Chapter 5

Intensification of Social Stratification and Infiltration of Political and Religious Authorities: c. A. D.800-1100

In the period from the second half of the eighth century to the end of the eleventh century, Bengal witnessed the establishment of strong dynasties and their rule. They are the Pālas and the Candras.

The Pālas originated from Varendra and extended their dominion to Raḍha and then to the eastern part of present Bihar. Their power occasionally stretched westwards as far as Kānyakubja and they were involved with struggles with the other powerful dynasties like the Gurjara·Pratihāras and the Rāstrakūtas.1 The origin of the Candras is not clear. What we can be sure is that they were the rulers of Candradvīpa or Vaṅgāla, approximately corresponding to the present Bakarganj area, under the suzerainty of the kings of Samatāta, who might have been the Devas, and later supplanted them. Their dominion covered almost all the eastern part of Bengal with Vaṅga, Samatāta and Śrīhaṭta under their rule.2 Apart from them, the Kāmbojas ruled Daṇḍa·bhukti, an area bordering present Orissa, and some kings with the name ending ‘deva’ showed their presence in Harikela.

Under the rule of these dynasties, kingship and its administrative apparatus infiltrated into the rural society, while the formation of a new power structure centred on subordinate rulers intensified in this period. The change in rural societies and their networks under the new power structure

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1 For the political history of the Pālas, see A. M. Chowdhury, Dynastic History of Bengal (c. 750-1200 A. D.), Dacca, 1967, pp.3-136. We need a total revision of the history and chronology of the Pālas, as two new kings, Mahendrapāla, the son of Devapāla, and Gopāla II, the son of Śūrapāla, were recently added to their genealogy, thanks to the discoveries of their copper plate inscriptions.

2 For the political history of the Candras, see Ibid., pp.154-189.
of political authorities, and their attempts to build up new kinds of social networks are the themes of this chapter.

**1. Social Stratification in Rural Society and Decline of its Power**

As the issue of land grants became monopoly of the kings after the eighth century, the format of the copper plate inscriptions pertaining to the Bengal region was standardised. It takes the form of unilateral order, in which the king informs his subordinates and local residents about a donation of particular villages or land plots, and asks them maintenance of the donation. In these inscriptions, information about the rural society and its networks are limited to the mention of local residents in the address section, formalised requirements to them, and the occasional description of border demarcation. Limited information gathered from them indicates general tendency of the progress of stratification in the rural society and general decline of its power vis-à-vis outside authorities including political powers and donees imposed by them, with some degree of variation according to the locality.

The sub-region of Varendra has been under the Pala rule almost all through the period dealt with in this chapter. The changes in the address section of their copper plate inscriptions through generations allude to the changes of rural society and its relation with the outside authorities.

The earliest of them, the Khalimpur copper plate inscription of Dharmapāla, dated year 32, which belongs to the beginning of the ninth century, is addressed to the four categories of people related to (samupagata) four villages belonging to two visayās in Vyāghrataṭi-vaṇḍala of Puṣṭravardhana-bhukti. The first category is the ‘subordinates of the king’

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3 *EI*, 4, pp.243-254; *SI*, 2, pp.63-70.
4 *SI*, 2, p.67, l.30-p.68, l.44.
which include 24 titles consisting of royal officers and subordinate rulers like rāja and rājaputra. The second is other unnamed officers (anyāms-c=ākirttitān) and people belonging to (jātiya) cātas and bhatas. The third is visaya-vyavahārins being in the position at the proper time (vathā-kāl-ādhyāsino), beginning with jyeṣṭha-kāyastha, mahāmahatara, mahattara and daśagrāmika, with karaṇas. The fourth is ‘residing cultivators’ (prativāsinah ksetarakāmīs=ca). The king greeted, announced, and ordered them after making homage to brāhmaṇas beforehand (brāhmaṇa-mānanā-pūrṇvākam).5

The next inscription from this sub-region is the Jagajjibanpur plate of Mahendrapāla, year 7, belonging to the middle of the ninth century.6 It is also issued to the four categories of people related to Nandadārghik-odranga belonging to Kuddalakhataka-visaya in Pundravardhana-bhukti.7 The first is the subordinates of the king including 19 titles consisting of royal officers and subordinate rulers. The second is others belonging to cātas and bhatas (anyān=ca cāta-bhata-jātiyān). The third is visaya-vyavahārins being in the position at the proper time. The fourth is residing cultivators, with homage to brāhmaṇas beforehand.8

From the reign of Gopāla II, the son of Śurapāla, which was in the second half of the ninth century, the address in the copper plate inscriptions got standardised. His Mohipur plate, dated year 3,9 is issued to two categories of people related to the village Kaṅkāvāsaka belonging to Uccavṛkṣa-maṇḍala in Sthālikata-visaya of Pundravardhana-bhukti. The first

5 For details, see Appendix 5 Table 1a
6 El, 42, pp.6-29; Pratna Samiksha, 6-8, pp.58-70; note, Ibid., pp.88-90.
7 Pratna Samiksha, 6-8, p.63, l.30. According to Sircar, udraṅga means a kind of tax. IEG, p.349. In this case, it may mean an administrative unit under visaya, according to the context.
8 For details, see Appendix 5 Table 1b
9 This is an unpublished inscription, whose photos are procured by me from the Department of Archaeology, Government of Bangladesh. I am preparing an article on its contents with a tentative reading.
is the 'royal officers' (rāja-puruṣa) or 'subordinates of the king' (rāja-pāḍ-opajīvin) including 43 offices and titles which consist of royal officers, subordinate rulers like rāja, rājanaka, rājaputra and mahāsāmanta, and cāta-bhata servants including ethnic groups as Gauḍas, Mālavas, Khasas, Hūṇas, Kulikas, Kārṇātas and Lātas. The second category is residents beginning with brāhmanas, accompanied by mahattama and kutumbins, reaching medas, andhrakas and caṇḍālas. With addition of uttama between mahattama and kutumin, this standardised address is used in all the Pāla grants in Bengal following the Jajilpara plate of Gopāla III, year 6, which belongs to the second half of the tenth century.

The more or less standardised form of the address, which consisted of two categories, had already been in use in Magadha even during the reign of Dharmapāla. His Nalanda plate is addressed to 37 'subordinates of my own lotus-like feet' (sva-pāda-pāḍ-mopajīvin) including subordinate rulers, royal officers and bhata-cāta servants of Gauḍa, Mālava, Khaśa, Kulika and Hūṇa origin (l.7-16), and residents beginning with brāhmanas, accompanied by mahattama and kutumbins reaching medas, andhras and caṇḍālas (l.16-17).

The Monghyr and Nalanda copper plate inscriptions of Devapāla, his son, also have a similar standardised description of the address, with increase of the number of officers in both inscriptions and the appearance of mahattara instead of mahattama in the former. Thus the peculiar descriptions appear in the Khalimpur and Jagajjibanpur plates and their disappearance in the Mohipur plate can be interpreted as indicators of a

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10 'prativāsinaś-ca brāhmaṇottarān-mahattama-kūṭumib-puroga-med-ándhra-caṇḍāla-paryanyantān.' Mohipur CPI, 1.46. For details of the addressees in this inscription, see Appendix 5 Table1c.

11 JASB, 17, 1951, pp.137-144.

12 EI, 23, pp.290-292.

13 The Monghyr CPI lists 45 titles including Kārṇa and Lāta. EI, 18, pp.304-307, p.306, l.31-36. The Nalanda CPI lists 42 titles which do not include Lāta. SI, 2, pp.71-79, p.75, ll.28-32.

14 EI, 18, p.306, l.36.
particular social situation and change in Varendra in the ninth century.

Among the four categories of addressees mentioned in the Khalimpur and Jagajjibanpur inscriptions, the presence of the second and the fourth show peculiarity in comparison with the standard address with two categories.

The second category consists of people belonging to cātas and bhatas. Though its meaning is not so clear, cāta is often described as rogues making misdeeds in rural areas.\textsuperscript{15} The latter means a soldier or a warrior, who is also described as harassing rural population.\textsuperscript{16} Both of them are often mentioned together in copper plate inscriptions in this period and exemption from their entrance is listed as a privilege conferred on donees. In the other Pāla plates, they are prefixed with ethnic names like Gauḍa, Mālava, Kāraṇtā and so on.\textsuperscript{17} These references indicate that they are irregular troops or mercenaries including people from Bengal and other regions, who are deployed for war or police duty in rural areas and make annoyance to the residents.\textsuperscript{18} The fact that they are categorised separately from other subordinates of the king may indicate their loose connection with the kingship and their ambiguous position between the royal administrative apparatus and the rural society.

The third category is the vyavahārins of viṣaya. As was discussed in the previous chapter, vyavahārin may be a general category of local people involved with management of some local affairs related to the adhikarana, who belonged to the dominant section of a locality.\textsuperscript{19} The description in the Khalimpur inscription shows that they are local notables including the chief

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, p.117.
\textsuperscript{17} Ex. The Monghyr CPI of Devapāla, \textit{El}, 18, p.306, ll.35-36.
\textsuperscript{18} Sircar compares them with modern rural polices like \textit{Paik}. \textit{IEG}, pp.51, 67-68.
\textsuperscript{19} Supra pp.119-120.
scribe and the upper section of peasant landholders. The expression 'with karanaś (sa-karanān), added to them, has an important meaning if we remember that karana is sometimes used as an abbreviated form of adhikarana in the previous period. Though the word can be a synonym of kāyastha, meaning a scribe, the mention of jyeṣṭha-kāyastha as a constituent of vyavahārins excludes this possibility. Thus vyavahārins can be local notables with their adhikarana organisation functioning at the level of viṣaya.

We have no clue to the situation of the rural society of Varendra in the period between the middle of the fifth century and the beginning of the ninth century, due to the lack of the contemporary copper plate inscriptions. However, the mentions of vyavahārins in these grants from Varendra may indicate that this sub-region also experienced the ascendance of the rural notables and their involvement in local affairs through the organisation of adhikaranas like the sub-regions of Vaṅga and Rādhya from the middle of the sixth century to the first half of the seventh century, and the continuing presence and activity of those notables in Varendra at least during the early phase of the Pāla rule. Their differentiation from the other residing cultivators indicates their superiority to the ordinary peasants.

In general terms, the rearrangement of categories mentioned above can be interpreted as the inclusion of the middle categories into the first and the last. In case of the cātas and bhatas, their inclusion into the category of royal officers or subordinates may mean a tighter control over them by the king and his administrative apparatus, or at least the latter's intention to impose it. The change of suffix from the 'belonging to' (jātiya) to 'servant' (sevaka) subtly expresses this tendency. At the same time, the appearance of various ethnic groups among them may mean deployment of the mercenaries from the other regions, which started earlier in the western territory of the

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21 Supra Chapter 4 Section 2.
Pālas. As social groups without roots in the locality, they may have been more dependent on their employers, at least until they established their position as subordinate rulers after some generations, as the Senas from Karṇātaka did in Rādha.

In the case of *visaya-vyavahārins*, the category disappeared and some of their constituents were incorporated into the category of local residents. In the copper plate inscriptions from the reign of Gopāla II, these local residents are almost uniformly described as ‘residents beginning with *brāhmaṇas*, accompanied by *mahattamas, uttamas* and *kutumbins*, reaching *medas, andhras* and *candālas*.’ Among these social groups, *mahattamas* and *uttamas* may be the upper strata of landholders, while *kutumbins* seems to denote peasant householders as was in the previous period. *Medas, andhras* and *candālas* are the terms used to denote the social groups placed at the bottom of the society for some time. In the *Manusmrti*, *medas* and *andhras* are described as mixed *jātis* who should stay outside a village and engage in hunting wild animals in the forest. *Candālas* are described in the same text as a mixed *jāti* kept out of a village and engaging in carrying corpse and execution. Thus it is a stereotyped expression which comprehends all the members of a rural society by indicating the groups placed at both top and bottom ends of the social hierarchy.

The social change implied here is twofold. On one hand, the local notables seem to have lost their distinguished position in relation to local affairs at the supra-village level. In the early phase of the Pāla rule in Varendra, they were informed of the land grant prior to other local residents and kept the *adhikarana* organisations, even though they were not involved

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22 Ex. ‘prativāsino brāhman-ottarān mahattam-ottama-kutumbi-puroga-med-
andhra-candāla-paryantān’, Belwa CPI of Mahipāla I, year 5, *EI*, 21. p.8,
ll.39-40.
with the process of land grants as active participants any more. However, they were categorised together with other local residents as the uppermost section of them in the later grants from the time of Gopāla II. On the other hand, the stratification among residents of the rural society intensified. Though the expression employed in the standard address can be simply rhetoric, the fact that the Pāla administration adopted this expression instead of 'residing cultivators' may indicate the need felt by it to recognise social stratification of the rural society. Needless to say, mention of medas, andhras and candālas does not necessarily mean the existence of the same social groups perceived by the composer of the Manusmṛti in the much earlier period in Madhyadeśa. It is possible that some non-sedentary social groups newly incorporated into the fold of sedentary society were labelled by these terms used for denoting similar groups in the past. The references to dombis in the Caryāpada, which will be discussed below, seem to endorse this point. From these implications, we may conclude that the dominance of the local notables over other members of the rural society was upheld with further social stratification, while they were sidelined from the decision making of the local administrative matters like land donations.

The sidelining of not only the notables but also all the members of the rural society from such matters is discernible in the other sections of the copper plate inscriptions. First of all, they are not involved with land grants as active participants. They are unilaterally announced of the donation. Furthermore, they are required by the king to obey the order of donees and properly offer dues to them. In the early Pāla grants, it is stipulated that after becoming one who is enjoined to listen to the order of the donee, the offering of all the dues like tax (kara) and food (pindaka) should be made by the residing cultivators,25 while all the addressees are asked to agree with

25 'prativāsibhiḥ kṣetarakaraiś=c=āñāśravaana·vidheyair=bhūtvā samucita·kara·pindak·ā dri·sarvva·pratvay·opanayaḥ kārya', the Khalimpur CPI, SI, 2, p.68, l.55. In the Mohipur CPI, tribute is just mentioned as 'sarvva·pratyay·
the donation and future kings are required to protect it. Almost the same stipulation is imposed on cultivators in the later inscriptions, with additions to the list of dues. These stipulations for members of the rural society can be interpreted as the assertion of control by the Pāla kingship, which went along with sidelining of these members from the rural administrative matters.

The assertion of control over the rural society by the Pālas is also discernible in a section which lists privileges conferred on donees. The following terms and conditions are commonly listed in the Pāla grants in Bengal. The extent of the donated village is described to be 'as far as own borders, grass land and pasture.' The donation is accompanied with flat land (sa-tala), raised ground (s·oddesa), trees (sa·padapa) or more particularly Mango and Mahua trees (s·amra·madhūka), watering place (sa·jalasthala), pits and saline land (sa·gart·osara), additional tax (s·oparikara), right to levy fines of ten offences (sa·das·apaciira) and right to catch the thieves (sa·ca·ur·oddharana). The donated land or settlements

opanayah', ll.56·57.

26 SI, 2, ll.54·55.
27 Ex. 'prativasibhiṣ=ca kṣetarakarair=ājñā·śravaṇa·vidheyi·bhūya yathā·kālam samucita·bhāga·bhoga·kara·hirany·ādi·sarvva·pratyāy·opanayah kārya itī', Jajilpara CPI, JASB, 17, 1951, p.144, ll.39·40.
28 'sva·sīmā·tṝṇa·yūtī·gocara·paryantāḥ', Ex. Belwa CPI of Mahipāla I, year 5, EI, 21, p.8, l.41. Sometimes, 'yūtī' is spelled as 'pūtī.'
29 *Tala* and *uddeśa* are interpreted as 'surface of ground' and 'space above the ground' by Sircar. *IEG*, pp.404·405. However, the mention of 'tala·pātaka in the Khalimpur CPI suggests that *tala* is rather a land usable for agricultural purpose. *SI*, 2, p.68, l.51. In this light, 'flat land' is better interpretation for *tala*. Accordingly, *uddeśa* may mean 'raised ground' and these interpretations suit the geographical context of Bengal.

30 Mohipur CPI, l.52.
31 *Jala·sthala* is interpreted as 'land and water' by Sircar. *IEG*, p.399. If we consider that the land is already connoted in *tala* and *uddeśa*, 'watering place' can be more reasonable interpretation.
32 From the reign of Mahipāla I, this privilege ceased to appear in the Pāla grants.

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are also exempted from all the labours (parihṛta-sarva-pīda) and kept without entrance of cātas and bhataś (a-cātā-bhata-praveśa). Nothing should be taken from them (ākiṇcit-pragrāhya) and all the dues like bhāga, bhoga, kara and hiranya accompany the tenure. These dues may be respectively the share of agricultural products, periodical offerings, taxes in grain and taxes in cash. Apart from them, the privileges especially include small market, toll at the ferry, harvest and income at the gates, in cases of the Khalimpur, Jagajjibanpur and Jajilpara inscriptions.

These privileges listed above are extensive. First of all, they comprehensively cover the sources of income and resources in a rural space. Apart from them, the rights related to local policing are also ceded to donees, while the donated land and settlements are exempted from interference by cātas and bhataś. They are also exempted from the charges in the form of labour and production, probably imposed by political authorities like the king and his administrative apparatus. The potential strength of donee's power derived from those privileges and the stipulation for cultivators mentioned above is implied in the way of donations recorded in the Pāla grants. Except two copper plate inscriptions of Gopāla II, dated year 4, all the Pāla grants pertaining to Varendra record the donations of a village or several villages. In case of the Jagajjibanpur inscription, it records the donation of an administrative unit called udraiga. In these cases, at least notionally, the resource under the command of donees can be comprehensive.

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33 As an example of these privileges, see Jajilpara CPI, JASB, 17, 1951, p.143, ll.31-33
34 IEG, p.401.
36 'sa-ghaṭa-tar-opetāh', Pratna Samiksha, 6-8, p.64, l.46
37 'atratya ābhāvya dvārikādāna-sametayoḥ', JASB, 17, 1951, p.142, l.23.
38 Pratna Samiksha, 6-8, pp.71-83. As S. C. Mukreji's reading of the plates has some problems including line assignments, I read them from the photographs.
39 Ibid., pp.58-70.
and number of cultivators who would obey their orders can be large. In a
notion, these cases allude to the extremely strong presence of donees in the
rural society and the infiltration of the political authorities which conferred
and guaranteed their privileges.

Needless to say, the assertion of control does not necessarily mean
real control over the rural settlement and society. The implementation of
grants and the privileges of the donees can be guaranteed by the acceptance
of the authority of the Pāla kingship and donees by local population,
especially rural notables who seem to retain their superiority, and by their
collaboration. However, the fact that the Pāla kingship could sideline the
local population and discount their agreement in the process of land grants
still points to the relative decline of the power of the rural society vis-à-vis
the political authorities.

On the other hand, the donation of plural villages in case of the
Khalimpur grant or an administrative unit in the Jagajjibanpur plate, which
possibly consisted of vast tracts, might have made a problem of management,
which would make room for the interference by another kind of power,
especially subordinate rulers who keep their stronghold in Varendra. This
aspect will be discussed in the next section.

Apart from that, the reference to the exemption from the entrance by
cātus and bhatas as a privilege of donees shows the possibility of their
interference with the rural society otherwise. It can be also interpreted as a
case of infiltration by another kind of power external to the rural society.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the rural society in
Samatata was not involved with the issue of copper plate grants in the
seventh century. 40 In Vanga, the loss of such an involvement became clear
after the ninth century, if not earlier. Like the case of Varendra, information

40 Supra pp.135·136.
about the rural society in Vaṅga, Samataṭa and Śrīhaṭṭa is obtainable from
the limited parts of copper plate inscriptions issued by the Candra kings,
which covers the period from the first half of the tenth to the middle of the
eleventh century.

In the address section, four categories of people are listed. First is the
subordinate of the kings or royal officers starting with queen (rājīnī),
subordinate rulers like rānaka and rājaputra, officers and others. The titles
listed here are more irregular compared with the ones in the Pāla grants, as
they vary from 16 to 23 without any tendency of increase or decrease.41 The
second is persons who are ‘declared of the position as officer, unnamed
here’,42 which may mean the other royal officers not listed in the inscription.
The third is people belonging to cātas and bhatas.43 The fourth and the last
are janapadas and cultivators accompanied with brāhmaṇas.44 Except in the
case of the Madanpur grant, which has only two categories of king’s
subordinates and ones beginning with brāhmaṇas (brāhmaṇ-ottarān),45 all
the other copper plates accessible to us employ these four categories, with
slight difference in titles of the listed officers.46

Among them, the first two can be interpreted as the royal officers and
subordinate rulers who constituted the administrative apparatus of the king.
The expression used for the third category of cātas and bhatas is much the

41 16 in the Madanpur CPI and 23 in the Paschimbhag CPI, both belong to
the reign of Śrīcandra. See Appendix 5 Table 2.
42 ‘adhyakṣa-pracār-oktān=ih=ākīrttitān’, EDEP, p.67, 1.33.
43 ‘cāṭa-bhaṭa-jātiyān’, Ibid.
44 ‘janapadān kṣet rakarāṃś=ca brāhmaṇ-ottarān’, Ibid. In the Rampal CPI,
janapadas are not mentioned. IB, p.5, 1.22.
45 See Appendix 5 Table 2b.
46 The Idilpur CPI of Śrīcandra, whose abstract only was published, and the
Dhaka CPI of Kalyāṇacandra, which has not yet been edited, are out of
purview on this matter. EI, 17, pp.189-190. The Kedarpur CPI of Śrīcandra
contains only eulogies of the Candra kings and does not have any address. It
may be a blank copper plate prepared for future use. EI, 17, pp.188-192.

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same as the early Pāla inscriptions like the Khalimpur and Jagajjibanpur grants. The separate category for them may connote their ambiguous position, as was discussed above.

The fourth category is related to residents of a rural area. The presence of *brāhmanas* as a leading section of the rural society is evident in the expression *brāhmanottara*. Though the constituents of *janapadas* are not clear, the mention of them side by side with cultivators (*kṣetракara*) may indicate that they include non-agricultural members of the rural society like scribes and artisans. The presence of merchants in a village Vilakindaka or Vilikhandaka in Samatāta is attested by the inscriptions on the images from Baghaura and Narayanpur, which belong to the reign of Mahipāla I, at the end of the ninth century. These cases may show the presence of mercantile group in the rural society and allude to their inclusion in *janapadas*. Thus the expression used in these copper plate inscriptions may indicate the presence of diverse groups in the rural society. On the other hand, it does not show any stratification among these groups, especially cultivators, except some degree of superiority attached to local *brāhmanas*, unlike the expression found in the Pāla grants pertaining to Varendra.

The stipulation for cultivators is also found in the Candra grants. In the same manner as the Pāla grants, the residing cultivators are told to obey the order of the donee and offer dues as declared, while all the addressees are asked to agree with the donation and the future kings are required to

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49 Presence of these inscriptions may indicate a temporary occupation of the westernmost part of Samatāta by the Pālas.
Privileges conferred on donees are as extensive as ones in the Pāla inscriptions. Except the clauses like 'with Mango and Jackfruit trees' (sāmra·panasa), 'with Betel and Cocoanit trees' (sa·guvāka·nālikera) and 'with salt' (sa·lavāna), other conditions are almost the same as regular privileges listed in the Pāla inscriptions discussed above. These differences may accrue from the different ecological settings.

The stipulation for cultivators and the privileges conferred on donees mentioned here seem to be similar to or rather the same as ones written in the Pāla grants. However, their meanings can be different if we consider the way of donations observed in these sub-regions. Both in Vaṅga and Samataṭa, all the grants except two Mainamati grants of Laḍahacandra, which record the donation of a land plot and two villages and a village respectively, record the donation of a plot or plots of land in particular villages. In these cases, the extent of land plots varies from 8 dronas and 8 gaṇḍas in a village in the case of the Madanpur plate to 19 halas and 6 dronas scattered over five villages belonging to two separate administrative units in the case of the Dhulla grant. What is important here is the fact that, regardless of their extent, these donated land plots must be adjacent to the land which is not under the control of donees. Accordingly, the resources under their control cannot be as comprehensive as ones in the case of village donation, and the labour power which they can mobilise is also limited. In this condition,

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51 Ibid., ll.39·40.
52 Ex. 'sva·sim·āvacchinnā trina·[pūṭi·go]cara·paryantā/ satala·[s·o]lddeśa sā[m]ra·pandasā sa·guvāka·nālikera sa·lavāna/ sa·jalasthalā sa·gal[r]tt·oṣarā/ sa·daśāparādhā/ sa·cauroddharanā/ pariḥ[tal]·sarvva·pidā/ a·cāta·bhava[ta]·praveśā/ akiṇcit·[pralgra[h]yā]/ [sa]masta·rāja·bhoga·[ka]ra·hiraṇya·pratyāya·sahitā', Ibid, ll.30·33.
53 EDEP, p.74, ll.50·51.
54 Ibid., p.75, reverse l.7.
55 EI, 28, p.57, ll.20·21, 26.
56 EI, 33, p.139, ll.20·23, p.140, l.30.
donees have to hold their land side by side with local residents and need their cooperation. The need is more acute in the case of the Dhulla grant, as the donee should keep fractions of land plots in five separate villages. In such situations, the rural society may keep some room for negotiation with the authority of donees imposed upon it. The fact that the donations were limited to a land plot and the king had to gather fractions of land scattered over several villages for donation of the larger land, especially in the early phase of the Candra rule, may indicate the unaccomplished state of the infiltration of their power into the rural society.

Two Mainamti plates of Ladhacandra, belonging to Samatata in the first half of the eleventh century, record donations of the whole villages. In his first grant, one of the villages, Mahādeva-grama, was donated with a small market (hattika). These donations were made in a well-settled area, as is shown by minute descriptions of border landmarks, which are mainly constituted by hamlets (voraka) and villages (grāma) or piles (kilaka) and embankments (āli). The fact that he could donate a whole village located in such a well-settled area shows the enhanced state of the infiltration into the rural society by the king and his administrative apparatus.

The case of the Paschimbhag copper plate inscription, which pertains to Śrīhatha, the northern fringe of East Bengal, shows quite a different picture, though it was also issued under the Candra rule.

The inscription records the reorganisation of the three viṣayas of

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57 They are 4 halas in ...-tā-grama, 3 halas in Nondiyājo-jayasthara and 3 halas in Tivaravilli-grama, all of which belong to Valli-...-maṇḍala in Khediravilli-viṣaya, and 2 halas and 6 dronas in Pa-...-maṇḍ-grama, and 7 hala in a grāma, both of which belong to a viṣaya in Yola-maṇḍala. Both viṣayas belong to Pauṇḍra-bhukti. Ibid., p.139, ll.20-22.
58 EDEP, pp.69-75; Ibid., pp.75-76 (only reverse).
59 'Dhṛtipura-hattika-sameta', Ibid., p.74, l.45.
60 Ibid., p.73, ll.38-41 (Vappasihavoraka-grama); p.73, l.43-p. 74, l.44 (Mahādeva-grama); p.75, reverse l.9-p.76, l.11 (Suravoraka-grama).
61 Ibid., pp.63-69.
Garalā, Pogāra and Candrapura, belonging to Sātala-vargā of Śrihaṭṭa-māṇḍala in Paundravardhana-bhuxti, into a brahma-pura named Śricandrapura, and the large scale donation of this vast tract to nine mathas and six thousand brāhmaṇas. Candrapura-visāya may be identical with Candrapuri-visāya, which was a venue of another large scale grant recorded in the Nidhanpur plates belonging to the same locality in the first half of the seventh century.\(^{62}\)

The donees and the land plots assigned to them are minutely listed in three categories. The first is the matha of Brahmā and 120 pātakas of land donated to it. The land plots are minutely assigned to eighty-one people related to the matha beginning with a grammarian of Candra school, ten students for their food and chalk, five guest brāhmaṇas for everyday meal, and including service groups like garland makers, potters, musicians, servants and so on. 47 pātakas are especially earmarked for repairs of the matha. The second is two groups of four mathas of Vaiśānava (Agni), Yogeśvara, Jaimani (Jaimini) and Mahākāla, each of which belongs to Vaṅgāla or the other country (desantariya). 280 pātakas of land are donated to them with minute assignments to each of one hundred and seventy people related to those mathas and for their repairs in a manner similar to that of the matha of Brahmā. The third are six thousand brāhmaṇas settled by Vaiśānava Vināyaka who was born in Kāli-grām.\(^{63}\) The remaining lands were donated to these brāhmaṇas in equal division. Among them, thirty seven names are listed. Finally, land belonging to a Buddhist establishment (ratna-traya-bhūmi) and 52 pātakas belonging to the quay of Indreśvara (Indreśvara-nau-bandha) are excluded from the donated land.\(^{64}\)

As the grant was addressed to janapadas and cultivators apart from

\(^{62}\) EI, 19, pl.3, 1.5.
\(^{63}\) 'Kāli-grāma-bhavo vaisṇavah samāropayāṁ=vabhuva kṛtī/ śrimān Vināyak-ākhyo viprāṇām śat-sahasrāṇi// [22*]’, EDEP, p.69, 1.64.
\(^{64}\) For the detail, see Appendix 4 Table 3.
King's subordinates and cūtas and bhātas, and the land belonging to a Buddhist establishment and a quay named after a person had existed beforehand, the area may have included several settlements within it and not an uncultivated tract as was interpreted by Chattopadhyaya, though uncultivated land may have been fully available to accommodate such a large number of brāhmanas. The prior presence of non-donee brāhmanas among cultivators and janapadas is recognisable in the stipulation for these three categories of people to obey the order of donees and to offer tribute as defined in the grant. What transpires in this case is a reorganisation of the rural society through the land grant to the mathas and the settling of brāhmanas.

The detailed description of land assignments to the service groups attached to the mathas is important in this respect. A distinction was drawn between two categories of artisan and service communities, as Chattopadhyaya pointed out. Garland makers, oil pressers, potters, drummers, conch blowers, labourers and leather workers, barbers, and sweepers received only half a pātaka per person, while a dancer, carpenters, architects, and black smiths received two pātakas per person and even female servants received the three fourth. Kayasthas and vaidyās received two and a half and three respectively. It is possible that the differentiated ordering of the various communities in this case was derived from the

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65 Appendix 5 Table 2a
66 B. D. Chattopadhyaya, Aspects of Rural Settlements and Rural Society in Early Medieval India, Calcutta, 1990, p.55. Bhūmicchidra-nyāya, which Chattopadhyaya cited as the basis of his inference, is not necessarily limited to uncultivated land and it is also applied to the donation of villages in this period. Cf. Khalimpur CPI, SI, 2, p.68, l.51.
67 'yato bhavadbhīr=janapadaīṃ kṣetrakarair=bbrāhmanais=ca bidheyi-bhūya yathā-diyamāna-pratyāy-panayāh kāryah', EDEP, p.68, ll.56-57.
68 Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., pp.55-56.
69 Appendix 4 Table 3.
70 Ibid.
pattern of differentiation already in existence in the rural society.\textsuperscript{71} However, the fact that the same size of plots were equally assigned to various kind of service groups including garland makers, musicians and sweepers, and that female servants received wider plots than them indicate that the assignment of land plots were rather determined according to the importance of their service to the mathas. As the donated tract include some settlements, these service groups may have come from them and been embedded in the social order of these villages, which was differentiated and stratified to some extent. The attachment of these groups to the mathas and the assignment of land plots to them according to their relation with the institutions can be interpreted as the re-definition of social relations centred around the mathas and it may have inevitably affected the existing social order of the locality. Apart from that, settling of a large number of brāhmanas must affect the existing rural society which should bear the burden through the offering of dues and surrender of resources to which the donees are entitled.\textsuperscript{72} Thus the case of the Paschimbhag grant can be interpreted as a reorganisation of the rural society initiated by the king. Like the cases witnessed in the same locality in the seventh century,\textsuperscript{73} the character of this sub-region as periphery with uncultivated land tracts may have allowed such a practice.

In Harikela, the neighbouring sub-region to the south, we have two inscriptions mentioning kings with names ending with 'deva', which is issued from a city called Vardhamānapura. Among them, the metal vase inscription of Attākaradeva, which is probably from Chittagong,\textsuperscript{74} offers a glimpse of the rural society in this sub-region at the beginning of the tenth century.

\textsuperscript{71} Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., p.57.
\textsuperscript{72} \textit{EDEP}, p.68, ll.52-54, 56-57
\textsuperscript{73} Supra, pp.137-142.
\textsuperscript{74} \textit{SAA}, 1991, pp.323-338. Another inscription, the Chittagong CPI of Kāntideva contain only eulogy, name of the king and general address as 'future kings in Harikela-mandala.' \textit{EI}, 26, pp.313-318. It may belong to the first half of the ninth century.
The inscription has a format similar to a copper plate inscription. It is issued by ṛājādhīrāja Attakaradeva to present and future kings. ṛājaputras, ṛānakas and thakkuras, and all the royal officers like aksapatālikā in Harikelā-maṇḍala, with homage to brāhmaṇas beforehand.\(^{75}\) It records two occasions of donations of some land plots to a small Buddhist monastery (mathikā) constructed by mahāpratihāra Sahadeva,\(^{76}\) for the purpose of worship of the Buddha, provision for the bhikṣu-samgha and repairs of it.\(^{77}\)

Local residents are conspicuous by their absence in the sections mentioning addressees and stipulations for them.\(^{78}\) However, individual residents are mentioned as holders of the donated land plots. Among the land plots donated in the first occasion,\(^{79}\) whose descriptions are not so clear, the land plots belonging to kārada Indranātha and bhārada Amhela are mentioned respectively.\(^{80}\) The land donated in the second occasion, recorded on the rim of the vase, includes a small garden of betel tree and so on belonging to Nāgadatta.\(^{81}\) Kārada and bhārada respectively mean ‘giving tax’ and ‘giving labour.’ They may indicate two categories of landholders who offer tribute to the political authority either by their production or their labour service. On the other hand, the case of Nāgadatta shows the possession of resources like trees with valuable products by an individual resident. Their presence may show some differentiation among landholders in the rural society. On the other hand, the fact that they are not informed of


\(^{76}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p.334, ll.6-7.

\(^{77}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p.335, ll.8-9.

\(^{78}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p.333, ll.3-4, ‘tad=iyam sthitih sarvavadā-sarvva=eva yuṣmābhir=paripālaniya’, \textit{Ibid.}, p.335, l.16.

\(^{79}\) \textit{Ibid.}, ll.9-15.


the donation while their land are given to the monastery may show the authority of the local ruler and his subordinate which are imposed on the rural society.

Rādha, at least its northern part, may have been under the Pāla rule, as a copper plate of Dharmapāla was recovered from the ruin of Karnasuvarna in Murshidabad district82 and the eulogy of the Pāla kings from Dharmapāla to Nayapāla is included in a fragmentary inscription from Siyan, Bīrbhum district.83 As the aforementioned copper plate inscription has not yet been edited nor its photographs are accessible, we have no information about the rural society depicted in it.

The situation of the southernmost part of this region, Daṇḍabhukti-maṇḍala belonging to Vardhamāna-bhukti, is discernible in the two copper plate inscriptions of the Kāmboja king Nayapāla,84 which belong to the second half of the tenth century. Interestingly, the address of these grants is divided into two parts. In the first part, the king ‘orders, with worship of brāhmaṇas and so on beforehand’85 to vyavahārins accompanied with karāṇas and cultivators accompanied with residents in a village and inform them of the donation.86 After the explanation of details of the donation, they are told to offer the tribute to the donee after becoming submissive to him and to live comfortably in the locality.87 In the second part,

83 Siyan Inscription of the time of Nayapāla, EI, 39, pp.39-56.
84 Irdā CPI of Nayapāladeva, year 13, EI, 22, pp.150-159; Kalanda CPI of Nayapāladeva, year 14, EI, 41, pp.199-205.
85 ‘dvija-pūjādipūrvvam=ādiśaty’, EI, 22, p.155, l.22; 41, p.203, l.23.
86 Ibid., 22, p.155, l.20-22; 41, p.203, l.21-23. Appendix 5 Table 3.
87 ‘tad-[y-]pratyāyam samagram=taśmai vidheyatām gatvā kāl-ocitām [dadānāh] sukhena nivasath=eha’, Ibid, 22, p.156, l.31-32. Almost same phrases in the Kalanda CPI. Ibid., 41, p.204, l.31-32
the king 'looks, talks and orders' to his subordinates, who are subdivided into six groups, and 'future kings connected with own tirtha', which may denote future kings belonging to this dynasty. The king asked them to protect the donation eternally.

What is important here is the mention of vyavahārins with karanas. In these cases also, karana seems to stand for adhikarana, as it is also used to denote office of officers (adyakṣa) in the second address. The position of vyavahārins as local notables is well expressed by their differentiation from the subordinates of the king and by their superiority to other cultivators and residents shown by their precedence in the order. The mention of them and their karanas show the continuance of their activity and ascendancy, which was witnessed in the six and seventh centuries in this sub-region. The fact that vyavahārins and cultivators are informed of the donation separately from the royal subordinates may indicate a strong position of the rural society headed by local notables against the political authorities, though privileges conferred on donees are as extensive as ones in the Pāla inscriptions and even include night-soil deposit (avaskara-sthāna) and salt mine (lavāṇākara) in both cases, and market, landing place (ḥatta-ghatta) and ferry (tara) in case of the Irda plate. On the other hand, the infiltration of the outside authority is advancing with involvement of various kinds of royal subordinates with the protection of donations and stronger presence of the donees in the donated villages. The privilege of 'non-presence of cātas and bhatas in pasture' also indicates possibility of their

88 'viktati vodaty=anusāstī', Ibid., 22, p.156, l.36. In the Kalanda CPI, 'with affection' (snehenā) is attached and 'viktati' is replaced with 'vicakṣati' (declares). Ibid., 41, p.204, l.35.
89 Ibid., 22, p.156, ll.32-36: 41, p.204, ll.32-35. Appendix 5 Table 3.
90 EI, 22, p.156, ll.36-37: 41, p.204, 36.
91 Supra, pp.123-128.
What is discernible here is the delicate balance kept between the rural society headed by local notables and the authorities outside it.

Another type of contemporary sources shows the stratification in the rural society of Bengal by references to the lower class cultivators. The verses belonging to this period and Bengal region included in the *Subhāṣitaratnakośa* and the *Saduktikarnāmrta* mention social groups called *pāmara*. Their differentiation from other cultivators is discernible in a verse in which *pāmaras* call other group of cultivators (*kṛṣaka-jana*), when they find out and chase a pair of rabbits during the harvest. Another verse describes a *pāmara* as being summoned by a *hālika* and reluctantly coming to a field. It shows the subordinate position of the former to the latter. *Hālikas* are described as peasant householders whose houses 'become worthy' (*arghantā*) after the first harvest of winter rice, even if the term rather denotes subordinate agriculturalist in the sources belonging to the other regions. In the case of *pāmaras*, the context of their appearance is rather their collective labour at agricultural field and threshing floor, though

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93 'a·cāta·bhaṭa·gocarā', *Ibid.*, 22, p.155, ll.24-25; 41, p.203, l.25.
94 'kśetropāntapalāyamānasāsakadvandvam parikṣyāparān ahūyatirasena kārsakajānānābaddhakolālāḥ/

95 'āhūto hālikenāsrutamiva vacanām taṣya kṛtvā kṣaṇaikām tiṣṭhāsustabdharomā kathamapi viṭapam niḥsamiraṁ vihāya/ dorbhyāmāvṛtya vākṣaḥsthalamālasatgārdināpādapracaṇāḥ

96 *SRK*, v.314: *SK*, 2.173.2
98 *SRK*, v.300: *SK*, 2.173.5.
99 *SRK*, v.318.
they are also mentioned with their house\textsuperscript{100} in which a pāmara woman rotates a hand-mill.\textsuperscript{101} Thus pāmaras can be labelled as agricultural labourers collectively working for peasant householders.\textsuperscript{102} Their presence and subservient position show the stratification among cultivators in the rural society.

Another tendency, the infiltration of the political authority, is also discernible in a verse included in the Subhāṣītaratnakosa. It describes a merciless bhogapati as a causeless disaster afflicting families in a village, because of whom only some families retain their land as ‘land of own lineage’ (\textit{nija-vamsa-bhū}) and villages become desolate.\textsuperscript{103} As bhogapati is listed as one of royal subordinates in the Khalimpur inscription,\textsuperscript{104} he constitutes a part of political authority either as an officer in charge of an administrative unit or tax called bhoga, or as a holder of some land tenure. The possibility of his interference with donated land tracts is also assumed in the Paschimbhag inscription, which asks bhogapatis, instead of future kings, to protect the donation.\textsuperscript{105} What is important is the description that some families retain their land because they are ‘measured / investigated’ (\textit{mita}) as holding land of own lineage.\textsuperscript{106} We may detect here the infiltration of the political authority into the rural society in the form of interference with the land rights of peasant families.

The \textit{Caryāpada}, a collection of esoteric verses composed by the

\textsuperscript{100} pāmar-āgāra’, \textit{SRK}, v.1176.
\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Ibid.}, v.1173. The term used in this verse is ‘geha.’
\textsuperscript{102} A. K. Choudhary, op. cit., pp.98-99.
\textsuperscript{103} ‘kaiściddvitadayena bhogapatina niśkāraṇopaplutaprapkinair= nijavamsabhūriti mitairatayamānāḥ kulāḥ/ grāmā
nīṣṭnajīrñakudabahuḥ svairam bhramadbhravah prāyāḥ
pāṇḍukapotakanthamukharāme na yāntyutkatām//’, \textit{SRK}, v.1175.
\textsuperscript{104} Appendix 5 Table 1a.
\textsuperscript{105} \textit{EDEP}, p.68, l.l.57-58.
\textsuperscript{106} Supra note 103. Literally, families (\textit{kula}) are ‘investigated (\textit{mita}) as “lands of own lineage” (\textit{nijavamsabhū}).’ I add ‘holding’ to make its sense.
siddhācāryas of Sahajiyā Buddhist sect, offers some glimpses of one aspect of the social stratification, that is, the incorporation of non-sedentary groups into the rural society. In verses included in the text, domba women (dombī) are often referred to as a metaphor of Śūnyatā or Nairātma, the goddess embodying voidness. They are described as low class women living at the fringe of the rural society, with some interaction with other members in the rural society like illicit sexual relations with male members, providing commodities like loom and bamboo basket, and working as a ferry woman. On the other hand, both mātangi and candāli are interchangeably used as synonym of dombī in some verses. Those descriptions may indicate that fringe groups which can be labelled as domba were somehow incorporated into the rural society, while the names denoting them were imposed by the rural society who recognised them as such. The last point may explain the appearance of candālas in the Pāla copper plate inscriptions as was discussed above.

Thus the stratification within the rural society and the infiltration of the outside authorities into it as a result of the disruption of the power of local notables, are observable as an ongoing process in this period, though there is a difference in extent according to the locality. I would like to discuss the character of the outside authorities and their mutual relations in the following section. The first to be discussed is the political authorities.

108 Ibid., Caryā 10, pp.6-7 (having relation with a brāhmaṇa); Caryā 18, p.11 (relation with a brāhmaṇa connoted); Caryā 19, p.12 (marriage of Kāhṇupāda with a dombī).
109 Ibid., Caryā 10, pp.6-7 (selling loom and bamboo basket); Caryā 14, p.9 (working as a ferry woman).
110 Ibid., Caryā 14, p.9 (mātangi and dombī) Caryā 18, p.11, Caryā 47, p.25 (candāli and dombī).
2. Infiltration of Political Authorities and Rise of Sāmantas

One indicator of the infiltration of the political authorities into the rural society is the number of the king's subordinates informed of the donation, which enormously increased from ones listed in inscriptions of the previous period. In case of the Pāla inscriptions, the titles listed in this section of the address steadily increase from 24 in the Khalimpur inscription to around 45 in the later inscriptions from reign of Gopāla II onward. The copper plate inscriptions of the Candras also include 16 to 23 titles with some irregularity. Two plates of the Kāmbojas also show the involvement of various kinds of royal subordinates. Though the intensity varies according to the locality, they show general tendency of the infiltration by the political authorities, which include kingship, its administrative apparatus, and subordinate rulers.

Apart from the number of officers concerned, the other forms of the infiltration, or rather an effort of infiltration, into the rural society by kingship and its administrative apparatus are discernible in the inscriptions of the Pālas and the Candras.

As to the Pālas, their effort of infiltration took the form of assessment of villages in terms of their land measurement or productions, through which they try to bring rural settlements under their control. The earliest case of measurement of a whole village is observable in the first Suvarṇakārikā-danda plate of Gopāla II, which belong to the second half of the ninth

111 For example, the Devaparvata grant of Bhavadeva is addressed to only present and future visayapatis, karanikas and daśagrāmikas. JASBL, 17, 1951, p.93, ll.43-44.
112 For example, Belwa CPI of Vigrahapāla III, year11, lists 45 titles. See Appendix 5 Table 1d.
113 Appendix 5 Table 2.
114 Appendix 5 Table 3.
115 As the provenance of the two copper plate inscriptions of Gopāla II, year 4, are unknown, I tentatively call them as the Suvarṇakārikā-danda plates, from the name of locality to which both of them are related.
century. In this inscription, the donated portion (aṅśa) and the whole part of the village Bhūtabhada is measured as 1 kūlya 1 drōna 1 ādhavāpa 2 pādas 3 kākinis and 9 1/2 kūlya 1 pāda respectively.\(^\text{116}\) In the Belwa grant of Vigrahapāla III, belonging to the second half of the eleventh century, a half of village Lovanikāma is donated with exclusion of some land within it.\(^\text{117}\) Both the donated and excluded portions are mentioned with the standard of 3 kūlyas 7 1/2 drōnas 11 udamānas and 1 kūlya 2 drōna 3 1/4 ādhavāpas 3 1/2 udamānas.\(^\text{118}\) In the Amgachi plate of the same king, the donated village, Viṣamapur-āṃśa with Daṇḍatraheśvara belonging to Vṛāhmani-grāma-ṃaṇḍala, is mentioned with standard of 6 kūlyas 2 drōnas 2 udamānas 3 kākinis.\(^\text{119}\)

Assessment of the production of a village in terms of currency unit is indicated in the Bhaturiya stone inscription, which mentions Rājyapāla and belongs to the middle of the tenth century.\(^\text{120}\) According to this inscription, the donation of village Madhusrava was made by Rājyapāla to a temple of Śiva constructed by Yaśodāsa, his subordinate, after withholding tax of one hundred purāṇas.\(^\text{121}\) This is a case of kara-śāsana, by which a land plot or a village is given with a condition that certain amount of tax would continue to be paid to the king.\(^\text{122}\) Purāṇa is a unit of silver currency, which may be a

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\(^\text{117}\) EI, 29, p.11, ll.27-29. Ardha-Lovanikāma is treated as a village. Ibid., p.12, l.38

\(^\text{118}\) Ibid., p.11, ll.27-29.

\(^\text{119}\) Ibid., 15, p.297, ll.25-26. In this inscription also, the donated part is treated as a village. Ibid., l.32.

\(^\text{120}\) EI, 33, pp.150-154.

\(^\text{121}\) ‘sataṃ purāṇān=nikaram niyamya’, Ibid., p.154, l.16.

\(^\text{122}\) D. C. Sircar, Studies in the Political and Administrative Systems in Ancient and Medieval India, Delhi, 1974, pp.74-75.
notional unit rather than a real coined currency in this period. This case presupposes the estimation of production of a village in terms of this unit, on which tax can be calculated. In the Biyala plate of Mahipāla I. dated year 35, the donated village Palāśavṛnda is mentioned with the standard (pramāṇa) of one thousand purāṇas, which may indicate the estimated production of the village.

The Belwa copper plate inscription of the same king, dated year 5, mentions three donated villages, that is, Osinna-kaivarta-ṛṣṭī, Nandivāmini and Gaṅeśvara-sameta-grāma-puṣkiriṇi with the standard (pramāṇa) of 210, 490 and 151 respectively. In both the Suvarṇakārikā-danda plates of Gopāla II, the village or administrative unit called Suvarṇakārikā-danda, from which some land plots are donated in two separate occasions, is also mentioned with the standard of four thousand. The donated portion is mentioned with the standard of 457, apart from the land measurement, in the first plate. In the second plate, it is referred to as the standard of 450. From the fact that this ‘standard’ (pramāṇa) appears side by side with land measurement in the first Suvarṇakārikā-danda plate, it is easily inferable that the standard mentioned here is not a land measurement. In the light of the expression in the Biyala inscription,

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124 As I could not consult the edition by S. V. Bhattacharya, published in *Bangladesh Asiatic Society Patrika*, 5, 1987, pp. 1-9, information of this inscription is based on my own reading from the photographs procured from the Department of Archaeology, Government of Bangladesh.
125 ‘Palāśavṛnda sahasra-purāṇa-pramāṇa’, Biyala CPI, l.28.
126 *EI*, 21, p. 7, ll. 28-31. Though the last one sounds like a pond belonging to a village, all the three are collectively mentioned as ‘three villages written above’ (yathoparikhitāh tri-grāmāh). *Ibid.*, p. 8, l. 41.
the standard used in these inscriptions also seems to be a standard based on *purāṇa* and the number mentioned here is the estimated production in terms of the currency unit.

The assessment of lands and villages in terms of currency unit was more systematically practiced with land measurements in the Sena period. As I will discuss in the next chapter, this system of assessment gave a leverage to the Sena rule as it enabled them to uniformly assess rural settlements by overcoming the difference of the standard of land measurement used in each locality. Compared with them, the Pālas did not thoroughly apply the system, as is shown by the fact that the villages Kaṅkā-vāsaka and Kuraṭa-pallikā-grāma, which were donated in theMohipur grant of Gopāla II and Bangarh plate of Mahipāla I respectively, are not mentioned with any standard. However, it can be still interpreted as the first step towards this direction and shows advanced state of the infiltration of kingship and its administrative apparatus into the rural society.

The assessment of the rural settlement both in terms of land measurement and production counted in currency unit does not appear in the copper plate inscriptions of the early Pāla kings. The cases cited above indicate that it was introduced during the reign of Gopāla II. This fact is remarkable as the standardised address of grants which excludes *vyavahārins* was introduced in Varendra under this king and this phenomenon can be connected with the sidelining of local notables, as was discussed above. This coincidence may show that the infiltration of the Pāla power into the rural society was enabled by sidelining and comparative decline of the authority of these notables in the rural society.

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131 Mohipur CPI of Gopāla II, ll.40-41; *EI*, 14, p.327, ll.31-32.
132 Supra, pp.164-165.
The infiltration of the Candra rule into the rural society in Śrīhāṭṭa, which is shown by the case of the Paschimbhag plate of Śricandra, can be interpreted as the social reorganisation. The meticulous references to each recipient and the size of their land plot may indicate land measurement over wide area, even though it does not cover the whole area constituted by the three visayās donated at the occasion.

The situation in Vaṅga and Samataṭa shows some difference from it. The control on the Candras over the rural society in these sub-regions is not as strong as the Pālas or their own rule in Śrīhāṭṭa. However, their effort to infiltrate into the rural society through land measurement became visible in the later phase. In the first Mainamati plate of Laḍahacandra, which belongs to the first half of the eleventh century, two villages donated with a land plot, Vappasinhavora-grāma and Mahādeva-grāma, are mentioned with standard of 8 pātakas 4 3/4 dronas 5 yāstis 3 kākas 2 vindus and 3 pātakas 9 dronas 1 kākas respectively. In the second plate also, the donated village Suravora-grāma is measured as 8 pātakas 1 1/2 dronas and 29 yāstis. This tendency is comparable with the measurement of a whole village which appears in the grants of the later Pāla rulers, while the measurement of each land plot is a regular feature of the Candra plates from the early phase of their rule.

Their effort of infiltration in Vaṅga and Samataṭa is rather shown by the donees to whom they made donations. In the early phase, land plots were given to individual brahmaṇas by Śricandra. The donee of his Dhulla plate was śāntivaṇika Vyāsagāgaśarman, who performed a ritual of adbhuta-sānti

133 Supra, pp.172-175.
134 Supra, pp.171-172.
135 EDEP, p.73, ll.41·42, p.75, 45. Another land donated together is Campāvāṇi-bhūmi measured 5 3/4 dronas, belonging to Phullāhaḍā. Ibid., p.73, l.37
136 Ibid., p.76, reverse l.11.

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at the four times of homa sacrifices held by the king.\textsuperscript{137} This is a propitiatory rite against evil omens.\textsuperscript{138} Sāntivārika is a brāhmaṇa priest specialised in such propitiatory rites. Similarly, another sāntivārika named Pitavāsaguptaśarman, who participated in a koṭihoma sacrifice of the king, was granted a land plot in the Rampal copper plate inscription.\textsuperscript{139} Kotihoma is a kind of navagrahahoma, propitiatory rites to pacify bad effects of planets.\textsuperscript{140} The grants to them can be interpreted as rewards for their ritual services to the king. In the Madanpur plate, the king is specially mentioned as 'born in the same country' as the donee, brāhmaṇa Śukrādeva.\textsuperscript{141} In these cases, donees have a personal association with the king through the ritual service to him or the shared origin with him. The imposition of such brāhmaṇas as donees may have contributed to the extension of the influence of the king in the rural society.

The donations made by Laḍahacandra show another kind of effort made by the Candras. In both of his grants, a land plot and three villages are donated to a deity named Laḍahamādhava. This deity, a form of Kṛṣṇa clearly named after the king, was installed by him at Paṭīkeraka or Paṭīkerā,\textsuperscript{142} corresponding to the present Mainamati area. As both plates of Laḍahacandra and a later copper plate mentioning the deity\textsuperscript{143} were discovered from a site called Charpatra Mura, located among the ruins on Lalmai hill range, this site may represent the temple of the deity constructed

\begin{footnotes}
\item[137] EI, 33, p.139, ll.33-36.
\item[138] HD, 5, pt.2, pp.761-763.
\item[139] EI, 12, p.139, l.27-p.140, l.29.
\item[140] HD, 5, pt.1, p.290.
\item[141] 'ekadēsa-bhavas=tasmai smita-pūrvv-āhhibhāśīne śrimate Śukrādevāya Śricandra-npaltir=dda*]dda' EI, 28, p.58, ll.35-36.
\item[142] 'asmat-kārīta-śrī-Ladahamādhava-bhaṭṭārakāya', EDEP, p.74, 1.53: 'śrī-Paṭīkeraka 'smat-kārīta-śrīLadahamādhava-bhaṭṭārakāya', Ibid., p.76, reverse l.20.
\item[143] Mainamati CPI of Viradharadeva, year 15, JAIH, 14, pp.17-28.
\end{footnotes}
by Ladahacandra. This activity can be interpreted as the establishment of a temple of the royal tutelary deity at the site of the prominent religious centre of Samata, which has enjoyed royal patronage since the seventh century. The establishment of the deity indicates not only the shift of religious allegiance of the king, but also his intention to make a religious centre strongly connected with the kingship. The repeated donations of villages to the deity show his effort to extend influence in the rural society through this newly established temple. His son Govindacandra donated a land plot to the deity Naṭeśvara in his Mainamati plate. His personal allegiance to Śiva is indicated by the fact that the donation was made in the name of the deity, though he was still described as a devout Buddhist. As this plate was also recovered from Charpatra Mura, this deity may have been installed in the same temple. It shows the continuance of the temple as an abode of royal tutelary deity and of its important position as major recipient of land grants, through which the Candra kings tried to extend their influence.

While kingship and its administrative apparatus were trying to infiltrate into and extend their control over the rural society, another type of political authority gained prominence in this period, especially in the sub-region of Varendra. They were subordinate rulers generally called sāmantas. While they served the king as a part of his administrative

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144 A. Imam, *Excavations at Manamati: An Exploratory Study*, Dhaka, 2000, pp.91-98. Ladahacandra is said to have 'made' (exactly caused it to be made) the deity, not the temple. However, this is a usual expression to describe the construction of a temple and Imam's reservation about the construction of the temple by the king is unnecessary. *Ibid.*, p.96
145 Though he is still described as a devout Buddhist (*parama-saugata*), the donations are made in the name of Vāsudeva, not Buddha. *EDEP*, p.74, l.54; p.76, reverse l.21.
146 *EDEP*, pp.77-81.
147 *Ibid.*, p.80, l.33; l.47.
apparatus especially in military roles, they had their own agenda and stakes in the rural society. Their activities become visible in their own inscriptions and the copper plates recording donations petitioned by them.

The genealogies recorded in these inscriptions show their multiple origins. The Inscription of Pahila, discovered from Nimgacchi thana in Sirajganj district of Bangladesh and presently kept in the Bangladesh National Museum, records the construction of a Vaišnava matha by this subordinate ruler of Devapāla with a genealogy of his family, which includes a progenitor and three generations.148 The progenitor Pañcahūti is described as a ruler (adhipa) of Bhaṭṭala-maṇḍala, which may be located at the south-eastern corner of Varendra, the provenance of the present inscription.149 Karkkarāja, who was born in his family, is described as a chief (nāyaka) of Bhaṭṭala-deśa and a friend of king Yaśovarman, who may be identical with the famous king of Kanyakubja, who made an expedition to eastern India in the former half of the eighth century.150 The position of his son Śivarudra is not clearly mentioned.151 Pahila, the son of Śivarudra born from Dottebhaṭṭārikā, is said to be burdened with the kingdom by Devapāla.152 The titles adhipa and nāyaka wielded by Pañcahūti and Karkkarāja vaguely indicate that they were local chiefs of Bhaṭṭala maṇḍala or deśa. This can be considered as a case in which a family of local chieftains first affiliated to Yaśovarman and then to the Pālas.

The Jagajjibanpur plate of Mahendrapāla contains the genealogy of

149 Ibid., p.389, vv.4-5, ll.5-6.
150 Ibid., v.6, ll.6-7. For Yaśovarman's expedition to East India, see D. C. Sircar, The Kanyakubja-Gauḍa Struggle: From the Sixth to the Twelfth Century A. D., Calcutta, 1985, p.25.
152 Ibid., v.9, ll.9-11.
mahāsenāpati Vajradeva, who is a petitioner of the donation. It starts with Devaradeva, the grandfather of Vajradeva, who is said to have been born in the great family, without any clear mention of his position.\textsuperscript{153} His son Nārāyaṇadeva was appointed as a ruler (adhipati) of Daruddaraṇī- maṇḍala by king Dharmapāla.\textsuperscript{154} Vajradeva, his son from Kalyāṇadevi, is described as a strong warrior\textsuperscript{155} and his position as a general of Mahendrapāla is clearly indicated by the mention of him with the title in another part of the plate. This can be a case in which a member of the local notable family acquired the position of a subordinate ruler through the designation by the Pālas and improved their position through military service.

The Mohipur grant of Gopāla II records the genealogy of mahāsainyapati Kokkāka, who made a petition similar to Vajradeva’s. Their genealogy starts with mention of their family as sāmanta family (vamsa), which was a carrier of the burden of the kingdom of the Samataṭa kings.\textsuperscript{156} As Cāmuṇḍadatta, grandfather of Kokkāka, is said to have been born in this family,\textsuperscript{157} they had already served the king of Samataṭa at least in the generation of the father of Cāmuṇḍadatta. If we collate this fact with the chronology of the kings of Samataṭa, their overlord might have been either the Khadgas or the Devas, who flourished from the second half of the seventh century to the end of the ninth century. Cāmuṇḍadatta had a son named Vapyadatta, who got married with Cundādevi, daughter of Pārāsadatta.\textsuperscript{158} Kokkāka was born to them. It might have been he, who started the relation with the Pālas, as his service to Śūrapāla is described by the expression that he was the bridge over the ocean of battles for the king.\textsuperscript{159} The description

\textsuperscript{153} Pratnna Samiksha, 6-8, p.64, vv.22-23, ll.54-56.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., p.65, v.27, ll.61-62.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., vv.30-32, ll.65-69.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., v.28, ll.62-63.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., v.29, ll.63-64.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., vv.31-33, ll.64-67.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., vv.34-35, ll.67-68.
that the king bestowed on him a golden cudgel (*ujvala·hema·danda*) may refer to his nomination to *mahāsainyapati*.\(^{160}\) This can be a case in which a *sāmanta* family based in Samataṭa shifted to Varendra for some reason and became the subordinate of the Pālas. Though it is possible that the kings based in Samataṭa expanded their dominance to Varendra and local chiefs of the sub-region became their subordinates, there is no positive evidence to support it.

The Badal Inscription of Guravamisra, which mentions Nārāyaṇapāla and belongs to the end of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century, records the deeds of a *brahmana* family, of which five generations were associated with six Pāla kings.\(^{161}\) They served the kings mainly as political advisors and sometimes as priests or generals. About Garga, the first member of the family to serve the Pāla kings, it is said that Dharmapāla was made the lord of all the quarters by him.\(^{162}\) His son Darbhapaṇi is described with the expression that Devapāla made whole the earth tribute-offering (*karada*), i.e. subordinate, by his policy.\(^{163}\) It is even said that the king came to the gate of his residence for consultation without regarding proper time.\(^{164}\) His son Someśvara is described as a friend of *parameśvara*, denoting the Pāla king, probably Devapāla.\(^{165}\) Gauḍēśvara, who may be Mahendrapāla, is said to have held the earth with Utkala-kula uprooted, the pride of Hūṇas removed, the pride of Dravīḍas and Gūrjaras suppressed, after paying attention to the intelligence of Kedāramiśra, his son.\(^{166}\) It is also said that Śūrapāla attended sacrifices held by him.\(^{167}\) His son Guravamiśra's


\(^{161}\) *SI*, 2, pp.87-91.


\(^{163}\) *Ibid.*, p.88, vv.4-5, ll.3-5.

\(^{164}\) *Ibid.*, v.6, ll.5-7.

\(^{165}\) *Ibid.*, v.8, l.8.


\(^{167}\) *Ibid.*, v.15, ll.15-17.
association with Gopāla II is implied in the expression ‘causing pleasure to Gopāla’. Apart from being credited with eloquence and knowledge of Āgama, policy, astrology and Itihāsa-purāṇa, he is also described as skilful in both discussion and war. He also functioned as a messenger (dūtaka) in the Bhagalpur copper plate inscription of Nārāyanapāla. This can be considered as a case of a brāhmaṇa family having acquired their position as strong subordinate rulers in Varendra through their long term association with the Pāla kings.

The Bhaturiya inscription of Yaśodāsa, which mentions Rājyapāla and belongs to the middle of the tenth century, contains a genealogy of his family. First, it mentions a place called Aṭamūla, a new settlement derived from Vṛhaddhāta, as an original place (janma-bhū) of the Dāsas. Then it mentions Malhadāsa born in this family and his son Sūrādāsa known as an abode of heroism. It is said that his son Saṅghadāsa, whose generosity is poetically described, got married with Sarasvatī, daughter of Sūryakūṇḍa and Dūrvvāyi. Yaśodāsa was born to them and king Rājyapāla made him his councillor (mantri). He was promoted to a minister (saciva) and then tantrādhikārin by the same king. After the description of submission of various ethnic groups to the king during Yaśodāsa’s tenure,

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168 ‘Gopāla-priya-kaṇakam’, Ibid., v.16, l.18. This verse is a double entendre, which means ‘causing pleasure to cowherds’, when it is applied to Viṣṇu-Puruṣottama, to whom Guravamisra is compared.
170 Ibid., p.90, vv.,20, 22, 24, ll.20-21, 22-23, 25.
171 SI, 2, p.85, l.53.
172 EL, 33, pp.150-154.
174 Ibid., v.3, ll.3-4.
175 Ibid., p.154, v.4, l.5.
176 Ibid., v.5, ll.5-7.
177 Ibid., vv.6-7, ll.7-10.
178 Ibid., v.8, ll.10-12. The groups mentioned here are Mlecchas, Aṅgas, Kālingas, Vāṅgas, Odras, Pāṇḍyas, Kārṇātas, Lātās, Suhmas, Gurjaras, Kritas and Cinas.
it is said that his fame spreaded all over the world by the excavation of ponds, Vedic sacrifices, construction of temples and mathas, knowledge and sattras and so on.\textsuperscript{179} There is nothing to indicate that they were brähmana family, while Yaśodāsa was appointed to the positions which required intellectual qualification and were often occupied by brähmanas. Therefore, the Dāsas may have been a family of non-brähmana literate group located in the rural society. Their rise may have accrued from the marriage alliance with Sūryakūṭa, who is especially mentioned with the name of his wife, their association with the Pāla king, and the religious and public activities in the locality. The case of Dākkadāsa, who is the engraver of the Mirzapur plate of Śūrapāla and the Mohipur plate of Gopāla II, and affixed with the title sāmanta in the former,\textsuperscript{180} can also be categorised as a case of a non-brähmana literate having acquired the status of a subordinate ruler.

Thus these cases show that subordinate rulers or sāmantas are a composite group with various origins, which includes local chiefs, local notables, brähmanas and non-brähmana literate groups. Chiefs of forest regions are also included in this category, as ātavikas, whose help Rāmapāla asked, are explained as ātāviya-sāmantas in the commentary of the Rāmacarita of Sandhyākaranandin.\textsuperscript{181} Some of the sāmantas who constituted Rāmapāla's army are also described as such in the same text.\textsuperscript{182}

What is conspicuous among the activity of these sāmantas in this period is the construction of religious institutions, which is often followed by the petition for donation of villages. As is mentioned above, the inscription of Pāhila records the construction of a Vaiśṇava matha by him.\textsuperscript{183}

\textsuperscript{179} Ibid., vv.9-10, ll.12-14.
\textsuperscript{180} ‘utkīrṇam=idaṁ śāśanāṁ sāmanta-Dākkadāsa-Vairocanadāsabhyām’, EI, 40, p.16, l.72.
\textsuperscript{181} Rāmacarita (hereafter RO), 1.43.
\textsuperscript{182} Viraguna is described as 'lion' (kanthirava) of Kotosāvī and Lakṣmīśūra is called 'samast-ātavika-sāmanta-cakra-cūḍāmaṇi'. Ibid., 2.5, commentary.
\textsuperscript{183} G. Bhattacharya, op. cit., p.389, l.12-p.390, l.14, v.11.
In the Khalimpur copper plate inscription, mahāśaṁantādhipati Nārāyaṇavarman petitioned Dharmapāla to give four villages to the deity Nunna-Nārāyaṇa-bhattāraka, who was installed by Nārāyaṇavarman at the temple constructed by him at Šubhasthali, and attendants of the deity (pādamūla) like Lāṭa brāhmaṇa priests protecting him, for the worship and attendance.\textsuperscript{184}

In similar terms, the Jagajjibanpur and the Mohipur plates record donations to Buddhist vihāras constructed by generals. In the former, Vajradeva petitioned Mahendrapāla to give Nandadirghika udranga to the Buddhist vihāra constructed by him in the locality.\textsuperscript{185} In the latter, Kokkāka petitioned Gopāla II to give village Kaṅkāvāsaka to the vihāra constructed by him in this village.\textsuperscript{186} In both cases, donees are described as the Buddha, the abode (sthāna) of all Dharmanetris beginning with Prajñāpāramitā, group (gana) of non-returning (avaivarttika) Bodhisattvas, and the bhikṣu-samgha as an embodiment of the eight great persons (aṣṭa-mahā-puruṣa).\textsuperscript{187} The purposes of donations are listed as worship and copying of scriptures (pūjana·lekhana)\textsuperscript{188} or offerings and rituals (pūjā·bali·caru·satra·nivedya),\textsuperscript{189} repairs of broken parts (khanda·sphūtita·samskāra), and provision of clothing, food, bedding, seat, preparation for disease,\textsuperscript{190} medicine and utensils.\textsuperscript{191}

\textsuperscript{184} \textit{SI}, 2, p.68, ll.49·52.

\textsuperscript{185} \textit{Pratna Samiksha}, 6·8, p.63, l.39·p.64, l.44. The site of this monastery was excavated at Jagajjibanpur, the find spot of the inscription. Amal Roy, 'Nandadirgha-vihara: A Newly Discovered Buddhist Monastery at Jagajjibanpur, West Bengal', G. Sengupta and S. Panja (eds), \textit{Archaeology of Eastern India: New Perspectives}, Kolkata, 2002, pp.557·611.

\textsuperscript{186} Mohipur CPI, ll.47·51.

\textsuperscript{187} \textit{Pratna Samiksha}, 6·8, p.64, ll.41·42; Mohipur CPI, ll.48·49.

\textsuperscript{188} \textit{Pratna Samiksha}, 6·8, p.64, ll.42·43.

\textsuperscript{189} Mohipur CPI, l.49.

\textsuperscript{190} It means a cloth kept for defraying the cost of medicine, according to I·ch'ing's account. J. Takakusu (tr.) \textit{A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (AD 671·695) by I·tsing}, New Delhi, 1998 (Reprint), p.55.

\textsuperscript{191} \textit{Pratna Samiksha}, 6·8, p.64, l.43; Mohipur CPI, ll.49·50.
What is important is the additional clause that others wished by the petitioner would also be given the donation, in the ratio decided by him, for the unobjectionable enjoyment.\textsuperscript{192} This clause shows the involvement of petitioners with the management of donated property and their following influence over it. As they could construct vihāras at these localities, these places may have been somehow under their control. However, the construction of vihāras and donations to them may have allowed the petitioners to extend their influence with the authority of the religious institutions, with which they have personal connections. The vihāra of Jagajjibianpur was known as ‘Nandadirghi-vihāra caused to make by Vajradeva’, according to the legend of sealings excavated there.\textsuperscript{193} On the other hand, they could secure for these properties the status of sāsana land, immune to revenue charges and other interferences by the king, through such manoeuvres. In other words, they could legitimately encroach upon the authority and power of the king through the construction of vihāras and the petition of grants. The case of the Khalimpur plate can also be understood in this manner.

Such manoeuvres by sāmantas were not always successful. The case of the Bhaturiya inscription is an example. According to this inscription, Yaśodāsa constructed a temple complex of Śiva and installed a liṅga at the main high building (prāśāda) surrounded by eight shrines (sura-mandira).\textsuperscript{194} Then Rājyapāla gave village Madhusrava to the deity after withholding the tax (nikara) of one hundred purāṇas.\textsuperscript{195} As is explained above, this is a case of kara-sāsana and thus the grant is not accompanied with full immunity. Though it is not clearly mentioned, Yaśodāsa may have petitioned the king

\textsuperscript{192} Pratna Samiksha, 6-8, p.64, ll.43-44; Mohipur CPI, ll.50-51.
\textsuperscript{194} EI, 33, p.154, v.11, ll.14-16.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., v.12, ll.16-17.
for the bestowal of a sāsana land with issue of a copper plate grant. The fact that this inscription was written on the stone slab which may have been fixed on the aforementioned temple and could not be issued as a copper plate inscription shows a 'failure' on the side of Yaśodāsa. It may also show the enhancement of the Pāla power vis-à-vis their sāmantas, as a result of the consolidation of their power basis through infiltration into the rural society facilitated by the land measurement and assessment observable in their inscriptions from the reign of Gopāla II.

These activities by sāmantas show some similarity to the donations recorded in the copper plate inscriptions from Samatā and Śrihaṭṭa in the seventh century, in which subordinate rulers constructed some religious institutions, settled a group of brāhmaṇas and petitioned land grants on behalf of them. In those cases, however, these institutions were constructed in forest tracts and what is implied is the intention of subordinate rulers to expand his influence over newly reclaimed land. The cases discussed above occurred in well-settled areas and were connected with the infiltration of sāmanta power into the rural society on the one hand, and the encroachment by this power upon the authority of the king on the other.

Thus infiltration into rural society by two kinds of political authorities, namely, kingship with its administrative apparatus and subordinate rulers, are discussed. What follows is a discussion about another outside authority, that is, religious institutions beginning with Buddhist monasteries and their nexus with these political authorities.

196 Supra, pp.137-141.
197 Supra, pp.141-142.
3. Buddhist Monasteries and Other Religious Institutions: their Nexus with Political Authorities

Emergence of Buddhist monasteries as large scale landholders was well attested in the previous period, especially by the account of I·ching. The continuance of their status as such is shown by the scale of gigantic Buddhist monuments constructed or renovated in this period. In Bihar, Mahābodhi temple in present Bodhgaya and mahāvihāra at Nalanda continued to be the important Buddhist centres, while Vikramāśila mahāvihāra was said to have been constructed by Dharmapāla in this period. In Bengal, Somapura mahāvihāra identified with the present site of Paharpur, Patālikera mahāvihāra identified with the Buddhist complex around Lalmai hill range, and recently excavated Jagaddala mahāvihāra are the large scale Buddhist monasteries prominent in this period and still identifiable till date. Apart from them, moderate scale monasteries are known from either excavations or mentions in inscriptions.

Their landholdings may have partly accrued from royal grants, as were the cases of shrines and monasteries of Nalanda, and small scale

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198 Supra, pp.152-155.
199 For these sites, see D. R. Patil, The Antiquarian Remains in Bihar, Patna, 1963, pp.59-70, 300-335.
200 The excavated site at Antichak, which is a large scale Buddhist monastery with cruciform temple at its centre like Paharpur, is identifiable with this famous vihāra. For the site of Antichak, see B. K. Jamuar, The Ancient Temples of Bihar, New Delhi, 1985, pp.86-91.
monasteries built by generals in Varendra, who petitioned grants to the Pāla kings.205 The unpublished copper plate inscription of Dharmapāla, found in Murshidabad district, seems to record a land grant to Somapura mahāvihāra petitioned by mahāsāmanta Bhadranāga.206 The landholdings of Buddhist vihāras in Śrīhatta and Samatāta are indicated by mentions of ratnatraya-bhūmi in the Paschimbhag plate of Śricandra and the granted land (śāsana-bhūmi) belonging to Lokanātha-bhaṭṭāraka in the second Mainamati plate of Ladahacandra.207 The case of donation to a Buddhist monastery is also attested by the metal vase inscription pertaining to Harikela.208

The mutual connection of these Buddhist monasteries through the movement of monks is indicated by some inscriptions. In one Buddha image inscription from Bodhgaya, belonging to the tenth century, the donor Viryendra is described as an eminent Mahāyānist from Samatāta and an elder (sthavira) belonging to Somapura mahāvihāra.209 The fact that a monk from Samatāta, belonging to the mahāvihāra in Varendra, came to and made donation at Mahābodhi in Magadha shows the mobility of Buddhist monks and the network connecting these monasteries, which facilitates such movements. This network may have covered vast areas, as names inscribed on the metal images and other objects discovered from Kurkihar in Gaya district, Bihar, dated from the ninth to the twelfth century, contain at least thirteen people, mostly monks, from Kāśi as donors.210 One of them was a

205 Jagajjibanpur CPI of Mahendrapāla, year 7, Pratna Samīkṣha, 6·8, pp.58·70; Mohipur CPI of Gopāla II, year 3.
206 G. Bhattacharya, 2000, p.442.
207 EDEP, p.68, l.54: p.75, reverse ll.8-9.
209 śri-Samatātikah pravara·mahāyāna·yāyinah śrimat·Somapura·mahāvihāriya·vinayavit·sthavira·Viryyendrasya' SI, 2, p.59, pt.2, ll.1·3.
210 For these objects and their inscriptions, see P. L. Gupta (ed.), Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities (Stone Sculptures, Metal Images.
sthavira of Kāñci who originated from Kerala·desa. 211 It shows the presence of a Buddhist monastery in Kāñci which attracted a monk from Kerala, and the network which connected this monastery with a monastery at present Kurkihar. The presence of a monk from Sindhu at a vihāra in present Bihar is also attested by the inscriptions of two Buddha statues kept in Indian Museum. 212 The existence of such networks between Buddhist monasteries in the seventh century is attested by I·ching. 213 The evidence cited here indicate their continuance in this period.

Apart from these Buddhist monasteries, other religious institutions like temples and mathas dedicated to particular Brahmanical deities became prominent in this period. 214 The donation and social reorganisation by king Śricandra in a vast tract of Śrīhaṭṭa centred around nine mathas is already discussed above. 215 The construction of Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva temples by subordinate rulers and donation of villages to them are also mentioned. 216 Ladahacandra and Govindacandra are known for the construction of the temple of tutelary deities and donations to them. 217

The Bangarh inscription belonging to the time of Nayapāla, the middle of the eleventh century, contains minute information about activities of ascetics centred around a matha complex. 218 It records the making of an

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211 'Kāñci·sthā·Avalokatasiṅgha·devadharmmo=ya[m*] Kerala·desasya', Ibid., p.156 no.165.
212 The Indian Museum Image Inscription of the time of Śūrapāla, year 3, JASB, NS, 4, no.3, 1908, pp.107-108.
213 Supra, pp.155·156.
214 For the activity, especially spread of the mathas in the early medieval period, see A. Bhattacharyya, 'The Mathas of Eastern India in the Early Medieval Period', idem, Selected Essays, Kolkata, 2004, pp.13-22.
215 Paschimbhag CPI, EDEP, pp.63·69, Supra, pp.172·175.
217 Mainamati CPIs of Ladahacandra, EDEP, pp.69·75, 75·76; Mainamati CPI of Govindacandra, Ibid., pp.77·81. Supra, pp.187·188.
218 JAIH, 13, pp.34·56.
image and eulogy of Mūrṭtīśiva, an ascetic of Śaiva Mattamayūra sect, arranged by Rūpasiva, his fellow disciple, with deeds of ascetics belonging to this religious order. The genealogy of the ascetics starts with Vidyāśiva from a matha in Golagi, which claims its descent from Ṛṣi Durvāśas. His disciple Dharmasiva constructed a temple of Trilocana-guru (Śiva) in Vārānasī. Indraśiva, his disciple, was donated a temple and matha by king Mahipāla I at present Bangarh. Indraśiva made donations which can be categorised as sixteen mahādānas. His disciple Sarvasiva was the preceptor (guru) of Nayapāla and ceded this position to Mūrṭtīśiva, his brother and disciple on the occasion of his renunciation. Mūrṭtīśiva is credited with constructions of temples, tanks and gardens, probably in the precincts of the matha complex. He is also credited with performance of the gift of Tulāpurusa and the addition of a room on the roof (vadabhā) to the main temple. This main temple of Bhāvani is said to be attended by one thousand beauties (rāmā). Rūpasiva is described as a disciple of Sarvasiva and a friend (literally second life) of Mūrṭtīśiva, and credited with the revival of the doctrine of Caṇḍī-guru (Śiva) and defeat of eminent discussants in many places, through which he achieved a praise of king Bhoja, who seems to be the famous contemporary king of Dhārā.

The descriptions in this inscription show affluence of ascetics and their matha complex, which is shown by their generous donations, extensive construction works and many female attendants, who may be devadāsīs.

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219 Ibid., p.43, v.5, ll.4-5 (Durvāsas); p.44, v.6, ll.5-6 (Golagi matha); v.7, ll.6-7 (Vidyāśiva).
220 Ibid., v.8, ll.7-8.
221 Ibid., v.9, ll.8-9.
222 Ibid., p.45, v.11, ll.10-11.
223 Ibid., vv12, 14, ll.11-12, 13-14.
224 Ibid., p.46, vv.16-18, ll.15-18.
225 Ibid., p.47, vv.23, 25, ll.22-23, 24-25.
226 Ibid., p.48, v.27, ll.17-18.
227 Ibid., vv.28-29, ll.28-30.
attached to the main temple. It is probable that their wealth accrued from the landholdings as a result of their association with the Pāla kings as royal preceptors. On the other hand, the itinerary of these ascetics shows their mobility comparable to that of Buddhist monks.228

The close connection of such religious institutions and the temporal power is shown by the involvement of kingship with their foundations and the vigorous donations to them.

As to the Pāla kings, their association with the major Buddhist monasteries are well-known. Dharmapāla is credited with foundations of mahāvihāras at Somapura and Vikrāmaśīla by later Tibetan chroniclers like Tāranātha.229 At least his association with foundation of the former is attested by the inscription of clay sealings discovered at Paharpur.230 His support of the mahāvihāra at Nalanda is partly shown by his copper plate inscription excavated from the site.231 On the other hand, later kings of the dynasty were involved not only with Buddhist monasteries but also with other kinds of religious institutions. The Mirzapur copper plate inscription of Šūrapāla records the donation of four villages in Nagarābhukti, located in North Bihar, to the temple of Māhaṭeśvara constructed by his mother Māhātā, and the congregation (parīṣad) of Śaiva ācāryas in Vārānasi.232 The Bhagalpur plate of Nārāyaṇapāla records the donation of a village in the

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228 For the spread of this sect to Rāḍha, Āndhra and South India, see A. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., pp.16-17.
229 D. P. Chattopadhyaya (ed.), Lama Chimpa and A. Chattopadhyaya (trs), Tāranātha’s History of Buddhism in India, Delhi, 1990, pp.266-267, 274-275. The genealogy of the Pālas recorded by Tāranātha is confused. Devapāla is described as the son of Gopāla and the grandfather of Dharmapāla. He is also credited with the construction of a vihāra at Somapuri.
230 ‘śrī·Somapure śrī·Dharmapaladeva·mahāvihāry·ārya·bhikṣu·saṅghasya’, MASI, 55, p.90, P. 304.
231 EI, 23, pp.290-292.
232 EI, 40, pp.4-16.
same bhukti to the temple of Śiva constructed by the king and the parisad of Pāṣupata ācaryas.\textsuperscript{233} The personal association of kings Mahipāla I and Nayapāla with the matha of Mattamayūra sect and its ascetics as royal preceptors are already described above. The Siyan stone inscription of the time of Nayapāla seems to describe the vigorous temple constructions by the king at Devikota (Koṭivarṣa, present Bangarh),\textsuperscript{234} Gaṅgaśāgarā\textsuperscript{235} and other places, though its fragmentary nature does not allow the precise identification and location of the temples. The foundation of a temple of the tutelary deity by Laḍahacandra at Mainamati was discussed above.

The relation between these religious institutions and political authorities can be described as symbiotic. As was discussed above, the authority of donees of land grants was enhanced in this period through the comprehensive privileges conferred on them.\textsuperscript{236} Among these donees, religious institutions were large scale landholders who had many villages under their jurisdiction. Accordingly, they were nodes of the network which cover those villages. The close connection with the religious institutions would enable the king to extend his claim as a legitimate ruler through this network. On the other hand, the enhancement of the authority of donees was enabled by the disruption of the power of the rural society, especially its notables, and the infiltration of the political authority into it, which was simultaneously proceeding. Needless to say, the dependence of these institutions on the patronage by temporal powers through donations of land plots and villages are amply evidenced by the cases discussed above. Thus the king and the religious institutions were mutually dependent in their infiltration into the rural society.

For sāmantas, their connection with the religious institutions gave

\textsuperscript{233} SI, 2, pp.80-86.
\textsuperscript{234} EI, 39, p.53, l.18.
\textsuperscript{235} Ibid., p.54, l.25, p.55, l.28-29.
\textsuperscript{236} Supra, pp.166-168, 171-172.
them another kind of leverage. As was discussed above, the construction of religious institutions and the petition of land and village donations to them enabled sāmantas to legitimately encroach upon the authority of the king.\(^{237}\)

On the other hand, they were also party to this nexus of political and religious authorities with their shared interest in the rural society.

Thus we may conclude this nexus of temporal and religious powers as the substance of the outside authority which was infiltrating into the rural society. While it could contain elements of rivalry and power struggle, as is implied from the activity of sāmantas vis-à-vis their overlords, or possible competition for the royal patronage among religious institutions, this nexus seems to have facilitated infiltration of the outside authority as a whole.

4. Attempt at Social Reorganisation: Representation of Homogeneous Agrarian Society in the Kṛṣiparāśara

The discussions made above show two problems which the rural society confronted in this period. One is the intensification of social stratification within. Another is the infiltration of the outside authority, which went side by side with the disruption of the power of rural notables. The reaction of the rural society to this situation took the form of social reorganisation in two ways. The first of them is an attempt to keep cohesion of the rural society, especially among peasant householders. This attempt is discernible in the Kṛṣiparāśara, a text on agriculture, composed in the middle of the eleventh century, most probably in the Bengal region.\(^{238}\)

The rural society depicted in the text is an agrarian society almost exclusively constituted by cultivators without clear internal differences. Almost all the instructions, except ones for cowherds (gopāla) during the cattle festival (goparva / gopūjā), are given to cultivators (krṣaka / karṣaka /

\(^{237}\) Supra, pp.193-196.

\(^{238}\) For a minute discussion of the date of the text, see L. Gopal, 'The Date of the Kṛṣi-Parasara', *JIH*, Golden Jubilee Volume, 1973, pp.151-168.
They are supposed to have first-hand engagement in agricultural operations, probably with family labour in moderate scale. Cooperative works are prescribed for the assemblage of a plough, making of a ritual post (medhi), and alluded to for sowing. Cultivators are recognised as a collective entity, that is, people bound by common interests, who share both wellness and misfortune. There is no reference to the subordinate agricultural labourers or their deployment by other cultivators in this text, while the Kāśyapiyakṛṣisūkti, another Sanskrit agricultural text probably belonging to the South Indian tradition, refers to dependants (anujivika), attendants (anucārīda) and servants (bhṛtya) as agricultural labourers differentiated from cultivators (kṛṣivala) in the context of harvest and threshing. The image of the rural society in the Kṛṣiparāśara gives a strong impression of homogeneity.

Arbitrariness of this image of the homogeneous agrarian society is clear when we compare it with the rural society described in the other kinds of sources like contemporary inscriptions and anthologies of Sanskrit poems. As I have discussed above, the stratification of the rural society was intensifying in this period. The presence of dominant landholders like mahattamas and uttamas and people of the lowest rank like medas, andhras and candālas is attested by the Pāla copper plate inscriptions. The agricultural labourers called pāmaras are also mentioned in the poems

240 Ibid., pp.160-162.
241 Kṛṣiparāśara (hereafter KP) vv.119, 215.
243 Ibid.
245 ‘taddaṇḍakartanaṁ kāryaṁ samkulādayaiḥ kṛṣivalaiḥ/ anujivikavargaśca bhṛtyairanyāstathā naraḥ/’, Kāśyapiyakṛṣisūkti, v.480: ‘sthāpanam khalabhūmiṣu bhṛtyānucāridabhī/ trayām vā paṅcakam tatra dinānām khalabhūmiṣu/’, Ibid., v.484.
belonging to this period, included in the *Subhāsitāratnakośa* and the *Saduktikarnāmṛta*. On the other hand, two occasions mentioned in the *Kṛṣiparāśara* reveal inconsistency with the image of a homogeneous agrarian society depicted in other parts. They are the cattle festival (*goparva*) and *pūṣyayātra*.

Cattle festival is prescribed for the health of cattle on the first day of the month Kārttika. In this festival, cowherds play a leading role in the procession of the leader bull (*vṛśam mukhyam*) through the village, with their bodies and cattle well decorated and being accompanied with music. Then a cultivator puts oil mixed with turmeric on the body of cattle and gathers with other cultivators. The former part is an injunction for cowherds, unlike other parts of the text in which cultivators are agents of action even in matters concerning cattle. The injunction for a cultivator just after it, especially a reference to the gathering of cultivators, indicates that this is an occasion in which cowherds and cultivators interact with each other and reconfirm their relation annually. The leading role of cowherds can be interpreted as a temporary inversion of hierarchy or power relations. On the other hand, these verses remind me of the total absence of injunctions on pasturage in which cowherds would have appeared. This absence is understandable if we consider the character of the text as a manual for cultivators. However, it seems that the relation with cowherds was so important that the composer still could not avoid prescribing the occasion to reconfirm it. Anyway, these verses denote the existence of a group which the image of a homogeneous agrarian society cannot sufficiently explain.

*Pūṣyayātra* is another festival prescribed in the month of Pauṣa before harvesting and threshing. It should be 'mutually' performed by people

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246 Supra, pp.179·180.
247 *KP*, vv.99·104.
near the agricultural field. The first procedure prescribed in the text is a feast in which all the people feed each other special cuisine prepared from various kinds of materials including fish and meat. As is shown by reference to 'all the people' (janāḥ sarve) and the use of the verb 'feed' (bhōjayaḥ), it is a communal feast attended by all the local population. The use of 'all the people' instead of cultivators, in contrast to the other parts of the text, indicates incorporation of various social groups apart from cultivators in this category. It is possible that this festival was a special occasion in which restrictions on social interaction were temporarily eschewed, or at least the composer constructed its image in this way.

The next procedure is besmearing of each other with sandal paste, catuhsama (unguent of sandal, agallochum, saffron and musk) and oil boiled with good perfume, and making each other bite agreeable betel leaf scented with camphor and filled with incense. The great festival of dance and music follows them. A particularly important point is that these acts are prescribed to be done to 'each other' or 'mutually' (anonyam). According to the context, it means that all the people, including a variety of social groups, intermingle and perform such merrymaking all together. If we consider the fact that it is supposed to be held before harvest, which needs the collaboration of the rural population, Puṣyayāṭrā can be interpreted as an occasion in which the cohesion of rural society is reconfirmed through gathering and temporary discarding of differences amongst all the social groups.

The intention of reconfirming cohesion or oneness is connoted by the incantation, whose recital is prescribed after that: 'In the field with yet harvested paddy, she who is revered by us all, the giver of welfare

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249 'akhaṇḍite tato dhānye pauṣe māsi śubhe dine/ puṣyayāṭrām janāḥ kuryuryanonyam kṣetrasannidhe/, KP, v.221.
250 Ibid., vv.222-224. For a translation see Furui op. cit., pp.167-168.
251 KP, vv.225-228. For a translation, see Furui, op. cit., p.168.

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(Subhapradā) must protect us as the result of Puṣyayātrā. All of them, who are opposing us by action, mind and word, must be stilled as the result of Puṣyayātrā. Increase of paddy, increase of fame, welfare of wife and son, increase of the honour of king, growth of cattle, increase of mantra and śāsana (land?), increase of wealth, day and night, always they should be to us as long as the year has not completed.252 The use of 'us' in this incantation shows group consciousness to be shared by all the participants. In the case of Puṣyayātrā also, the allusion to the local population, which may cover wider social range, contradicts the image of a homogeneous agrarian society. Again, the importance of such an occasion may not have allowed composer of the text to ignore it. Due importance put on Puṣyayātrā by him is attested by the statement that Parāśara made this festival for the welfare of the whole world or people (sarvaloka) in the ancient time.253 On the other hand, his emphasis on keeping cohesion can lead us to an answer to the question why the image of homogeneous agrarian society was constructed in the text.

Amongst the concluding remarks on Puṣyayātrā, there is a verse which runs as follows: 'The people proud of wealth do not perform Puṣyayātrā. For them, there is no cessation of obstacles. Then how there can be any pleasure (for them) in the year?'254 It shows the fact that the composer recognised the social differentiation in the contemporary rural society, which is discernible in other sources, and interpreted it as a result of accumulation of wealth by some members. It also shows his disagreement with such a tendency. The image of homogeneous agrarian society can be interpreted as the social norm constructed by him due to his strong inclination towards social cohesion and his intention to gloss over diversity and divisiveness of the social reality. Both composer and intended audience of the text may have

252 KP, vv.229-232.
253 'hitāya sarvalokānām puṣyayātrā manoharā/ purā parāśareṇeyam kṛtā sarvārthasādhini//, Ibid., v.234.
254 Ibid., v.236.
belonged to dominant groups in the rural society as is inferable from their character as rural literates constituting the notable group. In this period, they were confronted with two social realities, namely, the social stratification within the rural society and the infiltration of the outside authorities into it. The latter tendency was intensified by the nexus of temporal and religious authorities, while the authority of local notables was disrupted by it. They needed solidarity of the rural society, especially wide range of peasant groups who constituted its main part, to counter the infiltration of the outside authorities. For this purpose, it was necessary for them to restrain the intensification of social stratification and emphasise their cohesion as a single category of cultivators. The collaboration of the peasant group as a whole may also be necessary to sustain their authority over the other rural population. The representation of the rural society as a homogeneous agrarian society may have been worked out to fulfil these requirements. The instruction on the cattle festival shows another way to keep their authority through the regulation of the relation with the other social groups. On the other hand, the emphasis on cohesion of the rural society in injunctions on Puṣyayāṭrā shows the strong intension to uphold cohesion of the rural society as a whole, including the wider range of social groups, based on the cognition of their presence.

The composition of the Kṛṣiparāśara and codification of the image of a homogeneous agrarian society through it can be interpreted as an attempt at social reorganisation towards cohesion of the rural society, initiated by the local notables.

5. Another Attempt: Networking of Professional Groups towards Jāti Formation

Another attempt at social reorganisation which emerged in this period was the construction of networks based on common professions. In this attempt also, the activities of the local literate groups loom large.
The first to discuss is *brāhmanas*. Their presence in the rural society shows some ambiguity. On one hand, they have settled in a rural area and become a part of local notables, while they kept their identity as *brāhmanas*. Their presence is clear in the address of copper plate inscriptions which mentions local residents as 'beginning with *brāhmanas* (brāhmanāttarāḥ). On the other hand, some of them entered and settled in the rural society as donees with a vast range of privileges conferred by the political authorities. They can be considered as a part of the outside authority or the nexus of temporal and religious powers, while they were simultaneously a dominant group within the rural society. Thus there was a differentiation within a single category of *brāhmanas*, which contributed to their ambiguous presence. As a result, their attitude to the contemporary situation in the rural society was also diversified. Some of them who had more stakes in being a part of local notables may have opted for the maintenance of solidarity and cohesion in the rural society. This position is represented by the composition of the text like the *Krṣiparāśara* by local literates including *brāhmanas*. At the same time, the others, especially *brāhmanas* with privileges and higher academic credentials, rather opted for networking of *brāhmanas* based on clearer identity as a group. This tendency is discernible in inscriptional evidence.

The identity of *brāhmaṇa* donees became more specific in this period. In the copper plate inscriptions of the Candras, kinship relation based on *gotra* and *pravara*, academic credentials based on affiliation to a particular Vedic school, genealogy of four generations, and titles are mentioned as the indicators of their identity. For example, *sāntivārika* Vyāsagaṅgaśarman, the donee of the Dhulla grant of Śricandra, is mentioned as belonging to Vārddha-Kauśika *gotra* and *pravara* of three *ṛṣis* and Kāṇva school (*śākhā*),

255 Appendix 5.
256 Supra, pp.166·168, 171·172.
and as the great grandson of Jayagaṅga, the grandson of Nannagaṅga and the son of Vibhūgaṅga. 257 In the Pāla grants, more indicators related to the academic qualification and origin are employed, while genealogy is limited to three generations. In the Jajilpara inscription of Gopāla III, the donee bhattacharja vājīka Śridharaśarman is said to belong to Kāśyapa gotra and Kāśyapa, Āvatsāra and Naidhrupa pravara, and Vājasaneyā-Mādhyandina school. He is described as a reader of Sāmaveda in three ways (Sāmaveda-tripāti-pāthaka). 258 He originated from Muktāvastu and was living in Sihagrāma. He is said to be the grandson of bhattacharja Nāga and the son of bhattacharja Śrigarbhā. 259 In the later inscriptions, more information about their academic qualification is added to their profiles. Khodulakadevaśarman, the donee of the Amgachi plate of Vigrahapāla III, is described as a fellow-student of Hari (Hari-sabrahmacārin), Sāmavedin, learner of Kauthumi school and knowing mimāṁsā, grammar (vyākaraṇa), logic (tarka) and vidyā. 260 The last expression is also used in the other Pāla inscriptions. 261 The Irdā plate of Nayapāla, the Kāmboja king, also follows similar format with additional mention of Chandoga carana, a list of five names as pravara and a genealogy of four generations. 262

These indicators show keener sense of identity, especially in terms of kinship and academic qualification. The academic qualification, especially their Vedic learning, differentiates these brāhmaṇa donees from other brāhmaṇas who are local literates with moderate knowledge. The kinship

257 EI, 33, p.140, ll.33-35.
258 For three ways of Vedic recitation, see P. S. Filliozat, T. K. Gopalan (tr.), The Sanskrit Language: an Overview: History and structure, linguistic and philosophical representations, uses and users, Varanasi, 2000, pp.19-21.
259 JASB, 17, 1951, p.144, ll.35-37.
261 Bangarh CPI of Mahipāla I, EI, 14, p.327, l.48; Biyala CPI of Mahipāla I, ll.42·43; Belwa CPI of Vigrahapāla III, EI, 29, p.12, l.42; Bangaon CPI of Vigrahapāla III, Ibid, p.56, l.38.
262 EI, 22, p.156, ll.26-29.
relation shows one aspect of their social relation. *Gotra* is an exogamous patrilineal kinship group based on a common ancestry and *pravara* is a stereotyped list of names of ṛsis who are believed to be the remote founders of the family. 263 This system is concerned with the regulation of marriage ties among *brahmaṇa* families. 264 Though a developed form of the system had already appeared in Śrautasūtras, 265 it was seldom mentioned in the copper plate inscriptions in Bengal in the earlier period. 266 The appearance of *gotra* and *pravara* as a regular feature with donee's genealogy indicates more acute consciousness of kinship relations among high rank *brahmaṇas*. This consciousness may have been derived from the development of kinship relation among them and need of its regulation.

While the indicators in terms of kinship and academic qualification contributed to consolidate their distinctive identity, another indicator which became conspicuous in this period alludes to the network of *brahmaṇas* facilitated by their geographical spread. It is the reference to villages of origin and residence. As is the case of the Jajilpara plate cited above, a *brahmaṇa* donee of the Pāla grants is often mentioned with names of two villages. One is a village from which he originated (*vinīrgata*) and another is a village where he is residing (*vāstavya*). Similar descriptions are observable in the Kalanda inscription of Kāmboja king Naya pāla, 267 the Bangarh plate of Mahipāla I, 268 and the Belwa and Amgachi grants of Vigrahapāla III. 269

264 Ibid., pp.1-7.
266 An exception is the Egra plate of Śaśāṅka, in which donee *bhatta* Dāmasvāmin is described as Kauśika·sagotra, tripavara, Kauśika·Āyamāra (Āghamāra)·Vaiśvāmitra·pravara. *EI*, 40, p.137, l.19.
268 *Bhattaputra* Kṛṣṇadityaśaśārman: from Hastipadagrāma, residing in

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while the Irda plate of Nayapāla mentions places of birth and origin. As these inscriptions record donations of a village or land plots in it, donees were involved with at least three villages. The mention of original and residential villages indicates the migration of donees from the former to the latter. Whether their relation with the original village continued after the migration is not clear from the description in inscriptions, though some connection may have been kept through kinship relations. About donated villages, it is not clearly mentioned in these cases whether donees migrated to them from their residential villages. What is inferable is that they kept their interest in both villages in some ways like commuting between them. Thus a network of brāhmaṇas connecting several villages can be presumed in these cases. The activity of a brāhmaṇa family as a unit in this networking is discernible in two copper plate inscriptions of Gopāla II related to Suvarṇakārikā-daṇḍa. They record two donations made on the same day, that is, the fourth day of the month Phālguna, in the fourth year of the king’s reign. The donee of the first plate is sāntivārika-bhāṭaputra Lilākara, the grandson of bhāṭṭa Dinakara and the son of bhāṭṭa Yaśaskara. The donee of the second plate is sāntivārika-bhāṭaputra Atthakara, the grandson of bhāṭṭa Yaśaskara and the son of bhāṭṭa puṭraḥita Sāntikara. As both of them share the same gotra and pravara, Vedic school of Atharvaveda Paippalāda sākhā and the villages of origin and residence, it is clear

Cavatigrāma. EI, 14, p.327, l.48-p.328, l.49.
270 Bhāṭaputra Aṣvatthasaśarman: born in (udbhava) Drona, from Kuṭārā. EI, 22, p.156, l.27
271 Pratna Samiksha, 6-8, pp.71-77, 77-83.
272 Ibid., p.77, ll.42-43.
273 Ibid., p.80, ll.40-41.
274 Kauthari gotra, paṅcārṣaya Bhārgava, Cyāvana, Āpnuvāna, Aurvva, Jāmadagni pravara, Ibid., p.77, l.41; p.79, l.39-p.80, l.40.
275 Ibid, p.77, ll.40-41; p.79, l.39.
that they are uncle and nephew. Both of them are donated some parts (ṣaṣā) from Suvarṇakārikā-daṇḍa.²⁷⁷

The geographical spread of brāhmaṇas and their networking appears in the Silimpur inscription, which belongs to the eleventh century Varendra.²⁷⁸ This is a eulogy of a brāhmaṇa family, stretching seven generations. The eulogy can be divided into two parts, namely, a description of village Śiyamvaka, where the family resided, and genealogy of the family.

After a verse eulogising Viṣṇu, it mentions brāhmaṇas descendent from rṣi Aṅgiras and their abode named Tarkāri, which belonged to Śrāvasti and in which Vedic sacrifices were regularly performed.²⁷⁹ Then it mentions a village named Vālagrāma, which was 'born from it' (tattvasūta), that is, derived from Tarkāri. This village was located in Pundra country, had Sakaṭi, probably a river, between it and Tarkāri, and was said to be a decoration of Varendra. It is resided by many qualified but arrogant brāhmaṇas, among whom none could receive high esteem of people.²⁸⁰ The next verse says that a settlement named Śiyamvaka 'was born' (babhūva) near the village, with desire for a sparse residence. It was the abode of the best brāhmaṇas of the lineage of pandītas born in the eastern part (pūrva-khaṇḍa) of Vālagrāma. It is said that virtuous brāhmaṇas were born in this place 'in the past of the past' (pūrva-pūrve) and two or three of them has not yet been extinct till date.²⁸¹ This account can be called as a genealogy of villages, which conforms to an analogy of birth employed in the inscription itself. This genealogy shows expansion of Brahmanical settlements by multiple migrations.

²⁷⁶ They are from Campā, residing in Samudrāndali or Samadroccali. The difference of last village names seems to be a result of scribal mistakes. Pratna Smiksha, 6-8, p.77, ll.41-42; p.80, l.40.
²⁷⁷ Ibid., p.76, ll.26-28; p.79, l.26.
²⁷⁸ EI, 13, pp.283-292.
²⁷⁹ Ibid., p.290, vv.2-3, ll.2-4.
²⁸⁰ Ibid., vv.4-5, ll.4-5.
²⁸¹ Ibid., vv.6-7, p.290, l.5-p.291, l.7.
The second part starts with the mention of a person named Pasupati born in Śiyamvaka, who is conversant in six duties. His son Sāhila is credited with constructions of a Viṣṇu temple named Sāhilāditya for his father and a pond named Vaicunda for his mother. Manoratha, his son, begot a son named Sucarita, who in turn got married with Nitula. Their son Taponidhi, who is credited with high academic credential, got married with Sugga, and a son named Kārttikeya was born to them. He got married with Kalipavva, the daughter of Aṅgada, who was the son of Ajayamiśra belonging to the family of Kutumvapali. She, the great granddaughter of Viṣṇu, delivered a son named Prahāsa, who had vast knowledge in logic, tantra and Dharmaśastras. He is said to have rejected nine hundred pieces of gold and a sāsana land with income (udaya) of one thousand offered by Kāmarūpa king Jayapāla, who wanted to make the ritual of Tulāpuruṣa. As a meritorious deed for his parents, who resigned their lives in the Ganga, he installed an image of the deity Trivikrama for his father and constructed two ponds for his mother after renovating two temples in the village. He also arranged charitable feeding of rice (anna-sattra) and installed an image of the deity Amaranātha at one of the temples, and donated a garden in Śiyamva and seven dronas of land in Śirīsapuṇja to the deity Vāsudeva, which seemed to be the main deity of the temple. After attaining the age of fifty and putting his sons to the household, he finally renounced his life and went to stay at the bank of the

282 Ibid., p.291, v.8, ll.7-8.
283 Ibid., vv.9-10, ll.8-10.
284 Ibid., vv.11-12, ll.10-12.
286 Ibid., v.18, ll.15-16.
288 Ibid., v.22, ll.19-20.
289 Ibid., vv.23-24, ll.20-21.
290 Ibid., vv.25-26, ll.21-23.
One of the important components of this genealogy is the marriage relations. Nitulā, the wife of Sucarita, is described as a woman of pure family (śuddhānvayā). As to Kalipavva, the wife of Karttikeya, three generations of her forefathers are mentioned as belonging to the family of Kuṭumvapalli. The last term seems to be the name of another settlement. This seems to be a marriage alliance with an influential family of another village. Such alliances may have facilitated networks of brāhmaṇa families which connect these villages. Another factor is charitable activities, especially constructions of temples and ponds by members of this family. Though they were especially enacted for the merit of late parents, such activities may have enhanced the presence of this brāhmaṇa family in the village. Compared with these activities, their relation with kingship is conspicuous by its minimal reference. Apart from the rejection of king Jayapāla's offer, there is only a casual mention of bowing by the group of kings as a proof of Prahāsa's academic quality. This fact shows that the networking of brāhmaṇas could be made through their own effort of migration and construction of kinship relations, without direct intervention of the political authority in the form of land and village donations.

Another phenomenon discernible in this inscription and other sources is the emergence of Brahmanical centres in Bengal. Śrāvasti, which can be located around Hilli-Balurghat area of present South Dinajpur district of West Bengal, is an area in Varendra, which contains several Brahmanical centres. Tarkāri is one of them. Another centre mentioned in the contemporary inscriptions is a village named Krodāṇca / Krodaṇji / Kolaṇca / Kolāṇca and so on. Its location within Śrāvasti is attested by a

291 Ibid., v.27, ll.23-24.
292 Ibid., p.291, l.11.
293 Ibid., l.18.
295 For its location in Varendra, see Ibid.
mention in the Subhankarapāṭaka plates of Kāmarūpa king Dharmapāla, belonging to the former half of the eleventh century. It is also mentioned as an original village of donees in the Amgachi and Bangaon inscriptions of Vīgrahapāla III. The latter inscription also refers to villages Krodāṇca, Kāccha, Gohanaka and Iddhalahā, each of which was derived from the village mentioned just before. It can be interpreted as a case of multiple migrations of brāhmanas like that of the Silimpur inscription. Śrāvasti itself is mentioned in the Kalanda plate of Kāmboja king Nayapāla as the original place of the donee. Siddhalagrama, mentioned in the Bhuvaneswar inscription of bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, was such a Brahmanical centre in Rādha.

These places except Siddhalagrama seem to have been named after the eminent Brahmanical centres in Madhyadesa. In case of Siddhalagrama, its eminent brāhmanas of Sāvaraṇa gotra, including the family of bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, may have originated from Madhyadesa. The great grandfather of Rāmadevaśarman, the donee of the twelfth century Belava plate of Bhojavarman and another Sāvaraṇa brāhmaṇa from Siddhalagrama, is said to have originated from Madhyadesa. These cases may indicate that these Brahmanical centres in Bengal owed their presence to migrations of brāhmanas from centres in Madhyadesa.

The emergence of these and other Brahmanical centres in this period

297 EI, 15, p.298, l.39; EI, 29, p.56, l.39.
298 Ibid., 29, p.57, l.49. Sircar did not notice the fact that Kāccha, Gohanā and Iddhalahā are place names and considered them as ancestors of Ghaṇṭiśa. The first and the second are respectively called ‘abode of good brāhanaṇas and ‘resting place of sacrificers.’ The use of ablative pronouns to express derivation of these villages is understandable if we compare it with the rhetoric of birth used in the Silimpur inscription discussed above.
299 Ibid., 41, p.203, l.28.
300 IB, p.33, l.3.
301 Sircar, Studies in Geography, pp.297-298.
302 IB, p.21, l.l.43-44.
may be connected with the enhanced sense of identity among high rank brahmanas and their consolidation as a group, which may have been to some extent stimulated by the migration of brahmanas from Madhyadeśa. As centres which provided highly qualified brahmanas eligible for invitations and donations by the political authority, they may have functioned as nodes of the network built by the migration of those brahmanas.

The activity of non-brahmana literate groups like the kāvasthas is not as evident as that of brahmanas, whose presence is conspicuous in inscriptions. Some of them might have acquired the status of subordinate rulers, as was the case of Yaśodāsa described in the Bhaturiya inscription and discussed above. The importance of marriage relations for them is indicated by the mention of the parents of Sarasvatī, mother of Yaśodāsa, in their genealogy, though it is not clear whether Sūryakuṇḍa, her father, also belonged to such a literate group. The case of the Kosham Shahar image inscription of the time of Vigrahapāla II rather clearly shows a marriage alliance among the literate group. This inscription records the installation of an image of Gaurī, in the form of mother and child, by Catuṣṭasamā, the wife of mudrādhikārin Līlānandin. It describes Vāyilānandin, the father of Līlānandin, as sāndhivigrāhika of king Rājyapāla. Catuṣṭasamā is described as the daughter of kāvastha Subhaṅgaladatta and Sumānuṣī. The family of Līlānandin was a family of royal officers involved with the documentary administration, as mudrādhikārin can be interpreted as an officer in charge of royal seal. They may have belonged to a non-brahmana literate group. Thus the marriage of Līlānandin and Catuṣṭasamā can be interpreted as a

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304 Ibid., p.154, l.5.
marriage alliance between two families belonging to the literate group. It is not clear how common such marriage alliances were among those literate groups. What is clear is the establishment of the group identity as karana by the end of the eleventh century. In his own eulogy, Sandhyākaranandin describes his father Prajāpati as the foremost among karanas, who got the position of sāndhivigrahika. It indicates that karana has become a term denoting not a designation but an occupational group which can be differentiated from designations like sāndhivigrahika.

The geographical expansion of non-brāhmaṇa literate groups through migration is connoted in the Bhaturiya inscription, in which Aṭṭamūla, the original place of the Dāsas, is described as derived from Vṛhaddhāta, another settlement. This description is similar to the depiction of the expansion of Brahmānical settlements in the Silimpur inscription and the Bangaon plate discussed above.

Cases of some families engaging in engraving of copper plate inscriptions show the geographical spread and other aspects of such literate groups. Dakkadasa, son of Jayadasa and the engraver of the Mohipur plate of Gopāla II, is described as being ‘born to a good person of Sāmatāta origin’ (sat-Sāmatāta-janman). The proximity of time may indicate that he is identical with his namesake who engraved the inscription of Pāhila and the Mirzapur plate of Śūrapāla. He gained the position as a sāmanta according to the description in the latter inscription. Maṅghadāsa, the engraver of

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307 'tasya tanayo mata'nayaḥ karaṇānāṁ=a-graṇīr=anarghagunaḥ/ sāndhi-śripada-sambhāvit-ābhidhānaḥ prajāpati=jjātāḥ/, RC, Kaviprasasti, v.3.
310 Mohipur CPI, l.76.
312 'utkīrṇāṁ=idaṁ śāsanam sāmanta- Dakkadāsa-Vairocanadāsabhyāṁ', EI, 40, p.16, l.72.
the Bhagalpur plate of Nārāyanapāla, and his son Vimaladāsa, the engraver of the Jajilpara plate of Gopāla III may belong to the same family, as almost the same expression, ‘sat-Samatata·janma’ and the same name ending ‘dāsa’ are used for them. This case shows the long term activity of a migrant family of scribes as engravers of the Pāla royal grants, which covers geographically a wide stretch from Mudgagiri, the issuing place of the Mirzapur grant, to south-eastern corner of Varendra, where the inscription of Pāhila was discovered. Still more interesting fact is the retaining of Samatata origin as an indicator of their identity, even after they have settled in Varendra. It may indicate their presence as a scribal group differentiated from others due to their origin from another sub-region. A similar case is observable in the Paschimbhag plate of Śricandra. The messenger of this grant was mahāmudrādhikṛta Śubhāṅga, who was from Sāra (core) Varendra. The Bangarh inscription of the time of Nayapāla and the Silimpur inscription, both of which belong to the eleventh century Varendra, were engraved by Lakṣmidhara and Someśvara from Magadha. These cases show the mobility of the literate group in this period.

Another group of engravers show their presence in a different way. The engravers of five copper plate inscriptions of Mahipāla I and Vigrahapāla III are said to be artisans (śilpin) from Poṣaligrāma. They are Puṣyāditya, the son of Candrāditya, Mahīdhara, the son of Vikramāditya, Bhamāditya, the son of Candrāditya, Śaśideva, the son of Mahīdharaṇa, and

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313 SI, 2, p.85, ll.53·54.
314 JASBL, 17, 2, 1951, p.144, l.46.
315 ‘mahāmudrādhikṛta śri Śubhāṅga·dūtaka·mukhena’, EDEP, p.68, ll.54·55; ‘sāra·varendri·vinirggata Śubhāṅga·dūtaka·mukhena’, Ibid., l.63.
316 JAIH, 7, p.49, ll.34·35; EI, 13, p.292, ll.24·25.
317 Belwa CPI of Mahipāla I, year 5, EI, 21, p.9, ll.57·58.
318 Bangarh CPI of Mahipāla I, year 9, EI, 14, p.328, l.62.
319 Bīyala CPI of Mahipāla I, year 35, ll.55·56.
320 Amgachi CPI of Vigrahapāla III, year 12, EI, 15, p.298, l.49.
Śaśideva, the son of Mānhrideva. Among them, Puśyāditya and Bhāmāditya seem to be sons of Candrāditya. Vikrāmaditya, Mahidhara or Mahidharadeva and Śaśideva seem to constitute three generations of a lineage. Śaśideva of the last inscription seems not to be identical with another Śaśideva, as names of their fathers are different. Thus there are three families from this village, whose members worked as engravers of the two Pāla kings. Their mutual relation is not clear, though there can be some kinship relation between families of Candrāditya and Vikrāmaditya. What is of interest is the existence of a village which provided families of artisans especially skilled in engraving inscriptions. Poṣaligrāma may be identical with Poṣali gāṇi of the Rādhiya brāhmaṇas, which has been identified with modern Poshela about five miles to the south-east of Mangalkot in Barddhaman district. If this identification is correct, it was a centre of artisans with special skill and literacy, whose activity was extended to neighbouring sub-region of Varendra and further to Mithilā. It is not clear whether the village had already established its position as a Brahmanical centre in this period. But we can be sure to some extent that Poṣaligrāma was a centre for this specialised artisan group and may have been a node of their network. Tinnidigrāma, where the father of śilpin Prthvideva, the engraver of the Belwa plate of Vighrapāla III, originated, may be another centre of such artisans.

The activity of other kinds of artisans and mercantile group is more difficult to trace than that of those literate groups. However, they are visible in this period, mainly because of their involvement with installations of

321 Bangaon CPI of Vighrapāla III, year 17, EI, 29, p.57, ll.48-49.
322 EI, 29, p.6. Gāṇis or gains are surnames of kulina brāhmaṇas of the later period, based on names of villages they were supposed to have received as gifts. N. K. Dutt, Origin and Growth of Caste in India (Volumes 1 and 2 Combined), Calcutta, 1986, pp.210-211.
323 EI, 29, p.13, l.54.
images, compared with their counterpart in the previous period, who were totally absent in the inscriptions. As was discussed above, inscriptions of the images from Bhagauna and Narayanpur, belonging to Samatata, mention their donors with names of villages and their profession as merchant (vanik / vanika).\(^{324}\) It shows the presence of merchants in the rural society and they may have been included in \textit{janapadas}, a category of non-cultivators which appeared in the Candra inscriptions.\(^{325}\) The dominance of the mercantile group based in urban settlements in affairs of the rural society was attested by the copper plate inscriptions belonging to the fifth and sixth century North Bengal. They wielded authority over the rural society and extended their own interest in it through the organisation of \textit{adhikaranas}.\(^{326}\) However, they may have lost this arena as a result of the monopoly of land grants by kingship and their influence in the rural society diminished. It seems that installations of images became for them a way to differentiate themselves from others and to enhance their position in the rural society. It is important to note that they did it with distinctive identity as merchants. In case of the Narayanpur image inscription, both donor and his father are affixed with the title of \textit{vanik} / \textit{vanika}.\(^{327}\) It is at least a hereditary occupational group, though we have no clue to their organisation in terms of marriage regulations and other aspects. Apart from merchants, a senior trader (\textit{vṛddha-sārtha}) was also engaged in such an activity in this sub-region, according to the Mandhuk image inscription.\(^{328}\) Some inscriptions from Bihar also record the names of donees with their occupation as merchants.\(^{329}\)

\(^{324}\) EI, 17, p.355; \textit{Indian Culture}, 9, Miscellanea, p.125. Supra, p.170.

\(^{325}\) Appendix 5 Table 2. Supra, p.170.

\(^{326}\) Supra, pp.77-80.

\(^{327}\) \textit{Indian Culture}, 9, Miscellanea, p.125, ll.3-4.

\(^{328}\) 'vṛddha-sāṛtha·Jambhalamitrena', \textit{IHQ}, 28, p.57, ll.2-3.

\(^{329}\) Rajauna Image Inscription of the time of Śūrapāla, year 5, \textit{JAIH}, 7, p.107; Nalanda Pillar Inscription of the time of Rājyapāla, year 24, \textit{JRAI}, 15, 1949, p.8; Kurkihar Image Inscription of vanika·Maṇeka, P. L. Gupta, op. cit.,
Similar references to artisan groups are observable in inscriptions on the images or votive inscriptions from Bihar. The names of occupations attached to donors or their fathers are oil presser (*tailika*), potter (*kumbhakāra*), leather worker (*carmačāra*), goldsmith (*suvarnacāra*), and distiller and vendor of liquor (*saundika*). These cases show the presence of artisan groups in the rural society with distinctive identities based on their occupations. Whether artisan groups in Bengal also participated in such donative activities is not clear, as we have not yet had clear reference to them in image inscriptions from Bengal. However, their presence in Śrīhaṭṭa is evident in the Paschimbhag plate, in which various artisans are included in the service groups of *mathas*.

The cases discussed above show an inclination towards clearer identity based on profession, common to various groups in the rural society. In case of *brāhmaṇas* and other literate groups, their networking through geographical spread and marriage relations is traceable to some extent. The centres of such groups, which may have functioned as nodes of the network, also emerged in this period. These phenomena may indicate a germinal stage of formation towards the *jāti* system, whose development would be witnessed

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p.142, no.89.


331 Nalanda Votive Inscription of the time of Devapāla, *MASI*, 66, p.88. The Prakrit forms *kumhāra* and *kumhari* are used in this inscription.

332 Gaya Museum Image Inscription of the time of Śūrapāla, year 12, S. L. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, Leiden, 1984, p.211, No.16a


334 Naulagarh Image Inscription of the time of Vigrasapāla III, year 24, *JBRS*, 37, pt.3-4, p.4. The donor is a daughter of *saundika*.

335 Supra, pp.173-175, Appendix 4 Table 3.
in the later period.

6. **Kaivartta Rebellion as Culmination**

There is one event which can be interpreted as the culmination of the various tendencies witnessed in this period. It is the so-called *kaivartta* rebellion, which occurred towards the end of the eleventh century and temporarily ousted the Pālas from Varendra. This event was interpreted as either a peasant protest or a revolt of *sāmantas*. Against the social background of this period discussed above, this event can be interpreted differently.

*Kaivartta* is a social group engaging in fishery and boatmanship. In the *Manusmṛti*, it is claimed as a synonym used in Madhyadeśa for *Mārghava*, a mixed jāti living off by boatmanship (*nau·karma·jīvin*). Their position at the bottom of the social hierarchy in the rural society of Bengal in the ninth century is shown by the address of the first Suvarṇakārikā-daṇḍa plate of Gopāla II, in which they are listed together with *medas, andhras* and *caṇḍālas*. However, some section of them succeeded in becoming a landholding group, as a village named *Osinna-kaivartta-vṛtti* is mentioned as one of donated villages in the Belwa grant of Mahipāla I, which belongs to the end of the tenth century. *Vṛtti*, which means 'livelihood', may indicate a land granted for livelihood or for service. It is noteworthy that they held this village with distinctive identity as *kaivarttas*. Their distinctive identity is also shown by the description of the rebel and enemy of Rāmapāla as a

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337 *Manusmṛti*, 10.34.

338 ‘med·āndhra·kaivartta·caṇḍāla·paryantān’, *Pratna Samiksha*, 6·8, p.76, l.36. My own reading from the photograph. S. C. Mukherji did not read this part properly.

339 *EI*, 21, p.7, l.29.

340 *IEG*, p.381.
kaivartta king.\textsuperscript{341} It also shows the organisation of kaivarttas under their own chief. This is comparable with networking of other social groups with distinctive identity based on their professions.

The rebellion started with the revolt of sāmantas. This is discernible in the description of the death of Mahipāla II in the commentary of the Rāmacarita. According to it, the king died in the battle in which his disarrayed army was surrounded by a circle (cakra) of uncountable sāmantas.\textsuperscript{342} Divya / Divvoka, the kaivartta chief, may have been one of these rebellious sāmantas, as he is described as a subordinate (bhṛtya) of the king,\textsuperscript{343} while the kaivartta chief is said to have grabbed the earth after killing the king.\textsuperscript{344} The descriptions of the first battle between Rāmapāla and Bhima, the kaivartta chief and the nephew of Divya,\textsuperscript{345} which represent it as the encounter between proper armies equipped with cavalry and elephant troops,\textsuperscript{346} may indicate that the rebels were sāmanda armies with proper equipment and training. On the other hand, the army of Rāmapāla was also constituted of sāmantas of western Bengal and eastern Bihar including forest chiefs, whose support was mustered by him by travelling through their territories and offering abundant gifts of land and movable properties.\textsuperscript{347} These two facts, the revolt of sāmantas and the heavy reliance of the Pāla king on them for its suppression, show one result of the rise of sāmantas and their encroachment upon the authority of the king. The encroachment by them is connotated by the term 'wicked' (vyāla) used to denote some of

\textsuperscript{341} RC, 1.12, commentary, 1.29, commentary.
\textsuperscript{342} Ibid., 1.30, commentary.
\textsuperscript{343} Ibid., 1.38, commentary.
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid., 1.29, commentary.
\textsuperscript{345} Ibid., 1.39, commentary.
\textsuperscript{346} Ibid., 2.12-20.
\textsuperscript{347} Ibid., 1.43-45, 2.5-6. The commentary on the last two verses minutely lists names, provenance and other information of these sāmantas. For their identification, see A. M. Chowdhury, op. cit., pp.117-120.
sāmantas. It is explained by the commentator as appropriators of agrahāra and viśaya.\(^{348}\) The weakened Pāla rule in Varendra around the time of rebellion due to the rise of sāmantas is also indicated by the presence of the Ramganj plate of Īśvaraghoṣa, which may belong to the second half of the eleventh century.\(^{349}\) He issued the copper plate inscription without any mention of his overlord, while his title mahāmāndalika shows his status as a subordinate ruler.

The description of the second battle after regrouping by Hari, Bhima's ally, and the escape of the latter from the captivity of the Pālas, shows a different aspect of the incident. In this phase, the army of Bhima was enlarged by the deployment of 'naked army' (kiśa-bala)\(^{350}\) and disarrayed in its manoeuvre.\(^{351}\) It even included soldiers riding on buffaloes and hurling arrows.\(^{352}\) These descriptions allude to the deployment of ill-equipped and ill-trained soldiers probably from the lower strata of the society. On the other hand, the description of Bhima's army as 'agreeable to the people agitated by tax' (kara-kṣobhī-rucita) connotes the support for the rebellion by some groups afflicted by the taxation, most probably by the Pālas.\(^{353}\) These facts may indicate the wider range of participation to this rebellion, at least in its second phase. The element of dissent against the Pāla rule is also connotated in another verse. The verse 1.48 describes the advance raid of Varendra by mahāpratihāra Śivarāja, Rāmapāla's maternal cousin. In this verse Varendra (Varendri) under Bhima's rule is described as miserable because of the confusion of viśaya and grāma.\(^{354}\) For the confusion of viśaya and grāma, the commentator made the following explanation: 'For

\(^{348}\) 'tatra vyālā āgrahārikā vaisayikā', Ibid., 1.43, commentary.
\(^{349}\) IB, pp.149-157.
\(^{350}\) RC, 2.39.
\(^{351}\) Ibid., 2.39-41.
\(^{352}\) Ibid., 2.41.
\(^{353}\) Ibid., 2.40.
\(^{354}\) 'viṣaya-grām-ākulatvā-dusthā yā', Ibid., 1.48.
the protection of the land of *devas* and *brāhmanas*, questions as "what is this *visaya*, what is this *grāma*, whose is this *bhukti*" followed afterward."355 Accordingly, the confusion mentioned here was the confusion of ownership, which had to be ascertained after the recovery of Varendra. The reference to the protection of the land of *devas* and *brāhmanas* alludes to the occurrence of encroachment upon the land donated to them. As I have discussed above, they were a part of the nexus of religious and political authorities, which was infiltrating into the rural society. 356 The encroachment upon their landholdings can be an expression of defiance made by members of the rural society in the absence of royal power. The support of the rebellion by people agitated by tax is also understandable, if we consider the intensification of control through the assessment of villages under later Pāla rulers.357

Because of these points, the rebellion cannot be interpreted as only a conflict between the king and *sāmantas*. Though it was triggered by a revolt of *sāmantas* including the *kaivartta* chief, it gave members of the rural society an opportunity to defy the authority by mustering wider participation and support. For the Pālas, it was an ‘unfortunate disturbance of *dharma*’ to be repelled by Rāmapāla.358 The *dharma* disturbed by the incident was the order which was considered as proper and upheld by kingship.

The rebellion was suppressed and Varendra was recovered by Rāmapāla with the help of the *sāmantas*. It led to temporary recovery of Pāla authority and their heavy dependence on *sāmanda* powers, which finally resulted in the rise of the Senas, one of them,359 and ouster of the Pāla powers from Bengal. Meanwhile, two attempts at social reorganisation went

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356 Supra, pp.167-168, 202-203.
357 Supra, pp.182-185.
358 ‘(a)nīkaṁ dharma viplavam’, *RC*, 1.24.
359 Vijayarāja of Nidravāli, mentioned in *RC*, 2.6, can be identified with Vijayasena. A. M. Chowdhury, op. cit., pp.119-120.
on. Their progress with the intervention of the Senas and Brahmanical authority will be the theme of the next chapter.