Chapter 6
Brahmanical Systematisation: c. A. D. 1100-1250

From the last quarter of the eleventh century, Bengal witnessed the rise of dynasties which originated from other regions and had the strong inclination to Brahmanical traditions, while the Pāla control was steadily diminishing after the reign of Rāmapāla. Among them, the Varmans, who may have originated from Kaliṅga, established their stronghold in Vaṅga after the Candras for a short period from around 1080 to 1150 A. D.¹ The Senas, who originated from Kārnāta region, first established their position as a sāmanta of the Pālas in Rādhā. They expanded their territory to Vaṅga and a part of Varendra during the reign of Vijayasena, which corresponds to the period between 1096 and 1159 A. D. They integrated almost all the sub-regions of Bengal by ousting the Pālas from Varendra sometime after 1165 A. D.,² though this integration was short-lived one, as they lost the western and northern part of Bengal to the Turkish army led by Muhammad Bakhtyār Khalji at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The Senas continued their rule in Vaṅga until the middle of the same century.³

In this period, brāhmaṇas enhanced their presence as large scale landholders and authoritative groups in the rural society, as a result of their networking on the one hand and the patronage of the kings, especially the Senas, on the other. Under their stronger influence, the tendencies witnessed in the previous period, that is, infiltration of the political and religious

¹ For their history, see A. M. Chowdhury, Dynastic History of Bengal (c. 750-1200 A. D.), Dacca, 1967, pp.189-201.
² As one of the Rajibpur CPI of Madanapāla has date of the 22nd year of his reign, Madanapāla kept a part of Varendra, corresponding to the area around present South Dinajpur district, at least until 1165 A. D. G. Bhattacharya, ‘Newly Discovered Copper Plate Grants of the Pāla Dynasty’, idem, 2000, pp. 447-449.
³ For the history of the Senas, see A. M Chowdhury, op. cit., pp.204-264.
authority into the rural society and two forms of the social reorganisation, took another turn. What emerged in this period was an attempt at social reorientation and systematisation according to the Brahmanical social view, which resulted in the composition of texts like the *Dharmanibandhas*. In this chapter, I would like to discuss this Brahmanical systematisation and its implications. The first to discuss is the efforts of further infiltration into the rural society by the political authorities.

1. Efforts of Further Infiltration: Land Assessment in Terms of Currency Units

The reorganisation of the Pāla administration in Varendra after the *kaivartta* rebellion is alluded to in some verses of the *Rāmacarita* and its contemporary commentary. As was discussed above, the confusion of the land ownership, probably due to the encroachment upon the landholdings of religious institutions and *brāhmaṇas*, required the Pālas to ascertain and settle land tenures after the recovery of their territory.\(^4\) It seemed to be accompanied with a reorganisation of *visayas*, which is mentioned as a deed of Rāmapāla.\(^5\) Apart from them, his moderation of tax is also mentioned in the text. It is said in a verse that Varendra, which was oppressed by cruel taxation, is treated with tenderness because of the king’s mild taxation.\(^6\) If we consider the reference to the participation by people agitated by tax in the rebellion in the same text,\(^7\) the cruel taxation may allude to the heavy tax imposed by the earlier Pāla kings, rather than the *kaivarttas*, and the act of Rāmapāla can be interpreted as the policy of appeasement.

The administrative reorganisation of the Pāla kings in this last phase

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\(^4\) Supra, pp.225·226, *RC*, 1.48 and commentary.

\(^5\) ‘tatra sa nivasan=nānā visaya’sanniveśena/ sūnu samarppita rājyo rāmah kāntā sa kāsaka=ciram remel’, *RC*, 4.1.

\(^6\) ‘krūra kara pidita=sā viti bharttur mṛdu kara grahat kpayā/ kṛṣṭ opacitām sapadi skhalita pratipakṣa māra dahana sucam’, *RC*, 3.27.

\(^7\) Supra, p.225, *RC*, 2.40.
is also discernible in the Manahali copper plate inscription of Madanapāla, dated year 8, and two grants of the same king discovered from Rajibpur, dated year 2 and 22 respectively. All these inscriptions recorded the donations of villages in an administrative unit called Hālavartta-mandaśa belonging to Kotīvarṣa-visaya in Pundravardhana-bhukti to brāhmanas. What needs to be noted is the mention of kośṭhāgāra, ‘store-room’ or ‘treasury’, in the Manahali plate and the second Rajibpur plate. In the latter, an administrative unit called ‘Daksīṇ-āvadhi’, to which donated land tracts belonged, is described as being attached to the kośṭhāgāra of Devikoṭa, synonym of the city Kotīvarṣa. In the former, the village is donated from the ‘twenty’, which seems to denote a land with production of twenty in some unit, belonging to kośṭhāgāra. Such a description was absent in the earlier Pāla grants. It may indicate the intention of the Pāla administration to keep their landholdings tightly by attaching them to the treasury of their administration and clearly mentioning their affiliation. This intention is also discernible in the exclusion of a royal landholding (rāja-sambhoga) belonging to the Buddhist complex in the former and another including land of the Buddhist complex and service land (vṛtti) of kaivarttas and carmakāras in the latter from the donated land. This condition was also absent in the

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8 JASB, 69, 1, 1900, pp.66-73; CBI, pp.209-219
9 Pratna Samiksha, 1, pp.173-174. The information of these plates is based on my own readings from the digital photo data taken by myself at the State Archaeological Museum of West Bengal, Kolkata.
10 JASB, 69, 1, 1900, p.71, l.32-33; Rajibpur CPI, year 2, l.37-38; Rajibpur CPI, year 22, l.32-35.
12 ‘kośṭhāgāra-śaṃ vimśatyaś’, JASB, 69, 1, 1900, p.71, l.32. In the light of the similar expression in the Rajibpur CPI, year 22, the rendering of this word as ‘kāśṭhāgiri-śaṃ’ by the editor seems to be due to the overlooking of a stroke at the left of ‘kā’, which makes it ‘ko’, and the similarity between strokes employed to express ‘ā’ at the right of a consonant and ‘i’ at its left.
13 ‘ratnatraya-rāja-sambhoga-varjitaḥ’, JASB, 69, 1, 1900, p.72, l.41.
14 ‘ratnatraya-kaivartta-carmmakāra-vṛtti-ādi-rāja-sambhoga-varjito’.
earlier Pāla inscriptions. It may indicate stronger intention of the Pāla kings to keep hold of their own land holdings, which even included land tracts donated to a Buddhist complex and service land assigned to particular social groups.

In the context of the rebellion and its aftermath, where confusion of the land ownership and its settlement became an issue, this administrative reorganisation can be interpreted as a remedy for such confusion and a way to keep their control over the rural settlements. However, they seem not to have succeeded much as a verse of the Rāmacarita mentions confusion or agitation in villages, which required Madanapāla to make an alliance with another king, whose identity is not clear.\(^\text{15}\)

The continuing effort of the Pāla kings to infiltrate into the rural society through the assessment of settlements is discernible in those inscriptions. In the first Rajibpur plate, Vudhavadā-grāma, the object of donation, is referred to as ‘production of 30 by the standard of kṛta-hala-kula.’\(^\text{16}\) In another Rajibpur plate, one of the donated land plots is measured as 35 ādīhavāpas.\(^\text{17}\) In both inscriptions, donations are made with reference to the production of 30.\(^\text{18}\) Similar mentions of numbers 20 and 30 appear in the Manahali grant, without any specification of unit.\(^\text{19}\) The use of a derivative ‘triśatika,’ common to production of the other two inscriptions, seems to indicate that the number mentions production from the land. As

Rajibpur CPI, year 22, ll.43-44.
\(^{15}\) ‘sa manobhūr=aniruddha-prabhavo viṣam-āyudho rati-praṇayi/ sumanah·samayan[pa]r[am]=ayuyjata ksmāpatim=ākula·grāmah/’, RC, 4.23.
\(^{16}\) ‘kṛta-hala-kula·pramāṇena triśatik-otpattau Vudhavada·grāme’, Rajibpur CPI, year 2, ll.37-38.
\(^{17}\) ‘Khand̐a-kṣetra·Vā˙anta·valli·Khakusa·muṇḍakhī·piśāca·kule Yakhavivudhayasyām pañcatrīṇād·ādhāvāpa·bhūmau’, Rajibpur CPI, year 22, ll.33-34.
\(^{18}\) ‘triśatik-otpattyā sāsani·kṛtya pradatto=smābhīh’, Rajibpur CPI, year 2, ll.51-52; Rajibpur CPI, year 22, ll.48-49.
\(^{19}\) ‘[koṣṭhāgarā·sām·vimśatāyāv=ādhīk·opeta·Sakaivavadārvva·cattāraṭṭake] triśatikāyām bhūmau’, JASB, 69, 1, 1900, p.71, ll.32-33.
numbers referring to production from villages or land plots in these grants are small compared with the numbers referring to the production in terms of purāṇas, which amounted to hundreds to thousands, in the earlier Pāla inscriptions,\textsuperscript{20} we may detect the introduction of a new unit and system for assessing production of settlements in this period. The mention of \textit{kṛta·hala·kula·pramāna} also endorses it. This term may mean 'standard of established plough / cultivation and family' and indicate the assessment of the production through the estimation of number of ploughs or extent of cultivated land, and number of families.

These cases show the continuing effort of the Pālas to infiltrate into the rural society through the assessment of settlements. However, its implementation is not as thorough as the similar effort of the Senas, which will be discussed below. While the land plot of Yakhivivudhayasi in Vātanda·valli is measured as 35 ādhasvapas as is mentioned above, the land plot of Nandipāṇa, which belongs to Cakhaḍi and is neighboured by Vātanda·valli, has no mention of its land measurement,\textsuperscript{21} though both of them are donated at the same time. It shows that land measurement could not be equally applied to two villages in the same locality. The mention of the production of 30 for all the villages and land plots donated in these three inscriptions also cast doubt over the extent of the actual implementation of the system.

The Pāla rule in Bengal as a whole was declining due to the rise of sāmantas, which was further enhanced by the heavy dependence of the Pālas on them for the repression of the rebellion. Vijayasena's acquisition of land by helping Rāmapāla to recover Varendra is alluded to in the Deopara inscription.\textsuperscript{22} The expansion of the Sena territory to the southern part of

\textsuperscript{20} Supra, pp.183·185.
\textsuperscript{21} 'Cakhaḍi·prativaddha·Vātanda·valli·sim·āvabhinna·Nandipāṇiya·bhūmauçça', Rajibpur CPI, year 22, ll.34·35.
\textsuperscript{22} 'dattvā divyā·bhuvah pratikṣitibhṛtām=urvīṁ=urikurvvatā"
Varendra is verified by the presence of this inscription, which records the construction of a temple complex by the king, in present Rajshahi district.\textsuperscript{23} The diminishing power of the Pālas over their sāmantas is also evident in the Kamauli copper plate inscription of Vaidyadeva, dated year 4, which pertains to Kāmarūpa.\textsuperscript{24} Kāmarūpa seems to have come under the Pāla suzerainty during the reign of Rāmapāla, according to a verse in the Rāmacarita.\textsuperscript{25} In the reign of Kumārapāla, it was governed by Tingyadeva, who is described as a king of the eastern land in the Kamauli plate.\textsuperscript{26} As he showed change (vikṛti), which may connote rebellious tendency, Vaidyadeva, the issuer of the plate, was sent against Tingyadeva and appointed as king of Kāmarūpa after defeating him.\textsuperscript{27} Finally, Vaidyadeva himself claimed the status of an independent king as is indicated by the issue of the present grant and his titles of mahārājādhirāja, parameśvara and paramabhaṭṭaraka.\textsuperscript{28} According to the eulogy recorded in the inscription, Vaidyadeva was from the family of hereditary ministers. It is said that Yogadeva, his grandfather, and Bodhideva, his father, respectively served Vigrahapāla III and Rāmapāla as ministers (saciva).\textsuperscript{29} Vaidyadeva also served Kumārapāla, the son of Rāmapāla, as a minister.\textsuperscript{30} He is also credited with a victory in the naval war in South (anuttara) Vanga, which indicates his service as a general.\textsuperscript{31} This episode shows the decline of the Pāla power over the subordinate rulers especially in the periphery of their territory. Its seriousness is indicated by

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\texttt{virāśrg·lipi·lāṭchito\textasciitilde=amunā prāg=eva pattri\textasciitilde=kr\textasciitilde=lah\textasciitilde, IB, p.48, l.l.18-19. As is correctly pointed out by Majumdar, \textquoteleft divya-bhū \	extquoteleft connotes \textquoteleft land of Divya', that is, Varendra occupied by Divya the kaivartta chief, as a double entendre.}
\end{flushright}
the fact that even a hereditary minister defected from them after acquiring the position as a subordinate ruler. In such a situation, the administrative reorganisation by the Pālas may be interpreted as the effort to tighten their control over the remaining territory while they were losing it to the Senas and other former sāmantas.

The administration of the Varmans in Vāṅga is mainly known from the three copper plate inscriptions so far discovered from East Bengal. As to the administrative apparatus, their reign can be labelled as a transitional period between the Candra and Sena administrations. The list of king's subordinates included in the address section of the Samantasar grant of Harivarman, which belongs to the end of the eleventh century or the first half of the twelfth century, shows a similarity to the list in the Mainamati plate of Laḍahacandra, while the same list in the Belava grant of Bhojavarman, which belongs to the middle of the twelfth century, shows a close affinity with the list in the Barrackpur plate of Vijayasena. On the other hand, the division of addressees into four categories, that is, king's subordinates, other unnamed officers declared for the office, cātas and bhaṭas, and people and cultivators including brāhmaṇas, is common to the Candras, the Varmans and the early Senas except the change of cātas and bhaṭas to cattas and bhaṭas, and the shift of the meaning of brāhmaṇottara, whose implication in relation to the change of the rural society will be discussed in the second section of this chapter.

Their relation with the rural society seems to be similar to that of the Candras in Vāṅga, as far as discernible in these inscriptions. The objects of donation in the Samantasar and Belava inscriptions were the land plots,
which were 1 \textit{hala 6 dronas} 80 unreadable units in Varaparvata-\textit{grāma}\textsuperscript{36} and 1 \textit{pātaka 9 1/4 dronas} in Upyalikā-\textit{grāma} respectively,\textsuperscript{37} while the object of the Vajrayogini grant cannot be known, due to its mutilated condition.\textsuperscript{38} Both in terms of units used for measurement and the pattern of donation as grants of land plots in a village, these cases are similar to the ones of the early Candra grants in Vaṅga.\textsuperscript{39} This similarity may show relative weakness of their control over the rural settlement, which was speculated in case of the Candras.\textsuperscript{40} We cannot detect any special effort of infiltration into the rural society like the assessment of the whole village in terms of land measurement or annual income, which was discernible in the later phase of both the Pāla and Candra rules,\textsuperscript{41} at least in these limited cases of the Varman grants.

The copper plate inscriptions of the Senas show their firm intention and effort to infiltrate into the rural society. The first to mention is their attempt and failure to implement a uniform standard for land measurement to the sub-regions of Bengal. In the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena, the donated land is measured as 4 \textit{pātakas} by Samaṭatiya-\textit{nala}.\textsuperscript{42} The plate was discovered from a village nearby Barrackpur cantonment in Twenty-four Parganas, and Khāḍi-\textit{viṣaya}, to which the donated village belonged, can be located in the Diamond Harbour sub-division of this modern administrative unit.\textsuperscript{43} Needless to say, this locality cannot belong to the sub-region of

\textsuperscript{36} EI, 30, p.257, 2.2-3. The unit of the last number is effaced due to the damage on this part of the plate.
\textsuperscript{37} EI, 12, p.40, ll.28-29.
\textsuperscript{38} Only a quarter of the whole plate remains. \textit{Ibid.}, 30, p.259.
\textsuperscript{39} Supra, pp.171-172.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{41} Supra, pp.182-183, 186.
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{IB}, p.63, l.33.
\textsuperscript{43} A. Bhattacharyya, \textit{Historical Geography of Ancient and Early Medieval Bengal}, p.76.
Samataṭa, which was located in the eastern fringe of Bengal. Though C. Gupta suggests the possibility that this standard was used in the deltaic parts of Bengal during the time of the Candras, there is no mention of such a standard in the Candra grants, and the extension of their rule towards the present Twenty-four Parganas area also lacks any substantial evidence. In the present condition of evidence, the introduction of the standard of Samataṭa had better be attributed to Vijayasena, as his Barrackpur grant is so far the first record mentioning it. The application of the standard of land measurement prevalent in one sub-region to another may allude to the intention of Vijayasena to implement uniform standard all over his territory.

His intention and its inheritance by his descendants are also discernible in a standard named Vṛṣabhaśaṅkara-nala, used in the copper plate inscriptions of Vallālasena and Lakṣmaṇasena. Vṛṣabhaśaṅkara or Ari-Vṛṣabhaśaṅkara was an epithet of Vijayasena, as is evident from a verse in the Barrackpur grant, which mentions the nomination of a messenger by the king. The introduction of this standard can be attributed to Vijayasena, as far as it is named after him, though it is not clear whether this standard was identical with Samataṭiya-nala and came to be known by this name during the reign of Vijayasena or later. Vṛṣabhaśaṅkara-nala appears in the Naihati grant of Vallālasena, and the Anulia and Saktipur grants of Lakṣmaṇasena. The first and the last inscriptions pertained to Uttarā-Rādhā and belonged to Vardhamāna-bhukti and Kaṅkagrāma-bhukti.

44 Supra, p.40.
46 'nrpa'ganan-āgrima-rekhah śrīmān·Ari·Vṛṣabhaśaṅkaraḥ krtavā[ṇ] [{*] Udayakara-sāsana-dāne Śālādḍanāgām=iha dūtam [{/*}], IB, p.64, ll.48·49.
48 IB, p.74, ll.44·45.
49 Ibid., p.87, ll.36·37; EI, 21, p.218, ll.35·36.
respectively,\textsuperscript{50} while the second was related to Vyāghrataṭi of Pauṇḍravardhana-bhukti.\textsuperscript{51} The former corresponds to the area west to Bhagirathī and north to the Ajay River,\textsuperscript{52} while the location of the latter is not clear.\textsuperscript{53} As Rādha is mentioned as the territory of the early Sena rulers in the Naihati inscription,\textsuperscript{54} it is probable that the Senas tried to implement a uniform standard in a part of their old territory.

On the other hand, incompleteness or failure of the implementation of a uniform standard is well attested by the use of various standards of land measurement in the other copper plate inscriptions of Laksmanasena. In the Govindapur inscription, year 2, which pertained to Vetaṭḍa-caturaka of Paścima-khāṭikā in Vardhamāṇa-bhukti, corresponding to present Betad in Howrah district,\textsuperscript{55} land was assessed by a \textit{nala} measured by 56 cubits, which was a practice of the locality.\textsuperscript{56} Similarly, land was measured by a 'nala which is custom of this country', in the Tarpandighi grant, year 2, which was related to Varendrī of Pauṇḍravardhana-bhukti.\textsuperscript{57} The phrases used in these cases show the prevalence of local customs on the standard of land measurement. In the Sundarban plate, year 2, the land was calculated by an \textit{unmāna} measured by 32 cubits, which was in turn measured by a cubit added with 12 finger-breathths marked by the pillar of Śrīmad-Ugramādhava-pāda.\textsuperscript{58} It seems to mean that the standard of land measurement was fixed against a pillar belonging to a local deity and this

\ \ \ \\textsuperscript{50} \textit{IB}, p.74, ll.37-38; \textit{EI}, 21, p.218, ll.26-27.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{IB}, p.87, ll.34-35.
\textsuperscript{52} Supra, p.35.
\textsuperscript{53} A. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., p.75.
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{IB}, p.71, ll.5-6
\textsuperscript{55} A. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., p.80.
\textsuperscript{56} 'tad-ṛṣṭya-samvyavahāra-ṣatpaṃcāṣṭa-hasta-parimita-naḷena', \textit{IB}, p.96, ll.36-37.
\textsuperscript{57} 'tatrasya-ṛṣṭya-vyavahāra-naḷena', \textit{Ibid.}, p.102, l.36.
fact endorses the local character of such a standard. The relevant part in the Rajavadi inscription, year 27, which pertained to the area corresponding to present Sripur thana / upazila of Gazipur district in Bangladesh,\(^59\) mentions a nala measured by 22 cubits as a standard of land measurement.\(^60\)

These cases surely show that different types of nalas were used for measuring land in different parts of the Sena dominion.\(^61\) However, the contrast between Vṛṣabhaśākara·nala, which has connection with the Sena kingship, and other nalas related with local custom alludes to not only the presence of various local standards of land measurement, but also the intention and failure of the Senas to implement a uniform standard and supplant the local ones. The difficulty of implementation is indicated by the use of different standards even in the same region where Vijayasena introduced Samataṅga·nala and its vicinity, as is indicated by the cases of the Barrackpur and Sundarban plates mentioned above, both of which pertained to Khādi viṣaya / mandala, and the Govindapur plate, which pertained to the neighbouring area. Their failure and abandonment of the effort of standardisation is discernible in the absence of any references to the standards of land measurement in the Madhainagar plate of Lakṣmaṇasena \(^62\) and the Vangiya Sahitya Parishad grant of Viśvarūpasena.\(^63\) In cases of the Idilpur and Madanapada plates of the latter king, even sizes of land plots are not mentioned.\(^64\)

Compared with their failed attempt to implement a uniform standard for land measurement, the assessment of annual production of a

\(^{59}\) *JRASBL*, 8, 1942, pp.7·17; A. B. Paul and D. Shamsuddin, ‘Geographical Provenance of the Find Places of the Inscriptions of Bengal (From 3rd Century B. C. to 13th Century A. D.)’, *JAS Bangladesh, Hum.*, 46, 1, 2001, p.22, no.84.

\(^{60}\) ‘dvāvimśati·hasta·parimita·nalena’, *Ibid.*, p.36, 2.10.

\(^{61}\) C. Gupta, op. cit., p.578.

\(^{62}\) *SI*, 2, pp.124·130

\(^{63}\) *IB*, pp.140·148.

\(^{64}\) *IB*, pp.118·131; *EI*, 33, pp.315·326

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settlement or a land plot in terms of a uniform currency unit was implemented thoroughly by the Sena kings and provided them leverage for infiltrating into the rural society and keeping their control over it.

A unit of currency named *kaparddaka-purāṇa* was used for estimating production of a particular village or land plots in the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena,65 Naihati plate of Vallālasena,66 and the Govindapur,67 Tarparidghi, 68 Anulia, 69 Rajvadi 70 and Madhainagar grants of Lakṣmaṇasena.71 The unit mentioned as *purāṇa* in the Sundarban plate of Lakṣmaṇasena,72 and the unspecified unit in the Saktipur grant of the same king73 seem to mention the same currency, as is shown by the similarity of phrases. *Kaparddaka-purāṇa* may denote a theoretical unit of account representing the value of a *purāṇa*, a unit of silver currency, counted in cowrie shells.74 It may have functioned as a notional unit of currency, while the actual use of cowrie shells as currency in the early and late medieval Bengal is well attested by various kinds of sources.75 The extensive use of cowrie shells was based on the thriving inter-regional trade, as cowrie shells

65 ‘*kaparddaka-purāṇa-śatadvay-otpattih*, IB, p.63, ll.33-34.
66 ‘pratyavdam kaparddaka-purāṇa-pańca-śat-otpattikah’, Ibid., p.74, l.46.
68 ‘samvatsareṇa kaparddaka-purāṇa-sārdhā-śat-ai̯k-otpattiko’, Ibid., p.102, ll.37-38.
69 ‘samvatsareṇa kaparddaka-purāṇa-śat-ai̯k-otpattikam’, Ibid., p.87, l.38.
70 ‘samvatsareṇa kaparddaka-purāṇa-śata-catuśṭay-otpattika’, JRASBL, 8, 1942, p.36, 2.12.
71 ‘samvatsareṇa kaparddak-āśṭa-śaṣṭi-purāṇ-ādhika-śata-mūły-otpattiko’, SI, 2, p.128, ll.43-44
72 ‘samvatsareṇa pańcāsat-purāṇ-otpattikah’, IB, p.171.
73 ‘samvatsareṇa s-ārdhā-śata-dvay-otpattikah’, EI, 21, p.218, l.30,
75 Ibid., pp.68-70; B. D. Chattopadhyaya, ‘Currency in Early Bengal’, pp.52-54.
were mainly imported from foreign countries like Maldives.\textsuperscript{76} On the other hand, transactions based on notional currency presuppose the existence of somewhat developed commercial infrastructure.

In the inscriptions of Viśvarupasena, the units named \textit{purāṇa}, \textit{cūrṇī}, \textit{hiranya} and its abbreviated form \textit{hi} were used for indicating production of land plots. As is shown by an expression in the Madanapada grant of the same king,\textsuperscript{77} they were used interchangeably and may have denoted the same unit. Among these terms, \textit{hiranya}, originally meaning gold, seems to be a currency unit in this context, as it often appears along with revenue terms and is used to denote tax paid in cash in the inscriptions of this period.\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Cūrṇī} is differently interpreted by scholars. D. C. Sircar opined that it was the same as \textit{kaparaddaka·purāṇa} counted in cowrie shells, according to the Oriya lexicons.\textsuperscript{79} B. N. Mukherjee considered it as ‘dust money’, powdered silver or gold which was carried in small bags and functioned as a unit of metal currency, from its philological relation with a term \textit{cūrṇa}, ‘powder’.\textsuperscript{80} While the use of cowries for trade and other transactions in Bengal in the earlier and later period, until the nineteenth century, is attested by various sources,\textsuperscript{81} the use of dust metal as currency in the same region lacks substantial evidence, though Mukherjee tried to enhance his theory by references to silver and gold in the foreign accounts.\textsuperscript{82} In the present

\textsuperscript{76} For the condition of trade in this period, see Mukherjee ‘Commerce and Money.’
\textsuperscript{77} ‘Kandarpasāṅkṛ·āśramiya·padāti·Śāpāmarka·sām·va(dvā)trimśat·purāṇ·ottara·cūrṇi·śat·aika 132 vahīḥ sām·bhūḥ hi 500’, \textit{EI}, 33, p.324, l.43–p.325, l.44.
\textsuperscript{78} Chattopadhyaya, ‘Currency in Early Bengal’, p.58.
\textsuperscript{80} Mukherjee, ‘Commerce and Money’, p.70.
\textsuperscript{82} Mukherjee, ‘Commerce and Money’, pp.70–71.
condition of evidence, the former seems to be more plausible and it indicates continuance of the evaluation of production in terms of a currency unit counted in cowrie shells.

The estimation of the production in terms of such units of currency must have been based on the assessment of rural settlements on the ground level. However, the figures appearing in the Sena copper plate inscriptions rather indicate rough estimations on which those figures are based. In the Govindapur grant, it is said that the production was calculated by the ratio of 15 purānas for a drona, while the size of the land plot and its annual production were respectively 60 dronas 17 unmānas and 500.83 In this case, 17 unmānas were excluded from the calculation of production as a fraction. The other inscriptions, which mention the size of land plots in fragmentary numbers and units, and the production from them in well-ordered numbers, also indicate rough character of their estimation.84 However, later inscriptions like the Madhainagar and Madanapada grants mention annual production in fragmentary numbers85 and the Vangiya Sahitya Parishad plate contains minute descriptions of land plots like land type, size, production in terms of currency unit, which even include income from betel vine and nuts plantations.86 These cases, especially the last one, seem to indicate more intensive assessment of rural settlements and one may detect

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83 'saptadaśa·unmān·ādhika·śṣṭi·bhū·dronā·ātmakah pratidroge pañcadaśa·purāna·utpatti·niyame vatsareṇa nava·śat·otpattikaḥ', IB, p.96, ll.37-39.
84 Naihati CPI: 7 pātaka 9 dronas 1 ādhaka 40 unmānas 3 kākas / 500 KP (IB, p.74, ll.45-46); Tarpadighi CPI: 120 ādhavāpas 5 unmānas / 150 KP (IB, p.102, ll.37-38); Sundarban CPI: 3 dronas 1 khādi 23 unmānas 2 1/2 kākinis / 50 KP (IB, p.171); Anulia CPI: 1 pātaka 9 dronas 1 ādhāvāpa 37 unmānas 1 kākini / 100 KP (IB, p.87, ll.37-38); Saktipur CPI: 89 dronavāpas / 500 (EI, 21, p.218, l.36). For the mutual relations of these units, see C. Gupta, op. cit., p.583.
85 Madhainagar CPI: 100 khādīs 91 khādikās / 163 KP (SI, 2, p.128, ll.42-43); Madanapada CPI: 627 cūrṇās or hiranyas (EI, 33, p.325, ll.45, 51-52).
86 See Appendix 4 Table 4.
the enhanced state of implementation in the later phase of the Sena rule.

The importance of the use of such units of currency for the Senas lies in the fact that it enabled them to assess the quantum of production of rural settlements with a universally applicable unit in spite of the difference of standard for land measurement in each locality, and to keep information and control over revenue from these settlements. The Saktipur grant of Lakṣmaṇasena fully shows the efficacy of this system. This inscription records the donation of six hamlets (pātakas), which were measured 89 dronas in total by Vṛṣabhaśaṅkara-nala and whose annual income was estimated as 500, probably kaparddaka-purāṇa, to a brāhmaṇa named Kuvera.87 It is said that those six hamlets were given in exchange for the donated land with production of 500 received by Gayāla-brāhmaṇa Haridāsa from Vallālasena, after measuring and enclosing them.88 This description may allude to the following sequence of events. First, the land with production of 500, which had already been given to Haridāsa by Vallālasena, was mistakenly given to Kuvera. After being informed of this fact, probably by Haridāsa, Lakṣmaṇasena donated another land with same value in production to Kuvera, by collecting six hamlets in the two neighbouring clusters.89 Such a manoeuvre is possible only through the estimation of the value in terms of a uniform unit. The kaparddaka-purāṇa functioned as such a unit and the assessment of annual production by it enabled the Senas to overcome the difference of standards of land measurement.90

87 EI, 21, p.218, ll.34-38, p.219, ll.46-48.
88 Ibid., p.219, ll.44-49.
89 Those hamlets are located in two clusters with two separate border descriptions, both of which belong to the same caturaka. Ibid., p.218, ll.26-34.
90 In a different context of the early modern Deccan, Perlin convincingly discussed how monetisation facilitated organisation of a uniform administrative system despite local variations of measurement and so on. F. Perlin, The Invisible City: Monetary, Administrative and Popular Infrastructures in Asia and Europe, 1500-1900, Hampshire, 1993, pp.46-48.
The assessment of production in terms of a currency unit was also inherited and practiced by the later Devas in Samatata, as is shown by the Mehar grant of Dāmodaradeva, dated SE 1156 and RE 4.\textsuperscript{91}

While the Sena grants show further infiltration of the control of the kingship and its administrative apparatus, the presence and activity of sāmantas are less visible under the Sena rule. They are conspicuous by their absence in the process of land grants as active participants, while some titles denoting this group appear in the address of the Sena plates.\textsuperscript{92} They never appear as petitioners of grants, unlike their counterpart in the previous period.\textsuperscript{93} Instead, members of the royal household like queens are indirectly mentioned as petitioners. Vilāsadevi, the queen of Vijayasena and the mother of Vallālasena, is referred to as a petitioner in the grants of both the kings.\textsuperscript{94} Sāmantas in this period are also absent in eulogies in contrast to the ones in the previous period when genealogies were mentioned in both copper plate and other inscriptions.\textsuperscript{95}

The only exception is a sāmanta showing open defiance by issuing a copper plate grant on his own. The Rakshaskhali grant was issued by Dōmmānapāla, who is a son of a mahāmāndalika and wields the titles including ‘sāmanta hostile to mahārajādhirāja’ (mahārajādhirāja-vipaṅsa-sāmanta).\textsuperscript{96} As this inscription is dated SE 1118, i.e., 1196 A. D., the mahārajādhirāja mentioned here seems to be Laksmaṇasena. The case recorded in this inscription pertains to the area named Purva-Khāṭikā, which is said to have been acquired by this Pāla family originating from Ayodhyā.\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{91} See Appendix 4 Table 5.
\textsuperscript{92} Rāja, rājanyaka, rānaka, rājaputra etc. in Appendix 5 Table 5.
\textsuperscript{93} Supra, pp.193-196.
\textsuperscript{95} Supra, pp.193-196.
\textsuperscript{96} \textit{EI}, 27, p.122, ll.1-3.
\textsuperscript{97} 'Ayodhyā-viniḥṣṭa-Pāl-ānvay-opārjīṭa-Pūrvva-Khāṭik-āntabhātī', \textit{Ibid}, l.3.
It can be located to the east side of Bhagirathi, adjacent to Paścima-Khaṭikā, which is mentioned in the Govindapur plate of Lakṣmaṇasena as his territory.⁹⁸ There is no mention of land assessment in the Rakshaskhali grant, while the Govindapur plate mentions it. This fact seems to indicate that the system of assessment was not implemented in the territory of this sāmanta family, who held it in heredity. On the other hand, their exceptional defiance and visibility paradoxically show how well the Senas could keep the sāmantas under their control in the areas where they implemented the system of land assessment. In these areas, sāmantas or subordinates of the king appear as landholders with superior tenure together with royal members, as I will discuss in the third section below.

2. Establishment of Brahmanical Authority: Royal Adoption of their Norms and Dominance in Rural Society

One tendency which became obvious in this period is the establishment of the authority of brāhmaṇas both in courts and the rural society. In courts, it took the form of closer association of kingship with brāhmaṇas and its appropriation of particular Brahmanical norms.

The brāhmaṇas with whom kingship got involved in this period were highly qualified brāhmaṇas. In the copper plate inscriptions of Madanapāla, all the donees held the title of pandita and bhaṭṭaputra,⁹⁹ in contrast to the donees of the earlier Pāla grants, who held none or only the latter.¹⁰⁰ Apart from the good family background and the qualification of Vedic and other studies, these panditas are credited with services in the form of mahādāna rituals and recital of the Mahābhārata, which will be minutely discussed.

⁹⁸ IB, p.96, l.34. A. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., p.80.
⁹⁹ pandita-bhaṭṭaputra Muraripurātadevasarman, Rajibpur CPI, year 2, l.50; pandita-bhaṭṭaputra Vaṭeśvarasvāmiśarman, JASB, 69, pt.1, 1900, p.72, ll.44-45; pandita-bhaṭṭaputra Mahesvararātāśarman, Rajibpur CPI, l.47.
¹⁰⁰ Ex. bhaṭṭaputra Kṛṣṇādityaśarman, Bangarh CPI of Mahipāla I, year 9, EI, 14, p.328, l.49.
In case of the Varmans and the Senas, their patronage of eminent authors of the *Dharmanibandhas* is well-known. *Bhatta* Bhavadeva is one of them who authored several *Dharmanibandhas* like the *Prāyaścittaparakarana* and the *Sambandhaviveka*.\(^{101}\) His association with the Varman king Harivarman as his minister (*saiva*) is attested by the Bhubaneswar inscription of the former.\(^{102}\) Aniruddha is another *nibandhakāra* credited with authorship of the *Hāralatā* and the *Pitṛdāvatī*.\(^{103}\) He was a preceptor (*guru*) of Vallālasena, as the latter mentioned in the introduction of the *Dānasāgara*.\(^{104}\) Halāyuḍha, an eminent scholar, was also associated with the Senas.\(^{105}\) According to the description of himself in the *Brāhmanasarvasva*, he was a royal scholar (*rāja-pandita*) in his boyhood and *mahāmahattaka*, which seems to be an officer involved with royal grant under the Senas,\(^{106}\) in his youth. Lakṣmaṇasena conferred on him a position of *dharmādhiṅkāra* in his adulthood or at the end of his youth.\(^{107}\) The last position seems to be the same as *mahādharmaṅdhyakṣa, mahādharmaṅdhiṅkṛta, dharmaṅdhyakṣa* or *dharmaṅdhiṅkṛta*, as he interchangeably used them as his own titles in the *Brāhmanasarvasva*.\(^{108}\) His father Dhanaṅjaya also held the position of *dharmaṅdhyakṣa*.\(^{109}\) The function of this office, which is often interpreted as...
that of a judge, is not necessarily clear. As D. M. Bhattacharya claimed, it can be an office in charge of religion, especially dealing with religious grants and endowments made by the king. Halāyudha once called himself 'officer in charge of the treasury of dharma' (dharmakośādhiṃ) in his work. However, the connotation of dharma is not limited to religion and the appointment of a nibandhakāra like Halāyudha may rather point to its function as an officer in charge of dharma in wider connotation.

The office of mahādharmādhyakṣa had special bearing for the Varmans and the Senas. From the reign of the Varman king Bhojavarman, this office was regularly mentioned as one of the addressees in the copper plate inscriptions, until the end of the Sena regime. This fact makes a contrast to the Pālas, whose list of addressees never includes this office, while Mahādevarāta, the great grandfather of Maheśvararātaśarman, the donee of the second Rajibpur grant of Madanapāla, is mentioned with the title of mahādharmādhiṃkaranīka. It may indicate the growing importance of this office under the Varman and Sena regimes, which corresponds to their close association with eminent nibandhakāras.

What transpires from the association of kingship with those highly qualified brāhmaṇas is the acceptance of particular Brahmanical norms upheld by them. These Brahmanical norms are ones based on Dharmaśāstras and Purāṇas. This is clear from the patronage of nibandhakāras by the Varmans and the Senas mentioned above. In case of the Senas, the kings themselves took the initiative in compiling Dharmanibandhas. Vallālasena

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110 Sircar suggests that it also denotes the superintendent of charities. IEG, p.93.
111 Brāhmaṇasarvasva, introduction, pp.xviii-xix.
112 'halāyudhena gaudendradharmakośādhhiṃ', Ibid., p.132.
113 Appendix 5 Table 4b, 5. The inclusion of mahādharmādhyakṣa in the address of Madanpur CPI of Śrīcandra is based on the conjecture about the illegible letters. Appendix 5 Table 2b.
114 Rajibpur CPI of Madanapāla, year 22, l.46.
compiled the *Dānasāgara* and the *Adbhutasāgara*, while Lakṣmaṇasena took over the compilation of the latter and completed it.\(^{115}\)

Another phenomenon which indicates the acceptance of such Brahmanical norms is the performance of a particular kind of Brahmanical rituals, especially *mahādānas* and *sāntis*, by those kings and their grants of land and village as rewards for the ritual service. Both the Rajibpur plates of Madanapāla record village grants as rewards (*dakṣīṇā*) for the ritual of *hemāśva-mahādāna* (donation of the golden horse).\(^{116}\) In the first plate, dated year 2, Muraripurātadevasaṅkṣemman received a village as a reward for the ritual held by Kumārapāla on the full-moon day.\(^{117}\) In the second plate, dated year 22, his son Maheśvararātasaṅkṣemman was granted a village as a reward for the ritual held at the occasion of solar eclipse.\(^{118}\) Apart from them, the Manahali plate of Madanapāla, year 8, records the donation of a village to Vaṭeśvarasvaṃsaṅkṣemman as a reward for his recital of the *Mahābhārata* for chief queen Citramatika.\(^{119}\)

The copper plate inscriptions of Varmans do not have any direct references to such rituals. However, the donees of the Samantasar grant of Harivarman and the Belava grant of Bhojavaraman wield the titles of *sāntivārika* and *sāntyāgārāḍhikta* respectively.\(^{120}\) The *brāhmaṇas* wielding the former title were seen to have officiated rituals of *mahāsānti* like *kōtihoma* in the inscriptions of Śricandra.\(^{121}\) *Sāntyāgārāḍhiktra* seems to

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\(^{115}\) *HD*, 1, pt.2, pp.730-735.


\(^{117}\) 'Māghe māsi paurna-māsyām antar-adau Gaṅgāyām=vidhitvat snātvā byhad-rāja-śrī Kumārapāladeva-pāder=ddatta-ācārā-āvārya- daksīna-sanvandhena', Rajibpur CPI of Madanapāla, year 2, ll.50-51.

\(^{118}\) 'Māghe māsi sūrya-grāsa-samaye Gaṅgāyām hemāśva-mahādāna-yajña- samutsarggita-daksīna-sambandhena', Rajibpur CPI of Madanapāla, year 22, ll.47-48.

\(^{119}\) *JASB*, 69, pt.1, 1900, p.72, l.45.

\(^{120}\) 'bhattaputra-sāntivārika-śrī' (name of the donee illegible), *EI*, 30, p.58, 2.13: 'sāntyāgārāḍhikta-śrī-Ārāmadevaśaṅkṣemman', *EI*, 12, p.41, l.45.

\(^{121}\) Supra, pp.186-187.
denote 'the priest in charge of the room for the performance of propitiatory rite' according to the philological interpretation.\textsuperscript{122} Their appearance as donees may allude to the performance of *mahāsāntis* by Varman kings and the grant of land as a reward for the ritual service.

The Sena inscriptions mention various Brahmanical rituals performed by the kings and members of the royal household. The Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena refers to the *kanaka tūlpūraṣa mahādāna* (distribution among *brāhmanas* of gold which is weighed against a person)\textsuperscript{123} held by chief queen Vilāsadevi and the land grant as a reward for *homa* performed in it.\textsuperscript{124} The same queen is credited with the performance of *hemāśva mahādāna* in the Naihati grant of her son Vallālasena.\textsuperscript{125} The Govindapur plate of Lakṣmaṇasena records a village grant at the time of coronation ceremony (*rājya-ābhiseka*),\textsuperscript{126} while the Tarpandighi plate of the same king mentions a land grant as a reward on the occasion of *hemāśvaratha mahādāna* (donation of a golden chariot with seven or four horses).\textsuperscript{127} The Madhainagar plate of the same king seems to mention 'original coronation' (*mūl-ābhiseka*) and *aindrī mahāsānti* as the occasion of a village grant.\textsuperscript{128} According to the passage of the *Adbhutasāgara* cited by N. K. Bhattasali, the latter is a propitiatory rite prescribed in coronation ceremonies when invasion from an enemy circle is apprehended, when one's own territory is divided, and for killing one's enemy.\textsuperscript{129} It can be interpreted as the reworking of the original coronation ceremony with the performance of this propitiatory rite against

\textsuperscript{122} IEG, p.299.
\textsuperscript{123} HD, 2, pt.2, p.869
\textsuperscript{124} IB, p.63, ll.39-41.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p.74, ll.51-52.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., p.96, l.46.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., p.102, l.46. For this ritual, see HD, 2, pt.2, p.875.
\textsuperscript{128} SF, 2, p.128, ll.49-50.
\textsuperscript{129} 'bhaviṣyatābhiseke ca paracakrabhyāṣu ca/ svarāṣṭrabhede 'ribadhe aindrī sāntistathesyate/', N. K. Bhattasali, 'Rājāvādi (Bhāwāl) Plate of Lakṣmaṇa Śena Deva', *JASBL*, 8, 1942, pp.1-39, p.20.
the invasion and conquest of Nadia by the army of Muhammad Bakhtyār Khalji.\textsuperscript{130}

The performance of such rituals and the donation to \textit{brāhmanas} for their participation and service in them have already been witnessed in the Dhulla and Rampal copper plate inscriptions of Śricandra, which belonged to Vaṅga in the tenth century.\textsuperscript{131} The cases cited above show the continuance of such a practice in Vaṅga under the Varmans and then the Senas, and its spread to the other sub-regions like Varendra and Rāḍha under the Pālas and the Senas. The adoption of this practice by the Pālas in their last phase is remarkable, because of its absence in their earlier grants. As was discussed above, the imposition of \textit{brāhmanas} who had personal association with the king through ritual service on the rural settlements and society may have contributed to the extension of the king’s influence.\textsuperscript{132} Such a phenomenon, the performance of Brahmanical rituals for the kings and land grant as its reward, can also be interpreted as extension of the functions of \textit{brāhmanas} from the domestic rites for themselves to the ritual service in the courts, and as the evidence of the assimilation of the courtly culture of Bengal to the wider tradition, if we follow Morrison’s opinion.\textsuperscript{133} What is important, however, is the wide acceptance of particular religious norms and values propagated by \textit{Purāṇas}. This is evident in the performance of \textit{mahādānās}, which were first codified in the \textit{Matsyapurāṇa} around the period between 550 to 650 A. D.\textsuperscript{134} They may have been enacted in a particular social context of the state formation and the acculturation in West Deccan and performed by various kings located in the peripheral regions for their

\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.19-20.
\textsuperscript{131} Supra, pp.186-187.
\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{133} Morrison, \textit{Political Centers and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal}, p.109.
\textsuperscript{134} R. C. Hazra, \textit{Studies in the Purānic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs} (2nd ed.), Delhi, 1975, pp.44-45.
function of validating royal power. The adoption of *mahādānas* by kings of Bengal in this period may indicate their acceptance of the religious principles which permeates in these rituals and is propagated by these texts. The acceptance of the *Purāṇas* as their guideline by the Senas is also attested by the Madanapada plate of Viśvarūpasena, which mentions the acquisition of merit of land donation propagated by the *Śivapurāṇa* as a reason of the grant. The extensive use of the *Purāṇas* by Vallālasena for his *Dānasāgara* and *Adbhutasāgara* also endorses this point.

The establishment of Brahmanical authority in the rural society is discernible in the growing presence of *brahmānas*. What is especially conspicuous is the settling down of highly qualified *brahmānas* and their emergence as large scale landholders in the rural society.

Multiple migrations of highly qualified *brahmānas*, which were witnessed in the previous period, continued in this period. The donees of the Rajibpur copper plate inscriptions of Madanapāla belonged to a *brahmana* family originating from a place named Sammārjjanī. Muraripurätāśarman, the donee of the first plate, was a resident of Deviśkiṭa and received a village Vudhavaḍā-grama. His son Mahēśvararātāśarman, the donee of the second plate, was a resident of Vudhavada-grama and received two land plots in villages Vātanḍa-vallī and Cakhaḍī. These cases show multiple migrations of an eminent *brahmana* family from Sammārjjanī.

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138 Supra, pp.213-217.
139 Rajibpur CPI, year 2, l.48; Rajibpur CPI, year 22, l.46.
140 Rajibpur CPI, year 2, ll.37, 44, 49.
141 Rajibpur CPI, year 22, ll.33-35, 41, 46.
to Devikota, then to Vudhavadā-grāma. In the Belava grant of Bhojavarman, Pitāmvaradevaśarman, great-grandfather of the donee Rāmadevaśarman, was said to have originated from Madhyadeśa and belonged to Siddhala-grāma in Uttara-Rādhya. Ramadevaśarman received a land plot in village Upyalikā-grāma belonging to Kauśāṁvi-aṣṭagaccha-khaṇḍala in Adhahpattana-maṇḍala of Pauṇḍra-bhukti. Though the location of Upyalikā-grāma is not clear, it might be located within Vaṅga, if we consider the fact that the village was under the jurisdiction of Pauṇḍra-bhukti, which covered Vaṅga and Samatata under the Candras, and that the copper plate was found in present Narshindi district of Dhaka division, Bangladesh. This is a case in which a brahmaśa belonging to a family originating from Madhyadeśa and having settled in Siddhala-grāma, a Brahmical centre in Rādhya, migrated to Vaṅga because of the patronage by the Varman king. Similarly, Ratnakaradevaśarman, the great-grandfather of Udayakaradevaśarman, the donee of the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena, was said to have originated from Madhyadeśa and belonged to Kāntijoṅgī. Udayakaradevaśarman was donated a land plot in Bhāṭavāḍa-grāma belonging to Khāḍi-visaya, which can be located in the present Diamond Harbour division. Though the location of Kāntijoṅgī is not clear, this is also a case of multiple migrations. These cases may show the continuance of the spread and networking of brahmaṇas through migration. It continued until the beginning of the thirteenth century, as the inscription on the image of Viśṇu from Keoar, near Rampal in Munshiganj district of Bangladesh,

142 ‘Madhyadeśa-vinirgga[ṣya*] Uttara-Rādhāyām Siddhala-grāmiya-Pitāmvaradevaśarmmanah’, IB, p.21, ll.43-44.
143 Ibid., p.20, ll.27-29, p.21, ll.37, 45.
144 Supra, pp.38, 41.
146 Ibid., p.63, ll.31-34.
mentions a brahmana from Tataki in Varendri as a maker of the statue. It indicates the migration of a brahmana from Varendra to Vaṅga.

Another tendency is observable in the contemporary Manahali copper plate inscription of Madanapāla. Donee Vateśvarasvāmiśarman was also a highly qualified brahmana in terms of both learning and family background like others mentioned above, as was shown by the title of pandita, the mention of the Vedic school, the meticulous description of his gotra (Kautsa), pravaras (Śāndilya, Āsita, Devala) and a genealogy of four generations. However, he is said to be both belonging to and residing in the place named Campāhiṣṭi, without any mention of the origin of his family. This fact might mean that his family had settled in Campāhiṣṭi as early as they remembered, or that their association with this locality was more important than their origin. In any case, it shows that this brahma family settled and took root in this locality. The diminishing importance of origin or rather migration itself is also discernible in the Sena grants. In all their copper plate inscriptions after the reign of Vijayasena, mentions of the origin and residence of the donee are conspicuous by their absence. This fact makes a clear contrast to the cases of multiple migrations mentioned above, including the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena. In the light of the Manahali plate, this change may be attributed to the settling down of highly qualified brahmans, who were eligible for land grants, in the rural society. As those brahmans settled down in the rural society and became a part of it, their origin and association with supra-local Brahmanical centre seems to have lost its importance as identity tags. Instead of them, the identity based on

147 'Vaṅgokena kṛto Viṣṇur-Viṣṇu-sālokya-kāmyayā [/ 1*] Varendri-Tatakiyena Śāndilya-kula-janmanā [/] EL, 17, p.356, ll.2-3.
149 Ibid., ll.42-43, 44.
150 'Campāhiṣṭi-yaya Campāhiṣṭi-vāstavyāya', JASB, 69, pt.1, 1900, p.72, ll.43-44.
the sub-regions of Bengal appeared in this period. In the discussion about Vedic studies among contemporary brāhmanas, Halāyudha mentions Rādhiya and Varendra as categories of brāhmanas, together with Utkalas and Pāscattya, in his Brāhmaṇasarvasva.151 While the latter two categories indicate the presence of brāhmana groups with distinctive identities as migrants from Utkala, the north-eastern sub-region of present Orissa,152 and ‘West’, connoting Madhyadeśa, respectively, the former two categories show the making of identities based on their sub-regional affiliations among brāhmanas in Bengal. The making of such sub-regional identities for brāhmanas with Vedic learning presupposes their settling down and establishment of their networks in those sub-regions.

The settling down of highly qualified brāhmanas and their incorporation into the rural society are also indicated by the shift of meaning of the word brāhmanottara. This term appeared in a part of the address, which mentioned local residents, in the Pala and Candra inscriptions. In the standard address of the Pala grants, the relevant part can be interpreted as ‘residents beginning with brāhmanas, accompanied by mahattama, uttama and kutumbins, reaching medas, andhrakas and candālas.’153 In the Candra plates, the same part runs as ‘people and cultivators beginning with brāhmanas.’154 In both cases, this term is used to condition the categories denoting local residents and to indicate the inclusion of brāhmanas among

151 ‘tatra ca kalāvāyuhprajñotsāhasraddhādīnāmalpatvāduttakalapāścāttyādibhirvedādhyayanamātram kriyate rādhiyavārendraistv-adhyayanam vinā kiyadeva vedārthasa karmamimāṃsādvaṃreṇa yajñetikartavyatāvīcāraḥ kriyate’, Brāhmaṇasarvasva, p.8.
152 For its location, see Sircar, Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India, pp.173-174.
154 ‘janapadān kṣettrakārāṃ-ṣa brāhmanottarān’, Paschimbhag CPI of Śricandra, year 5, EDEP, p.67, 1.33.
them. The shift of meaning is observable in the copper plate inscription of the Varmans. In the Samantasar grant of Harivarman, the earliest of them, the relevant portion is the same as that of the Candra plates.\(^{155}\) In the other plates, however, the term *brāhmaṇa* is inserted between cultivators and *brāhmaṇottara*.\(^{156}\) This insertion converts *brāhmaṇottara* from a term conditioning local residents to a separate category which contrasts with *brāhmaṇa*. In this connotation, this term can be interpreted as 'higher *brāhmaṇas* differentiated from other *brāhmaṇas*. Their appearance among addressees of copper plate inscriptions may indicate the incorporation of highly qualified *brāhmaṇas* into the rural society. This expression is regularly employed in the Sena grants.\(^{157}\)

The clue to the position of those *brāhmaṇas* in the rural society is offered by descriptions in the copper plate inscriptions. First to mention is the resources and privileges conferred on donees. They are as extensive as they were in the previous period. In the Pāla grants of this period, a clause 'with bushes and shrubs' (*sa·jhāta·vitapa*) is added to the privileges listed in the earlier grants.\(^{158}\) The privileges listed in the Varman plates are almost the same as ones of the Candra plates.\(^{159}\) In case of the Senas, the privileges listed in their grants show some change during their rule. They are similar to ones of the Belava plate of Bhojavarman in the early phase. In the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena, the land divided by confirmed borders and

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155 ‘janapadān kṣetrakarāṃś=ca brāhmaṇottarān’, *EI*, 30, p.258, 2.7·8
157 Appendix 5 Table 5.
158 ‘sa·jhāta·vitapaḥ’, Rajibpur CPI, year 2, 1.45; Manahali CPI, year 8, *JASE*, 69, 1900, p.72, 1.40; Rajibpur CPI, year 22, 1.42. For privileges listed in the earlier Pāla grants, see Supra, pp.166·167.
159 Samantasar CPI of Harivarman, *EI*, 30, p.258, 2.9·11, 2.15; Belava CPI of Bhojavarmadeva, *IB*, p.21, 1.37·41, 47·48. The latter does not include ‘cauroddharana.’ For privileges listed in the Candra plates, see Supra, p.171.
reaching grass land and pasture is donated with flat land (sa\-tala), raised ground (s\-oddes\-a), Mango and Jack fruits trees (s\-āmra\-panas\-a), Betel and Cocoanut trees (sa\-gувāka\-nārikela), forest (sa\-vana), watering place (sa\jalasthala), pits and saline land (sa\-garto\-sara), right to levy fines of ten offences (sahya\-da\-ś\-parādhā). It is also exempted from all the labours (parihrta\-sarvpa\-pida) and entrance of ca\-t̄as and bha\-t̄as (a\-ca\-t̄a\-bha\-t̄a\-pravesa), which were synonymous to cā\-t̄as and bha\-t̄as of the previous period. Nothing should be taken from the land (aki\-ncit\-pragrāhyā) and all the dues of the king like bhoga, kara and hira\-nya accompany the tenure.

In the Naihati grant of Vallālasena, flat land and raised ground are substituted by a clause ‘with homestead, cultivated and fallow land and so on’ and forest is replaced by bushes and shrubs (sa\-jhāta\-vita\-pa), while other privileges are same as the Barrackpur plate. Number of privileges decreases from the reign of Lakṣma\-nasena. In the grants of him and his son Vi\-svarūpasena, Mango and Jack fruit trees are not listed as resources conferred on the donee. A clause about king’s dues accompanied with tenure is conspicuous by its absence.

In the previous chapter, the extensiveness of privileges conferred on the donee was interpreted as evidence of the strong presence of donees in the rural society and the assertion of control over it by the political authorities. From this viewpoint, the decrease of those privileges in the later Sena period could be interpreted as the evidence of the declining

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160 'yathā\-prasiddha\-catu\-ḥ\-sim\-āvacchinā', IB, p.63, 1.33, ‘t̄ma\-pūtī\-gocara\-paryyantā’, Ibid., l.34.
161 Ibid., ll.34-35
162 Ibid., ll.35-36.
163 'aki\-ncit\-pragrāhyā samasta\-rāja\-bhoga\-kara\-hiranya\-pratyāya\-sahitā', Ibid., ll.36-37.
164 'sa\-vāṣṭu\-nāla\-khillādibhiḥ', IB, p.74, 1.45.
165 Ibid., l.47.
166 Ex. Tarpandighi CPI of Lakṣma\-nasena, Ibid., p.102, ll.38-41.
167 Supra, pp.167-168.
authority of *brāhmaṇa* donees and the political powers which guarantee those privileges. However, its implication can be different in the context of this period. As was discussed above, this period witnessed settling down of highly qualified *brāhmaṇas* and their incorporation into the rural society. In this context, one may assume their dominant presence in the rural society and the absence of minute description of royal dues assigned to the donee may rather imply unspecified and arbitrary character of the extraction by him. Arbitrariness allowed in their tenure is indicated by a clause in the Idilpur and Vangiya Sahitya Parishad grants of Viśvarūpaṇa, which says that donation was made for the donee ‘to enjoy’ donated property ‘with enjoyment by own will’ as a hereditary right.\(^{168}\)

On the other hand, the decree to residential cultivators to obey the donee and pay tribute to him is conspicuously missing in all the Sena grants and the Belava plate of Bhojavaranman, while the petition to all the addressees for agreement and to future kings for protection remains in the Sena grants.\(^{169}\) As such a decree for cultivators in the Pāla grants can be interpreted as an assertion of control by the king over the rural society and showing relative decline of power of the latter vis-à-vis the political authority,\(^{170}\) the disappearance of this clause could indicate decreasing control. However, the absence of this decree does not necessarily mean the retreat of control of the political authority, as the king is said to have donated land plots ‘after causing to make shrines and ponds etc. and causing to plant Betel and Cocoanut trees etc.’ in the Idilpur and Vangiya Sahitya Parishad copper plate inscriptions of Viśvarūpasena.\(^{171}\) This statement shows the

\(^{168}\) ‘*putra-pautr-ādi-santāti-kramaṇa sva-cchand-opabhogen=opabhoktum*, *IB*, p.125, ll.52-53; p.147, l.61.

\(^{169}\) ‘*tad=bhavadbhih sarvvairev=ānumantavyam bhāvibhir=api nrpatibhir= apaharaṇe narakapāta-bhayāt pālane dharmma-gauravāt pāλaniyaṃ*’, Saktipur CPI of Lāksmaṇasena, year 6, *EI*, 21, p.219, ll.49-50.

\(^{170}\) Supra, pp.165-168.

\(^{171}\) ‘*devakula-puṣkariṇyādikam kārayītvā guvāka-nārikel-ādikām*
king's claim of authority to deploy local residents for construction and other works for the donee, at least notionally, and the absence of the decree to residential peasants needs to be explained in another way. It is notable that the disappearance of the decree was coincident with the shift of the meaning of brāhmaṇottara and incorporation of highly qualified brāhmaṇas into the rural society. In this context, absence of the decree to cultivators can be interpreted in relation to the establishment of the dominance of brāhmaṇas in the rural society. As brāhmaṇas established their dominance over other members of the rural society, kingship might not have needed special decree to assure the compliance of those members with the donee, who also belonged to brāhmaṇa community. This point is endorsed by the fact that only brāhmaṇas and the brāhmaṇottaras are mentioned as addressees belonging to the rural society in the copper plate inscriptions of Viśvarūpasena.172 It indicates the establishment of the dominance of brāhmaṇas in the rural society, so that the political authority need not announce the donation to other members.

A glimpse of one aspect of Brahmanical dominance in the rural society is obtainable from the case recorded in the Vangiya Sahitya Parishad plate of Viśvarūpasena.173 This inscription was issued for the donation of the thirteen land plots scattered over six villages in three administrative units, and measured 336 1/2 udānas in total with production of 500 hiranyas, to a brāhmaṇa named Halāyudhaśarman.174 Its contents reveal the actual aim of the grant to upgrade those land plots, which had been acquired by

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172 Idilpur CPI, year 3?, IB, p.124, l.46; Madanapada CPI, year 14, EI, 33, p.324, l.41; Vangiya Sahitya Parishad CPI, year 13, 14, IB, p.146, l.41.


174 For details, see Appendix 4 Table 4.
Halāyudhasarman on six occasions minutely recorded in the inscription, to śāsana land exempted from revenue and other charges. The detailed information about land plots provided in this inscription offers a rare glimpse into the multi-layered land rights and this aspect will be discussed in the next section. What are important for the present discussion are activities of Halāyudhasarman gleaned from this record. Modes of land acquisition adopted by him and mentioned in the grant include not only donations by the king and other political authorities but also purchases made by the donee himself. Among the eleven land plots acquired by the donee, four are mentioned as pattoli purchased by him from groups of people. Pattoli originally means ‘deed of purchase’ and denotes land purchased by such a purchase deed. These pattoli lands are located in the two villages belonging to the different administrative units and three of them include homestead land with betel nut trees. A land plot in Ajikulā-pāṭaka is especially mentioned with annual income from the sales of three thousand betel nuts from a betel nut plantation (kalana) belonging to it. Apart from them, a śāsana land held by rāja-pāṇḍita Mahesara in village Ghāgharakāṭi belonging to Urā-caturaka of Phandradvīpa was also purchased by Halāyudhasarman. What transpires from these cases is the presence of this highly qualified brāhmaṇa as a large scale landholder involved with acquisition and management of his landholdings. As a brāhmaṇa with laudable family background indicated by proper mentions of his gotra, pravaras and genealogy, and with credentials of Vedic study and

175 IB, p.146, l.51-p.147, l.52, l1.53-54, 54-55. Appendix 4 Table 4, nos.6·9.
177 One is located in village Ajikulā-pāṭaka belonging to Navasamgraha-caturaka of Madhukṣirak-āvṛtti, other three are located in village Deīlahasti belonging to Lāuhaṇḍā-caturaka of Vikramapura-bhāga. Appendix 4 Table 4, nos.6 and 7·9.
178 Appendix 4 Table 4, no.6.
179 Appendix 4 Table 4, no.12.
180 Vātsyāya-sagotra, Aurva-Cyavana-Bhārgava-Yāmadagnya-Āpnuvat-
the title of *pandita*,\(^{181}\) he was eligible for donations and was actually granted some land plots.\(^{182}\) However, he seems not to have been satisfied with them and vigorously accumulated land holdings through purchases and had them upgraded as *śāsana* land. It is also notable that he especially purchased homestead lands which contain betel nut trees and that his land holdings were scattered around a wide area. These facts indicate his interest in the management of landholdings through the accumulation of potentially profitable land plots, whose potential would have been further enhanced by his possession of the seven betel vine plantations (*varaja*) in one of the donated land plots.\(^{183}\) Thus the case of Halāyudhaśarman shows the presence and activities of a *brahmāṇa* in the rural society as a landlord. This case could be exceptional, as the other Sena grants are silent about such activities of donees, while some of them received land plots with similar or higher value.\(^{184}\) However, the fact that the *pattoli* tenures purchased by Halāyudhaśarman were recognised and upgraded to *śāsana* tenure by the king may indicate that the active involvement of *brahmāṇas* in land acquisition and management was rather a normal phenomenon which would not make any problems for the political authority.

Thus the dominance of *brahmāṇas* in the rural society might be underscored in terms of their position as large scale landholders, apart from their authority.

\(^{181}\) *Pañca-pravara*, *IB*, p.147, l.63. He is the great-grandson of Lakṣmidharaśevasarman, the grandson of Devadharadevasarman and the son of Adhyadevasarman. *Ibid.*, ll.61-63.


\(^{183}\) Appendix 4 Table 4, nos.1-4, 11.

\(^{184}\) Appendix 4 Table 4, no.4.

\(^{184}\) In Madanapada CPI of the same king, the donee received land plots whose production was valued as 627 *purāṇas* per annum. *EI*, 33, p.325, l.45.
3. Social Stratification and Infiltration of Monetary System

Stratification of the rural society is still discernible in the Pala grants in this period. In all three plates of Madanapāla, local residents from *mahattamas, uttamas, kutumbins* to *candālas*, accompanied with *brāhmaṇas*, are informed of the land grants. As is discussed in the previous chapter, this is an expression to comprehend all the members of a rural society by indicating both their top and bottom ends and shows intensified state of the social stratification, partly due to the incorporation of fringe groups. What is notable here is a simplification of the description of the bottom rank, which generally contained *medas* and *andhras*, and *kaivarttas* in one case, apart from *candālas* in the previous period. While the omission of *kaivarttas* may be explained by the upward social mobility of a part of them to a landholding group with their own chief, there is no evidence of such a social mobility for *medas* and *andhras*. This simplification seems to show the change of cognition of the Pala administration, for which the distinction among these low class members became less important. Compared with them, groups included in the top rank are the same as before. It may show the relative importance of those dominant groups in the rural society recognised by the Pala administration. They maintained their dominant position in the rural society of Varendra even after the turmoil of the *kaivartta* rebellion and the administrative reorganisation under Rāmapāla, and the Pala administration needed their compliance, though it tried to

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185 'prativāsino brāhmaṇottarān mahattārottama-kutumbi-purogama-candālā-paryantān', Rajibpur CPI, year 2, 1.43: Manahali CPI, year 8, *JASB*, 69, 1900, p.72, 1.38: Rajibpur CPI, year 22, 1.40.
186 Supra, p.164.
187 Cf. Appendix 4 Table 1c, d.
188 Suvarnākārikā-daṇḍa CPI of Gopāla II, year 4 (no.1), 1.36. My own reading from the photograph.
189 Supra, pp.223-224.
190 Cf. Appendix 4 Table 1c, d.
make further infiltration into the rural society. On the other hand, some form of landholdings by professional groups is discernible in the Rajibpur plate dated year 22, which mentions service land (vr̥tti) held by the kaivarttas and the carmakāras.

The presence and activity of cultivators and other residents in the rural society were becoming almost invisible in the Varman and Sena copper plate inscriptions, except in their address section, as they seem to have been totally sidelined from the process of land grants due to further infiltration of the political authority and establishment of the dominance of brāhmaṇas, which were discussed above. However, a rare glimpse is offered by the Vangiya Sahitya Parishad grant of Viśvarūpasena, which was discovered in the neighbourhood of Dhaka and pertains to the sub-region of Vanga. It shows a complicated land relation with which members of the rural society are involved and horizontal networks organised by them.

As is discussed above, this grant records upgrading of the thirteen land plots acquired by Halāyudhaśarman on six occasions to sāsana land. Descriptions of land plots and occasions show complicated land relations. Vertically, we can see as many as four levels of rights or powers on a particular land plot. The highest is the power to give the status of sāsana to a land plot, which is exclusively wielded by the king. The second is the right to donate several land plots. The third is the right of landholding. The fourth is the right of cultivation, which seems to be kept by cultivators.

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191 Supra, pp.231-232.
192 Rajibpur CPI, year 22, l.43-44.
193 Appendix 5 Tables 4 and 5.
194 Supra, pp.254-257.
196 Sircar, op. cit., p.201. 'Paṇḍravardhana-bhukty-antahpāti-Vaṅge', IB, p.146, l.42.
197 For details, see Appendix 4 Table 4.
Of those rights and powers, the third level, that is, the right of land holding seems to be substantial as this is what Halāyudhaśarman sought after. This level is located immediately above the level of cultivators and seems to entitle the holder some share of production from the land and the power to have it cultivated. It is held by the king in four plots,198 by prince Prusottamaśena in a plot,199 by rāja-pandita Mahesara, a sāsana holder, in a plot200 and untitled people who seem to be local residents in five plots. Among the last plots, four are jointly held by groups of people, whose names are affixed with vāra, which indicates their collectivity, as I will discuss below.201 The remaining one plot of land with homestead, measured 165 udāna and held by Sauvasā, Kirito, Maito, Ucchoka and others seems to be not a single plot but a collection of several land plots held by each of them, as this plot is much larger than any other plot and those people are not affixed with vāra.202 This right is alienable and Halāyudhaśarman acquired it through donations by the king and the prince or through purchases from a sāsana holder and groups of local people.

The cultivators, who are located at the fourth level, are rather indirectly mentioned in these cases. In some plots, mentions of annual income are preceded by a word either ‘grāma-patyā’203 or ‘nānā-patyā.’204 According to Sircar, they seem to be the abbreviations of ‘grāma-rājana-patitvāt’ and ‘nānāgrāma-rājana-patitvāt’, and respectively indicate that the tenants of land plots are inhabitants of the village in which land plots are located or villages of the neighbourhood.205 These expressions show the

198 Ibid., nos.1-3, 5.
199 Ibid., no.11.
200 Ibid., no.10.
201 Ibid., nos.4, 7-9.
202 Ibid., no.6. See Sircar, op. cit., p.205.
203 Appendix 4 Table 4, nos.1-3.
204 Ibid., nos.5-6.
205 Sircar, op. cit., pp.203-204.
presence of cultivators who collectively cultivated land under landholders. Their subservient position to landholders is indicated by the fact that even their names are not mentioned while the right of landholding is shifted. On the other hand, it is notable that the collectivity of cultivators can be constructed both at village and supra-village levels.

The second level is held by the king in three plots,²⁰⁶ and by prince Sūryasena and sāndhivigrāhīka Nāṇisimha, a king’s subordinate, in one plot each.²⁰⁷ As they are said to have donated the same land plot which was purchased by Halāyudhaśarman from a group of landholders, what is denoted here seems to be a superior right over the land. The fact that the land donated by a prince and a subordinate needed to be upgraded to a sāsana land by the king indicates that this right is inferior to the right held by the king and does not entail the immunity and privileges accompanying the sāsana land. From these points, this might be the right to some portion of production, possibly with some administrative authority, assigned to members of royal household and king’s subordinates. It seems to be accompanied with the obligation of revenue payment and other duties to the king, which can be exempted by the issue of sāsana.

The first level, the king’s power to make sāsana land, indicates his overarching authority which covers all his territory, at least notionally. He can even confiscate and donate some land plots under his subordinate, as is alluded to in other Sena grants. In the Barrackpur plate of Vijayasena, village Bhāṭavādā-grāma, from which a land plot is donated, is affixed by ‘enjoyment (sambhoga) of Ghāsa.’²⁰⁸ One of the land plots donated in the Madanpada grant of Viśvarūpasena is described as ‘belonging to (king’s) own dependant.’²⁰⁹ The power of king may be backed up by the infiltration into

²⁰⁶ Appendix 4 Table 4, nos.4, 6-7.
²⁰⁷ Ibid, no.8 (Sūryasena), 9 (Nāṇisimha).
the rural society, which was discussed above.

Members of the rural society, including both landholders and cultivators, constructed some forms of horizontal networks, while they were embedded in this complicated land relation. The networks of cultivators may be formed through their collective cultivation of a land plot under the dominance of landholders. They can be formed both at village and supra-village levels as is discussed above.

The network of landholders takes the form of collective landholding. In village Rāmasiddhi-pātaka, four new betel vine plantations (varaja) in a lot were held by Nāko, Lokta, Gāṅika and others, and three betel vine plantations in another lot are held by Šremano, Udayi, Apara and Loktaka.210 Each group is affixed with a term vāra.211 According to Sircar, it means ‘collection’ and indicates that each group of betel vine plantations are jointly held by a group of people.212 Similarly, each of three land plots with homestead land, among which two include betel nut trees, in village Deūlahastī was held by a group of people affixed with vāra. Among those plots, a land plots with homestead land measured 25 udāna is held by Āranto, Kāmya, Piṅṭhanāga and others.213 Another plot which consists of 7 udānas of arable land and 3 udānas of homestead land with betel nut tree is held by Vrahmo and Amṛtoka.214 The last plot constituted by 3 udānas of arable land and 4 udānas of homestead land with betel nut tree is held by Kano and Amṛtoka.215 What transpires from these cases is the collectivity and network of a few landholders based on their joint landholding. As joint holders of a

210 Appendix 4 Table 4, no.4.
212 Sircar, op. cit., p.204.
213 Appendix 4 Table 4, no.7. ‘vāra- Āranto- Kāmya- Piṅṭhanāg- ādinām’, IB, p.146, l.51-p.147, l.52.
214 Appendix 4 Table 4, no.8. ‘vāra- Vrahmo- Amṛtokayoh’, IB, p.147, l.53.
215 Appendix 4 Table 4, no.9. ‘vāra- Kano- Amṛtokayoh’, IB, p.147, l.55.
land plot, they seem to share both production from it and burden imposed on it by the superior right holders like the king, the princes and the king's subordinates. It is remarkable in these cases that some people belong to plural landholding groups at the same time. In case of the betel vine plantations of Rāmasiddhi-pātaka, Lokta and Loktaka seem to be one and the same person. As to the land plots in Deūlahasti, Amṛtoka seems to be a member of two landholding groups. It shows that a landholder can have stakes in plural landholdings located in the same village as a member of different landholding groups. Interestingly, two plots in which Amṛtoka has stakes belong to different superior right holders at the second level, that is, prince Sūryasena and sāndhivigrahika Nāṇisimha. It may indicate that while land plots in a village can be under the power of different superior right holders, the interest of a landholder in different land plots can be extended beyond the jurisdiction of one superior right holder, as far as they are located in the same village. Though the relation among different landholding groups are not clear in the context of the present grant, some kind of connection may be facilitated by the presence of a common member. It may allude to a village level horizontal network of landholders.

The information about these landholders is limited to their names and it is difficult to determine their social position only from them. However, their dominance over cultivators is still discernible. They may correspond to local notables like mahattamas in the Pāla grants. Though such a group is not mentioned in the Sena grants including the present one, their latent presence may be indicated by the 'reappearance' of mahattaras in the Mehar plate of Dāmodaradeva, which was issued in neighbouring Samatata, fourteen years after the issue of the present plate. The information

216 Sircar, op. cit., p.204.
217 Appendix 4 Table 4, nos.8-9.
218 Appendix 5 Table 5.
219 'Mehāra-grāma-nivāsi-yathā-pradhāna-janapadān mahattarāṁś=ca', EL
provided by the Vangiya Sahitya Parishad plate shows social stratification of agrarian groups into landholders and subordinate cultivators, within a complicated land relation involving the political authorities, and horizontal networks constructed by each of them. The subordinate position of actual cultivators can be detected in the assignment of agriculture as an occupation of dāsas in the Varnasamkara episode of the Brhaddharmapurāṇa, which will be minutely discussed in the fifth section. Though they are treated as Uttamas or Sat-śūdras, they are not perceived by the brāhmaṇas to be as important as the local literate groups like karanas and ambasthas.

Another phenomenon discernible in the same inscription is the infiltration of monetary system and transaction into the rural society. It is well implied by the fact that Halāyudhasarman could purchase landholdings from groups of landholders by purchase deeds (paṭṭolam) and sāsāna land from another brāhmaṇa. Such transactions are possible only when both sides are accustomed to some form of monetary system. Even though it may not have taken the form of payment in cash, accumulated wealth of the purchaser must have been calculated in terms of a currency unit and his payment must have been accepted by sellers as such. The reference to the price of three thousand betel nuts annually produced from a betel nut plantation (kalana) also indicates prevalence of monetary transaction, which includes sales of betel nuts. The prevalence of monetary system in Bengal

27, p.188, ll.15·16. This inscription is issued in SE 1156, corresponding to 1234 A. D., while the last date recorded in Vangiya Sahitya Parishad Plate is the regnal year 14 of Viśvarūpasena, corresponding to 1220 A. D.


221 Appendix 4 Table4, nos.6·9.

222 Ibid., no.10.

223 Ibid., no.6. ‘that=aitad-vāstu-bhumau kalana-sam-sālm[ ] guvāka-ṣata 30 etan=mūlyam hi 40’, IB, p.146, ll.50·51. For the reading of this part and interpretation of kalana, I followed Sircar. Sircar, op. cit., pp.204·205.
under the Senas is indicated by almost universal application of the assessment of production in terms of currency unit to rural settlements under their control, as is discussed above.\textsuperscript{224} This system of land assessment also presupposes the acquaintance of rural population, at least their upper section including landholders, with monetary transaction.

The activity of artisans, merchants and other professional groups, whose networking was discernible in inscriptions belonging to the previous period,\textsuperscript{225} is difficult to detect in the inscriptions belonging to this period. Though \textit{silpin} Tathāgatasara is credited with engraving all three copper plate inscriptions of Madanapāla,\textsuperscript{226} there is no other information about his identity like original village and genealogy, unlike in the earlier Pāla grants.\textsuperscript{227} In the Varman and Sena grants, even the names of engravers are not mentioned.

One exception is the Deopara stone inscription of Vijayasena. In this inscription, Śūlapāṇi, the engraver, is described as 'a crown jewel of the \textit{silpi-goṣṭhi} of Varendra', with genealogy of four generations and the title of \textit{rāṇaka}.\textsuperscript{228} The presence of artisan families who were specialised in engraving royal inscriptions, having a particular village as centre, and acquiring the status of \textit{sāmanta} was discernible in the earlier Pāla grants as was discussed above.\textsuperscript{229} What is remarkable here is the reference to a corporative body of such artisans based on sub-regional identity. The making of such an organisation in the framework of sub-region can be interpreted as a result of horizontal networking by a group of artisans through their

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{224} Supra, pp.238-242.
\bibitem{225} Supra, pp.217-222.
\bibitem{226} Rajibpur CPI, year 2, 1.63; Manahali CPI, year 8, \textit{JASB}, 69, 1900, p.73, ll.56-57; Rajibpur CPI, year 22, 1.60.
\bibitem{227} Supra, pp.218-220.
\bibitem{228} 'Dharmmo-pranaptā Manadāsa-naptā Vṛhaspateh sūnur-imām praśastim/ cakhāna Vārendraka-śilpi-goṣṭhi-cūḍāmanī rāṇaka-Śūlapāṇih/\textsuperscript{f}, \textit{IB}, p.49, v.36, l.32.
\bibitem{229} Supra, pp.193, 218-220.
\end{thebibliography}

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mobility and establishment of their centres. This tendency is comparable with the making of sub-regional identities among brāhmaṇas as a result of establishment of Brahmanical centres and their spread through migration.\footnote{Supra, pp.252-253.}

It is not clear from the inscriptive evidence how other professional groups are organised, except the case of carmakāras holding service land (vṛtti) under Madanapāla.\footnote{Rajibpur CPI, year 22, ll.43-44.} However, the narrative of Varnasamkara unfolded in the Brhaddharmapurāṇa indicates the presence of hereditary occupational groups perceived by brāhmaṇas as jātis.\footnote{For those groups, see Appendix 6.} The attempt of the brāhmaṇas to systematise these groups according to their own social view will be discussed in the fifth section below.

4. Puranic Festivals: Efforts towards Social Cohesion by Brahmanical Initiative

The rural society delineated from inscriptive evidence shows the continuity and enhancement of some tendencies observed in the previous period in a different historical context. The infiltration of political authorities into the rural society is intensified through the system of land assessment, which is facilitated by the prevalence of monetary transactions. The social stratification continues within more complicated land relations. The efforts of social reorganisation in two ways, namely, the maintenance of social cohesion within the rural society and networking based on professions also seem to be made in this situation. A critical difference from the previous period is the establishment of the authority of brāhmaṇas and their initiative in these efforts of reorganising social networks. Their efforts are discernible in the Purānas composed in Bengal in this period.

The effort of brāhmaṇas towards social cohesion appeared as
prescriptions of festivals at special occasions of a year. The most important
and minutely described among them is the autumn goddess festival held in
the month of Āśvina, which is called by names like Durgotsava, Mahāstami
or Navarātra in the Purāṇas. This is a festival centred on worship of the
goddess known by Durgā and other names by animal sacrifices and other
offerings on the eighth and ninth days of bright fortnight of month Āśvina.
Its procedure is described in several Purāṇas and there are some variations
among them, even between different sections of the same Purāṇa.233 What is
conspicuous in the accounts of this festival in the Purāṇas compiled in Bengal
in this period like the Devibhāgavatapurāṇa, the Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa and
the Brhadharmapurāṇa, and in the Kālikāpurāṇa, which seems to be
compiled in Assam or the part of Bengal near to it in the tenth or the first
half of the eleventh century,234 is the element of social gathering.

According to the Brhadharmapurāṇa, the festival starts with the
invocation of the goddess on the ninth day of the dark fortnight in month
Āśvina.235 It continues for fifteen days until the ninth of the bright fortnight
of the same month, and the goddess is worshipped in the form of Vilva tree
for the first thirteen days.236 On the seventh day of the bright fortnight, the
goddess is brought to a house and her worship with various kinds of animal

233 For minute descriptions of procedures of this festival in the Purāṇas, see
S. Einoo, ‘The Autumn Goddess Festival: Described in the Purāṇas’, M.
Tanaka and M. Tachikawa (eds.), Living with Śakti: Gender, Sexuality and
Religion in South Asia (Senri Ethnological Studies 50), Osaka, 1999,
pp.33-70. Apart from the Purāṇas consulted by Einoo, the Mahābhāgavata-
purāṇa Chapter 45 contains a description of the festival. Mahābhāgavata-
purāṇa, Ed. by P. Tarkaratna, Calcutta: Navbharat Publishers, 1995, 45,
especially 45.34-43.
245.
235 ‘navamyāṁ kṛṣṇapaksārdrānakṣatre tvāṁ meheśvarīṁ/ bodhayisyanti
pūjayai mahatayai jagadambikel/, Brhadharma, 1.22.17.
236 ‘evam pañcadasāhāṁi mama pūjāmahotsavah/ atra trayodaśāhāṁi vilve
māṁ pūjayetkṛṭi/, Ibid., 1.22.26.
sacrifice \((bali)\) and overnight vigil \((jägarana)\) is made in the following two days.\(^{237}\) It especially prescribes fasting on the eighth and animal sacrifice on the ninth day.\(^{238}\) The *Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa* also mentions similar procedures starting with the invocation of the goddess in Vilva tree\(^{239}\) and continues for fifteen days, until the tenth of the bright fortnight.\(^{240}\) According to the text, the goddess should be worshipped in the earthen image from the seventh of the bright fortnight until the ninth.\(^{241}\)

The *Bṛhaddharmapurāṇa* makes special instructions for the worship during two days between the eighth and the ninth. The worship should be made by all the people, and *brāhmaṇas, ksatriyas, vaiśyas* and *śūdras* with devotion would be always connected with profit and wisdom in gathering, after discarding worldly duties, injuring, strife and selfishness. No teaching, studying, battle, purchase and sales, reception of a guest \((argha)\) nor agriculture \((kārṣa)\) should be done at this time. A song with names of female and male genitals, with words of eroticism, should be sung and one should feed *brāhmaṇas* and satisfy women.\(^{242}\) Similarly, the *Devibhāgavatapurāṇa* prescribes great merrymaking \((mahotsava)\) consisting of songs, music and dance during *Navarātra*\(^{243}\) and the *Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa* mentions the release of the goddess image in a stream with a huge merrymaking \((sumahotsava)\) on the tenth day.\(^{244}\)

\(^{237}\) 'saptamayaṃ grhamāṇīyaṃ pujayitvā dinadvayam/ nānāvidhais ca balibhiḥ pujājāgaranādibhiḥ/, *Ibid.*, I.22.27.

\(^{238}\) 'aśtamyaṃupavāsenā navamyaṃ balidānataḥ', *Ibid.*, I.22.27ab.

\(^{239}\) 'brahma tu vilvavrēkṣe tām devīṃ sampūjya bhaktitah/ bodhayāmāsa rāmaśya jayārtham jagadamvikām/†, *Mahābhāgavata*, 45.1.


\(^{241}\) 'tasyāmārābhyāṃ saptamayaṃ navamāṃ yāvadeva hi/ mṛmmayāṃ pratimāyāntupūjyāham vidhivat surāḥ/†, *Ibid.*, 45.34.

\(^{242}\) *Bṛhaddharma*, 1.22.30-33.


\(^{244}\) 'daśamyāṃ māṃ prapūjyātha prātareva surottaṁāḥ/ mūrtティvisarjaniyā tu
The merrymaking mentioned in the Brhadharrmapurâna and the Mahâbhâgavatapurâna may correspond to sâvarotsava described in the Kâlikâpurâna. The latter contains as many as eight accounts of the festival with variations according to contexts and forms of the goddess. Among them, the two mention sâvarotsava and prescribe it at the time of dismissal of the goddess on the tenth day. It is explained by Jimûtavâhana in his Kâlaviveka as follows:

Being as if (one is) sava-râma, after becoming one whose body is covered by leaves and so on and smeared with mud and so on, who is devoted to jump, dance, song, instrumental music and so on connected with various ways. This is the meaning of the word sâvarotsava.

Its contents are minutely explained in the Kâlikâpurâna:

With married women and young girls, with prostitutes, with actors, with sound of conch-shell and instruments, with drums, with kettle drums. With many kinds of banners and clothes, with scattered perched grains and flowers, with dust and mud slinging, with play (kridâ, festivity (kautuka) and auspicious acts (maingala), with names of male and female genitals, with songs of male and female genitals, with pronouncement of male and female genitals and so on, people should play thoroughly.

One who is not insulted by others and one who does not insult others, to him angry Bhagavâti gives a very terrible curse.

Thus this is a merrymaking made by people disguising themselves as savarâs, with much emphasis on obscenity and sexual acts. It is remarkable

srotasu sumahotsava//, Mahâbhâgavata, 45.42

Kâlikâpurâna, Ed. by B. N. Shastri, Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1991-92., 60.6-11; 12-16 (goddess with ten arms); 17-21 (with eighteen arms); 22-25 (Vaiśînâvi); 25cd-32 (battle between Râma and Râvana); 33-54 (nirâjana of Indra); 55-80 (slaying of Mahiśa); 61.14cd-30 (mentioning offering of human flesh (mahâmâmsa)).

Ibid., 60.32cd; 61.17-18.


Kâlikâ, 61.19cd-23ab.
that this element of merrymaking is shared by the near contemporary Purāṇas of Bengal and the Kālikāpurāṇa, although the latter contains the other accounts which show inclination towards kingship indicated by the centrality of the king in rituals and incorporation of the procession of army with 'lustration' (nirājana) to the procedure.

One characteristic of the social gathering during the goddess festival depicted in those Purāṇas is a confirmation of solidarity through the temporary suppression of differences. The Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa claims that there is no consideration of sovereignty / power (ādhipatya) and varnas of devotees for the goddess. The stipulations in the Brhadharmapurāṇa about the worship on the eighth and ninth days mentioned above clearly show this character. Especially important is the prohibition of daily duties during the festival. These duties, teaching and study, battle, purchase and sale, reception of a guest and agriculture, seem to represent duties of four varnas. On the other hand, they can also be interpreted as actions which differentiate people. They divide people into teachers and students, winners and losers, buyers and sellers, and guests and hosts. Agriculture also contains the element of dominance and subordination between landholders and cultivators in the context of stratified land relations in this period.

Thus injunctions against those activities during the festival connote a temporary suppression of difference and power relation among members of the rural society. It is comparable to Puṣyayātrā prescribed in the

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249 'durgāntreṇa mantreṇa kuryād durgāmahotsavam mahānavamyām śaradi balidānam nrādayah', Ibid, 60.1; 'balanirājanam rājā kuryād balavṛddhayē', Ibid., 60.43cd.
250 Ibid., 60.21, 33, 36, 43. For details of nirājana described in the Viṣṇudarmottaraapurāṇa and the Agnipurāṇa, see Einoo, op. cit., p.52 Table 11 and p.53 Table 12.
251 'nādhipatyavicarōsti na vā varṇavīcarāṇā/ tasyām yasya matiḥ puṇyā tasyaiva sulabhā tu sā/', Mahābhāgavata, 43.86.
252 Supra, pp.265-266.
Kṣiparāśara, which was discussed in the previous chapter. The prescription of merrymaking (utsava) with dance and music is also common to both, though merrymaking in the Purāṇas contains more subversive elements of obscenity and sexual acts.

However, there are some critical differences between them. First, the temporary suppression of difference and participation by all the members prescribed in the Purāṇas presuppose a difference of social ranks in the framework of four varnas. It is different from a social view asserted in the Kṣiparāśara, which tries to gloss over difference among cultivators and never mentions any varṇa or jāti. Needless to say, four varṇas do not function as actual social statuses in this period and the presence of many social groups and their recognition by brāhmaṇas are discernible even in another portion of the Brhaddharmapurāṇa as the narrative of Vārnasamkara. What transpires here is rather the intention of brāhmaṇas to impose their social norms, at least notionally.

Second to notice is the involvement of brāhmaṇas with the festival. In the Brhaddharmapurāṇa and the Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa, the involvement is expressed as a stipulation of their feeding during the festival. In case of the Devībhāgavatapurāṇa, brāhmaṇas are first invited at the night on the new moon day after preparation of the place of worship (mandapa). Then they make recitation of scriptures and utter the word of welcome to the goddess according to mantras of Veda, after being honoured by gift of clothes and ornaments and so on. Though it is not clearly mentioned whether all the ritual procedures are officiated by brāhmaṇa priests in those accounts, their involvement makes clear contrast to Puṣyayātrā, in which the recitation

253 Supra, pp.205-208.
254 Furui, 'The Rural World of an Agricultural Text', p.158.
255 Brhaddharma, 1.22.33cd; Mahābhāgavata, 46.17, 19.
of mantra after merrymaking should be done by all the participants, without any intervention of priests.\textsuperscript{258}

Similar tendency is noticeable in other festivals described in the \textit{Brhaddharmapurāṇa}. \textit{Dipānvītā} is a festival for worshipping goddess Kāli at the next new moon night after the full moon day of month Āsvina.\textsuperscript{259} In this festival, the goddess should be worshipped in the manner of \textit{Mahāstamī} festival or in Tantric way with animal sacrifice, offering of rice and so on.\textsuperscript{260} It is also said that high-minded people who has subdued senses, desire for food and sleepiness should worship the goddess with offering of various kinds of clothes, ornaments, rice and \textit{pāyasas}, and with songs, instrumental music and dance, accompanied with a row of candles.\textsuperscript{261} Those people are also described as being delighted in Mālasī songs and mentioning female and male genitals.\textsuperscript{262} The element of subversive merrymaking with obscenity is remarkable in these descriptions. On the other hand, the involvement of \textit{brāhmaṇas} as priests is obvious in the description that \textit{brāhmaṇas} should worship the goddess and the god, Kāli and Śiva, by abundant offering of animals, flowers and honouring water,\textsuperscript{263} and in the reference to the reward (\textit{daksina}) for four \textit{praharas} (a division of time corresponding to around three hours) of worship.\textsuperscript{264} They should also be fed on the next day.\textsuperscript{265}

\textit{Rāsotsava} is a festival held on the full moon day of month Kārttika, in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[258] \textit{Krṣiparāśara}, v.228.
\item[259] \textit{Brhaddharmā}, 1.23.4cd.
\item[260] ‘mahāstamīvidhānena vidhināgāmikena vā/ pūjāmimāṃ prakurvitva balyannādyairyathocitām/, \textit{Ibid.}, 1.23.19.
\item[261] \textit{Ibid.}, 1.23.10-12ab.
\item[262] ‘mālasīgānaniratā bhagalingābhiśabdinaḥ/, \textit{Ibid.}, 1.23.11ab. According to Sen, Mālasī are songs on Durgā and Śiva, which were generally sung in the melody of the same name. S. Sen, \textit{An Etymological Dictionary of Bengali: c. 1000-1800 A. D.}, Calcutta, 1971, p.760.
\item[263] ‘atastāmatra vai bhaktyā devadevim dvijātayah/ pūjayeyurmudā śyāmām pasuuouspārghyasampadā/, \textit{Ibid.}, 1.23.9.
\item[264] ‘catuspraharapūjāyā dadyādviḍuladaksinām/, \textit{Ibid.}, 1.23.20cd.
\item[265] ‘paratrāhāni vai viprān bhojayedbhaktitapataraḥ/, \textit{Ibid.}, 1.23.20ef.
\end{footnotes}
which Kṛṣṇa and gopīs (cowheerdess) are worshipped in images. While this festival otherwise called Gopikotsava contains merrymaking with dance, song and instrumental music,\textsuperscript{266} brāhmaṇas should be invited and honoured by seats and washing of their feet for welcome, and by offering of various food, clothes, decorations, ornaments and so on before the worship.\textsuperscript{267} They should be worshipped, rewarded and satisfied before the dismissal of images, after which they should also be fed with sweets.\textsuperscript{268}

These festivals contain both characters of the social gathering with subversive merrymaking and the ritual involving brāhmaṇas. What transpires here is the attempt of brāhmaṇas to incorporate and regulate those festivals with popular elements, which may have functioned as occasions for reconfirming solidarity and cohesion of the rural society, in a way which enables them to keep their authority and control over them. They tried to attain this aim by inserting themselves in the festivals at least as receivers of honour, even when they could not establish their position as priests presiding over rituals. They also tried to keep subversive elements under their control by limiting them to a specific period and even then putting some regulations. In another chapter of the Bhaddharmapurāṇa, it is said that one should not utter the sound denoting female and male genitals to people belonging to other families (paragocara, literally ‘other pasture’) and should utter it during the days of mahāpujā in month Āśvina.\textsuperscript{269}

Even then, he should not utter it in front of his mothers and daughters, or female disciples who have not yet been initiated to Śakti worship.\textsuperscript{270} We may

\textsuperscript{266} ‘nrtyagitaivadyaisca kārayed gopikotsavam’, \textit{Ibid.}, 1.22.32cd.
\textsuperscript{267} ‘svāgatāsanapādyādyairnaivedyairvividhairapi’
vastrālankāraḥbhubḍiyairāhūya brāhmaṇānapi’, \textit{Ibid.}, 1.23.31cd·32ab.
\textsuperscript{268} ‘sampūjyā daksināndattvā brāhmaṇān paritoṣya ca/ visarjayetāḥ pratimāḥ
paratrāhānī tūtsavah/ bhojayet brāhmaṇānmiśram kṛtvaivam
vidhimuttamam/, \textit{Ibid.}, 1.23.33·34ab.
\textsuperscript{269} ‘bhagalingādiśabdaṇca noccaret paragocaram/ uccaredāśvine māsi
mahāpujādineṣu hi/, \textit{Ibid.}, 3.6.81cd·82ab.
\textsuperscript{270} ‘mātṛṇaśca sutānāṇca samipe na tadāpi ca/ aṣaktidikṣitāyāśca śisyāyāḥ
detect here an ambiguous position of *brāhmanas* concerning such subversive elements and a delicate balance struck by them.

The description of another festival, *Śivamahotsava* held in month Caitra, alludes to the difficulty accompanying the attempt of *brāhmanas*. This is a festival in which devotees worship Śiva with great merrymaking of dance and songs, by disguising themselves as Śiva.\(^{271}\) Its ecstatic and violent character is indicated by the mention of self-tortment among devotees beginning with *kṣatriyas*.\(^{272}\) In this festival, *brāhmanas* are conspicuous by their absence. We may detect their difficulty to infiltrate into this festival, so that they tried to segregate it by stipulating that the festival should be held outside a village.\(^{273}\)

Thus we can see the efforts towards social cohesion by the initiative of *brāhmanas* in those festivals. Their attempts may be backed up by their enhanced position in the rural society. However, their difficulty to accommodate popular elements is detectable in the accounts of festivals in the *Purānas* themselves. It is a process to be followed by further attempts in the later period.

5. *Brahmanical Systematisation of Social Stratification: Jātis* in the *Bṛhaddevapurāṇa*

The attempt at social reorganisation based on professions, which started to appear in the previous period and continues in this period, seems to result in the making of various *jātis*. The presence of such groups is attested by the narrative of *Vṛṣṇasamkara* in the *Bṛhaddevapurāṇa*. What

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is conveyed by this narrative is, however, not an objective account of those
groups. A careful reading of the narrative reveals an attempt of brāhmaṇas
at comprehension of stratified and variegated social reality and its
systematisation.

The concept of Vān nasamkara, that is, the mixture or intermarriage
of different varṇas resulting in their progeny with inferior status and
particular professions, was introduced by the Dharmasūtras and had been
deployed to comprehend and explain the presence of the social groups other
than four varṇas in the texts belonging to the later period. What is
characteristic of the Vānasamkara narrative in this Purāṇa is the
integration of the theory of Vānasamkara with the story of king Vena, which
is narrated in the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas to explain the origin of
Niśādas. In the present text, Vānasamkara is depicted as a result of evil
deed of this king.

The narrative is unfolded in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters
of Uttara-khaṇḍa of the text, as the narration by Vyāsa to Jāvalī. The
narration of Vyāsa starts with the genealogy of Vena, followed by his evil
deeds as a prince, which resulted in the renunciation of kingship by his
father Aṅga and his accession to the throne. As Vena disturbed dharma,
the sages came to admonish him and explained the result of abandonment of
dharma. They mentioned the confusion of ownership of property, women
and house as a result of the abandonment of dharma. They also explained

274 For the theory and descriptions of Vānasamkara in the Dharmasūtras
and the early Smṛtis, see G. Yamazaki, The Structure of Ancient Indian
Society: Theory and Reality of the Varna System, Tokyo, 2005, pp.8-10,
214-218.
275 A. Parasher, Mlecchas in Early India: A Study in Attitudes towards
Outsiders up to AD 600, New Delhi, 1991, p.200.
276 Brhadāranyaka, 3.13, 14.
279 'tyaktadharmme jane bhūte dhanam yasya na tasya tat/ yasya stri tasya
that a country with unrighteous king is the same as a country without king and there would be the intercourse with other's wife and mixture of varna. They finally warned Veṣa that the mixture (samkara) is the way to hell. Provoked by this statement by the sages, he forcibly interwed members of different varnas and made them produce mixed progeny. He further made those mixed progeny to produce their offspring.

As a result of the mixture of varnas, the three ranks of samkaras were produced. Among them, the twenty resulted from the mixtures of four varnas, except that between a śudra father and a brāhmaṇa mother, were ranked as Uttama (the best). The twelve offspring from the unions of karana, ambasta, gopa fathers and vaisya mothers, and of gopa, mālakāra, māgadha fathers and śudra mothers was called Madhyama (middle). The third rank called Adhama (the lowest) or Antyajas were resulted from the mixtures of Madhyamas, Madhyama fathers and vaisya, gopa, vaisya or śudra mothers, with an exception of candra who was from a śudra father and a brāhmaṇa mother. They were declared to be outside the varnāśrama-dharma. All those samkaras were mentioned as 'the thirty-six natural occupations with additions.' The description of samkaras is followed by the reference to devala, who was brought from Śakadvipa by Suparna (Garuda) and called śakadvipī vipra (brāhmaṇa), and to gaṇaka and vādaka
born between him and a *vaiśya* woman. Then it is said that Mleccha was born from Veṇa’s body and the sons like Pulinda, Pukkaṣa, Khaśa, Yavana, Suhma, Kamboja, Śavara and Khara were born from him. After seeing the destruction of *dharma* by Veṇa, the group of sages came to him and killed him by their word. Then they created king Prthu, who is Viṣṇu himself, and his consort from Veṇa’s body, and the order was recovered under him.

The fourteenth chapter starts with the summoning of *brahmānas* by Prthu, who could not get the comfort of his mind while he governed his kingdom righteously, because the earth did not yield food for people. *Brāhmaṇas* answered his enquiry and said that the earth did not yield food because she bore the burden of pain made by *samkaras* roaming around on her. They offered the solutions to the king, who asked them how to deal with those *samkaras*. First, they told him to stop further mixture of *jātis* and *samkaras*. Then they advised him to summon *samkaras* and hold ‘the gathering of *dharma* (*dharma*-samgraha) to make the decision to fix their occupations. Following their advice, Prthu summoned the group of *samkaras* and interrogated them. After their initial defiance toward the king and following subjugation through punishment, *samkaras* obeyed him. The king requested the *brahmānas* to decide *varṇas* and occupations of *samkaras* and they interrogated *samkaras*, after declaring that those ‘thirty-six *jātis* were *śūdras*.

290 *Bṛhadārṇava*, 3.13.55-60.
Among samkaras, Karana talked to brāhmaṇas at first and showed humility and submission by admitting their stupidity, low-origin and lack of wisdom. Delighted by his word, brāhmaṇas said to the king that karana should do the duty of king (rāja-kārya) as he was furnished with discipline and good behaviour, spoke excellently, and knew policy (nīti). They declared him a sat-sūdra because of his devotion to brāhmaṇas and deities. They also claimed that devotion to brāhmaṇas, homage to deities, lack of envy (amātsarya) and good discipline (suśīlatva) as criteria of a sat-sūdra. Then brāhmaṇas directed karana, who bowed to them, to be suitable for king’s duty and skilful in writing (lipi-karma), to show devotion to brāhmaṇas, to discard envy and so on. They guaranteed him that his descendant would be equal to himself. The decision about ambaśtha followed the case of karana. First, brāhmaṇas performed the initiation ritual (samskāra) for ambaśtha and made him as if he were reborn, because he committed sin of making offspring with vaiśya woman, who belonged to the same varna as his mother. Then they created Āyurveda with the help of Aśvins and gave it and the name vaidya to ambaśtha. They assigned medicine (cikitsā, vaidika) as his occupation, with warning against neglecting Āyurveda and reciting (learning) other scriptures like Purāṇas. Then brāhmaṇas assigned powerful and ferocious ugra the occupation of kṣatriya (kṣatra-vṛttī) for his suitability for war, and tried to put māgadha on the same duty. Māgadha rejected it and asked royal activities

299 Ibid., 3.14.32-34ab.  
300 Ibid., 3.14.34-36.  
302 Ibid., 3.14.41-43. For the origin of ambastha from brāhmaṇa father and vaiśya mother, and his progeny from vaiśya woman, see Appendix 6, nos.2, 23 and 24.  
303 Brhadārthasamgrah. 3.14.44-45.  
(rāja-karman) other than occupation of war (yuddha-vrtti). Brāhmaṇas assigned him duties as an admirer of brāhmaṇa and kṣatriya, a conveyer (vṛddā) of their documents, and a superintendent of knowledge of kṣatriya (kṣaṭra-veda). Then brahmaṇas decided occupations of the remaining Uttama-samkaras, and svarṇakāra and svarṇavaṇik. After deciding occupations of samkaras, brahmaṇas bestowed Jyotisāstras to gaṇaka and made him grahavipra (astrologer). Then samkaras asked brahmaṇas who would preside over their Vaidika, Śmārtta and Āgamiṇa rituals. Brāhmaṇas replied that śrōtriyas themselves would be the priests for the twenty Uttama-jātis and fallen brahmaṇas would be the priests for the sixteen other jātis. Thus everything was settled and Prthu could make the earth yield crops again.

The general framework of this narrative, which combines Varnasamkara and the myth of Vena and Prthu, might show the emphasis of brahmaṇas on the centrality of the king and the importance of proper marriage for the maintenance of the order. However, a minute scrutiny of the text enables us to read the intention and effort of the brahmaṇas to comprehend various social groups in contemporary Bengal and redefine their positions in a hierarchical order, with their own dominance kept over others.

All the samkaras are deemed to be sūdras and this supposition results in the varna composition devoid of the two intermediate varṇas. Their absence might reflect the situation in contemporary Bengal, which did not witness the rise of political powers legitimised by their claim of authentic

309 Ibid., 3.14.73-75.
311 R. B. Inden, Marriage and Rank in Bengali Culture: A History of Caste and Clan in Middle Period Bengal, New Delhi, 1976, p.52.
312 Brhaddharmā, 3.14.28.
ksatriya status, and the dominance of merchant groups, unlike in western India.\textsuperscript{313} On the other hand, the dichotomy of \textit{brähmanas} and \textit{súdras} can be interpreted as claim of superiority over any other social groups by \textit{brähmanas}, which was enabled by their dominance in the rural society. Thus the theory of \textit{Varnasamkara} enabled the \textit{brähmanas} to legitimise and explain the absence of the two intermediate \textit{varṇas} and their dominance without other competitors. The employment of this scheme also offered them a way to explain and impose a social hierarchy on other members of the rural society in conformity with Brahmanical social view. Three ranks of \textit{Uttama}, \textit{Madhyama} and \textit{Adhama / Antyaja} may be based on the actual social hierarchy perceived by \textit{brähmanas}, though the status of \textit{svarnakāra} and \textit{svarnavanik} show some ambiguity in it. By the scheme of \textit{Varnasamkara}, this hierarchy could be converted into the ritual ranks which can be explained by the Brahmanical social view of four \textit{varṇas} and the extent of their mixture. The ranks of \textit{Uttama} and \textit{Madhyama} are explained as results of intermarriages among four \textit{varṇas} and \textit{pratiloma} liaisons between \textit{Uttama-samkara} men and \textit{vaśya, śudra} women respectively, while the origin of \textit{Adhama} rank is attributed to \textit{pratiloma} marriages between \textit{Madhyama-samkara} men and \textit{Uttama-samakara, vaśya, śudra} women, except \textit{cāndalas} born to \textit{śudra} father and \textit{brähmana} mother.\textsuperscript{314} This system of three ranks is complemented by another system of ritual status in relation to the service of \textit{brähmaṇas}. It differentiates \textit{Uttama-samkaras} as \textit{sat-śudras} deserving ritual services of highly qualified \textit{srotriya brähmaṇas}, from others to be served by fallen \textit{brähmaṇas} with the same status as themselves. This system of ritual status makes the relation with \textit{brähmaṇas} a decisive factor.


\textsuperscript{314} Appendix 6.
for other social groups in their social hierarchy.

On the other hand, the social groups listed as Venā's descendants seem to be outsiders, including foreigners and tribal people, to the Brahmanical fold. The story of king Venā, which narrated the creation of Niśādas from the left thigh of the king in the earlier texts, enabled brahmanas to comprehend them as outsiders of the Varnasamkara scheme. The ambiguous position of ganakas, who are incorporated into neither samkaras nor outsiders, seems to be related to their position as a literate group, which will be discussed below.

The claim of authority by brahmanas can be read in the episode of the gathering of dharma (dharma·samgraha), in which occupations of samkaras are decided. What is notable is that the brahmanas exercise initiative in the decision, while the gathering is convened by king Prthu according to their advice. It shows their claim as custodians of dharma, the proper social order, while they admit the authority of the king.

The sequence of defiance and subjugation of samkaras, which occurs at the beginning of the gathering, provides an interesting view about their claim of authority and control.

It begins with the remark of the king about samkaras. He described them as deformed (vikrtākāra), ill-clothed (kucela), dirty-faced (malinānana), withered (śīrṇa) and very weak (sudurbala), and lamented what kind of knowledge he would hear from them. Samkaras countered his remarks by claiming themselves as clean-formed (subhākāra), well-clothed (sucela), clean-faced (vimalānana), clean-bodied (subhānga) and strong (subala), and claimed him to be blind. They claimed that they were the same as Venā,

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protected and produced by him, and that even the deities like Brahmā and Viṣnu were not superior to them. Hearing these words, the brāhmaṇas laughed at them, and the king got angry and bound them. Tormented and bound, samkaras asked the king to protect them. They agreed to obey the king’s order and asked him to convert them from deformed to clean-formed, decide their varnas, occupations and names, and destroy their offence due to foolish knowledge of Vēṇa.

This episode can be interpreted as a textual representation of the subjugation of the other social groups by the brāhmaṇas. It explains and legitimises the subordinated and ‘disciplined’ condition of samkaras, in which they accept the authority of brāhmaṇas and their discourse. One important aspect of the process of subjugation is the exhibition of coercive power (danda). The defiance of samkaras makes an occasion for the use of danda by the king to subdue them. It is preceded by the advice of brāhmaṇas not to kill but to punish errant people. This event might indicate the acceptance of the royal authority by brāhmaṇas. However, his power is limited to the maintenance and imposition of the social order, which would be stipulated by brāhmaṇas, who exercise their initiative all through this narrative. We may detect here an intention of brāhmaṇas to define kingship as a necessary but secondary power under Brahmanical authority. Another

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320 ‘vyāśa uvāca śrutvaiyam vacanām jahasurbṛhmanādāyaḥ/ rājā tu krodhamāviṣṭastān babandha kṛtāgasāh// tadā te pidiṭā baddhā mlānavakṛtāḥ kucelakāḥ/ rakṣa rakṣa mahāvāho iti bhāṣākulānanāḥ//’, Ibid., 3.14.22-23.
322 Brāhmaṇas talked to samkaras, who were disciplined after this event.
aspect is the imposition of perception as a form of subjugation. The remarks about samakaras made by Prthu can be interpreted as representation of an image of a subordinate group perceived by a dominant group. Importantly, the defiance of samkaras takes a form of a word-for-word denial and counterclaim against this perception. The subjugation is also expressed by the acceptance of 'deformed' (vikrtākāra), one of those remarks, as their own image. Thus the perception is conceived as a point of contention between dominant and subordinate groups, and the imposition of perception of the former upon the latter constitutes an indispensable element of the subjugation. This point is endorsed by the expression that samkaras become beautiful (cārurūpa) and intelligent (subuddhi) after brāhmaṇas put them to their proper occupations, which is a result of their acceptance of the authority of brāhmaṇas and the social order enacted by them. The importance of this aspect should be emphasised from the fact that the aim of whole the episode narrated here can be interpreted as the imposition of a social image perceived by brāhmaṇas upon other groups.

The interrogations of samkaras by brāhmaṇas, through which their occupations are fixed, indicate the social groups over whom brāhmaṇas tried to establish their authority, and a delicate balance with which they achieved their aim. The social groups whose occupations are decided in the fourteenth chapter of the text are limited to twenty-one, which includes all the Uttama-samkaras except rājaputra and vārajīvin, svarṇakāra and svarṇavanik among Madhyama-samkaras, and ganaka.326 The emphasis on Uttama-samkaras is clear in this list. This category include groups with literacy (karaṇa, ambaśṭha, māgadha, gopa) and administrative function (karaṇa, ugra, māgadha), and merchants specialised in a particular

326 Appendix 6, nos.1-6, 8-15, 17-20, 23-24, 42.
commodity (gandhika, tāmbūli, taulika), apart from agriculturists, artisans and other service groups.\textsuperscript{327} They can be considered as people who wield some authority in the rural society because of their superiority in terms of knowledge, power and wealth. Brāhmanas might have needed their compliance to keep their own authority in the rural society. Their intention to establish the authority over these groups is discernible in the references to qualities of satśūdras, which is synonymous with Uttama-samkaras. In these references, devotion (bhakti) to brāhmanas and lack of envy (amātsaryā) are especially listed as criteria of a satśūdra.\textsuperscript{328} The cases of svarnakāra, svarnavanik and ganaka show some ambiguity. Among Madhyama-samkaras, svarnakāra and svarnavanik are especially mentioned in the context of decision of occupations, while others are not mentioned at all. It may be due to their wealth accrued from their involvement with craft and trade in gold and other precious metals that brāhmanas cannot ignore them as others included in this category. However, the occupations assigned to them are examination (nirūpana) and inspection of genuineness (tattvaparikṣā) of gold and silver ornaments and so on,\textsuperscript{329} and not craft and trade of those staffs as are inferable from their names. We may detect the intension of brāhmanas to restrict these wealthy groups both in terms of their ritual status and occupations. In the case of ganaka, their special treatment may be due to their character as a literate group, which will be discussed below.

\textsuperscript{327} Appendix 6, nos.1·20. The half verse mentioning the occupation of tāmbūli is not included in the text edited by Shastri, but in another edition by Tarkaratna. Brhaddharma, Ed. by P. Tarkaratna, Calcutta: Navbharat Publishers, 1396 BS, 3.14.60ab.
\textsuperscript{328} 'brāhmaṇa bhaktimāścaiva deveśvapi bhavatvapi// eṣa eva hi satśūdro bhavatyeva na samśayāh//, Brhaddharma, 3.14.34cd·35: 'brāhmaṇe bhaktimattvantu devatārādhanē matiḥ/ amātsaryyam saśīlātvametat satśūdrālakṣānam//, Ibid., 3.14.36.
\textsuperscript{329} 'svarnakāre svarnarūpyabhūṣanādininirūpaṇam// teṣāṁ tattvaparikṣāyai kalpitah kānako vanik/, Ibid., 3.14.67cd·68ab.
The effort of *brahmanas* to keep their authority and a delicate balance which they struck in this exercise are the most evident in their ways to deal with literate groups. In the episode of *dharma-samgraha, karana, ambastra* and *māgadha* are mentioned with special plots each of which covers eight to fourteen verses. The case of *ganaka* is described by a full verse. They make a contrast to other cases, in which occupations of two to four *jātis* are explained in each verse.

*Karana* is listed at the foremost of *samkaras* and depicted as their representative, who spoke out first. He is also described as a paradigmatic *satśūdra*, as the explanation of *satśūdram* in general follows the description of his good characters and *satśūdra* status. He is also assigned to the king's duty, which seems to mean administrative functions, due to his knowledge of policy. These statements indicate the admission of his prominent position in the rural society by *brahmanas*. On the other hand, the depiction of his humility and submission to *brahmanas* and appraisal of his devotion to them as virtue common to *satśūdram* allude to their intention to impose subordinate position upon him. In case of *ambastra*, his dependence on *brahmanas* is represented by their *samskāra* which cleansed him of sin and their creation and bestowal of *Āyurveda*, while his high position is admitted as his origin from a *brahmana* father. The special character of his knowledge is also acknowledged by a mention of the help of Aśvins for its creation, which contradicts the credit claimed by *brahmanas*.

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336 'ityuktvā te dvijagānāḥ smṛtvā nāsātadasrakau/ tayorunugrahādvipra
dependence on *brāhmanas* is expressed in their duties as an admirer of *brāhmanas* and *ksatriyas*, and conveyer of their documents, while another duty as a custodian of *ksatra-veda* implies their admission of his special knowledge.337 *Ganaka* occupies a special position. Though his foreign origin is alluded to by mentioning *sākadvipi brāhmanas* as his father,338 he is not categorised with other foreign groups who are claimed to be Vena's descendants. He is not categorised as *samkara* either. However, his importance is duly acknowledged for his occupation as an astrologer is decided by *brāhmanas* like that of *Uttamas*. On the other hand, the bestowal of his knowledge, *Jyotihśastras*, is credited to *brāhmanas*.339

These groups are literates with alternative knowledge, or at least recognised as such by *brāhmanas*. Their caution in these groups is discernible in a warning to *ambaśtha* against learning other scriptures like *Purāṇas*.340 The mention of *Purāṇas* in this context might indicate their anxiety about a potential encroachment by these groups upon their intellectual domain. Confronting this challenge, *brāhmanas* accept the possession of a particular branch of specialised knowledge by each of those literate groups. *Brāhmanas* also admit their prominent position among *sāmakras*. Both *ambaśtha* and *māgadha* are addressed as 'the best of *sāmakaras* (*sāmakarottama)*,341 while *karāṇa* is described as a representative of all the *sāmakaras* as is discussed above. Admission of *gaṇaka*'s prominence is reflected in his ambiguous position between *sāmakaras* and outsiders. On


339 'gaṇakāya dadustesu jyotihśastrāṇi sarvvaśah/ grahavipramakurvvamste

340 'āyurvedastu yo dattastubhyamambaśtha bhūsurāh/ tena pramatto
naivanyat purāṇādi vadiysi// āyurvedāt param nānyadyuśmākām

the other hand, brahmanas claim their authority over these literates through
the emphasis of their dependence on brahmanas. The rhetoric especially
employed for this purpose is the bestowal of knowledge by brahmanas, as is
the case of ambastha and ganaka. What is discernible here is the intention
and effort of brahmanas to accommodate literate groups and secure their
cooperation through concession, while they keep the authority over these
groups.

The narrative discussed above can be seen as an attempt to design a
framework of social systematisation by brahmanas, through which they give
a meaning and explanation to the social reality perceived by them and try to
impose a social order compatible with their own world view. The emphasis is
laid on securing compliance of the upper section of the rural society,
especially literate groups with alternative knowledge. It conforms to the
Brahmanical way to accommodate local cultures in what K. Chakrabarti
called Puranic process in the context of the early medieval Bengal.\textsuperscript{342}

The extent of their success in this attempt is not clear from the
contemporary sources, as texts like the Dharmanibandhas rather maintain
the four varna scheme. For example, Jimutavahana discusses shares of sons
born to mothers of different varnas by this scheme in his Dāyabhāga.\textsuperscript{343} Only
once he mentions 'between (different) varnas (varnāntarāla) and 'mixed
origin' (samkīrṇajāta) in a vague manner.\textsuperscript{344}

The continuance of such an attempt in the later period is attested by
another narrative related to Varnasamkara in the Brahmavaivarttapurāṇa.\textsuperscript{345} While many social groups which appeared in the Bhaddharma-

\textsuperscript{342} K. Chakrabarti, Religious Process: the Purāṇas and the Making of a
Regional Tradition, New Delhi, 2001, pp.316-318.
\textsuperscript{343} L. Rocher (ed., tr., intro., annot.), Jimūtavāhana's Dāyabhāga: The Hindu
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid., p.314, 6.1.36.
\textsuperscript{345} Brahmavaivarttapurāṇa, vol.1, Ed. by J. L. Shastri, Delhi, 1983, 1.10.
Hazra dates most parts of the text to the period between the tenth to the
purāṇa are also mentioned in this text, with additions of many other groups, and the three-layered ranks are loosely followed without systematisation. A totally different approach is taken in this narrative. The origin of samkaras is connected not only with marriage among different varnas and jātis, but also with divine genealogy. For example, nine jātis of artisans (śilpakārin) are claimed to be born to Viśvakarman and apsaras Ghṛtācī, who were born as a brāhmaṇa and a sūdra woman because of the curse cast on each other. The difference of approaches in those texts shows that this attempt at social organisation by brāhmaṇas was the process requiring their multiple and long term efforts. The attempt in the Brhaddharmapurāṇa can be considered as a first step taken by them.

sixteenth century and concludes that Smṛti-chapters except 4.8 and 26, including the present chapter, are very late additions. R. C. Hazra, Studies in the Purānic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs (2nd ed.), Delhi, 1975, pp.166-167.

346 For those groups, see N. R. Ray, J. W. Hood (tr.), History of Bengali People, New Delhi, 1994, pp.196-197.

347 Brahmavaivartta, 1.10.19-95.