[re sadyah·prayoggo=ṛthinām nitau nītī-vidhānata·nī(t)acūro', Ibid., II.13-14. I followed Sircar's interpretation that 'yasmim' in this sentence indicates the battle. IHQ, 23, p.233.
132 SI, 2, p.37, II.9-14.
133 Ibid., p.31, II.15-16.
concern, that is, from the middle of the seventh century to the end of the eighth century. Though we have three cases belonging to the second half of the seventh century, that is, the Tippera grant of Lokanātha dated probably GE 344, the Kailan grant of Śrīdhāraṇārātā dated year 8 and the Kalapur grant of Maruṇḍanātha, in which the grants were issued by kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇa, the contents of inscriptions are donations made by the aforementioned rulers caused by petitions of their subordinate rulers or a brāhmaṇa, and the seals of the adhikaraṇa attached to them were endorsed by those rulers. In the first two inscriptions, it is clearly said that the orders of rulers were conveyed by princes acting as messengers. There is no indication of the involvement of local notables in these cases and it is more conspicuous when we find the mention of landmarks of donated land like a mahattara’s pond in the Tippera inscription and mahākāyastha’s land granted with copper plate in the Kailan inscription. Thus the presence and dominance of the political authority are conspicuous even in cases with which adhikaraṇas are involved and there is no room for local notables. Its centrality is also highlighted by the fact that all the copper plates belonging to this region in this period contain lengthy and elaborate genealogy and eulogies of the rulers, in contrast to the inscriptions of contemporary Vānaga and Rādhā.

The cases of donations recorded in the copper plate inscriptions in

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134 EI, 15, pp.301-315; SI, 2, pp.28-35.
135 IHQ, 23, pp.221-241; SI, 2, pp.36-40.
137 Infra, pp.139, 142.
138 Infra, p.140.
139 EI, 15, p.302; IHQ, 23, p.237; CPS, p.69.
140 rājaputra-Lakṣminātha, son of Lokanātha, SI, 2, p.31, ll.16-17; yuvarāja-prāptapaṇcamahāsabda-Baladhāraṇārātā, son of Śrīdhāraṇārātā, Ibid., p.38, ll.17-18.
141 ‘uttareṇa mahattara-Raṇaśubha-puskariṇī’, Ibid., p.32, l.31.
this period can be subdivided into two categories. One is the case of large scale land grants to groups of brähmanas which occurred mainly in forest tracts and another is the case of grants to Buddhist monasteries in well-settled space.

The former is constituted by cases of the Nidhanpur, Tippera and Kalapur inscriptions mentioned above. Among them, the Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskaravarman records the reissue of copper plate grant and the resumption of agrahāra land of Mayuraśālmala in Candrapuri-viṣaya given to brähmanas by Bhūtivarman, the great great grandfather of Bhāskaravarman, which was prompted by the information from mahārāja Jyeṣṭhabhadra that the aforesaid agrahāra was yielding revenue as the original copper plate was lost.\(^{143}\) It minutely mentions at least two hundred and seven brähmanas with their gotra, Vedic school and share of land assigned to each of them, though number may be more as the fourth plate of the inscription is still missing.\(^{144}\) Though it takes a form of resumption of the former donation, the meticulous arrangement in which the vast tract or its product was divided into at least 166 11/16 shares and assigned to two hundred and seven brähmanas gives the impression of total restructuring made by Bhāskaravarman. The meticulousness of arrangement is also shown in a stipulation about the use of sedimentary land made by two rivers bordering the land. It is stipulated that the product of sedimentary land made by the river Kausika, which has already dried up, belongs to brähmanas who was ‘receivers’ (pratigrāhaka) of it, while sedimentary land made by Gaṅginikā should be equally distributed among brähmanas listed in the inscription.\(^{145}\) Considered with the fact that the donated tract was surrounded by dried river Kausikā, Ṇumbari-ccheda (cleft)\(^{146}\) and Gaṅginikā

\(^{143}\) \textit{EI}, 19, p.118, 1.6-7 (pl.3).
\(^{144}\) See Appendix 4 Table 1.
\(^{145}\) \textit{EI}, 19, p.120, ll.52-54 (pl.6).
\(^{146}\) P. P. Bhattacharya, the editor, interpreted Ṇumbari-ccheda as ‘a (piece of)
at all the directions except North, and that the pit of potter (kumbhakāra-gartta) and the pond of vyavahārin Khāsoka are located at North-West and North-East respectively.147 This stipulation may indicate the location of the land at the southern periphery of a settlement, which is adjacent to unreclaimed land and has potential of further agricultural expansion. It also indicates a strong intention of the king to regulate the management of agrahāra land, which is also shown by assignment of a share to each brāhmaṇa.

The presence of local notables in this process is noticeable in the demarcation of the border, while the inscription itself is addressed to the present and future visayapatis and adhikaranas in Candrapuri-visaya.148 Candrapuri-nāyaka Śriksikuṇḍa, nyāya-karanika Janārdanasvāmin and people beginning with vyavahārin Haradatta and kāyastha Dundhunātha are mentioned as 'giver of border' (simā-pradāti) with a messenger and other functionaries.149 Among them, connotation of Candrapuri-nāyaka is not clear. As visayapatis of Candrapuri-visaya are mentioned in the address part, he may not be the administrator of the visaya. Rather, he can be a local headman or leader of Candrapuri. Janārdanasvāmin, mentioned as nyāya-karanika, 'dispute settler', may be a brāhmaṇa as his name ending shows and most probably the same person with either of his namesakes among donees.150 Thus it seems to indicate the involvement of local notables, who may belong to the settlement nearby, with the border demarcation and it

hewn fig tree. Ibid., p.121. However, as it demarcates the South-eastern, Southern and South-western borders and has confluence (samvedyā) with Kaušikā and Gaṅginikā, it should be interpreted as a cleft (cheda) or riverbed named Ďumbari, connected with these rivers.

147 EI, 19, p.120, l.54 (pl.6)-Ibid., 12, p.75, ll.45-47 (pl.7).
148 Ibid., 19, p.118, ll.5-6 (pl.3).
149 Ibid., 12, p.75, ll.48-49 (pl.6).
150 No. 60 (Vaiśnāvrddhī gotra, Chandoga school) or no. 175 (Bārhaspatya gotra, Bāhurcyā school) in Appendix 4 Table 1.
may have offered them an occasion to negotiate with enforcers of the grant. However, the mentions with them of other functionaries like the messenger,\(^\text{151}\) conveyer of order and one who causes its writing,\(^\text{152}\) tax-collector and engraver,\(^\text{153}\) who include people with titles of subordinate ruler, rather indicate the incorporation of the function of these notables into the function of the enforcers of king’s will and their affinity to the political authority. The inclusion of a representative from donees also shows the change of the border demarcation from the activity which assured the local notables some extent of autonomy.

The case of the Tippera inscription of Lokanātha is comparable in some aspects. It records a large scale grant of the forest land (ātavi-bhū-khaṇḍa) in Suvvuṅga-viṣaya\(^\text{154}\) petitioned by mahāsāmanta Pradoṣaśarman for the ritual service to the deity Anantanārāyaṇa installed by him,\(^\text{155}\) and made to the matha of the deity and brāhmaṇas knowing four Vedas whose names and assigned plots of land are minutely recorded.\(^\text{156}\) In this case also, the donated land is located at the periphery of settlements as it is bordered by two villages on the south, donated land plots on the west and the pond of mahattara Ranaśubha on the north, while the eastern border is demarcated by a hill named Kaṇāmoṭilā.\(^\text{157}\) Its potential for agricultural expansion as unreclaimed land is indicated by the description ‘forest land plot without differentiation between the artificial and natural.’\(^\text{158}\) The

\(^{151}\) ‘ajñā-ṣatā-prāpayītā prāpta-pañcamahāśāsvadā-śri-Gopāla’, EI, 12, p.75, ll.47·48 (pl.6).

\(^{152}\) ‘sāsaitā lekhayitā ca Vasuvarṇa-bhāḍāgr-ādhikṛta-mahāsāmanta- Divākara-prabha’, Ibid., 1.50 (pl.6).

\(^{153}\) ‘utkhetayitā Dattakāraraupṛṇḍo/ sekyakāra Kāliyā’. Ibid., 1.51 (pl.6). For this peculiar term mainly found in inscriptions from Assam, see IEG, p.354.

\(^{154}\) SI, 2, p.31, ll.21·22, 1.25, p.32, 1.31.

\(^{155}\) Ibid., ll.22·24.

\(^{156}\) Ibid., p.31, 1.24; p.32, 1.51. For the names and land plots of the brāhmaṇas, see Appendix 4 Table 2.

\(^{157}\) SI, 2, p.32, ll.30·31.

intention of structuring social relation in this agrahāra is shown by the minute assignment of land not only to each of at least one hundred ninety two brāhmaṇas but also to some people whose names are listed at the end of the document.159 As they include a cook,160 a person who is supposed to speak something161 and a digger,162 they can be considered as a service group to the matha and brāhmaṇas. Such an arrangement of service group shows the intention of social structuring on the side of political authority.

As to the involvement of the local residents including notables, pradhānas, vyavahārins and janapadas are mentioned as accompaniment of visayapatis with adhikaranas163 in the address section which include the future and present sāmantas accompanied by brāhmaṇas in the visaya.164 What should be noted is the fact that they are attached to visayapatis for notification and not notified as a separate entity. Apart from this, there is no indication of their involvement and the adhikaraṇa mentioned here seems to be the office under visayapati like a kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇa.

The detail of the case of the Kalapur inscription is not clear due to bad condition of the plate. According to the information gathered from the legible lines, it records the donation of a land plot petitioned by brāhmaṇa Jayasvāmin for the ritual service to the deity Anantanārāyaṇa, who was installed and whose matha was constructed by him, and for the daily rituals of brāhmaṇas knowing three Vedas.165 The land is described as ‘land plot of water and forest’ (jalātavi-bhūkhanda) and was first given to Jayasvāmin and another brāhmaṇa named Pradośasvāmin, and then probably given to the

159 Ibid., p.34, ll.55-56.
160 ‘pācaka-Vasu dro 20’, Ibid., l.55.
161 ‘...vācakatvena Sudhāṇa(?) dro 20’, Ibid., l.56
162 ‘utkhātakāmana-Naradattasya dro 10 9’, Ibid.
163 ‘visayapatin=s-ādhikaraṇān=sa-[pradhāna-vyavahāri-janapadān’, Ibid., p.29, l.2.
164 Ibid., l.1.
165 CPS, p.70, 1.17-19, p.71, 2.7-8.
deity and *brahmanas* of the *matha*. The land was measured in units of *pātaka* and *dronavāpa*, though the portion mentioning the extent is illegible. Though it lacks the list of *brahmana* donees and the element of minute land assignment to each of them, it shares basic structure with the case in the Tippera inscription: the petition by a person who installed the deity and the donation of forest land to the deity and group of *brahmanas*. There is no mention of local residents and notables in legible lines of the inscription.

One thing discernible in these cases is the inclination of the political authorities to structure or restructure the society in the donated tract. Another is the initiative taken by vested interests, especially subordinate rulers, in land transaction in the form of application. In the Tippera and Kailan inscriptions, the applicants could secure donation to the deity installed by them. As they were involved with its installation, they may have kept influence over the affairs in donated tract. In case of the former, it is clearly said that the applicant constructed the abode and installed the deity in the unreclaimed forest tract. I may detect here the intention of a subordinate ruler to expand his influence over newly reclaimed land and even increase his own resource base through the channel of religious land grants and authority of his overlord. From this viewpoint, *mahārāja* Jyeṣṭhabhadra's report to the king of the loss of grant and the yield of revenue in an *agrahāra* land sounds differently. As an intermediary between *brāhmaṇa* donees and the king, he did them favour and it may have generated his influence over them. Even the lost copper plate given by Bhūtivarman can be fictitious, as no copper plate grant belonging to the period earlier than Bhāskararvarman's reign has yet been found in Assam.

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168 *SI*, 2, p.31, ll.21-22.
and the same rhetoric is used in the Dubi copper plate inscription. In any case, the presence of the subordinate rulers in these transactions was strong and it may have adversely affected the authority of local notables.

In respect of the vested interest of subordinate rulers, the case of the Kailan inscription offers a clear view. It has a format similar to the Tippera inscription, though the donated land plots were located in well-settled marshy land according to the border description and the donees were Buddhist samgha and thirteen brāhmanas. What is important in this case is that mahāsāndhīvigrahādhikṛta Jayanātha, the petitioner of the grant, clearly acquired some land plots as an alms giver (bhikṣada). Totally twenty five pātakas of land plots were given in three places: five pātakas in two plots in Ranku-potaka, eighteen pātakas in Khaḍobhālikā-tratuvā-pātaka, both belonging to Guptinātana-viṣaya, and two pātakas in Karala-koṭa belonging to Patalāyikā-viṣaya. The land of Ranku-potaka was given to the Buddhist establishment (ratnatraya), except a half pātaka given to the petitioner. The land of Khaḍobhālikā was given to brāhmanas with minute assignment to each of them, except five pātakas given to the petitioner. The land of Karala-koṭa was also given to him. Thus among twenty five pātakas, the petitioner obtained seven and a half, while the Buddhist establishment and brāhmaṇa group got four and a half and thirteen respectively. His accumulation of land is also attested by a mention of ‘own copper plate land’ (sva-tāmra), meaning the land donated by copper plate grant, neighbouring two land plots in Raṅku-potaka.

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169 Ibid., p.14, l.110-112.
170 Ibid., p.38, l.28-p.39, l.39.
172 Ibid., p.38, ll.28-29, p.39, ll.31-32, ll.34-35.
173 Ibid., p.40, l.45.
174 Ibid., ll.45-46-49.
175 Ibid., l.46.
176 Ibid., p.39, ll.32-33.
On the other hand, information obtained from border description in this inscription offers a glimpse into a complicated land relation emerging in this region. Apart from land marks characteristic of marshy low land like a lake (*villa*), rivers, embankment (*âlb*), boats harbour (*nauprthvi*) and boat path (*naudandaka*), the land plots held by various landholders are mentioned. One category is the copper plate land held by individuals like Jayanâtha and *mahâkâyastha* Bhâskaracandra, or belonging to religious institutions like Devî-mâtha and Mitrabâla-vihâra. Another category of land plots simply denoted as *ksetra* is held by individuals like *danda(nâyaka)* Jayasena and the ascetic (*tâpasa*) Dhanadeva, or groups like ‘sons of one hundred fifty family’ and ‘Malla blacksmiths beginning with Vendhana.’ The last two cases may be the case of collective land holding as the land is described in singular form while holders are in plural form. Such collective holdings may allude to the existence of social networks, one of which surpasses kinship relations and another is limited to narrow relationship of common profession, though there is no other evidence to support it or to show any relation among these groups and other individual landholders. In any case, these descriptions show the co-existence of several forms of land holdings side by side.

The complexity of land relation is more clearly discernible in the cases belonging to the second category, that is, the grants to Buddhist monasteries in well-settled space. They pertain to the area around

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177 Sircar interpreted it as the same as a Bengali term ‘nâodamrâ’ used in central Bengal in the sense of a path for boats made on the moss-covered waters of *bil* (lake) etc. *IHQ*, 23, pp.236-237.
Mainamati hill, which emerged as a site of huge Buddhist complex in the second half of the seventh century.\textsuperscript{181} Two Ashrafpur copper plate inscriptions of Devakhadga and one inscription of Bhavadeva, all of which were properly edited, offer the valuable information of the period from the second half of the seventh century to the eighth century, while other inscriptions discovered from the site of Salban Vihara are yet to be edited properly.\textsuperscript{182}

Both the Ashrafpur inscriptions, dated year 7 and 13 respectively,\textsuperscript{183} belong to the second half of the seventh century and record the donation of some plots of land to the vihāras of ācārya Saṅghamitra.\textsuperscript{184} They are issued by the king to visayapatis, adhikaranas and kutumbins in the former, and visayapatis and kutumbins in the latter, both gathered at particular land plots, respectively nine plots in seven settlements and eight plots in seven settlements.\textsuperscript{185} What is conspicuous in these cases is the mention of kutumbins in the address section. They are also required not to make any

\textsuperscript{181} As the latest digest of excavations and explorations of sites in Mainamati hill, see Abu Imam, \textit{Excavations at Manamati: An Exploratory Study (Studies in Bengal Art Series no.2)}, Dhaka, 2000.

\textsuperscript{182} Among them, one inscription of Devakhadga, another belonging to Khadgas and two inscriptions of the Devas have not yet been read at all. M. H. Rashid, 'The Mainamati Inscriptions', E. Haque (ed.), \textit{Hakim Habibur Rahman Khan Commemoration Volume}, Dhaka, 2001, pp.193-224, pp.200-201, 205-206. The inscription of the Khadga ruler Balabhāta and another inscription containing grants of Ānandadeva and Bhavadeva were partially read by K. K. Gupta, though his reading is quite unreliable. Gupta, Two Mainamati Copper-Plate Inscriptions of the Khadga and Early-Deva Times (7th and 8th centuries A. D.), \textit{Bangladesh Archaeology}, 1, 1979, pp.141-148. It is regrettable that no effort has been made to properly edit these precious sources till date.

\textsuperscript{183} \textit{MASB}, 1, no.6, pp.88-91; \textit{Ibid.}, pp.89-90, \textit{SI}, 2, pp.41-43. The reading of date of the former is based on D. C. Ganguly's reading. \textit{EI}, 26, pp.125-126.

\textsuperscript{184} 'Sālivardaka ācārya-Saṅghamitrasya vihāre', \textit{MASB}, 1, no.6, p.91, l.16; 'ācārya-vandyā-Saṅghamitrā-pādaiḥ[*] kāri[ta*]...vihāra-vihārikā-catusṭayam', \textit{SI}, 2, p.42, ll.13-14.

\textsuperscript{185} \textit{MASB}, 1, no.6, p.90, l.7-p.91, l.15; \textit{SI}, 2, p.41, l.2-p.42, l.11.
disturbance together with visayapatis.\textsuperscript{186} Compared with other inscriptions cited above, the presence of kutumbins is conspicuous, though they were unilaterally announced of donation and ordered to comply.

But the most important information is contained in the descriptions of land plots. Most of the land plots are mentioned with the tenure of particular holders apart from their areas. The tenures include ‘given’ (pratipādita), ‘being enjoyed’ (bhujyamānaka), ‘enjoyed’ (bhuktaka) and ‘being cultivated’ (kṛṣyamānaka). These variations allude to the hierarchical tenures over a particular land plot and some cases endorse it. One pātaka land located in newly reclaimed land (nava·ropya, literally ‘to be sowed newly’) in the settlement Vatsanāgapatāka was given by Udīrṇakhadga, probably a member of the royal family, and being enjoyed by a person named Śakraka, while the settlement itself had been given by Brhatparamesvara, probably denoting a former king of the dynasty.\textsuperscript{187} The same Śakraka was also enjoying some pātakas in the settlement Talapātaka.\textsuperscript{188} Another pātaka land mentioned in the grant dated year 13 is being enjoyed by Śavrāntara and cultivated by mahattara Śikha and others.\textsuperscript{189} I may detect in these passages at least four layers of tenure holders over a particular land plot: actual cultivators, enjoyers, a royal member who gave some part of land to an enjoyer and finally the king who gave whole the settlement. As enjoyers include Prabhāvatī, the chief queen of Devakhadga,\textsuperscript{190} sāmanta Vaṇṭiyoka\textsuperscript{191}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{186} \textquoteleft{tad=viṣayapaty-ādi·kūṭumbibhir=nirāvādhair=bhavitavyam', \textit{MASB}, 1, no.6, p.91, ll.16-17. The relevant part in the latter inscription is partly illegible. \textit{SI}, 2, p.42, l.14.
\item \textsuperscript{187} \textquoteleft{Buddha·maṇḍapa·prāpi·Vṛhatparameśvareṇa pratipāditaka·Vatsanāgapatāka·nava·ropye śri·Udīrṇakhadgena pratipādita Śakrakena bhujyamānaka pātak[a], \textit{MASB}, 1, no.6, p.90, ll.11-12.
\item \textsuperscript{188} \textit{Ibid.}, l.8.
\item \textsuperscript{189} \textquoteleft{śrimete śri·Śavrāntareṇa bhujyamānaka[h*] mahattara Śikha·ādibhiḥ kṛṣyamāṇaka[a*] \textquoteleft{[p*]ā.yaka[h*]}, \textit{SI}, 2, p.42, ll.8-9.
\item \textsuperscript{190} \textquoteleft{mahā]devi·śri·Prabhāvatīya bhujyamānaka·pātaka·dva]yam', \textit{SI}, 2, p.42, l.4. She is clearly mentioned as the chief queen of Devakhadga in the
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
and Netrabhata, probably one of the royal members as he was enjoying comparatively large land plot,192 and Sakraka enjoyed plural land plots at the same time, the tenure of enjoyment may mean the right to extract some portion of production from a particular land plot as their share. The transferability of this tenure is connoted in the description of the twenty dronavapas of land plot in Talapataka, which was enjoyed by an upasaka and presently being enjoyed by Svastiyoka.193 As it is said that those land plots were given to the donee ‘after taking away from enjoyer in this way’,194 the donations recorded in these documents may mean the transfer of the right of enjoyment to the religious organisation and there is no indication that they affected cultivators. In any case, the king wielded overarching authority with which he could transfer the right of enjoyment from the one section to another.

Another symptom to be noted is the weakness of local notables. Though it is a relatively large land plot of one pataka compared with another land plot, thirteen dronavapas, cultivated by Rajadasa and Durgata,195 mahattara Sikhara was cultivating his land plot with other people and the existence of enjoyer above him looms large. Their exclusion from the whole process of donation is also noticeable. In contrast to it, the presence of members of royal household and sambantas is conspicuous.

The so-called Devaparvata grant of Bhavadeva, dated year 2,196 is

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191 ‘samtana-vaatistyokena bhujyananka dvyardha-[ptakah*]’, SI, 2, p.42, l.5.
192 ‘sri-Netrabhatena bhujyananka-dvyardha-pataka’, Ibid, l.6. The name ending ‘bhta’ is shared by prince Rajaraja-bha, son of Devakadaga.
193 ‘upasakena bhuktak-adhuna Svastiyokena bhujyananka-vimsatir= dronavapa’, MAB, 1, no.6, p.90, l.10-11.
194 ‘yath=huunjand=apaniya’, Ibid., p.91, l.16. The same sentence is written in another inscription with the last part illegible. SI, 2, p.42, l.12.
195 ‘Rajadasa-Durgatatbyam krshyanankol trayodastra-dronavapa’, MAB, 1, no.6, p.90, l.10-11.
196 JRASBL, 17, no.2, 1951, pp.83-94. Rashid confirmed that this inscription
related to Peranātana-visaya, the same locality mentioned in the Ashrafpur inscriptions, and belongs to a bit later period, the eighth century. It records the donation of seven and a half pātakas of land located in four settlements to the Buddhist establishment in Vėndamati-vihārikā, petitioned by Vibhūtīdāsa, a subordinate ruler, through the mediation of mahāsāmantadhipati Nandadhara as a messenger (dūtaka). Apart from the mention of karaṇikas and 'person in charge of ten villages' (daśagrāmika) as addressees of notification with present and future visayapatis, there is no reference to local notables. Even the protection of donation is solely required of present and future kings. Rather, presence of the king and his subordinate rulers is strong. Especially the process of application shows the existence of at least three-layered hierarchical order of rulers: mahārājādhirāja Bhavadeva, mahāsāmantadhipati Nandadhara and Vibhūtīdāsa.

The cases examined above show two different tendencies: first, attempts at social structuring by political authority in the peripheral, mostly unreclaimed tracts; second, the existence of complicated and stratified land relation in well-settled tracts. The case of the Kailan inscription can be placed at the middle of these two poles. But the strong presence of political authority, its hierarchical structure and diminishing presence of local notables are commonly observed. Their interconnection can be surmised as the expansion of layers of subordinate rulers as a result of intensified

had been recovered from the site of Ananda Vihara, Mainamati. Rashid, 'The Mainamati Inscriptions', pp.212-213.
137 MASN, 1, no.6, p.91, l.13; SI, 2, p.42, l.6.
138 JRASBL, 17, no.2, p.94, l.56-59.
139 Ibid., l.53-56. Vibhūtīdāsa’s position as a subordinate ruler is indicated by eulogies of his family. Ibid., p.93, l.45-p.94, l.54.
141 ‘etac=ca bhūmī-[dānam yathā-kāla]-bhāvibhīs=sarvvair=eva bhūmipatibhiḥ pratīpālaniyām kārānam’, Ibid., p.94, l.60-61.
differentiation among local notables and incorporation of the upper section of them, and relative decline of the authority of local notables. One source recently made available may provide a glimpse into this process.

The Bangladesh National Museum Metal Vase Inscription of Devatideva, dated year 77 probably in the Burma era (715 A.D.), is a record of five land purchases or donations which occurred within five years in Harikela, neighbouring sub-region of Samatata, inscribed on a copper vase, probably originating from Chittagong. As it has the format similar to copper plate inscriptions recording land purchase and donation, and all the cases are related to a Buddhist monastery called Haritaka-Dharmasahavihāra, it may be a copy of several land sales grants later inscribed on the vase and kept by the vihāra.

The first main part of the inscription referred to the time as the reign of Devatideva-bhaṭṭaraka, year 77 and the year of Mārgaśīrṣa, the third day of the bright fortnight of the month Āśāha. It was issued by people accompanied with one kumārāṃṭya, four mahābāḷādhikṛtas, one mahāmahattara-bhāṭṭa, one ‘reciter of Dharma’ (dharmapāṭha), three bhattas, one sāndhivigrahika, three ‘elders’ (jyeṣṭha), one mudrapāla, three kāvasthas and two mahāvārikas and addressed to all the adhikaranas of Khaṣa-maka, all the visayins and all the king’s servants who gathered at proper time in Khaṣa-maka. They informed that they were ordered by mahāpradāhāna-daувārika Saubhāgyakirtti as follows:

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203 Ibid., p.472.

204 According to Bhattacharya, this is the date starting with Mārgaśīrṣa based on the Twelve Year Cycle of Jupiter. Ibid., p.473.

205 For the detail, see Appendix 3 Table 8.

In front of all of 'us' probably indicating Saubhāgyakirtti, mahāpradhāna-mantrimukhya Nayaparakramagomin purchased in total twenty two pātakas of land constituted by eleven pātaka land of Vedagongajavi belonging to Mobhināda-khaṇḍa from people accompanied by Saṅja, Oru. Ehiṣūri and Thihu of the village, and eleven pātaka land of Pitisonda from Mitra. Vesi, Anukūla, Daddiṣūrika and others of the village (ll.5-6). Then under the name of the king Devātideva, he donated it for the enjoyment of merit by the bhikṣu-samgha and repair of old, broken and opened part of the vihāra at Haritaka-Dharmasabha-vihāra (ll.6-7). 'You', indicating the issuers, should make in total twenty five pātakas, including some land probably given by Prthudāman, Jīnudāman, ...dāman and Gauriḍāman at the two places, to be enjoyed with all the excessive enjoyment (sarvātibhoga), which may denote land tenure some of whose contents are mentioned in the following part, including right of perpetual enjoyment, for the increase of merit of 'us all', indicating both Saubhāgyakirtti and issuers (ll.7-8).

After probably mentioning acquisition of merit by the mantri-bhattāraka, denoting Nayaparakramagomin, and knowledge, comfort, protection and so on in their viṣaya, it is said that the land was made to be enjoyed as if it was a common patrimony (ll.8-9). With mentioning that their activity would remain perpetually during the present Bhadrakalpa, it is also said that the land was given to brāhmaṇas belonging to five mathas after making all deities and human beings as the present and future witnesses (ll.9-10). Finally, they asked addressees to protect the donation for their own fortune (l.10). Brief description of the border landmarks follows (ll.10-11).

The second event happened on the thirteenth of the dark fortnight of the month Pusya in the Māgha year, probably two years after the first incident (l.11). The residents of Dharmasabha-vihāra beginning with bhikṣu-

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207 ‘yath=aikam=api paitrikān paribhogyam’, Ibid., 1.9.
sandhyācārya Śānditibhadra, Surakṣita and Śrīprabha, and karani Hastirudra and Vijayin purchased sixty dronavāpas of land from the portion of goldsmith (suvarnakāra) Kulacandra and Ratnacandra in some place by some money in front of the both karanas in Harikelā and made it accompanied with the tenure of sarv-ātibhoga (ll.11-13).

The third event happened on the seventh of the bright fortnight of the month Māgha in the same Māgha year (l.13). The residents of the vihāra beginning with ācārya Śānditibhadra, Devasimha, Sucarita and Somaprabha, and karani Hastirudra and Vijayin purchased sixty dronavāpas of fallow land (khila-kṣetra) in Candrabhaṭṭārikā-grāma of Khaṣa-maka, belonging to some residents of village accompanied by Sarabhadatta and others, by money one hundred twenty tandaka in front of the both kararjas in Harikelā and made it accompanied with the tenure of sarv-ātibhoga (ll.13-14).

The event mentioned at the fourth place happened on the thirteenth of the dark fortnight of the month Puṣya in the Āśvina year, probably two years before the first incident (l.15). A resident of the vihāra purchased by some tandakas thirty dronavāpas of land, whose border landmarks are mentioned, from the share (aṅśa) of pāṇḍita Dharmmadatta and his son Bhadradatta in a village in Salaṅga-khaṇḍa of Khaṣa-maka in front of the both karanas in Harikelā (ll.15-17). Yaśadeva also gave thirty dronavāpas and one vihāra was made to belong to the Dharmasabha-vihāra and made accompanied with the tenure of sarv-ātibhoga (l.17).

The fifth and the last event happened on the eleventh of the bright fortnight of the month Āśāḍha in the Māgha year, probably the same with the year of the second and third events (l.17). The ārya-samgha residing at the vihāra, accompanied with high rank monks (pādamūlika), righteously purchased one pāṭaka and three dronavāpas. They were constituted of twenty

208 Karana mentioned here can be either ‘scribe’ or abbreviation of adhikarana.
209 This currency unit is not known anywhere else.
eight *dronavāpas* in Kālasra-kaṭaka and fifteen *dronavāpas* in another place from *mahāvārika* Kaliṣuri, Kenduṣūri, Amtalakṣani, Pasivadokeyama and others of Padyūra belonging to Sidevālasubhataka in Kasa-maka. They made the procedure probably in front of the both karanaś in Harikelā, and the land was made accompanied with the tenure of sarv-āṭibhogō (l.17·19). The total areas of the land donated in all those events are mentioned as thirty *pātakas* and twenty *dronas* at the end (l.20).210

What is important in this source, apart from the mention of Khaṣa-maka, probably meaning dominion of Khaṣas according to the context,211 is the occurrence of land purchase and its record in the south-eastern fringe of Bengal. The procedures show the pattern of the land holding by various individuals including goldsmiths and alienability of such land plots by payment in some form of currency.

The reference to the involvement of a kind of assembly with the list of members with such procedures is also important. Among them, *kumārāmātya, mahābalādhikṛta* and *sāndhivigrahika* are officers under the king. On the other hand, *mahāmahattara, bhatta, jyeṣṭha* and *kāyastha* can be considered as local notables including landholders, *brāhmaṇas* and clerical group. *Mahāvārika* may be arbitrator chosen by local notables, if it has some relation with *kulavārika* or *vārakṛta*.212 As to the reciter of *dharma (dharmapaṭha)* and the keeper of seal (*mudrapāla*), they can belong to either of the aforementioned groups depending on which *dharma* and seal are

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210 The actual sum of areas mentioned above is thirty *pātakas* and twenty three *dronavāpas*.


212 Bhattacharya mentioned that the term 'vārīka' occurred in the sense of a monastery official in Edgerton's dictionary. *Ibid.*, note 25. F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, New Delhi, 2004 (reprint), vol.2, p.477, col.2. But the names of *mahāvārikas* mentioned in this inscription are not like Buddhist monks' and in the fifth incident, the *samgha* purchased land plots from *mahāvārikas*. Thus it cannot be a monastery officer.
meant here. In any case, it is an assembly constituted of representatives from both administrative apparatus and local notables. As they received the order of 'door keeper' (dauvārika) Saubhāgyakīrtti, a royal officer, it is not clear how much authority they had in decision making on this issue. At least they made notification to other servants of the king and required their compliance to protect the donation. What should be noted here is the intimacy of local notables with political authority.

Possible result of this intimacy is indicated by two officers mentioned in the first event. Both dauvārika Saubhāgyakīrtti and 'leader of ministers' (mantri-mukhya) Nayaparākramagomin are prefixed by the title mahāpradhāna. Needless to say, mahāpradhāna is a title held by upper section of peasant groups together with mahāmahattara, at least in the seventh century Rādha.\textsuperscript{213} They may have originated from the class of local notables and got some position in the administration probably through connection with the king. Thus the information in this inscription shows both the incorporation of the assembly of local notables into administrative functionaries and transformation of the upper section of them into constituents of the political authority. In this light, a mahattara in the Ashrafpur inscription dated year 13, who cultivated a plot of land with others under the superior tenure holder, can be considered as a person belonging to the lower strata of local notables, who could not transform himself into a constituent of the political authority.

5. Emergence of Buddhist Monasteries as Large Scale Landholders

Before concluding this chapter, I would like to address one phenomenon which became conspicuous in this period. It is the emergence of Buddhist monasteries as large scale landholders. The tendency of their accumulation of land plots as a result of donation or purchase is clear

\textsuperscript{213} Supra, p.127, Appendix 3 Table 6.
especially in the eastern part of Bengal. It had already been discernible in
the case of the Gunaighar inscription at the beginning of the sixth century,\textsuperscript{214}
though it was rather intensified after the middle of the seventh century, as is
indicated by the cases of the Kailan, Ashrafpur, Devaparvata grants and the
Metal Vase Inscription cited above.\textsuperscript{215} In all the cases except one of the
Kailan inscription, in which the Buddhist establishment acquired four and a
half \emph{pātakas} in a settlement,\textsuperscript{216} a particular Buddhist monastery acquired
land plots, or enjoyment of production from them, scattered over several
settlements. In case of the Ashrafpur inscriptions, the \emph{vihāra} and the four
\emph{vihāras} and \emph{vihārikās} of Samghamitra were donated probably the right to
enjoy productions from six \emph{pātakas} and ten \emph{dronas} in seven settlements and
nine \emph{pātakas} and ten \emph{dronas} in seven settlements respectively.\textsuperscript{217} In the
Devaparvata inscription, it is said that the Buddhist establishment in
Veṇḍamati-vihārikā was donated seven and a half \emph{pātakas} in four
settlements.\textsuperscript{218} In the cases recorded in the Bangladesh National Museum
Metal Vase Inscription, Dhrmasabha-vihāra acquired thirty \emph{pātakas} and
twenty three \emph{dronavāpas} of land in six settlements mainly through purchase
from individual residents.\textsuperscript{219} Such donations may have generated the
network which connected Buddhist monasteries and cultivators in those
settlements for their regular interactions, while the interaction among these
settlements and the effect of the new network on it can be only guessed. As to
the relation between Buddhist monastery and cultivators of their land,
Chinese monk I-ching, who stayed in Eastern India around the last quarter
of the seventh century, left an interesting account.

In explaining the food and cloth necessary in monastic life, he

\textsuperscript{214} SI, 1, pp. 340-45.
\textsuperscript{215} Supra, pp.142, 144, 147-151.
\textsuperscript{216} SI, 2, p.40, l.45.
\textsuperscript{217} MASR, 1, no.6, p.90, l.8-p.91, l.14; SI, 2, p.42, ll.3-11.
\textsuperscript{218} JRASBL, 17, no.2, p.94, ll.56-59.
\textsuperscript{219} Bhattacharya, op. cit., p.476, ll.5-6, 7-8, 12, p.477, ll.14, 15-17, 18-19.
mentioned the management of agricultural land by Buddhist samgha. He first explained the relation between samgha and cultivators in theory:

According to the teaching of the Vinaya, when cornfield is cultivated by the Sangha (the Brotherhood or community), a share in the product is to be given to the monastic servants or some other families by whom actual tilling has been done. Every product should be divided into six parts, and one-sixth should be levied by the Sangha: the Sangha has to provide the bulls as well as the ground for cultivation, while the Sangha is responsible for nothing else. Sometimes division of the product should be modified according to the seasons.\textsuperscript{220}

He also referred to the case of some avaricious monks directly involved with observation of agricultural operation by giving out the work to servants.\textsuperscript{221} Then he wrote of the actual case witnessed by him at a monastery in Tamralipti:

When I for the first time visited Tamralipti, I saw in a square outside the monastery some of its tenants who, having entered there, divided some vegetables into three portions, and, having presented one of the three to the priests, retired from thence, taking other portions with them. I could not understand what they did, and asked of the venerable Ta shang Tang (Mahāyāna Pradīpa) what was the motive. He replied: 'The priests in this monastery are mostly observers of precepts. As cultivation by the priests themselves is prohibited by the great Sage, they suffer their taxable lands to be cultivated by others freely, and partake of only a portion of products. Thus they live their just life, avoiding worldly affairs, and free from faults of destroying lives by ploughing and watering fields.'\textsuperscript{222}

\textsuperscript{220} J. Takakusu (tr.), A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (AD 671-695) by I-\textvisiblespace tsing, New Delhi, 1998 (Reprint), p.61. Italicisation is mine.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., p.62. Ta·ch'\textvisiblespace eng\textvisiblespace teng (Ta shang Tan, Mahāyānapradīpa) is a Chinese monk who came to Tāmralipti earlier than I-ching, had studied there for twelve years and then went to 'Middle India', connoting present Bihar region for Chinese monks, with him. For his biography, see I-Ching, K. Adachi (ed., tr., annotation), Dai\textvisiblespace Tou\textvisiblespace Sai\textvisiblespace Iki\textvisiblespace Gu\textvisiblespace Hou\textvisiblespace Kou\textvisiblespace Sou\textvisiblespace Den (in Japanese), Tokyo,
The first account indicates that a *samgha* should ideally make sharecropping with its own servants or other householders by leasing them land and cow for ploughing and acquire the one sixth of production, without interfering in actual cultivation. According to the last account, it was somehow practised at least in the western part of Bengal in this period. On the other hand, the mention of avaricious monks alludes to the involvement of some section of monks with agricultural management. These accounts show that some form of network is made between *samgha* and cultivators through agricultural relation and inflow of products.

The network among Buddhist monasteries is also attested in another account of I-ching. When he left Tāmralipti for 'Middle India' with Ta-ch'eng-teng, they joined the party of several hundred merchants. Around twenty monks of Nālandā *vihāra* were also accompanied with them. They may have been residential monks of Nālandā who temporarily visited and stayed at the monastery in Tāmralipti. It shows interaction of Buddhist monasteries through movement of their monks and the existence of network based on it. It should be noted that this interaction is facilitated on the route and network maintained by vigorous trade activity. Thriving condition of inter-regional land trade is also indicated by the activity of brigands whom I-ching encountered on his way to Nālandā and his way back. Flourishing maritime trade routes connecting Tāmralipti, Nāgapaṭṭinam, Sīnhalab, Souh-East Asia and finally southern part of China are also detectable in the account of I-ching, though I would not discuss

223 Adachi, p.139. Lahiri, p.79. Number of merchants is described as 'several hundred' in original text, not 'hundred' as Lahiri translated.
225 Adachi, pp.139-140: Lahiri, pp.80, 82-83.
them as they are out of the ambit of this research. Apart from this, existence of monasteries of Kapisiša and Kaliṅga in the vicinity of Mahābodhi temple in present Bodhgaya and visit and stay of monks from North and South there is also mentioned.²²⁷ They also indicate the existence of networks connecting Buddhist establishments in present Bihar and other regions.

The rise of these Buddhist establishments is related with their closeness to kingship. In case of Samataṭa, a description in I'ching's account attests it, apart from the evidence of royal patronage in the form of land grants. In the biography of Seng-che, who stayed at the vihāra of the king, who may be Rājabhata or Rājarājabhata, son of Devakhadga, he described the procession of the statue of Avalokiteśvara on carriage, accompanied by monks and followed by the king, with pomp of banners, drum beats and music.²²⁸ Such a procession can be interpreted as an occasion in which the authority of king is exhibited and legitimised through Buddhist ritual. Mutual interaction and dependence of kingship and vihāra is also discernible in the following description:

In the royal city, there are around four thousand monks and nuns. All of them receive offerings of the king. Every morning he orders (an officer) to enter the vihāra, fold hands (to monks) in front of the cells and quickly make enquiry about disease. The great king asks the teacher of law and others whether they had peaceful night or not. They reply that they wish good health and long life of the great king and peace of the country. He makes (the officer) reward (or reply to) them and then minutely discuss state affairs.²²⁹

Thus while the kingship offers subsistence and welfare of monks, they give

²²⁷ Adachi, p.89; Lahiri, pp.48-49. Lahiri interpreted the latter as ‘Cālukya’ while Adachi took it as ‘Kaliṅga.’ For this term is suffixed with ‘country’, not ‘dynasty’ as Lahiri translated, Adachi’s interpretation seems better.
²²⁸ Adachi, p.161; Lahiri, p.85. The carriage, which Lahiri translated as ‘royal carriage’, is rather one prepared for the statue according to the context.
²²⁹ Adachi, p.161. Translation is mine. Lahiri’s translation shows several misunderstandings of terms and contexts in this paragraph. Lahiri, pp.85-86.
blessing to the king and his kingdom, and even provide counsel about state
affairs for him in exchange. Such a symbiotic relation between kingship and
Buddhist establishment would develop further under Palas and Candras,
which will be discussed in the next chapter.