Chapter- 2

Changing Notions of Rājadharmā: Attributes and Titles

In the early medieval context, the king was considered as the fulcrum of the state. A state without a king was unimaginable. Of the seven limbs of a state, according to the Arthaśāstra, the king or svāmin was the primary one. Kingship was generally hereditary, divine and based on primogeniture. According to the Buddhist social contract theory, the masses appointed the first king. His main function was to protect people. The divine theory of kingship held that the process was of sacred origin. Kings and sometimes, the queens were compared to gods and goddesses. According to Manu, the king was created from the external and essential particles of Indra and the seven other devas or lokapālas. Hence he was Sūrya, Candra, Agni, Vāyu, Yama, Kubera, Varuṇa and Indra. The king represented their functions and activities on earth, which was essential for kingship. The king was divinity on the earth, ‘naradeva’.

Scholars have debated on the nature of kingship. As the understanding of kingship gleaned through the literary texts remains incomplete, other sources such as inscriptions become relevant in order to understand the concept of rājadharmā. Examining the description of kings and the royal epithets, a changing notion of kingship over a period emerges. The present chapter deals with the notion of kingship, as represented in the Matsya Purāṇa and the inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas and the Kalacuris. The first section explores the notion of kingship and focuses on the historiographical trends. The second section examines the nature of kingship in the Matsya Purāṇa. The third section studies the depiction of kingship as noticed in the inscriptions. The fourth section compares the two sources and includes a summary of our findings.

I

The ancient Indian state regarded the king as the fountainhead accompanied by the ministers and other officers. All discussions on the state start with the king. A good king was necessary for the state, as the survival of the state was dependent on him. The king was not just at the top of the power hierarchy but according to Brāhmaṇical thought, the

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entire state and its existence was dependent on the ruler. The discussion was not limited to the king and his qualities but to his function and duties. The king should not only be brave but should be most capable as well as handsome.

The Sanskrit literature on rājadharma was very extensive. There was a discussion on the topic of kingship in the Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, Manusmṛti, and the Arthaśāstra attributed to Kautilya. The Pūrṇāṇas such as Matsya, Garuḍa, Agni, Viṣṇudarmottara, and Mārkandeya have dealt with the notion of kingship. Besides, specific texts such as the Nītriprakāśikā of Vaiśampāyana, Śukranitisāra, Mānasollāsa of Someśvara, Yuktikalpataru of Bhoja, Nītivākyāṁrta of Somadeva, Kṛtyakalpataru of Lakṣmīdhara, Rājaniitī-ratnākara of Cāndēśvara, Rājaniitī-prakāśa of Mitraśīra, Nītimayukha of Nilakaṇṭha and other such texts have dealt with the subject. Besides the literary texts, inscriptions provide a good source for the study of kingship. They refer to the various qualities of kings, their achievements as well as the titles assigned to them. Inscriptions also refer to the divine aspect of the kings in their prāśastis.

P.V. Kane points out that rājadharma was the root of all dharma. The Mahābhārata highlights the role of the king. According to the text, the king was the maker of his age i.e. he could bring in a golden age or disaster for his country. His main function was to protect his people and bring prosperity. The Mahābhārata further stated that the most important duty of the king was to reclaim land for cultivation and protect his people. The rule of the Dharmashastra was that the king had to dispense justice, being free from anger and avarice and work in accordance with the Dharmashastras. The role of the king was that of an intermediary between nature and people. Prajāpālana was an important duty of the king. He was the rāṣṭrabhṛt i.e. the sustainer of the realm according to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. He along with his priest was the upholder of the moral order of the world, dhṛtavratau. The Arthaśāstra mentioned that a king should be born in a good family, godly, possess valor, be virtuous, truthful and grateful. He should have long arms, should be enthusiastic, powerful and resolute in mind. He should have an assembly of ministers

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2 Ibid, p.3.
3 Ibid.
5 Ibid, p. 10.
6 Cited in J. Gonda, op. cit, p. 19.
who should be born in a good family and disciplined. Further, the king should restrict his sense organs by abandoning lust, anger, greed, vanity, arrogance and excessive joy. The king should be exemplary for his subjects and given a choice between vices and death, the king should prefer the latter.

According to J.C. Heesterman, the texts were unanimous in assigning to the king, the role of protector of the people and as one who would maintain the order of the world or even the whole universe. He symbolized the world order, *dharma* incarnate or at least equal to ten wise men learned in the Vedas. The king’s role was relevant in the cosmic sense according to Ronald Inden. The body of the king was the effective symbol of his kingdom’s unity, order and prosperity. In cosmic terms, his purpose was to regenerate and reintegrate the units, emitted by the cosmic man. Of the various duties of the king, according to J.C. Heesterman, the foremost is protection of people i.e. the king had to be a brave warrior. This is followed by maintenance of the social order or establishing *varṇāśramadharma*. The king should be divine, he should have *amśa* i.e. parts of various gods or as in the later periods, be similar to the gods. Besides there were minor qualities such as being handsome, good hearted, wise etc. Thus, kingship remained theoretically divided between sacral and secular, divine and mortal humanity, legitimate authority and arbitrary power, *dharma* and *adharma*. Gen’ichi Yamazaki enumerates twelve points to describe the ancient Indian concept of kingship. He also stresses that the king was the supreme power and was at the summit of the state. The destiny of the state was dependent on the king. The king should govern according to *dharma* and was given the *danda* i.e. the rod which symbolized his power. His foremost duty was to protect people and maintain social and political order. The king was expected to have paternal love for his people. He had the right to collect taxes and take his share. The king was required to

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13 Ibid, p.16.
14 Yamazaki, Gen’ichi, ‘Kingship in Ancient India as Described in Literary Sources and Inscriptions’ in Noboru Karashima (ed.), *Kingship in Indian History*, Manohar Publishers, Delhi: 1999, p. 18.
possess dignity and ability suitable to his rank. He must respect traditions. In case of misrule, the king could be removed. In return for proper performance of his functions, the ruler was expected to receive a share of the religious merit of his people.

On the origin of kingship, there was a divergence between the Brāhmaṇical and the Buddhist sources. According to the Buddhist notion, the relation between the king and people was contractual and elective. The people chose the king. The king’s remuneration was rice paid as tax. Thus, the king was mahāsammata as he was the great elect and was the rājā because he charmed others by dharma. Besides he should be a khattiya i.e. lord of the field. In a way, the king was both elective and elected. The king was supposed to act according to the wishes of the people. Interestingly, the Jātakas refer to the rule by women. The Udaya Jātaka mentioned that after the death of the king, there was no other ruler and Udayabhaddā, the wife of the king became the ruler. Thus, the widowed queen carried out the administration with the help of courtiers. In another instance, the Hattipāla Jātaka mentioned that after the king of Benaras became a hermit, the people requested the wife of the king to take up royal duties.

The Brāhmaṇical notion was based on the idea that the origin of kingship was divine. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa and Taitrīya Brāhmaṇa mentioned that the gods thought it essential to elect a king for the successful conduct of the war against demons. According to Manu, the lord created the king for the protection of the whole creation. The king was to maintain law and order. The king duly installed, sustains the seasonal rain, fertility, prosperity, peace and above all the ‘proper’ rank order of the society. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa referred to the king as praśāpati, literally the lord of people. According to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, during the coronation ceremony, deities like Agni, Gāyatrī, Svasti

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18 Ibid.
and Brhaspati, were invoked to enter the body of the king.\(^{22}\) In the later period, various rituals were associated with kingship. These included the *aśvamedha*, vājapeya and *rājasūya* yajña. This divine essence continued in the later *Purānic* period, although the gods and their functions changed. The gods like Varuṇa, Indra, Sūrya, Candra, Yama and Kubera became more pertinent.

Scholars debate on the subject of divinity. According to J. Gonda, the masses always accept the idea of a divine king. According to Drekmeier, the rituals did not imply that the king became a god or even that his office received divine sanction. The function of the king was divine and not the king himself. The quasi-divinity was metaphoric. The purpose was to describe the functions of the royal office.\(^{23}\) J.C. Heesterman says, that the reference to the eight *lokapālas* would mean that the king was the connecting link of the eight fold dispersed kingship. In other words, the king was the mediator between parts of the community. The enthronement ceremony reflected that connection.\(^{24}\) The Brāhmaṇical tradition does not reveal a consistent theory of kingship.\(^{25}\) On the one hand, there was a comparison between the king and various deities and on the other hand, there was the recommendation to kill a wicked king. However, P.V. Kane believes that these are different viewpoints and it addresses different groups of people. The statement, which referred to the power and pre-eminence of the king, were to maintain peace and order, thus it addressed the subjects. Punishing the kings was a check against abuse of power and was addressed to the king and ministers.\(^{26}\) A.S. Altekar states that the king’s divinity enhanced his status. It made the figure of the ruler strong. On the question of duties and responsibilities, divinity did not give him any privilege.\(^{27}\) The king was the *amśa* i.e. partial descent of Viṣṇu, who was the preserver of *dharma*. The queen at the same time was the divine consort, who accompanied her husband in his various forms. The king

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descended from the sun or the moon and was made of the eight guardian deities of the quarters. Ronald Inden postulates that the Hindu concept of kingship was not divine, rather it was the nature of the world or cosmos and the place of the king in that was central.\(^{28}\) Each of the quarters represented a distinct royal power. The king, rājā emitted, sṛṣṭa, by the self-generated one, svayambhūva, from portions of the various deities, devabhāga for wielding coercive power, danda-pranayanārtha, in order to protect all living beings, sarva-bhūtābhiguptī.\(^{29}\) According to the Agni Purāṇa, the king exercised the functions of nine deities, Sūrya, Candra, Pavana, Yama, Agni, Pṛthivī, Kubera, Varuṇa and Viṣṇu.\(^{30}\) As the king had radiant energy, tejas, so among the people he was like Sūrya, god of the Southwest quarter. The king was the source of delight for the eyes; thereby he became Candra, guardian of the Northeast quarter. He pervaded the entire world through his mobile agents, cāra, so the king became Vāyu or Pavana, the deity of the Northwest. For the wrongdoers he was Yama Vaivasvata, guardian of the South. When the king was angry, he was Agni, god of the Southeast. As Kubera the god of the North, he gave gifts. When the king floods the world with streams of riches, he was Varuṇa, deity of the West. When the king rules without any distinction between his prajā i.e. people by means of compassion, he became lord of the earth, Pṛthivī. When he protected the people with overlordship, ādhipatya then he turned into Indra, guardian of the East. According to Inden this demonstrates body symbolism.\(^{31}\) It was cyclic as the king renewed the gods and the gods restored the king. The eight guardians represented the various segments of the state, which were a part of the king’s body, and at the same time, the king was the whole, the central part. According to Inden that is the reason why kings proclaimed themselves as the ruler of the entire earth. It had a symbolic and not literal meaning.\(^{32}\) Manu also explained the power of the king in similar terms and compared the king with Sūrya, Soma, Vāyu, Agni, Yama, Kubera, Indra and Varuṇa.\(^{33}\)


\(^{29}\) Ibid, p. 48.


\(^{32}\) Ibid, p.50.

The king dispelled darkness, and was the slayer of enemies. He outshone his rivals; thus as Sūrya, he had *pratāpa* and *tejas*. The Moon identified with Soma was placid and gentle like the king, who was *saumya*. He was like the wind because of his swiftness, violence as well as strength. The king’s anger burnt the evildoer thereby he was Fire. He was Kubera because of his wealth and productivity. The king was Varuṇa as he was the lord of punishment and *dharma*. He was the protector of *ṛta* i.e. the cosmic order. Indra was the god of growth, vitality, rainfall, vegetation and fertility. He was the universal monarch, thus king was similar to him. Finally, like Yama the king had to control his subjects. The *Nārada-smṛti* held that the king was Indra incarnate on earth. He deserved the respect of people and exercised the functions of five deities, Agni, Indra, Soma, Yama and Kubera.34 In the *Mahābhārata*, the idea of divine kingship was that the ruler was five different gods according to five different occasions. He became Agni, Āditya, Mṛtyu, Vaiśravaṇa (Kubera) and Yama.35 The king as a repository of the special power possessed, *māna* and it was this power, which was sacred.36 In this notion of kingship, it was pertinent for the king to maintain social order. Thus, Drekmeier points out that it was divine obligations rather than divine rights.37 The most important check on the king was the fear of misfortune in case he violated his duties. Thus, the concept of divinity was metaphorical.

Another aspect, which had become a pertinent issue, was the relation between the king and his priest i.e. the brāhmaṇa-ksatriya relation. Jan Gonda postulates that ancient Indian kingship was most peculiar as the monarch belonged to the second class in the social order while the brāhmaṇa occupied the first place.38 It was advisable that the king should adore brāhmaṇas with gifts and services. The brāhmaṇa was the bhūmi-deva i.e. god on earth. The king and a learned brāhmaṇa were the upholders of dharma and their cooperation would result in glory and success. The king must have a *purohita*, who would preside as a *hotra* i.e. as controller of the royal sacrifice. A king could not perform a

37 Ibid.
sacrifice alone. The priest's task was to secure whatever the king achieved. His duty was to protect the king and his people by neutralizing the magical charms of the enemy, which would ensure prosperity.39 According to Louis Dumont, it is the secularization of kingship which the brāhmaṇa-ksatra relationship laid down.40 J.C. Heesterman also holds that ancient Indian kingship was unique as the king was dependent on others for his power. His authority was not absolute. He relied on the brāhmaṇa, as was apparent from various rituals such as the vājapeya, rājasūya and others.41

In political terminology, the king was a part of the state. The state consisted of seven limbs, aṅga, i.e. svāmin, king, amātya, minister, janapada or rāṣṭra, territory of the state and its people, durga, fort, kośa, treasury, danda, army and mitra, friends.42 The Śukranītisāra compared the seven aṅgas of the rājya to the body of the king. The king was the head, ministers were his eyes, ally the ears, treasury the mouth, army the mind, capital and rāṣṭra were the hands and feet.43 Thus, the king was the centre of the political unit and the people and ministers were dependent on him i.e. bhrtya.44

The most prominent power of the ruler was his ability to punish. According to the Gautama Dharmasūtra, the word danda was derived from the root dam that meant to control.45 The king should be in command of people by exercising danda. One prominent duty of the king was to maintain social order i.e. to maintain the varṇa and āśramas. There were many discussions on the references to Kali yuga in the Purāṇas and inscriptions. Kali yuga was seen as representing social change in terms of the coming up of new castes. The Brāhmaṇical texts explained it in terms of miscegeny of the four varṇas. The Brāhmaṇical texts see this change as symbolic of the Kali yuga. The Kali yuga was believed to be congruous with an actual historical phase because the texts use concrete social categories such as the state, human settlement, varṇas to highlight an

43 Ibid, p.18.
upheaval, which heralded a rupture with the past.\textsuperscript{46} R.S. Sharma describes it as a period when there was a deviation from the established order of things. The \textit{Kali} was synonymous with neglect of rituals, predominance and influence of heretical sects and of foreign non-\textit{brāhmaṇa} rulers.\textsuperscript{47} It was defined as non-performance of functions assigned in the Dharmaśāstras to different social strata or \textit{varna}. Hence, it was associated with the concept of \textit{varnasamkara}, i.e. proliferation of caste. During this period, the \textit{varna} order was distorted and women were specifically condemned for miscegeny. Uma Chakravarti postulates a relationship between the caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy.\textsuperscript{48} The purity of women was central in Brāhmaṇical theories because purity of caste was contingent upon them. Women were the gateway into the caste system.\textsuperscript{49} However, the proliferation of caste, on the other hand, was seen as acculturation of the tribal people into the realm of Brāhmaṇical society. The Purāṇas and the \textit{Mahābhārata} connect the \textit{Kali yuga} with several catastrophic developments, such as \textit{brāhmaṇas} ceasing to performing the Vedic \textit{yajña}, śūdras taking on religious duties, \textit{mlecchas} emerging as a dominant factor in contemporary life, women devoid of chastity and people taking to evil practices such as consuming liquor and meat.\textsuperscript{50}

Another aspect of kingship was the discussion on \textit{ratniniṃhavimśi} i.e. a ritual involving the top functionaries. Other than the king, there were eleven \textit{ratnins}. They were the senāṇī, purohita, mahiṣī, sūta, grāmaṇī, kṣattrī, samgrahitrī, aksōvāpa, bhāgadugha, govikartana, dūta, and \textit{parīvṛtti}.\textsuperscript{51} Later the \textit{Arthaśāstra} mentioned the functionaries as \textit{tīrtha} and stated that they were eighteen in number.

Burton Stein enumerates three kinds of kingship in south Indian history: heroic, moral and ritual kingship.\textsuperscript{52} We in the present study will be looking into the ritual dimension of kingship, elaborated in the Purāṇic and Dharmaśāstric ideals. The inscriptions also


\textsuperscript{49} Chakravarti, Uma, \textit{Gendering Caste Through a Feminist Lens}, Stree, Calcutta: 2003, p.-68.

\textsuperscript{50} Nath, Vijay, \textit{Purāṇas and Acculturation}, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi: 2001, p. 95.


\textsuperscript{52} Stein, Burton, ‘All the King’s Mana: Perspectives on Kingship in Medieval South India’ in J.F. Richards (ed.), \textit{Kingship and Authority in South Asia}, Oxford University Press, Delhi: 1998, p. 133.
referred to these notions of rājadharma. The next section discusses the notion of kingship as seen in the Matsya Purāṇa.

II

Scholars such as Om Prakash believe that the Purāṇas and epics represent kṣatriya traditions. The narrator according to the traditions was a sūta, i.e. not a brāhmaṇa. As a historical source, the Purāṇas can be a good source on rājadharma. The Matsya Purāṇa has a rich content in terms of political data. The Matsya Purāṇa deals with rājadharma, which includes the duties of kings as well as those of the ministers and other servants of the state, appointment and functions of the various state functionaries along with their qualifications. The chapters 142-145 deals with the Kali yuga and kingship during the various yugas and gives a description of the kalpas. It also informs about various kinds of forts, the location of the royal palace and other residential quarters. Details on the education of the prince, seven limbs of the state, the importance of the mantra as well as the four strategies, sāma, dāna, bheda and danda are also enumerated. Besides, it also mentions upekṣā, māyā, and indrajāla and punishments for various crimes. Chapters 215 -243 deals with duties of the king and various servants of the state, signs and omens, war as well as punishment and fines. The Matsya Purāṇa enumerates in detail various kings and their reigns. There are references to the evil king Veṇa, besides the exemplary rule by Prthu, Puru, Yayāti, Nala and many other kings.

The image of the king was that of one who gave gifts. One of the most important duties of the king was to wage war and acquire a kingdom (MP, 103.21). Another quality of the king was to abstain from untruth even in the time of danger (MP, 31.18). The king should be the one who would follow traditions and perform sacrifices. He must give dāna to the brāhmaṇas. Therefore, besides waging war, the king was the upholder of traditions. An evil king brings misfortune while a rightful ruler brings prosperity. Thus, a good ruler was the need of the state.

The Matsya Purāṇa described Veṇa as a bad ruler. In a way, it rationalized the need for a good and righteous ruler like Prthu. Various kings of the east, west, north and south acknowledged him as the sovereign of the world (MP, 8.11). Veṇa was the son of Svayambhuvā Manu and Sūnītā, daughter of Mrtyu (MP, 10). He was very valiant but

oppressive and sinful. He used to seize the wealth and women of others and did not listen to the advice of the sages. As a result, the sages cursed him but as they feared anarchy, they churned his body. The patriarchal nature of the text becomes clear as it mentioned that the evil qualities of the mother came out as black soot and hence came out the race of the mlecchas (MP, 10. 7-8). Moreover, from the good qualities of the father came out Prthu. He appeared wearing armor, studded with precious stones and armed with bows and arrows in one hand and a club on the other. In addition, he performed severe austerities. After obtaining blessings from Viṣṇu, he became illustrious and powerful. This legend exemplified the relevance of Vedic traditions and sacrifices. The resultant effect of a good king was bountiful production of grain, milk and other good things. During his reign people were long lived, wealthy and had peaceful relations with their neighbors. No one was sick, wicked and poor. Prthu became a powerful ruler with his bow and he made many parts of his kingdom habitable and cultivable. All people performed their duties. Louis Dumont points out that Veṇa represented confusion and in opposition, Prthu represented the necessary distinction of functions. He represented plentitude. Ronald Inden presents another aspect of the myth; Veṇa had to fulfill his debt as a householder by begetting a good son, Prthu. The birth of a son cleansed his vices. Inden sees it as the operation of the Hindu theory of good and evil as well.

Another virtuous king described in the Matsya Purāṇa was Purūravas who became the sovereign of the seven worlds after practicing asceticism in the Himalayas. He guarded dharma, artha and kāma dutifully and was given an equal status by Indra (MP, 24.14). He performed the aśvamedha yajña as well. He was valiant, famous, illustrious and wealthy with the help of Indra. His son, from the apsārā Urvāśī, king Raji/Rājeya was a famous ruler, known for his bravery. Thus, bravery and performing yajñas and being on friendly terms with gods were an important qualifications for a ruler. From the same line came another famous ruler, Yayāti. Several chapters dealt with the legend of Yayāti and how he being the protector of his realm ruled with truth and heroism. He was described as the performer of many sacrifices. He was a great lover of sacrifices and worshipped

the *pitr*s with great devotion. He won over his subjects and protected them dutifully (*MP*, 24.53-56).

The king of the Yadu dynasty, Arjuna was also praised for performing sacrifices (*MP*, 43.23-24). He got four boons i.e. having a thousand arms, the power of protecting the virtuous, ruling righteously and could be defeated in war only if the adversary was more valiant. He acquired valor and gave gifts to *brāhmaṇas* at sacrifices. No king was comparable to him. He was extolled for being virtuous, valorous, for practicing asceticism and learning the Śāstras. He traveled around his empire and punished thieves and the wicked with his sword, quoits and arrows. He was a *cakravartin* and had a treasury full of gems. He was the protector of cattle and the giver of rain. He found a new city of Māhiṣmati (*MP*, 43.29). Interestingly, the river Narmada trembled with fear at the sight of the king and he had tied up the valiant Rāvalī in Lanka. Thus, the king was comparable to deities such as Indra and Viśnu.

Another king praised was Vabhru, who was best among the men and equal to the gods (*MP*, 44.58). He liberated 70, 060 of his ancestors, who attained final bliss. He was a performer of great sacrifices, giver of alms and wās valiant. He was a steady observer of religious rites, handsome, illustrious, ambitious and fond of listening to the Śāstras (*MP*, 44.60). He performed the *aśvamedha* yajña. As can be noticed from the above descriptions of kings, the ideal king was expected to be brave and very importantly a performer of sacrifices and giver of *dāna*. Thus, an ideal king was one who was the upholder of traditions.

Except a few references, there was hardly any mention of the queen. The role of a queen, if mentioned was in terms of wifehood. Her role as mother was also important, although there were many references to obtaining progeny without women. Of the queens mentioned, one was the story of Anupamyā, wife of the demon king Vānāsura. She was a virtuous woman and was described as a *bhāryā mahādevī*, chief queen. She has been mentioned in the context of *dāna*. Interestingly in the legend, she enquired about the resultant effect of the *dāna*. This would imply that *dāna* was an option open to women whereas, the kings had a monopoly on performance of sacrifices.\(^{56}\) Interestingly, what she desired again was in terms of family and had nothing to do with her position as a

\[^{56}\text{For discussion refer chapter -5.}\]
queen. Another queen mentioned was Sannatī, married to Brahmadatta. She was born as a blessing of the *pitr*, and had learnt the Brahma lore. Along with her, the king ruled the country with satisfaction and prosperity (*MP*, 20.26-27). The references to queens are sparse and only in the context of motherhood. Thus, their role was restricted to those of wife and mother. There was no reference to any ruling queen or any instance where she had administrative power. There was no mention of the duties or qualities of a queen.

The *Matsya Purāṇa* mentioned the *saptāṅga* theory (*MP*, 220, 19) i.e. the king, minister, country and subjects, fort, law, treasure and friends were the seven components of a state (*MP*: Akhtar, 220.19). The *Matsya Purāṇa* initiated a discussion on *rājadharma* in the form of a conversation between Vaivasvata Manu and Viśnu (*MP*, 215.1). Manu inquired about the king who was capable to be on the throne. The first duty mentioned was to select suitable ministers so that his rule was prosperous and it brought opulence for his subjects. In a way, the king alone could not bring in happiness; his ministers were expected to support him (*MP*, 215.3). He should therefore choose his ministers and helpers carefully from respectable families with *sattva* guna, noble qualities. He should examine and place them accordingly. He should appoint a *brāhmaṇa* or *kṣatriya* as *senāpati*, commander-in-chief. The *senāpati* should be brave, modest, and capable of managing horses and elephants, able to understand omens and medicine besides having knowledge in military affairs (*MP*, 215.8-10).

The *pratihāra*, doorkeeper, should be a man of long stature, clever, handsome, humble and polite (*MP*, 215. 11). The *dūta*, messenger, should be truthful and give accurate reports, obedient, should have knowledge of other countries, fluent and should be able to perform his duties carefully (*MP*, 215.12-13). The personal guards, *rakṣina*, should be tall, robust, brave, firm and loyal to the king (*MP*, 215.14). The *tāmbuladharīn*, betel-bearer, should be free from avarice, immune from all outside influence and loyal (*MP*, 215. 15). The *sandhivigrāhika*, minister for peace and war, should have all the six kinds of knowledge of *sandhi*, peace, *vigrāha*, war, *yāna*, vehical or carriage,⁵⁷ *asana*, halt, *dvaidhibhāva*, duplicity and *āśraya*, seeking shelter (*MP*:Akhtar, 215.16). He should also know the language of the country. The provincial rulers should be able to control subordinates, take care of the income, expenditure, and production of crops and should

know many languages (MP: Akhtar, 215.17). The swordsmen, khadgadhārīn, should be handsome, tall, loyal, brave and from a good family. The archers, dhanurdhārīn, should be powerful, knowledgeable regarding horses, elephants and chariots. They should be skilled in archery and should be able to bear hardships (MP, 215.18-19). The sārathin, charioteer, should know the signs of omens, should be able to train horses, be gentle, learned and should know the divisions of the country. He should be aware of the power of the warriors. He should be well versed in all arts (MP, 215.20-21). The cook of the royal kitchen, sūdādhyākṣa, should be handsome, generous, should know the science of medicine and cooking. He should be particular about clipping his hair and fingernails (MP, 215.22-23). The sabhāsād, members of the assembly, should be kulīṇa brāhmaṇa and well versed in the Dharmaśāstras (MP, 215.24). The lekhaka, writer, should write legibly. He should be clever and well versed in the Śāstras (MP, 215.25-28). The dvārika, gatekeeper, should be tall, free from greed and charitable (MP, 215.29). The dhanādhyākṣa, treasurer, should know the way of granting iron, cloth, deerskin and jewels. He should be wise, clear in mind and active, his assistants should be like him (MP, 215.30-31). The cikitsaka, physician, should be skilled in eight fold medical science, virtuous, from a good family and free from avarice (MP, 215.33). The king should appoint officials in various departments such as the gajādhyākṣa, superintendent of elephants, aśvādhyākṣa superintendent of horses and durgādhyākṣa, i.e. commander of the fort. All the appointed officers should be capable in their fields (MP, 215. 34-39). There was also mention of a custodian of women's compartment in the royal palace, purādhyākṣa. He should belong to a respectable family, and be chaste, meek and modest (MP, 215.40-42). The controller of the arsenal, āyudhāgārādhyākṣa, should be brave, of a good family and gentle besides possessing other qualities (MP, 215.43-46). Besides these departments and various ministers and officers, the Matsya Purāṇa mentioned that the king should always take advice from his ministers, mantrin, and revere brāhmaṇas who know the three Vedas.

After the details on the traits of officers, the Matsya Purāṇa enumerated the qualities of a king. The king should know the Vedas, politics, logic, philosophy and science. He should keep his senses under control. He should also perform sacrifices and give gifts to brāhmaṇas. He must collect taxes annually. He should be paternal towards his subject
and promote the teaching of the Vedas. As Brahmā established these rules, the king who follows them would rule amiably.

The king’s actions should be according to brahmavidhi, also known as aksayavidhi. He should follow ksatriya dharma. The Matsya Purāṇa mentioned three foremost duties of a king, i.e. to wage war, protect his people and serve brāhmaṇas (MP, 215.60). He should protect the weak, widows and maintain the varṇāśrama dharma. He should protect the state from lawlessness. He should respect the learned and should learn and propagate Vedic learning. He should be well behaved. He should perform sacrifices and give dāna to brāhmaṇas. He should recollect his ksatriya dharma. He should reclaim and restore the fallen ones in their respective religions and provide grain, cloth, oil, utensils to the good, of all others. He should take care of himself and think of acquiring wealth.58 He should guard his limbs as well and should take precaution regarding his food and clothes. The king should respect the ascetics and provide them with food and shelter. He should always have spies in different places in disguise. His residence should be in a quiet unknown place. The Matsya Purāṇa suggested that the king’s palace should be beautiful with lot of trees and grasses (MP, 217.1). It recounted six different kinds of forts, dhanusadurga, mahādurga, naradurga, vrksadurga, jalamadura and giridurga. Of these, the giridurga was best (MP, 217.7). The Purāṇa advised the king to take precautions and never let a large number of people enter the fort. The fort should be well-lighted and stables should be nearby. Poisonous snakes should be kept in jars and animals such as lions, deer, birds etc. should be confined seperately (MP, 217.40). Besides, he should have dancers, musicians, and those good at arts in his palace (MP, 217.85).

The king’s protection was another topic of discussion. The chapter 219 suggests various precautions to be taken by the king. For instance, fruits of śirīṣa, śami, vijapura etc. prepared in ghee should be taken at an interval of fifteen days. It was known as kṣudyoga (MP, 219.2). Medicines were described which would help the king to regain health after wounds. These include kaśeru, ikṣumūla, bisa and dūrvā cooked in milk or clarified butter, to be taken at an interval of a month. Besides these prescriptions, the king should never touch his food, clothes, flower and ornaments without inspecting them (MP, 217.40).

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Further, there was mention that food, if poisoned will have a bad fume, bubbles and flies will not sit on it etc. Poisoned grain becomes copper colored, milk turns blue, wine and water becomes deep colored like the cuckoo bird, rice becomes blackish, garlands fade, clothes gets covered with black spots and iron and gems lose luster, besides other changes which could be observed (MP, 219.25-32). The king was the root of the empire so his protection was paramount. He should safeguard the other limbs of the state as well. Besides himself, he should also guard the prince (MP, 220.1). The prince should be taught dharma, kāma, artha, dhanurvidyā and other techniques of warfare. The ministers should surround the prince and guard him. He should be taught rājadharma. The king should not be mild and simple hearted. He should always keep his policies confidential. It was the duty of the king to safeguard people and the wealth of the state. A king would be loved universally, if he performed his duties carefully. He would bring wealth, name and fame for his empire (MP, 220.47). There was also mention of seven policies at the time of necessity, i.e. sāma, bheda, dāna, danda, upekṣā, māyā and indrajāla (MP, 222.2-3). Sāma was of two kinds i.e. satyasāma and asatyasāma. The principle of sāma was thought to be useful with people who belonged to a good family and were noble, virtuous, truthful and modest (MP, 222.10). The policy of bheda was applicable to people, who were hostile and wicked. It is further mentioned that the best policy was to divide and rule. It was easier to conquer evil people by creating disunion (MP, 223.1). However, at the same time, the king should not carry out the policy personally. There are two sources of discontentment, internal and external. The peril from other kings was a source of external danger, and was not hazardous, while the internal dangers were precarious, most dreaded and caused by the wrath and discontent of the queen, mahiṣī, prince, yuvāraja, commander-in-chief, senāpati and ministers, mantrin. The Matsya Purāṇa further stated that the external sources of danger were easily conquerable, if the internal conditions of the state were good (MP, 223.7-10). To win others, the policy of dāna was best (MP, 224.1). The king who gives gifts would be able to win over his foes and was beloved of all (MP, 224.3). Those who give gifts were the best men in the world. Such a king not only wins the world but also the realm of Indra (MP, 224.8).
In case of those who could not be won over by the above-mentioned policy, *danda* was to be applied (*MP*, 225.1). The application of the policy of *danda* was in accordance with the Dharmaśāstras and with the help of ministers. However, the king who prescribes punishment on the innocents and lets off the guilty, loses his realm and goes to hell in the next birth (*MP*, 225.6). If *danda* was not inflicted then the state goes into a stage of disorder where the powerful oppresses the weaker i.e. *matsyanyāya*. It is *danda*, which protects and governs all. The objective of the policy was two fold. It inflicted punishment on the guilty and secondly, prevented others from committing sins (*MP*, 225.17).

The *Matsya Purāṇa* includes details on fines and punishments. Here the text was more Dharmaśāstric in content, giving minute details on fines and punishments. For example, if a person takes a loan and does not return it then he should be compelled and fined by the ruler (*MP*, 227.4). If one does not confer a promised gift then he will have to pay gold as fine. A fine of eight *ratis*, also known as *ratnikā*, about 1.825 grains or 0.119 grams, was taken. If a master dismisses his servant without a fair cause and salary then a fine of hundred *krṣṇalas*, (one *krṣṇala* equals three *rati*), should be taken. If one injures the prestige of another man then a fine of two hundred and seventy *paṇas*, a coin that weighed eighty *ratis*, should be taken. A *ksatriya* who abuses a *brāhmaṇa* should be fined a hundred *paṇas*, a *vaiśya* had to pay two hundred *paṇas* and the *Matsya Purāṇa* suggests capital punishment for a *śūdra*. If a *brāhmaṇa* abuses a *ksatriya* then a fine of fifty *paṇas* should be levied, if he mistreats a *vaiśya* then twenty-five *paṇas*, and twelve *paṇas* if it was a *śūdra*. In case a *ksatriya* ill-treats a *vaiśya* then a fine of fifty *paṇas* was recommended. If it was a *śūdra* then a fine of twenty-five *paṇas* should be levied. In case a *vaiśya* insults a *ksatriya*, then he should be fined *prathama sāhāsa* i.e. two hundred seventy *paṇas*. If he curses a *śūdra* then a fine of fifty *paṇas* was taken. If a *śūdra* abuses a *ksatriya* then his tongue should be severed. If he abuses a *vaiśya* then the fine of *uttama sāhāsa* i.e. one thousand and eighty *paṇas* should be taken (*MP*, 227. 66-71). A *brāhmaṇa* however guilty, should be banished and deprived of wealth but never killed. Thus, in this case, it seems that the caste system was entrenched whereas elsewhere in the text fluidity could be noticed. This

60 Ibid, p. 162.
could be because the text was written over a long period. Thus, it probably shows different stages of social change.

The *Matsya Purāṇa* also mentioned fines for immoral actions. For instance, for misbehaviour with the blind, crippled or bald fine to be levied was one *Kārṣapana* i.e. one *tola* of silver (*MP*, 227.80). If one speaks harshly with his parents, *guru* and elders then a fine of hundred *panas* should be levied. There were references to thefts and other offences and corresponding fines that were imposed. By this period, money economy was ingrained in society, as every act was evaluated in terms of *panas*. Besides the caste system was also well accepted.

Besides these fines on petty issues, the text also referred to adultery. Moreover, it prescribes *vrata* for misdeeds. If one had illicit relations with the mother’s servant, sister, mother, mother’s sister’s daughter, virgin, *cāṇḍāli*, father’s sister’s daughter, brother’s wife and righteous women, then he should perform a *cāṇḍrāyaṇa vrata* (*MP*, 227.50-51). A *brāhmaṇa* who indulges in sexual relations with a woman of a different caste falls from his position. A woman defiled by a *brāhmaṇa* should be confined in the house by her husband. There was restraint on a woman who desired another man. If she continues to desire another man, then the *kṛcchra cāṇḍrāyaṇa vrata* should be kept (*MP*, 227.56-57). If a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya* and *vaśya* do things contrary to the prescribed order then they would have to undertake rites of purification. It also mentioned ordinances for other illicit relations as well. Here the punishment prescribed was not monetary, but rather penance in terms of the performance of religious rites. However, the text does not provide the details of the rites to be performed in such cases. Either these were well known or the text did not give much relevance to these prescriptions.

There was a long discussion on women and rules were prescribed, along with fines and punishment. If one has sexual relation with an unwilling woman in the household, then he should receive the death penalty (*MP*, 227.124). In case it was with her consent then the text suggests that he should be punished. However, the patriarchal nature of the text was clear. If a woman was disobedient to her husband and was proud of her brothers then she should be driven out of the house by the king (*MP*, 227.132). Further, in case she was dishonored by a man of her *varṇa* then she should be deprived of her authority, given dirty clothes and food for survival. She should be locked in her house. In case it was a
man of a higher varṇa who was involved then her head should be shaved leaving ten locks and she should be given dirty clothes. If a man of a higher varṇa dishonors a woman of a lower varṇa then a fine, uttama sāhasa i.e. 1080 paṇas, should be levied. If a brāhmaṇa engages in sexual relation with a vaisya woman, or a kṣatriya with a śūdra woman then it was madhyama sāhasa. Thus, in case of women, the punishment was banishment and dishonoring her but in case of men of higher varṇa the punishment was in monetary terms. If a sex worker, veṣyā after taking money goes to another man, then she should be made to pay double the amount (MP, 227.143). Moreover, if a man after bringing a public woman does not engage in sex with her then she should be paid double. In case many people forcibly engage in sexual relations with a sex worker then the king should make each of them pay her double.

Besides, there were regulations regarding the conduct towards the preceptor, guru. These rules of behavior were very important and the Matsya Purāṇa has a long passage related to them. Thus, these sections of the Matsya Purāṇa were similar to a law book. It not only discussed rājadharmā but also prescribed the fine and punishments for various offences. There was mention that a king should inflict punishment on the guilty. As he should never punish an innocent person, similarly he should not forgive a sinner. The king should always punish a guilty person after thinking duly over the gravity of the offence, in consultation with a brāhmaṇa (MP, 227.217).

There are chapters on signs of omens and methods to avert them. The Matsya Purāṇa recommended that the king undertake sānti offerings, such as saumya sānti, which was to be performed if people suffered from diseases (MP, 228.6). Similarly, the text recommended the performance of vaisnavī sānti in case, there was an earthquake. The brāhma sānti was to be undertaken, if Vedic lore declined. The raudra sānti was to be performed if there was a fear of a hostile king overtaking power. The vāyavī sānti was carried out when high wind blew for three days and there was no rain. There were several propitiatory rites mentioned to avert illness. Then it also mentioned evils supported by the deities. This included mischief among animals attributed to Rudra, among kings by the lokapālas, in between chieftains by Ganeśa etc. Changes in the images of the gods signified trouble. The king should worship the gods and decorate them with ornaments. The king should perform sacrifices and feed brāhmaṇas. He should give cows, land, gold
etc. that would prevent ill effects \((MP, 228.12)\). If the \textit{brāhmaṇas} are ill treated in the kingdom, people are not doing their duties and unnecessary taxes are levied, it signified the impending ruin of the king \((MP, 238.12-15)\). To avert such misfortune, the king should feed \textit{brāhmaṇas} and give gifts. Thus, according to the text, the remedy for most troubles was giving gifts to \textit{brāhmaṇas}. The \textit{Matsya Purāṇa} being a Brāhmaṇical text assigned a very high position to \textit{brāhmaṇas}. There were references to omens before going for war and again the advice of the \textit{brāhmaṇa} was relevant \((MP, 239.27)\). There was also a discussion on dreams and their effects. If one dreams of riding a horse, an elephant or an ox or climbing a hill, or a palace or a tree bearing white flowers, it was considered auspicious \((MP, 242.21)\). Thus, \textit{rājadhāma} was not just limited to the qualities and duties of the king and his officers but included fines and punishments. Besides, the king should be aware of the signs of trouble or misfortune and should be prepared to deflect bad omens. Thus, it was king’s duty to ensure a prosperous and peaceful kingdom.

The \textit{Matsya Purāṇa} mentioned that Svayambhuva created the king for the preservation of all beings, for awarding to the \textit{devas} their respective share of sacrificial oblations and for inflicting proper punishments on the guilty \((MP, 226.1)\). On the question of divinity, the \textit{Matsya Purāṇa} equated the king with various deities. According to the text, the king should exercise the function of eight deities namely, Bhāskara, Candra, Yama, Varuṇa, Āgneya, Prthivī, Indra and Vāyu \((MP, 226.12)\). Thus, it implied the creation of the king from the parts of the gods. The \textit{Matsya Purāṇa} with reference to kingly duties and obligations, urged the king to take up \textit{vrata} on the lines of the conduct of various deities. The king was like Bhāskara, Sun god, as no one could dare to look at him with hostile eyes. At the same time, it was a pleasure to look at the king as he satisfies everyone; therefore, the king was like the moon, Candrama. Similar to Yama, the king bestowed his affection and inflicted punishments. As people appear tied down in the bonds of Varuṇa, the king should tie the sinners. This was considered as the \textit{Varuṇa vrata} \((MP, 226.5)\). A king should be strong, vigorous and shining like fire to the sinners, the wicked and his enemies. This was the Āgneya \textit{vrata} \((MP, 226.6-7)\). Next was the \textit{Pārthiva vrata}. As the earth holds up and nourishes all creatures, the king should look after his subjects \((MP, 226.8)\). The king performed the \textit{Indra vrata}, sustaining his subjects like Indra, pouring
rain for four months (MP, 226.10). The king should realize revenue from his subjects as the sun draws in moisture by his rays for eight months. This was the Sūrya vrata (MP, 226.11). As air pervades and enters all beings, so the king should know the hearts of his subjects through spies. This was Mārutam vrata (MP, 226.12). The subjects were to be devoted to the king as he was comparable to the above-mentioned deities. Thus, implicitly kingship was divine. The existence of a king was essential for the maintenance of the status quo.61

The discussion on the Kali yuga was extensive and the Matsya Purāṇa elaborated on the four yugas i.e. Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. The Kṛta or Satya yuga was the first and consisted of four thousand divine years (MP, 142.18). In the beginning of the Tretā yuga there was Manu and the rṣis dictated śrauta and smārtta dharma. They wrote on marriage, agnihotra and other śrauta dharma according to the four Vedas. Manu and the rṣis did hard tapas, penance and discovered the mantras. In this yuga, the four Vedas formed a single text (MP, 142.47-48). However, in the Dvāpara yuga due to the short life span of human beings, the Vedas were divided into four separate texts. Over the yugas, dharma deviated from the Vedas and altered (MP, 142. 49). The duty of the kṣatriya was to perform sacrifices, the vaiśya to perform havirvajña and the sūdra to serve. The brāhmaṇa was to perform japam. In the Tretā yuga, all the varṇas performed their duties and prospered with children and wealth (MP, 142.50-51). In the Tretā yuga there were cakravartin kings who were great archers and endowed with auspicious signs. The kings had parts of Viṣṇu inherent in them. They were endowed with power, dharma, comfort and riches. The kings had artha, dharma, kāma and yaśas. They were gifted with divine marks and signs. They could defeat demons and humans by their strength. Sacrifices, asceticism, charity and truthfulness were the four limbs of dharma in the Tretā yuga (MP, 142.58-73).

During the Dvāpara yuga, there was greed, warlike tendencies and there was no distinction between the four varṇas (MP, 144.1-4). Dharma waned in the Dvāpara and became extinct in the Kali yuga. The varṇa and āśramadharma was weak. The state of things was chaotic and people were generally in trouble. During the Kali yuga, people indulged in theft, falsehood, deceit and other vices (MP, 144.30-31). Everyone was

greedy and untruthful. The brāhmaṇas were base and their learning was faulty. They did not read the Vedas, neither performed sacrifices. The śūdras became king and heretics could be seen. In the Kali yuga anyone could read the Vedas and the śūdra kings would perform the aśvamedha yajña. People were inflicted with diseases. Men overwhelmed with tamoguṇa, vices and were full of vanity. The brāhmaṇas were atheists and all the āśramas were upset. By the end of the Kali yuga all the varṇas got mixed up (MP, 145.16-18). Towards the end of the Kali yuga, king Pramati of the Bṛghu family and candramasa gotra will be born (MP, 144.51). He would be a part of Viṣṇu and would annihilate all śūdra kings which would include the Paradas, Pahlavas, Yavanas, Śakas, Tuṣāras, Pulindas, Āṇdhakas and other such dynasties (MP, 144.57-58). At the dusk of the Kali yuga, king Pramati would attain final bliss at Prayag. After that again Satya yuga will start.

The Kali yuga was also mentioned with reference to Kalki, Viṣṇu’s incarnation (MP, 47.248). There was mention of hypocrites and śūdra kings. The Kalki avatāra would kill such kings, purify śūdras and end the mixture of varṇas. He will educate people (MP, 47.249-254). Thus, there was some similarity between the Kāli avatāra and king Pramati as both would come at the end of the Kali yuga. Another important aspect was the reference to the tīrtha Prayag, highlighted in the legend of king Pramati, who would be a brāhmaṇa ruler. Thus, it was a kingly duty to bring order and remove kali.

Another description of kali was in the narrative of a dream of the demon Maya of Tripura (MP, 131). It mentioned that greed, poverty, jealousy, disunion and kali entered Tripura in the evening (MP, 131.18). Interestingly, he foresees these dangers in the form of women. He dreamt of four women, strī three of them were terrible and belonged to the earth. They raged like fire and there was darkness. There was one owl, a fan and a naked woman on a donkey. After this dream according to the legend, people left the path of virtue and started on the way of vices. They began to hate brāhmaṇas, gave up worship and quarreled among themselves (MP, 131.40-46). Although Kali yuga is not explicitly mentioned in this context, the description was quite similar.

The chapters on rājadharma were extensive and dealt with all possible aspects of kingship. Although the Matsya Purāṇa was a religious text it was unequivocal on kings, their qualities, functions, divinity and regarding fines and punishments. The text was
explicit about the *Kali yuga* and its problems, which was an important aspect in the notion of kingship in the inscriptions as well.

III

The inscriptions present a unique source to understand the notion of kingship in a realistic manner. The inscriptions, unlike the *Purāṇas*, do not refer to what was supposed to be the duties or qualities of a king. Inscriptions in their description of the achievements of the kings refer to what they considered as characteristics of kingship. This notion changed according to the period and circumstances. In the description, they also refer to *Purāṇic* notions as could be seen in the records of both the Vākṣṭakas and the Kalacuris. The trend was different for each of the dynasties, which was probably due to a variety of reasons. We first focus on the qualities of the kings, queens, minister, and feudatories as mentioned and then look at the issue of divinity. We also notice the changes in the titles of kings and queens. The inscriptions implicitly referred to various officers and state functionaries in the grants. All these aspects are relevant in order to understand the concept of *rājadharmā*.

The Vākṣṭakas referred to all the traits associated with kings in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, starting with the mention of the sacrifices performed by their predecessors. Thus, they portrayed their actions as part of a tradition of *dharmic* rule, in order to legitimize themselves. The inscriptions mentioned that the first ruler of the Vākṣṭaka dynasty, Pravarasena I performed the *agniṣṭoma, āptoryāma, ukthya, sōdaśin, atirātra, vājapeya, brhaspatisava, sādyaskra* and four *aśvamedhas*.62 The Vākṣṭakas claimed to be reviving old practices of sacrifice, emphasizing on *Brahmaṇical* traditions. Dirks points out that, sacrifices was one of the features of kingship.63 The king proclaimed his position through sacrifices and the gift he gave as *dakṣinā*. The record of the Vatsagulma/ Western branch also mentioned sacrifices. Vindhyāsakti II mentioned all the above sacrifices except the *ukthya, sōdaśin* and *atirātra* and instead mentioned the *jyotiṣṭoma*.64 Prabhāvaṭīguptā mentioned the *aśvamedha* sacrifice performed by Samudragupta in her Poona Plates.65

63 Dirks, Nicholas B., 'Political Authority and Structural Change in Early South Indian History', *Indian Economic and Social Historical Review*, (henceforth IESHR), Vol. 13, No. 2, 1976, p. 139.
64 Bāsim Plates of Vindhyaśakti II, CII, Vol 5, p. 96.
According to the Gautama Dharmsūtra there were seven forms of soma sacrifice: agniṣṭoma, atyāgniṣṭoma, ukthya,  śroṣāsin, vājapeya, atirātra and āptoryāma. The agniṣṭoma was the model of all soma sacrifices and was an integral part of the jyotiṣṭoma. The agniṣṭoma was performed in vasanta, spring every year and on the new moon day. In this sacrifice, the sacrificer and his wife performed the rituals whereas one who desires cattle, vigor, progeny, and all objects, performed the ukthya,  śroṣāsin, atirātra, āptoryāma rites. These sacrifices were executed in honor of Indra and Agni. Similarly, in the  śroṣāsin a cow was sacrificed for Indra. The atirātra was also a soma sacrifice and was referred to even in the Rgveda. Since this sacrifice continued in the night, it was called atirātra. The sacrifice was offered to Indra. The āptoryāma was similar to the atirātra and offered to Agni, Indra, Višvedevas and Viṣṇu. The brhaspatisava was a kind of one-day soma sacrifice to be performed by a brāhmaṇa who performs the vājapeya.

The vājapeya involved collective drinking, animal sacrifice and a chariot race. It was a major sacrifice, which involved resource mobilization. The asvamedha was another major sacrifice. The Rgveda mentioned this sacrifice, but scholars questioned its linkage with kingship during that period. The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa elaborated on the ritual as well. It required a lot of resource mobilization to perform such a major sacrifice.

It seems that the attempt of the Vākāṭakas was to trace continuity by claiming performance of Vedic rituals by an ancestor. The Vākāṭakas, as their inscriptions show, patronized Śaivism. However, the sacrifices and rituals were performed in honor of Indra, Agni, and Soma etc. They referred to sacrifices, which had probably lost their relevance in the early medieval period. They claimed familiarity with old ritual traditions. It only painted an ideal dharmic image, unimpeachable, which made them entitled to the royal office.

67 Ibid, pp. 1134-35.
68 Ibid, pp. 1204-05.
69 Ibid, pp. 1204-05.
70 Ibid, p. 1205.
Besides the reference to the performance of sacrifices, other rulers were praised for qualities such as being devoted to Maheśvara, being truthful, straightforward, compassionate, heroic, valorous, having political wisdom, modesty, high-mindedness, intelligence, devoted to worthy persons, being righteous conquerors, possessing purity of mind etc. besides having sons and grandsons and an army. The inscriptions mention these qualities for Prthivīsenā II. 75 With reference to Pravarasena II, the records mentioned qualities such as being the ornament of the family and one who established the Kṛta yuga. 76 One striking feature of the Vākāṭaka inscriptions was their unique homogeneity. The majority of the inscriptions gave the same genealogical record and mentioned similar qualities for the kings. The records were standardized and formalized in their content. 77 An inscription, which deserves special mention, was the Ajanta Cave inscription. 78 It eulogized the king as well as the family of the donor i.e. the minister Varahadeva. In this record, all the kings were described differently. Vindhyāśaktī I was described as a brāhmaṇa, warrior, mighty in fighting and charity, one who conquered the whole world and his enemies saluted him. Pravarasena I was eulogized as having lotus-like feet kissed by the rays of the jewels worn on the head of the enemies and eyes like blooming lotus. Sarvasena I had defeated all armies. Vindhyāśaktī II governed the earth righteously and conquered other kingdoms. Pravarasena II was excellent, powerful and liberal. Information about Devasena was missing. Hariśena was extolled as brave, valorous, and one who had conquered many kingdoms. In addition, he sprinted like a lion. Thus, it was not relevant to perform rituals, as now being a warrior, powerful, brave and giving charity was more important. Thus, there seems to be some divergence from the pattern of the early Vākāṭaka inscriptions. In the inscription of Ajanta Cave XVII, 79 Hariśena was described as a ruler with a face similar to the lotus and the moon. He is said to have protected the earth and did what was beneficial for his subjects.

There were only a few references to queens. Prabhāvatīguptā was mentioned only in the inscriptions of the Eastern branch. In her inscription, Prabhāvatīguptā, as always marks a

75 Bēḷorā Plates (Set A and Set B) of Pravarasēnā II, CII, Vol. 5, p. 18.
78 Ajanta Cave Inscription of Varahadēva, CII, Vol. 5, pp. 107-08.
She emphasized on the Guptas and specifically Candragupta II. Her records mention Candragupta II as a fervent devotee of Bhāgavata, matchless warrior, as one who exterminated all kings and tasted the water of the four oceans. He had donated crores of cows and gold. Generally, in the Gupta inscriptions, Samudragupta was furnished with the same title i.e. ‘caturudhisatilāśvāditayaśas,’ while the inscriptions of Pravarasena II described Candragupta/ Devagupta as one who exterminated all enemies and followed the path of former rulers, besides having strength and valor. Prabhāvatīguptā described herself as an ornament of both the families, the Vākāṭakas and Guptas, agramahiśī, chief queen, janānyā, mother of Damodarasena Pravarasena, devotee of Bhāgavata and as one who had sons and grandsons. However, she does not claim to have an army as was mentioned in the records of kings. She mentioned her mother, Kuberanāgā as a fervent devotee of Viśṇu in the Poona plates. The inscriptions do not mention details of other queens. The description given was not in terms of the function of a queen but as a devotee or mother of the king or the successor. The inscription used the term ‘utpanna’ i.e. from whom the prince was born, for the queens. Thus, her role was relatively restricted in comparison to that of the kings. Unlike the standarized Vākāṭaka inscriptions, the records of Prabhāvatīguptā, Poona and Riddhapur were different in many aspects. An unnamed queen, bhāryā mahādevī, gave donations in the Masoda plates of Pravarasena II. This grant was similar to other grants by the king.

One significant change in the later Vākāṭaka inscriptions was that not only the kings but also the donor was described. In the genealogy section of the Ajanta Cave inscription, Hastibhoja, the minister of Devasena, was described as having a broad chest. He was obliging, modest, loving, agreeable, obedient, faultless and accessible to people. His son, who was also a minister during the reign of Hariṣena was beloved of the king and people,

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83 Riddhapur Plates of Prabhāvatīguptā, CII, Vol. 5, p. 36.
86 Ajanta Cave Inscription of Varāhādēva, CII, Vol. 5, pp. 107-08.
firm, liberal, generous, intent on religious duties, virtuous and was one who governed righteously.

In the Ghaṭotkaca inscription, there was no description of the kings. The inscription mentioned the family of the minister Varāhadeva. He was described as wise, learned, having political wisdom, gave charity and supported the performance of religious duties. Similarly, the inscription of Ajanta Cave XVII, mentioned an unnamed king and his family, who had a feudatory status. The unnamed king was described as one who had a parasol and was known for protecting people. Others were eulogized as famous, beautiful, glorious and as the splendor of his race. The feudatory Ravisamba was portrayed as one who had subjugated countries. He was described as shining like the sun and was known for his prowess.

It is interesting to note that the wives of the ministers were many a time described, like Aticandrā, the wife of Kṛṣṇadāsa, who was described as clad in garments as white as the rays of the moon. She had a face like the full moon and her ornaments were modesty and virtuous conduct. For men the description gave details of their prowess and bravery. For women it was in terms of their nature, with the emphasis on being virtuous, modest and the mother of sons.

There was a paradigm shift in the Kalacuri inscriptions. There was hardly any mention of the performance of Vedic rituals. The king was described as handsome, brave and charitable. The queens were the consorts. Similar terms were used for the ministers and officers. The Kalacuris emphasized military strength and prowess. Other qualities were comparatively less important. Another feature, which was different from the Vākāṭakas, was the mention of beauty or being desired by women as a quality of the king. Thus, the definition of royal power in the inscriptions was in relation to prevailing and changing hierarchies of political power and status. The emphasis had changed by the Kalacuri

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87 Appendix 2.1.
88 Appendix 2.1.
89 Ajanta Cave XVII Inscription, CII, Vol. 5, p. 125.
period, as they no longer referred to sacrifices. This change according to Dirks was the change in the concept of sovereignty.91

Among the early Kalacuri inscriptions, the Karitalai Stone inscription of LakṣmAṇarāja II mentioned charity as an important quality of a king.92 The Bilhari Stone inscription93 gave a long description of the kings. Kokalladeva I was described as a valorous king who was adorned with pride and had killed his enemies. Mugdhatuṅga was depicted as one who had destroyed his enemies, brave and known for good deeds. The description of Keyūravarṣa was patriarchal. His most important qualification was that women of different countries desired him. According to the inscription, he fulfilled the desire of the women of Gauḍa, sported on the breast of the women of Kārnāṭa, applied ornamental marks on the forehead of the women of Lāṭa, enjoyed the love of the women of Kaśmira and was fond of the songs of the women of Kaliṅga. According to Mirashi this would imply that he married women of these countries.94 Besides the above-mentioned qualities, he was a great warrior. The rest of the kings were described in term of being unique, attractive, beautiful, fortunate, warriors, composers of poems and similar to the god of love, Kāma. There was special mention of a tiger killed by Yuvarājadeva II. Unlike the Vākāṭakas, there was a change in the description of the kings. In the Banaras Plates of Karna, Kokalladeva I proclaimed to be marked with good qualities, knew the Śastras and protected many kings. During Śaṅkarāgāṇa III’s reign kali fled and he was the ornament of the world. Karna’s rule was described as a time when enemies disappeared and brāhmaṇas and friends rejoiced. The Goharwa Plates mentioned that Yuvarājadeva II was fond of literature and had learned the Vedas. Kokalladeva II was described as having planted sacrificial posts and Karna maintained the four varṇas.95 The Rewa inscription of Karna, Year 812, mentioned that Karna was the lord of the earth and was depicted as a lion, whose nails were the sacred law and legs were the Purāṇas.96 The rest of the description was effaced, but the depiction was unique and was similar to the Nrśimha

92 Appendix 2.2.
95 Appendix 2.2.

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avatāra of Viṣṇu. It was probably an attempt to revive older traditions or a way to claim divinity.

In the Khairha Plates of Yaśahkarna,¹⁷ Yuvarājadeva II was praised for his political wisdom. Gāṅgeyadeva was compared to a lion. Gāṅgeyadeva was like a thunderbolt on the heads of the enemies; he was the lord of fortune of heroes, had a broad chest and was the crest jewel of heroic princes. He had smiling eyes and was called Vikramāditya. He attained salvation at the foot of a banyan tree at Prayag along with his hundred wives. Karna was commended for performing śrāddha. Yaśahkarna was liberal, extirpated the kṣatriyas, and bestowed the earth to brāhmaṇas. He shone in the Kali yuga.⁹⁸ The Bheraghat stone inscription of Narasimhadeva, year 907, mentioned Gāṅgeyadeva as a wish fulfilling tree and a king who made the earth an abode of learning. Gayakarna was described as the earth’s favorite.⁹⁹ Another characteristic was comparison of the king to a wish-fulfilling jewel, as in the case of Guṇasāgara I. Kings were also described as a kalpa tree as in the case of Śivarāja, Śaṅkaragaṇa III and other rulers. In the Sarkho Plates of Ratnadeva II,¹⁰⁰ Jajalladeva I was described as a wish fulfilling tree who was worshiped by all gods. In the same record, Ratnadeva II was renowned as a treasure on earth, the ornament of the Kosala country and as one who snatched the fortune from other kings. In the Akaltara stone inscription of Ratnadeva II,¹⁰¹ Ratnadeva I was praised as the incarnation of the law of truth. Prthivīdeva I was to the Kali yuga as an elephant to a lotus plant, besides being famous, liberal and virtuous. The Kharod stone inscription mentions that the death of Jajalladeva II led to the Kali yuga.¹⁰² The Kali yuga was described in terms of darkness. Thus for the kings it was relevant to be a great warrior, fortunate, liberal, generous, be the lord of the earth, famous, bring the Kali yuga to an end or shine in the dark ages. It was important to be a wish fulfilling tree and at the same time be desired by women.

With reference to the queens, the most common quality mentioned in the records was devotion to the god. Rāhada, wife of Lakṣmaṇarāja II was praised for her devotion to

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⁹⁷ Appendix 2.2.
⁹⁹ Appendix 2.2.
¹⁰⁰ Sarkho Plates of Ratnadeva II: (Kal.) Year 880, CIH, Vol. 4, Pt. II, p. 426.

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In the case of Nohalā, the queen of Yuvarājadeva I or Keyūravarṣa, she was described as the one through whom the king got splendor. The Banaras Plates of Karna mentioned the wife of Kokalladeva, Naṭṭā as good-natured. Āvallādevī, wife of Karna was described as the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī. The Bhere-ghat stone inscription of Narasimhapeva, mentioned the wife of Gayakarṇa as an unsullied banner fluttering from the staff of his long pedigree, the home of armor, the pitch of accomplishment, the garland of beauty and the store house of noble qualities.

The Ratnapur branch records that Nonnalā the wife of Ratnadeva I was described as being as dear to the king as valor is to the brave. Lāchalladevi, the wife of Jājalladeva I, was described as the co-wife of earth, vasudhā sapatneya, the lawful and only wife of the king. She was praised for being caring towards Vallabharāja who was the minister. She was like a mother figure to him as Yaśodā was to Kṛṣṇa or Pārvatī was to Guha. In these records, the queens were referred to only as the wife of the king.

The Kalacuri records, besides mentioning the traits of the kings, described the attributes of the ministers, feudatories or donor. In the Karitalai stone inscription of Lakṣmanarāja II, the minister Someśvara and his father were admired. Bhākāmiśra was extolled for his public works and for belonging to a noble family. Someśvara was described as knowledgeable. He could interpret the Vedas, grammar, logic, Tantra, Vedānta, knew the science of testing jewels and could take care of elephants and horses. His charities were compared to the viśvajit sacrifice. Another prominent minister was Vappulla who subdued others and was devoted to the king. He was described as a great warrior. In the Ratnapur branch inscriptions, the Sarkho Plates of Ratnadeva II mentioned the donee, Padmanābha and his family tree. Mahāsona, his great-grandfather, belonged to the Vatsa gotra with five pravaras. He was proficient in the six systems of philosophy and the arts. Like Brahmā, he knew all the Vedas, Āgamas, and Vedānta. People respected him and he had obtained liberation by fasting in a tīrtha. His son Someśvara was the ornament of brāhmaṇas, well known, a treasure of wisdom, versed in the Vedas and
performed many sacrifices. His son Kulacandra knew the Āgamas and was a collection of excellence. The donee, Padmanābha had studied the Āgamas, was known for his wisdom, virtue, knowledge of astronomy and performance of religious duties. He knew two Siddhāntas, tenets of Samhitā and was like Varāhamihira. The Akaltara stone inscription of Ratnadeva II praised the minister, Vallabharāja and his ancestors. His great-grandfather was an able and devoted feudatory and was a wish-fulfilling tree. His son Rāghava was famous, true, valorous, intelligent and removed oppression. He had knowledge of various arts. His son Harigaṇa was an instrument of the goddess of victory and had destroyed many kings. Vallabharāja was well known and persons like him were not known in the Kali yuga. He was knowledgeable, knew horse riding and could capture elephants. The Rajim stone inscription of Prthivīdeva II, mentioned the lineage of the donor Jagapāla. He had received the title of jagatsimha i.e. lion of the world. He had defeated many kings. He was like Rāma in valor, Yudhiṣṭhira in religious merit, Jimūtavāhana in truth and similar to Kaṇa in religious liberalities. He was conversant in the duties of the ksatriyas and reverent to brāhmaṇas, god and fire. He listened to the Purāṇas, Śāstras and Āgamas. He read the Rāmāyaṇa and gave gifts to brāhmaṇas. The Koni stone inscriptions of Prthivīdeva II described the minister Puruṣottama and his family. His ancestor Sodhadeva was a jewel among brāhmaṇas and held the post of a minister. He was like a wish fulfilling tree and was famous. His son Nimbadeva surpassed the god of love, and was learned, wealthy and famous. He was the ornament of the royal assembly, was a friend of good persons, an abode of religious merit, compassionate and beautiful. Puruṣottama was known for self-control, excellence, forgiveness, charity and prowess. He was the ornament among brāhmaṇas. He had the luster of the sun, the prowess of a lion and was serene like the ocean. He was like Kaṇa in charity, famous like Rāma, learned like Bṛhaspati and beautiful like Kāma. He had killed and captured many kings and was the sarvādhikārin of Ratnadeva II. The Ratnapur stone inscription of Prthivīdeva II year 1207, mentioned the donor Devagaṇa and his kin. Of his ancestors, Māme was described as an ocean of affection and the ornament to the royal assembly and the earth. His son Ratnasimha was brilliant, righteous in conduct and

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acquired religious merit. Devagana was extolled as brilliant, clever and a wish-fulfilling tree. Learned men listened to his words. Thus, being proficient in various fields, knowledgeable, brave, clever, and beautiful and the ornament of the earth were common features in such descriptions. These qualities were important not just for the king but his ministers, feudatories or the donor. They were compared to various deities and famous epic characters besides animals such as lions. Thus, elite men claimed an identity similar to that of the rulers.

The records also described the qualities of the Śaiva ascetics who received the grants. The Chandrehe stone inscription of Prabodhaśīva mentioned the lineage in terms of disciples. The line starts with Purandara, who performed austerities and was the spiritual preceptor of the kings. His disciple was Śikhāśīva who was like fire. Then was Prabhāśīva, who was revered by the kings and was the crest jewel of the Śaivas. Praśāntaśīva was pure, virtuous and the companion of sages. Prabodhaśīva was famous, conquered enemies and gave wealth to the meritorious. He placed the earth under obligation. He performed austerities and meditated. Kings worshipped at his feet. In the Tewar stone inscription of Gayakarna, the donor Bhāvabrahman was the disciple of Bhāvatejas of the Pāṣupata sect. Bhāvatejas had performed austerities, was wise and listened to the Āgamas and Yoga. He expounded the system of Nyāya, practiced the Yoga system of the Pāṣupatas. In addition, he attained union with Śiva. Bhāvabrahman performed penance, knew the pāncārtha and gave gifts of gold and food. He meditated and knew the Śastras. Thus by this period even the preceptors, i.e. the Śaiva ascetics, were eulogized. This also shows that the Śaiva ascetics held a prominent position for the rulers of the dynasty.

The records also mentioned the qualities of non-royal elite women such as the wife of the ministers, feudatories or donors. For example, Nayanāvali, the wife of Vappulla, the minister, was described as distinguished. Udayā, the wife of the donor Jagapāla, was known for truth and piety. She was quiet and increased the joy of her family. Lakhmā, the wife of Nimbadeva, was similar to her husband and the sole receptor of all virtues. She

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112 Appendix 2.2.  
115 Appendix 2.2.
was like Rati in her form and like Arundhati in righteous deeds. She was religious
minded and the object of prosperity in her house. Another grant mentioned Rambhā, the
wife of Ratnasimha who was honored by her relatives. Prabhā, the wife of Devagaṇṭha, was
virtuous and beautiful like an apsarā. His second wife Jāmbo was famous, graceful,
beautiful and dear to him. According to the inscription, Brahmā was pleased after
creating her. Interestingly, the record also mentioned Devagaṇṭha’s daughter Bhopā. She
was extolled as one who was untouched by kali and was like a celestial river purifying
the three worlds. This was the only inscription, which mentions a daughter in the
genealogical chart.

Of the qualities mentioned, the king was brave, handsome, gave charities as well as did
his duties righteously. The description of other elite men was also similar. They were
extolled as brave, handsome, loyal, had access to knowledge, gave charities and
performed religious duties. One significant change was that non-royal elite men claimed
knowledge of texts and other sciences such as taking care of elephants, knowledge about
jewels etc. They were celebrated for their acquaintance with the Vedas, Āgamas, Śāstras
and other texts. There were few references to women. The queens were mentioned in
very simple terms as belonging to a good family. Their identity was limited to being a
virtuous wife or caring mother but not specified in terms of administrative duties, if any.
Other elite women were also mentioned but as being modest and as dutiful wives. Thus,
the identity claimed by men and women was different.

The inscriptions established the divine concept of kingship. The records compared the
kings and queens with various deities. Of the records of the Vākāṭakas, only one
inscription made a comparison between the king and deities. It may indicate that the trend
had started towards the end of the dynasty. The Ajanta cave inscription of Varāhadeva117
compared Vindhyāśakti with Indra and Upendra i.e. Viṣṇu. In addition, Hariśena was
compared to Indra,118 Hara, Rāma, Kāma and Candra. It further mentioned that the
minister Varāhadeva was praised like Sugata. However, the name Varāhadeva suggests a
Vaiṣṇava affiliation. The Ghatotkaca Cave inscription does not compare the king with

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117 Ajanṭa Cave Inscription of Varāhadeva, CIH, Vol. 5, p. 107-08.
118 The term used here was Hari, which according to Mirashi was Indra as Rāma i.e. Viṣṇu was already
mentioned.
deities; rather it equates the minister’s ancestors with famous epic sages.\footnote{Ghaṭot-kacha Cave Inscription of Varāhadeva, \textit{CIH}, Vol. 5, p. 116.} Yajñapati, the predecessor of Varāhadeva was similar to Bhṛgu, Atri, Garga and Aṅgīras. The next in line Deva had led the king, as Kṛṣṇa had guided Pārtha towards religious duties. Thus again the references were drawn from the \textit{Mahābhārata}.

The trend of comparing men with famous mythical of legendary characters was a distinguishing feature of the Kalacuri inscriptions. Moreover, many a times those who were compared surpassed the deities in their qualities. Commonly, the king was described as one who surpassed the god of love, Kāma in beauty. The Kalacuri records represent an interesting pattern of comparing the king, queen and sometimes the donor, with Brāhmaṇical deities. They compared themselves to divine couples like Śiva and Pārvatī, Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu, Indra and Śaci and others. This was a method of claiming power, legitimacy and a divine status, which was a pertinent aspect of kingship. In the Bilhari stone inscription of Yuvarājadeva II,\footnote{Bilhari Stone Inscription of Yuvarajadeva II, \textit{CIH}, Vol. 4, Pt. 1, p. 212.} Keyūravarṣa was compared to Rudra and the queen, Nohalā was described as Rudrāṇī. In the description, even her parentage was extolled in divine terms. Nohalā was daughter of Avanivarman as Rudrāṇī was Himālayas’s daughter, as the Ocean got Lakṣmī, as Bhāskara got Kālindī and Janaka got Vaidehi. Moreover, as the daughter of Puloman was the wife of Maruta, Chāyā was the wife of the lord of light and Rati was the wife of the god whose bows were made of sugarcane, Nohalā became the beloved of the king Keyūravarṣa. In another inscription, Naṭī, the wife of Kokalladeva I, was described as Śaci was to Indra, Kamalā to Upendra and Pārvatī to Śiva.\footnote{Banaras Plates of Karna: (Kal.) Year 793, \textit{CIH}, Vol. 4, Pt. 1, p. 242.} The Bhere-ghat stone inscription of Narasimhadeva compared Gayakarna and Ālhaṇadevī with Śiva and Pārvatī. Ālhaṇadevī, wife of Gayakarna, was extolled in terms of her divine parentage. According to the Bhere-ghat stone inscription of Narasimhadeva, as Umā was born to Menā and Rati born to Viśṇi, similarly Ālhaṇadevī was the daughter of Śyāmalādevī and Vijayasimha.\footnote{Bhere-Ghat Stone Inscription of Narasimha: (Kal.) Year 907, \textit{CIH}, Vol. 4, Pt. 1, p. 316.} Here the queen claimed divinity through her mother as well, which was a unique example. However, in the comparison, the status of the queen was derived from the king. This reflected her
position as a consort. In a way, the comparison made them a divine couple. The status of the queen was dependent on the king’s position.

It was rare that the queens were separately compared to a deity, except for references to them as being similar to the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, such as Āvalladevī, wife of Kanṭha. The kings, on the other hand, were compared to various deities and extolled for their excellence. In the Bilhari stone inscription of Yuvarājadeva II, Kokalladeva was compared to Indra, Mugdhatunga had the prowess of Rudra, Keyūravarṣa was also like Rudra, Lakṣmaṇarāja II, Śaṅkaragana III and Yuvarājadeva II were comparable to Smara, god of love. Moreover, Yuvarājadeva I was eulogized as a second Arjuna in the Kali yuga. Lakṣmaṇarāja II was the incarnation of Dharma. Gāṅgeyadeva was the son of Dharma, Virocanā and Indra. Kanṭha was similar to Kanṭha of the Mahābhārata. Thus, comparisons were not limited to deities and their characteristic qualities but extended to other famous epic characters as well. The Goharwa plates of Kanṭha compared Yuvarājadeva II with Śeṣa, who supported the earth and also to Śiva. The king’s march through various routes was metaphorically compared to the Ganga, which flowed from the hair of Śiva. Moreover, Kanṭha was compared to Indra and Upendra. In the Khairha plates of Yaśahkarna, the king was compared to Paraśurāma, who wiped out kṣatriyas and bestowed the earth to brāhmaṇas. Narasimhadeva was compared to the Nṛsimha avatāra of Viṣṇu as the inscription also mentioned Hiranyakaśipu. Mirashi held that the term could also mean giver of gold and food. Thus, Purāṇic and epic stories provided points of reference for descriptions of several rulers. These indicate that the rulers or authors of the inscriptions as well as the audience were familiar with these stories.

The trend of comparison with gods and goddesses was more pronounced in the inscriptions of the Saryupara branch. It was interesting to note that for the kings the emphasis was on their military prowess. For the queen, wherever described, it was her

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role as a dutiful wife that was depicted. According to the Kahla Plates of Sodhadeva, the wife of Guṇāmbhodideva II was as Lakṣmī was to Viṣṇu. Similarly, Vidyā, the wife of Mugdhatunaga was described as Lakṣmī was to Viṣṇu and Girijā to Śiva. The queen Rājavā was to Guṇasāgara II as Lakṣmī was to Viṣṇu, Rohini to Candra, Gaurī to Śiva and Paulomi to Indra. Thus, they were represented as being divine in their capacity as consorts and not because of their own, individual or independent traits.

The king was compared to deities with reference to their legends; thus Śaṅkaragaṇa III was similar to Śaṅkara who destroyed his foes. The same record mentioned that the king Ullabha made his empire resemble the world of Brahmā. Guṇasāgara II was like the god of death. Śivarāja was like Brahmā. Bhāmāna II was described as all the heroes of the yuga, so he was Prthu in the Kṛta yuga, Rāmabhadra in the Tretā and the eldest son of Pāṇḍu in the Dvāpara. Bhīma was comparable to Bhima of the Mahābhārata and Guṇasāgara III was like Bali, Rāghava and Yayāti. Sodhadeva was like Kārttavīrya. The record referred to Purāṇic characters. Thus, there was a shift from the Vedic traditions to a Purāṇic one.

A similar trend is evident in the records of the Ratnapur branch. Some of the queens were mentioned as the divine consort. Rājallā, the wife of Prthivīdeva I, was resplendent like the moon, steadfast in her love like Lakṣmī and by her happy wisehood resembled Pārvatī. Again, the description was in terms of being a dutiful wife. Lāchalladevī, the wife of Jājjalladeva I was similar to Puruṣottama and Lakṣmī. The record further mentioned that she thereby became co-wife to the earth. Again, the inscriptions described the king in terms of bravery. For instance, Jājjalladeva I was compared to Indra and the record referred to the Indra-Vṛtra myth. His son Ratnadeva II was equated with Jayanta, the son of Indra. In the Akaltara stone inscription of Ratnadeva II, Prthivīdeva I was comparable to the Sun in luster, piety incarnated and was like a tree, which supported creepers of good deeds. He was like Prthu, who was venerated by the world. The Koni stone inscription of Prthivīdeva II compared the father and son pair of Ratnadeva II and Prthivīdeva II to the father and son pair of Puruṣottama and

130 Ratnapur Stone Inscription of Jajalladeva I: (Kal.) Year 866, CII, Vol. 4, Pt. II, p. 413.
131 Sheorinarayana Plates of Ratnadeva II: (Kal.) Year 878, CII, Vol. 4, Pt. II, p. 422.
Pradyumana, Hari as the son of Nanda and Skanda as the son of Śiva.133 In the Pendrabandh plates of Pratāpamalla, the illustrious king Pratāpa had surpassed the god of love, just as the sage Agastya dried up the ocean of enemies; besides, he was a second Bali in strength.14

These comparisons were not restricted to the kings and queens: other elite men and women used similar methods to claim a superior status. According to the Chandrehe stone inscription of Prabodhaśiva, the donor was like Kumāra, who avoided the company of women and performed his duties towards the gods. In addition, just as Rāghava created a bridge in the ocean, he created a bridge between the rivers and streams.135 The Rewa stone inscription of Karna, year 800, mentions that just as Viṣṇu had the śrīvatsa, the king Lakṣmaṇarāja had the minister Prabhākara. Another minister Vappulla was comparable to Arjuna.136 The Rewa stone inscription of Vijayasimhadeva, year 944,137 equates the minister Jāta with Brhaspati. His son, Yaśahpāla was like the Buddha born from Tārā. Next in line Padmasimha and his son Kṛtisimha were similar to Daśaratha and Rāma. The minister Malayasimha was like the moon. In many records, the donee was extolled to be divine. For instance, the donee, the brāhmaṇa named Viṣṇu was compared to the god Viṣṇu. Nevertheless, the quality mentioned was not military prowess; instead, he was described as one who “...was well-versed in the three Vedas and had a charming disposition on account of his knowledge of all Śāstras and Āgamas”.138 In another inscription the donor, Jagapāla, a general or feudatory of Prthvīdeva II, was compared to Rāma.139 In yet another inscription, which records the construction of a temple in the name of Bilvapāṇi by some Devagāṇa, the parents of the donor were described. Here the father Ratnasimha, the poet, was described as well learned. His wife, Rambhā i.e. the mother of the donor was described as Śacī was to Indra, the daughter of Girirāja was to Śambhu and the daughter of the milky ocean to Cakrapāṇi.140 In these inscriptions kings and queens were not compared with deities. Rather, the donor and his family were

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136 Appendix 2.2.
139 Rajim Stone Inscription of Prthvīdeva II: (Kal.) Year 896, CII, Vol. 4, Pt. II, p. 454.
compared not only to gods and goddess but also to other famous mythic characters. Thus, they claimed similarity with popular figures known for their bravery. Comparisons were also made with animals such as the lion and elephant. The gendered nature of such descriptions was clear as women were represented in terms of their status as wife, whereas for men the emphasis was on attributes such as being a minister or being learned. The terminology used for the kings and elite men was quite similar. Thus towards the end of the Kalacuri period, the methods of claiming status by elite men had become similar.

The titles used are the epithets, which the ruling king, queen and other officers and feudatories claim. The more grand the title/s, the more was the power claimed by the person. For instance, the title ascribed to the queen or claimed by her reflects her position in the dynasty. A queen from a strong and powerful lineage was generally mentioned with high-sounding titles. The epithets used refer to the power and status of the ruler.

The range of titles used by the Vakatakas in their inscriptions was limited. They claimed a superior status for their ancestor, Pravarasena I. He was described as samrāt in nearly all the inscriptions. However, the next ruler Gautamiputra was bereft of any title. The next ruler Rudrasena I claimed to be rājan in his own record while other records used the title mahārāja for him. All the other rulers used the same title. The Vatsagulma/Western branch records a different title for Vindhyasakti I, Sarvasena I and Pravarasena I i.e. dharma mahārāja. This branch also claimed the title of samrāt for Pravarasena I. The other rulers claimed the lesser title of mahārāja.

For the Vakatakas, the queens did not share the titles with the king but used different titles such as mahādevī and agramahiṣī. Although Prabhavatigupta ruled as a regent for her minor son, still she did not use titles equivalent to those of a king. The title used by the unnamed queen of Pravarasena II was mahādevī. Thus, during this period women used only derivative titles, which would imply that the queen derived power from the king. Nevertheless, she claimed a similar status.

The titles claimed by non-royal elite men were nṛpa and rāja. Feudatory rulers claimed these titles. None of the non royal elite women claimed any title in the Vakataka records.

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141 Appendix 2.3.
142 Appendix 2.3.
The titles used by the Kalacuris were wider in range than those used by the Vākāṭakas. This would probably imply a sharper political stratification. In the Kalacuri records, kings claimed many titles, for example, Śaṅkararāṇadēva I claimed the title of paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja-paramāheśvara (pmp). Kokalladeva I used the title of nrpa. Keyūravarṣa/Yuvarāṇadēva II also used the title of nrpa and cedirāja. Laksmanarāja II used the title rājaputra. Gāṅgeyadeva claimed the title of mahārāmahā-mahātaka and mahārāja. Karnā used the title of paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja-paramāheśvara, trikalināḍhipati, mahārāja, aśvapati, gajapati, naraṇapati, bhaṭṭārakaprabhā, cedirāja and naraṇādhipa. Karnā was the first ruler to claim the title lord of Trikaliṅga, Trikaliṅgaḍhipati. The Somavamsi king of Katak also used this title. Thus, the title passed from one dynasty to another. According to G. Ramadas the Tewar Dynasty lost it to the Gaṅgas of Kaliṅga and then the Ratnapur branch reclaimed it. Yaśahkarna also used titles such as paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja-paramāheśvara, trikalināḍhipati, aśvapati, gajapati and naraṇapati. Gayakarna claimed the title of nrpa. Narasimhadeva and Jayasimhadeva used similar titles. Vijayasimhadeva claimed the title of rājā, cedirāja and paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja-paramāheśvara, whereas Ajayasimhadeva used the title of mahākumāra.

The kings of the Ratnapur branch also used multiple titles. Kokalladeva I claimed the title of nrpa and cediśreṣṭha. Ratnarāja I used the title dharādhiśvara, whereas Prthivideva I was mahāmandaleśvara, narendra and bhiṣpati. Jājalladeva I claimed to be nrpa and bhiṣpāla, while Ratnadeva II claimed to be nrpa, mahārānaka, mahipati, nareśvara, rājā and narendra. Prthivideva II used titles such as mahipāla, narendra, bhiṣpati, bhiṣratnadeva, nrpaśreṣṭha and nareśvara. Jājalladeva II claimed the title of nrpa and nareśvara. Ratnadeva III claimed to be bhiṣpāla. The varieties in titles used was related to the use of ornamental language. Most of the titles were just derivatives: for instance, naraṇapati, narendra, and nareśvara all had a more or less identical meaning of lord of men. Similarly, bhiṣpati, mahipati, mahipāla and bhiṣpāla refer to the same quality of being lord or protector of the earth.

143 Appendix 2.4
145 Ibid, p. 545.
In the Saryupara branch, the kings did not claim any titles. Only Sodhadeva claimed to be \textit{paramabhattaraka-mah\textbar{a}raj\textbar{a}dhir\textbar{a}ja-param\textbar{ahe}svara} in his records. The titles claimed by queens were \textit{mah\textbar{a}dev\textbar{i}} by R\textbar{a}had\textbar{a}, \textit{mah\textbar{a}raj\textbar{i}ni} by Kelhan\textbar{a}dev\textbar{i} and Gosaladev\textbar{i}. L\textbar{a}challadev\textbar{i} of the Ratnapur branch claimed the title of \textit{mahi\textbar{t}}. As can be noticed \textit{mah\textbar{a}r\textbar{a}ja} was the only term for which a feminine equivalent \textit{mah\textbar{a}raj\textbar{i}ni} was used by the Kalacuris. For other titles no such equivalent was found. Using an equivalent title was perhaps an indication of sharing equal status. The absence of equivalent titles may suggest women exercised less power and were not considered to be of equal status to men.

Elite men claimed the title of \textit{r\textbar{a}j\textbar{a}, sarv\textbar{a}dhikaran\textbar{i}, thakkura} and \textit{mah\textbar{a}mandales\textbar{v}ara}. Elite women claimed the title of \textit{r\textbar{a}jn\textbar{i}ni} and \textit{thakkur\textbar{a}jn\textbar{i}ni}. Both the titles used by women were derivative and would suggest that these women claimed a more or less equivalent status to their menfolk.

Another aspect of kingship was officers of the state and their functions. The inscriptions refer to ministers as donors. At the same time, various state functionaries were informed about the grant. Generally, the records mentioned the writer, scribe and/or engraver. The V\textbar{a}k\textbar{a}takas in most of their grants inform the office of the \textit{sarv\textbar{a}dhya\textbar{k}\textbar{a}sa}, police officers and soldiers of noble birth, \textit{‘sarv\textbar{a}dhya\textbar{k}\textbar{a}s\textbar{a}n\textbar{i}yut\textbar{a}n \textbar{a}jn\textbar{\textbar{n}}\textbar{a}s\textbar{a}nc\textbar{a}rik\textbar{u}lap\textbar{u}t\textbar{a}d\textbar{h}ik\textbar{r}t\textbar{a}’}.\textsuperscript{146} Besides, they also mention the \textit{sen\textbar{a}pati}, scribe and the \textit{d\textbar{u}\textbar{t}aka}.\textsuperscript{147} The Poona plates of Prabh\textbar{a}vat\textbar{g}upt\textbar{a} however do not address any official; instead she informs the \textit{gr\textbar{a}m\textbar{k}ut\textbar{u}m\textbar{b}in}. The inscription only refers to the engraver. The Riddhapur plates do not address officials, but mention the \textit{d\textbar{u}\textbar{t}aka} and the writer. The Indore Plates of Pravarasena II mention the writer as \textit{r\textbar{a}j\textbar{u}ka Ko\textbar{t}t\textbar{a}dev\textbar{a}}, while the Tirodi plates of Pravarasena II referred to the writer as \textit{r\textbar{a}jy\textbar{\textbar{\textbar{a}}\textbar{d}hik\textbar{r}t\textbar{a}} Camid\textbar{\textbar{a}}sa}. The Pattan plates of Pravarasena II mentioned the writer as K\textbar{a}lid\textbar{\textbar{a}}sa, a servant of \textit{sen\textbar{a}pati} K\textbar{a}t\textbar{y}\textbar{\textbar{\textbar{a}}y\textbar{a}ya}, the engraver was the \textit{suvar\textbar{n}ak\textbar{a}ra} \textbar{I}s\textbar{v}aradatta, a servant of K\textbar{a}und\textbar{a}r\textbar{a}ja and the executors were Pit\textbar{a}m\textbar{a}ha and Nanda. The records of the Vatsagulma branch also refer to similar officers. However, the Basim plates of Vindhya\textbar{\textbar{a}}k\textbar{t}\textbar{\textbar{a}}k\textbar{\textbar{a}} inform the \textit{\textbar{a}jn\textbar{a}pati}, soldiers and \textit{sen\textbar{a}pati} about the grant.

\textsuperscript{146} J\textbar{\textbar{\textbar{a}}}mb Plates of Pravarasena II, \textit{CII}. Vol. 5, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{147} Appendix 2.3.
while the India office plates of Devasena mentioned the bhojakas and dāṇḍanāyaka. Besides the mention of gotra, there was no other detail regarding the officers.

In the Kalacuri records, not just were more officers mentioned, but there are also more details about them. The earlier grants were either fragmentary or contained little information. Generally, the Tripuri branch inscriptions mentioned the writer, composer of the eulogy, scribe and/or the sūtradhara. The Bilhari stone inscription of Yuvarājadeva II mentioned that the eulogy of the first three rulers was written by Śrīnivāsa. Sajjana, who was described as wise, wrote the eulogy of the other three rulers. The rājaguru Aghorāsiva had put these details together in the grant. Sīruka, who was a kāyanīka, wrote the record. The eulogy was by Nai, who was the kāranika i.e. writer of legal documents. Nonna, son of sūtradhara Sangama engraved the record. The praśastikāra, Dhāmsata, composed the Candrehe stone inscription of Prabodhaśiva. It contained the hope that the work would endure as long as the Ganga flows. Dāmodara, who was the scribe, was wise and well known. Nilakanṭha, by the order of the sūtradhara Sūrāka, inscribed the record. The Banaras plates of Karna address a huge list of state functionaries. It mentioned the mahādevī, mahārājaputra, mahāmantrin, mahāmātya, mahāsandhivigrahika, mahādharmādhikaranika, mahāksapatalika, mahākaranika, mahāpratihāra, mahāsāmanta, mahāpramātri, mahāśvasādhanika, mahābhāndāgārika and mahādhyakṣa. It was interesting to note that among the state officials the queen was the foremost. This may probably reflect that the queen had some official role although there are no further details. The Khairha plates of Yasahkarna also addressed the mahādevī, mahārājaputra, mahāmantrin, mahāmātya, mahāsandhivigrahika, mahāsāmanta, mahāpurohita, mahāpratihāra mahāksapatalika, mahāpramātri, mahāśvasādhanika mahābhāndāgārika and mahādhyakṣa. It also mentioned the writer Vacchūka was the dharmalekhin i.e. one who writes religious documents. The Tewar stone inscription of Gayakarna, year 902 referred to Mahidhara, who wrote the praśasti. It further mentioned that he knew the science invented by Viśvakarman. The Bhere ghat stone inscription of Narasimhadeva, year 907 also eulogized the praśastikāra.

148 Appendix 2.4.
150 Appendix 2.4
151 Appendix 2.4.
Pṛthivīdhara, as one who knew the Śāstras and was always surrounded by pupils. The record was composed by Śaśidhara, who was proficient in dialectics and was clever. The engraver, Mahidhara was foremost among the artisans and the architect, Pīthe, knew the science taught by Viśvakarman. He had planned as Pṛthu did the earth. Thus, even the minor officers are compared to Purāṇic characters. The Rewa stone inscription of Vijayasimhadeva, year 944 mentioned the various officers under the minister, Malayasimha. The record officer, Garga was like Citragupta. His minister Harisimha was described as a warrior who had killed huge and fierce elephants. He was compared to Kārtikeya, in the way he led the army. It further mentioned Vidyādhara, the superintendent of the excavation of the tank. His ancestors were praised for their achievement and were compared to Viṣṇu. The inscription then extolled Puruṣottama as a great brāhmaṇa who knew logic, lexicography, Mīmāṁsā, Vedānta, Yoga and the Vedas and was like Brhaspati. He had measured the tank. It then mentioned Ralhana, dvārīva i.e. the doorkeeper, who was like Nandi. The sütradhara Ananta had incised the eulogy. The Kahla plates of Sodhadeva, Saryupara branch, addressed the mahārājīni, mahārajaputra, mahāsandhivigrahika, mahāmahantaka, mahāpratihāra, mahāsenāpati, mahāksapatañjika, mahāsādhanika, mahāsreṣṭhin, mahādānika, mahāpañcakulika, saulika, ghalapati, tārāpati, viśayadānika, duṣṭasādhaka, khaṇḍavāla and balādhīra. It also mentioned the writer Janaka, who was the ādeśanaibandhika. Again, the queen was among the chief state functionaries.

The Ratnapur branch records mentioned various officers, like the Tripuri branch, and gave details of the composer of the prāśasti, the engraver, scribe and other such office holders. For instance, the Raipur plates of Pṛthivīdeva I, year 821 mention that the mantrin Vigrahapāla, brāhmaṇa Keśava and Gadādhara were the witnesses to the grant. The owner of the village Garbha, who was a good poet, wrote it. The scribe, Hāsala was described as intelligent. The Ratnapur stone inscription of Jajalladeva I, year 866 mentioned Vigraharaṇj as the sandhivigrahika. The record was composer by a kāyastha, who was foremost in the council. He was intelligent and knew the Śāstras. The writer was Kārtidhara. The Akaltara stone inscription of Ratnadeva II was composed by Devapāṇi. In
this case, the eulogy was compared to a lotus plant. The Rajim stone inscription of Prthivideva II, year 896, gave a detailed description of the composer, thakkura Jasananda, who was a worshipper of Maheśvara and Viṣṇu. He was devoted to the service of the brāhmaṇas, gods and teachers and was the wise servant of great poets. The scribe was the artisan Ratnapāla. In the Koni stone inscription of Prthivideva II, year 900, the composer, Kāśala was clever, compassionate, knew various arts, was skilled in science of arms, conversant in the science of medicine, knew about elephants, the three ratnas and was intelligent. Another record of Prthivideva II, the Ratnapur stone inscription, year 1207 mentioned the composer, Kumārapāla as learned, possessing an excellent talent for poetry and like the son of Bṛgu in politics and like the sun to the lotus. Again, the composer was compared to a known mythic character. The writer, Kumārapāla, was learned and intelligent. The engraver was the artisan Sāmpula, and Devagaṇa, the sculptor was the crest jewel among sculptors. Ratnasimha, who was intelligent and knew the system of Kāśyapa and Aksapāda had composed the Mallar stone inscription of Jājalladeva II, year 919.153 He was comparable to a lion. The king and ministers often compared to the lion as a symbol of bravery; in this case, the composer had compared himself to a lion. The writer Kumārapāla was best among the kṣatriyas. The Sheorinarayana stone inscription of Jājalladeva II, year 919, was incised by Cituka and written by Kumārapāla, best among kṣatriyas. The eulogy was described as a beautiful woman with good qualities. The temple was constructed by Vikkannadeva. It is interesting to note that the earlier grants simply mentioned the engraver and the scribe but by the late Kalacuri period, there was mention of one who composed the praśasti, then the writer, engraver, artisan and sculptor. Besides the minor officers were extolled for their qualities and were compared to animals such as the lion or to the lotus and sometimes to famous epic characters. Thus, they claimed a status similar to higher officers. The numbers of state functionaries were more and at the same time, it shows differentiation of jobs. The nature of the state during the Kalacuri period had become complex, as can be seen from the array of officers mentioned in the records.

153 Appendix 2.4.
The *Matsya Purāṇa* and the inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas and the Kalacuris present vast quantities of data on kingship. They mention the qualities of the king and other officials explicitly. They refer to the divine connections and at the same time use honorific titles. Both the sources mentioned the qualities of the king, omitting the queen’s duty as a state functionary, although the *Matsya Purāṇa* mentions that the queen, if discontented, was an inherent danger to the state. None of the sources describes the queen except as a wife or a mother. Even the descriptions of the elite women (non-royal) were along similar lines. Only Prabhāvatīguptā in her record diverges from the pattern in the rest of the Vākāṭakas inscriptions; in her records, she describes herself as chief wife of the king and the mother of the prince or the king. In the Kalacuri records as well, the queens, wherever mentioned were praised for being virtuous, modest and a good wife.

The king was praised for his bravery, learning, upholding traditions and maintaining the social order. The inscriptions followed the Purāṇic trend and added to it. From the Vākāṭaka period to the Kalacuri period, there was a shift in notions of kingship. The same trend could be seen in the case of the Pallavas. For example, Dirks holds that by the mid-Pallava period the Purāṇic view was adopted. The Pallavas shifted to divine genealogies and land grants instead of performing royal sacrifices. Just as the Purāṇas mentioned maintaining a status quo, the Vākāṭakas mentioned that they established the *Kṛta yuga*, while the Kalacuris claimed to have trampled the *Kali yuga* just as an elephant would a lotus pond. The Purāṇas mentioned that the king should be handsome. The Vākāṭakas were silent on this aspect while the Kalacuris gave descriptions of the beauty of the king, who quite often surpassed Kāma. They also mention that women desired the king because of his attractiveness. The description of the king was comparatively less elaborate in the Vākāṭaka records. The Kalacuris in their long inscriptions provide graphic description of the kings.

The *Matsya Purāṇa* mentioned that it was an important duty of the king to appoint his successor and give him training. He must also appoint suitable officers in various departments. The inscription do not mention anything regarding choosing a successor and

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ministers. They mention the family tree in detail and refer to various ministers and other officers. A comparison between some important traits of the king as mentioned in the Matsya Purāṇa and inscriptions is tabulated as below-

Table 2.1: Traits of a king

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the Matsya Purāṇa</th>
<th>In Inscriptions</th>
<th>Kalacuris</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protector</td>
<td>Warrior</td>
<td>Great warrior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replenish the treasure</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>Fortune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dāna</td>
<td></td>
<td>Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain status quo</td>
<td>Established the Kṛta yuga</td>
<td>Removed the Kali yuga/ maintained four varṇas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthfulness</td>
<td>Truthful</td>
<td>Truthful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best among men</td>
<td>Ornament of the family</td>
<td>Crest jewel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Dharma/Sāstras</td>
<td></td>
<td>Political wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handsome</td>
<td></td>
<td>Beauty/ desired by women, like the god of love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform sacrifices</td>
<td>Several sacrifice and aśvamedha yajña performed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactful</td>
<td></td>
<td>Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Vedic studies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Established abode of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitious</td>
<td></td>
<td>Famous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve Brāhmaṇas</td>
<td>Grants to Brāhmaṇas</td>
<td>Grants to Brāhmaṇas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage wars</td>
<td>Conquered several kingdoms</td>
<td>Conquered several kingdoms/ destroyed enemies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect taxes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Taxes mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take care of self and the state</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select successor and officials</td>
<td>Few officials mentioned</td>
<td>Many officials mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Protect earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar to deities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wish fulfilling tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquire qualities of various animals.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Compared to deities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Depicted as lion/ elephant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Refer Appendix 2.1 and 2.2 for details on inscriptions.

The features tabulated above are some of the common qualities mentioned in the sources. A single ruler did not claim all these characteristics. The attempt here is to understand the qualities, which were extolled with reference to the king. There were many features mentioned in the Matsya Purāṇa, which the inscriptions mentioned implicitly. The Matsya Purāṇa mentioned that the king should acquire wealth with the eyes of a crane, should have valor like a lion, run like a wolf, and save money like a hare. He should attack like a boar, be devoted like a dog, afraid as a crow, should have the manners of a
peacock and be sweet like a cuckoo (MP: Akhtar, 215.69-74). The Purāṇa and the inscriptions mention the divine aspects of kingship differently. The Matsya Purāṇa recommended various vrata, which the king should perform, such as the Sūrya vrata, Varuṇa vrata, Indra vrata etc. It mentioned that the king was similar to these deities, so everyone should respect him. The inscriptions invariably compared the king and the deities directly. The kings were equated with Indra, Viṣṇu, and Śiva. However, in the later inscriptions not just the king but also the ministers, donors as well the composer of the grant were compared to various deities and other famous mythical characters such as Arjuna, Bhīma, Yudhiṣṭhira, etc. Thus probably by the later period it was considered desirable to make comparisons with famous characters and refer to various legends commonly known. The deities such as Indra, Varuṇa and others had lost their position. Viṣṇu and Śiva were widely known and worshipped. The queens were compared to Śaci, Pārvatī or Lakṣmī. The comparisons of the queens and elite women were in terms of consort goddesses. The description of women was as a dutiful wife. However, in the case of kings and elite men, the emphasis was on their military capabilities or knowledge. Thus, the Purāṇic myths were selectively used and changed over a period. The main emphasis was on the claim to power, status and legitimization. Thus, the comparisons were gendered in nature.

The epithets used for women in the Purāṇa were bhāryā, mahādevī, and maḥiśī. In the Vākāṭaka records, the titles maḥādevī, agramahiśī and maḥārājīṇī were used. In many cases, the queen was referred to simply as devī. There was no mention of epithets for other elite women in the Vākāṭaka records. Probably only women who were politically relevant were given a title. In the Kalacuri inscriptions, similar titles were used. However, elite women during the Kalacuri period used honorific titles such as rājī and thakkurājīṇī. Again, as compared to the titles used by men, these were simple. Even elite men used epithets such as rājā, thakkura, rājuka, ācārya and maḥārāṇaka. In reference to the kings, the Matsya Purāṇa mentioned titles like rājā, rājan, bhūpata, mahipāla, prthivipati, narendra, nrpati, nrpa and nārādhipa. The epithets used for the kings in the Matsya Purāṇa and in the inscriptions can be compared in the table below:

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Table 2.2: Titles used by kings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matsya Purāṇa</th>
<th>Inscriptions Vākāñakas</th>
<th>Kalacuris</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nṛpa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Nṛpa, nṛpaśreṣṭha</td>
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<td>Narendra</td>
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<td>Narendra, narapati, nareśvara, prajapati</td>
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<td>Ptthivipati, mahipāla, bhūpati, mahipati, bhūpāla</td>
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<td>Rājā, rājan</td>
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<td>Rājan</td>
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<td>Mahārāja</td>
<td>Rājaputra, mahākumāra</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mahārājādhirāja</td>
<td>Mahārājādhirāja</td>
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<td>Dharmamahārāja</td>
<td>Dharmamahārāja</td>
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<td>Samrāṭ</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parama-mahārājādhirāja-paramēśvara</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gajapati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mahāmāndaleśvara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trikaliṅgādhipati, Cedirāja, Cediśreṣṭha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Refer Appendices 2.3 and 2.4 for details on inscriptions.

A single ruler did not claim all the titles mentioned above. These were some of the frequently mentioned epithets and reflected the nature of legitimization claimed by the kings. The Kalacuris used high-sounding titles, which would reflect the complex nature of the state. Their subordinates used the simpler epithets such as rājā; therefore the more important rulers had to use such varied and long epithets to distinguish themselves from their subordinates.

In the last section, we consider officers of the state and their respective duties. The Matsya Purāṇa holds that it was the foremost duty of the king to select suitable officers of the state. It mentioned in details the various officers and the qualities that they should possess. Generally, the recommendation was to select officers from good families. They should be knowledgeable in their field and at the same time be loyal, truthful and brave.

The inscriptions referred to the officers when listing various state functionaries concerned with the grant. They also mentioned various officers who were involved in the process such as the scribe, poet, composer etc. The numbers of officers mentioned in the Vākāñaka inscriptions were fewer as compared to the huge list of officers mentioned in the Kalacuri records. A comparison of the state functionaries as provided in the two sources would be relevant to understand the changing state structure. The officers
mentioned in the *Matsya Purāṇa* and the Vākāṭaka and Kalacuri inscriptions are tabulated as below:

**Table 2.3: Comparison of the State Functionaries:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matsya Purāṇa</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Kalacuris</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senāpati</td>
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<td>Mahāpratihāra</td>
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<td>Rakṣīṇa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tambuladhārin</td>
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<td>Sandhivigrahika</td>
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<td>Mahāsāndhivigrahika</td>
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<td>Khadjadhārin</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhanurdhārin</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Āśvasādhanika, Mahāśvasādhanika</td>
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<td>Sudhādhyaṅkaśa</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Purāṅdhyaṅkaśa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ayudhāṅgṛedhyakṣa</td>
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<td>Daṇḍanāyaka, Balāṅdhikṛta, gaulmika, duṣṭaṅsdhākha</td>
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<td>Grāmapprativāsin</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Refer Appendix 2.3 and 2.4 for details on inscriptions.

The number of officers in the various departments as well as the number of departments had increased considerably by the Kalacuri period. The Vākāṭaka state structure was simple as compared to that of the Kalacuris. There was similarity between the state structure suggested by the *Matsya Purāṇa* and as seen in the Kalacuri records. Both
mention the queen as an important state functionary. While the Vākāṭakas mentioned the queen in the records, the reference was not as a state functionary.

In the notion of kingship, women could hardly find space. In the inscriptions, reference to women was as the mother of the successor. Her description was not in terms of kingship or related to kingship. To conclude, although the Purāṇic ideals were followed in the inscriptions, the emphasis changed over the time.

Tracing the family line was an important feature of kingship ideals. It was important to belong to a noble family. Legitimacy was claimed generally by claiming relation to ancestors, real or imagined. Thus looking into the kinship pattern would be important for the study. The pattern would also reflect the identity claimed by elite men and women. Through genealogical chart and reference to marriage alliances, the position of women in the kinship structure can be understood. The method of exclusion and inclusion would show the trend followed in both the sources. We will explore these possibilities in the next chapter.