CHAPTER - THREE

ORIGIN, GENEALOGY AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE BHAÑJAS
In the eighth century A.D., the Bhañjas established their rule as the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas in Sonepur, Baud, Phulbāñī, Nayāgarh and Ghumusar regions which they called Khiñjali manḍala. The capital of their kingdom was Dhṛtipura which has been identified by N.K.Sahu with modern Baud. However, the early Bhañjas were powerful feudatory rulers of some independent sovereign principalities of early medieval Orissa. Śatrubhañja of the Asanpat stone inscription, Netṭabhañja of the Bānatumba copper plates (eighth century A.D.) and another Netṭabhañja of the Baud copper plates were known to be the earliest Bhañja rulers of probably independent status. The later Bhañjas became the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas of Toṣali and ruled over the manḍala states namely Khiñjali manḍala and Khijjiṅga manḍala. Before the establishment of the Bhauma-Kara hegemony over Toṣali, the history of the Bhañjas was shrouded in obscurity. Various scholars have given various opinions about the origin of this ancient race. It is because the copper plate grants which form the primary source to reconstruct the history of the Bhañjas are not very explicit in describing the origin of this dynasty.

Scholars mainly depend on the traditional accounts to trace the origin of the Bhanjas.

The literary accounts found in the epigraphic records of the early Bhanjas of Mayurbhanj indicate that Gaṇadanda Vīrabhadra was born of a peahen and nursed by sage Vaśiṣṭha. Vīrabhadra is the form of Śiva, usually associated with the cult of Sapta-Mātrkās. We are inclined to believe that Gaṇadanda, a tribal chief associated with the cult of Vīrabhadra was the progenitor of the Bhanjas who like many other tribes trace their descent from inanimate beings like the egg of a peahen (Mayūrāṇḍa Bhaitvā Gaṇadanda Vīrabhadrākṣa). The Keśarī copper plate of Śatrubhaṇja contains some more details of this legendary account. It clearly describes that the progenitor of the dynasty was Gaṇadanda Vīrabhadra who was born out of a peahen’s egg in the hermitage of ‘Koṭṭa’ and was nurtured by sage Vaśiṣṭha who ruled after an investiture from ‘Rāmadeva’ over a large territory comprising eighty eight thousand villages with eighty eight thousand sons as their administrative heads.

However, the Bhañjas of Dhṛtipura branch have stated themselves as ‘aṅḍajavaṁśa prabhava’ but the name Vaśiṣṭha is absent in their epigraphs while the Bhañjas of Vañjulvaka have not mentioned any thing about their origin in their charters⁹. As a matter of fact the ruling families of Baud, Daśapallā and Ghumusar are connected not with the Brahmanic Gotra of Vaśiṣṭha but with that of Kāśyapa. But the ruling families of Mayūrbhañj and the allied families of Keonjhar and Kanikā are attached to the Brahmanic gotra of Vaśiṣṭha.

On the basis of this legendary account, Pandit B.Mishra¹⁰ has however tried to show that they were an off-shoot of the imperial Maurya dynasty of Magadha. The main arguments of Mishra are that both the Mauryas and the Bhañjas emanated from the solar dynasty and that the origin of the solar dynasty as found in the legendary account in Tibetan work Pāg Sām Jon Zāṅg¹¹ is almost the same as the origin of the Bhañjas as found in their copper plates. It is also stated in the Pāg Sām Jon Zāṅg that the founder of the solar dynasty was born of an egg which was hatched in the sun’s rays. In the Bhañja copper plates as shown above it is stated that the first

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Bhañja Vîrabhadra was born of a peahen’s egg. This similarity has however no proof that the Mauryas and the Bhañjas belonged to the same family, but it rather points to the fact that both of them claimed to have originated from the sun. There were hundreds of royal families in India who claimed their descent from the sun. The Bhañjas have done the same thing, but this does not mean that all the royal families claiming descent from the sun belonged to one and the same dynasty. On the other hand it is also evidenced that the Mauryas were called as Nandānvaya and Pûrva Nandasuta previously and named their dynasty after the name of Murā, the mother of Chandragupta Maurya, which finds mention in Mudrārākṣasa of Viśākhādatta\textsuperscript{12}. So no truth is found to link the Bhañjas with the Maurya dynasty of Magadha. In this connection the view of R.C.Majumdar\textsuperscript{13} is very important who does not believe that the Bhañjas had some connection with the Mauryas who once upon a time held sway over a vast territory with their headquarters at Pāṭāliputra. He holds the view that the presumption of Mishra that Vîrabhadra’s birth from a peahen’s egg had some connection with the peacock tamer clan of the Mauryas has ‘no valid ground’. It only refers to the totemic origin of the Bhañjas. There is no reason

to bring similarity between the legendary traditional extents of Vīrabhadra as chakravarti with that of Vindusāra's kingdom. Gaṇadaṇḍa as presumed by Hiralal\(^{14}\) is a short form of Gaṇadaṇḍanāyaka or Gaṇadaṇḍapāla which refers to either a minister or a commander of army. There is no justification of going further on it.

Some scholars like Hunter\(^{15}\), Lathbridge\(^{16}\), Mishra\(^{17}\), Ramsay\(^{18}\), Acharya\(^{19}\) and Das\(^{20}\) also recorded the Rajput origin of the Bhaṅjas which states that one Jay Singh from Jaipur of Rājputānā visited Jagannath temple at Puri 1300 years ago and married the daughter of the then Gajapati Rājā, got Hariharpur as dowry and ruled there. He conquered a chieftain named Mayūrdwaja and bore the title Bhaṅja by breaking the pride of the said prince of Orissa. He also named the kingdom on the last request of the defeated ruler after his name Mayūr and enjoying his own achievement of breaking i.e. as Mayūrbhaṅja.

\(^{14}\) E.I., Vol.XVIII, p.289.
\(^{17}\) B.Mishra, Dynasties of Medieval Orissa, (Calcutta, 1933), pp.6-7.
There are also variations noticed in traditional history as recorded by different authors. Some say that Jay Singh came to Puri on pilgrimage with two sons Ādi Singh and Jyoti Singh and the elder brother married the daughter of the Gajapati Rājā of Puri while some mention that the title Bhaṅja had been conferred by the Gajapati for the conquest of Mayūrbhaṅj and so on which indicates that these stories were based completely on imagination. It is well established that the Rājput came into prominence during the Mughal rule and there was no progenitors of Gajapati Rājās in Orissa 1300 years ago.²¹

Basing on the above cited Rājput theory J.N.Datta²² has considered the Bhaṅjas to be immigrants who came from a place beyond Orissa and by their superior prowess and military skill carved out extensive kingdoms for themselves. To him also the Bhaṅjas were Kṣatriyas of Rājputānā who came over to the Midnāpore region on the border of modern West Bengal and Orissa states and settled there much before the sectarian division of the Rājputs that took place in the early medieval period. Coming over to the eastern part of the sub-continent they established their first

settlement at Bhañjabhûm in the modern Midnapore district of West Bengal. J.N.Datta’s presumption of the Bhañjas being originated from the Kṣatriyas of Rājputānā is based on a much later tradition prevailing among the members of the ruling family of Mayûrbañj regarding their origin. But a careful study of the facts available from the Bhañja charters and the location of the place names mentioned therein prove the fallacy of Datta’s theory.

R.K.Ray has attempted to connect the Bhañjas with the Nāgās of Keonjhar. He says 'In this connection our attention is drawn to the Asanpat stone inscription of Šatrubhañja Deva who according to many scholars belonged to the fourth century A.D. This is the earliest inscription of a king bearing the surname Bhañja. In the opening line of the inscription Šatrubhañja has been described as belonging to the Nāgā dynasty (Nāgānvaya) and in the 4th-5th line as the uplifter of the Nāgā dynasty (Nāgāvarśovardhana), Šatrubhañja is a very common name in the Bhañja family of Khijjiñga-Koṭṭa, Dhrṣtipura and Vañjulvaka. It appears that the Nāgās in Orissa assumed the surname Bhañja and they tried to give them a separate identity by establishing a mythological origin of

23. The rulers of the ex-state of Mayûrbañj claim descent from the Kachhvāha clan of Rājputs because when the Mughals conquered Orissa, the people of Orissa found that the Rājputs were the principal Hindu nobles in the Mughal empire and it became a fashion in Orissa to claim Rājput origin. R.D.Banerji, op.cit., pp.161-68
their progenitor. Subsequently they came to be regarded as belonging to Bhañja race.’ But there is no example of changing the surname of the dynasty in the history of Orissa and as the view of Ray lacks concrete evidence it is not accepted by us.

Other suggestions tried to link the Bhañjas with the Varāhas of Banāi state, who also bear the peacock emblem according to a joint stone inscription of Dharaṇi Varāha and Rāyabhañja of Mayūrbhañja, inscribed on the pedestal of the image of an Avalokiteśvara discovered in a place not far from Khiching. Two poetic works namely Viragāṭhā and Ábāhan describe the migration of the Varāhas of the Kadamba clan from the south which is also supported by Jagabandhu Singh.

‘There are also dynasties having peacock emblem in Tāmluk (ancient Tāmralipta) in Midnapore and in Mewār of Rajasthan. But all these dynasties claim their descent from the Mayūr (peacock) or the Mayūrāṇḍa (the egg of the peahen) which cannot however be taken to have originally belonged to one and the

same family. At any rate we have no data to enable us to arrive at such a conclusion', says A.Joshi.

The Keśarī copper plate of Śattrubhañja as cited earlier contains a legendary account about the progeny of the Bhañjas. The legend in its ordinary sense reads that Gaṇadanda Vīrabhadra, the progenitor of the Bhañjas was born out of a peahen’s age in the penance grove of a ‘Kotta’ and was nursed by the great sage Vaśiṣṭha. He was elevated to kingship by the grace of Rāmadeva and ruled over eighty eight thousand villages like a chakravarti with eighty eight thousand sons as their heads. It is noteworthy that Gaṇa in Sanskrit means ‘an assemblage or society of men formed for the attainment of the same objects’, which is otherwise known as republic. Daṇḍa refers to subjugation or control. So the epithet ‘Gaṇadanda’ before the name Vīrabhadra signifies that he was the controller of the republic of the Bhañjas. Thus from the above analysis it is known that the Bhañjas were a republican tribe flourished in Khijjinga-Kotta, identified with modern Khiching near Bāripadā in Mayūrbañj district. They trace their origin to an

30. Ibid., p.244.
31. In all the charters the Bhañjas of Khijjinga-Kotta have expressed that their headquarters was at Khijjinga-Kotta and their progenitor was born at Koṭṭiśrama. I.O., Vol.VI, pp.2-4.
eponymous being Vīrabhadra who was born in the penance grove of Koṭṭa, which has been identified with modern Kuting, 32 miles from Bāripadā. The location of the birthplace of Vīrabhadra and the political headquarters in Mayūrbhaṇj proves beyond doubt that they neither hailed from the Rājput stock in Rajasthan nor they had any connection with the Maūryas. They were certainly the natives of the land over which they ruled for centuries. The story of Vīrabhadra’s birth and his becoming the king shows a thorough network mystifying his actual origin. The totemic origin of the Bhaṇjas indicates that they originally belonged to some aboriginal tribe. N.K.Sahu has identified them with the Bhūyāns who are an ancient tribe and are still enjoying great powers and privileges in the region which was at one time under the sway of the Bhaṇjas. The Puruṇā Bhūyāns till today believe that their progenitor was born from the white of a peahen’s egg along with the progenitor of the Bhaṇjas who was born from its Yolk.33 So certainly the Bhaṇjas hailed from the local tribal stock among whom the practice of totem being held with veneration was common.34 Vīrabhadra was an upstart, whose name has been associated with Rāmadeva and his preceptor, sage

33. N.K.Sahu and Others, op.cit., p.131.
34. The Kharīyas, an aboriginal tribe of Mayūrbhaṇj assert that they and the family of the Bhaṇja Rājās were all produced from a peahen’s egg.
Vaśiṣṭha of the great epic Rāmāyana to make his claim more genuine to royalty. To get rid of his obscure family background, attempt has been made to trace his birth from the egg of a peahen which is rather common, and to connect him with the solar race of Rāmadeva or Rāmachandra. The expression that Vīrabhadra ruled over an extensive territory like a chakravarti with his eighty eight thousand sons as their heads is nothing but an exaggeration of real fact. It is just an attempt to make people notice the prowess of the Bhaṇja kings because Šatrubhaṇja, the donor of Keśarī copper plate has also claimed his mystery over eighty eight thousand villages. The Bhaṇja kings have not found out their actual relationship with Vīrabhadra. Consequently they have restored to deifying Vīrabhadra and establishing their relation with him in vague term that Koṭṭabhaṇja, the first historical figure of their family was born in that Ādibhaṇja family. This Ādibhaṇja is no other than Vīrabhadra.

While the above discussed Bhaṇjas were ruling over Khijjinga Koṭṭa, corresponding to modern Mayūrbhaṇj and Keonjhar districts of Orissa at that time another Bhaṇja family is known to

have ruled over Khṛtiṅjali maṇḍala comprising the Baud and Sonepur districts, Dhṛtipura being their headquarters.

Like the origin of the Khṛtiṅga Bhaṅjas, the origin of the Bhaṅjas of Khṛtiṅjali maṇḍala is also a matter of controversy. Scholars hold divergent opinions about the origin of the later Bhaṅjas. According to Hiralal the Bhaṅjas of Khṛtiṅjali maṇḍala are a branch of the Bhaṅjas of Khṛtiṅga Koṭṭa. He has argued that the kings of both the royal houses trace back their ancestry to one who was born out of an egg, the kings of both the Bhaṅja families ruled over two contiguous territories and the members of both the branches have a common names as per the sastric custom of continuing ancestral names.

The view of Hiralal is refused by R.C.Majumdar on the following grounds.

i) Basing on the common surname ‘Bhaṅja’ both the dynasty can not be taken as one and same. He has further argued that the title of ‘Pāla’ has been assumed by different ruling families of Bengal, Kanauj and Assam.

ii) In the copper plate inscriptions of Khijjiṅga Koṭṭa we find that the progenitor of the dynasty Gaṇadaṇḍa Vīrabhadra was born of a peahen’s egg and nursed by king Vaśiṣṭha in the penance grove of Koṭṭāśrama. Thus the charter of the Bhaṇjas of Khijjiṅga provides a detailed description regarding the birth and bringing up Vīrabhadra. But the charters of the Bhaṇjas of Khīnjali maṇḍala of Dhṛtipura branch mention them as ‘aṇḍaja vaṁśa prabhava’ omitting the name of Vaśiṣṭha while the Bhaṇjas of Vaṇjuvaka have not mentioned any thing about their origin in their charters. Besides, while the Bhaṇja families of Mayūrbhaṇj, Keonjhar and Kanikā belong to the Vaśiṣṭha gotra, the Bhaṇja families of Baud, Daśapallā and Ghumusar belong to Kāśyapa gotra.

iii) Hiralal identified Khīnjali with Keonjhar which led him to conclude that the kings of both the families ruled over two different parts of the same territory. On the basis of the available sources it can emphatically be said that Khijjiṅga and Khīnjali were two different territories with a central zone between the two which can not be included in the dominions of the Bhaṇjas. While Khijjiṅga constituted the

northern extremity of Orissa where as Khiñjali was located in its southern portion.

iv) Stray instances of similarity in the names of personalities of both the families do not enable us to establish any connection between the two, for the names of their immediate predecessors and successors widely differ from one another.

Saying that the Bhañjas of Khijjiṅga Koṭṭa are completely different from the Bhañjas of Khiñjali Majumdar gives the following conclusions.

i) The Bhañjas of Khijjiṅga Koṭṭa and Khiñjali maṇḍala were two different families ruling over two different territories interrupted by a chunk of land that cannot be assigned to them.

ii) The opening verses of the charters of both the families widely differ from each other.

iii) The expression ṣanunayam prāhabhūpālan, which is peculiar to the grants of the Bhañjas of Khijjiṅga, does not occur in the charters of the Bhañja kings of Khiñjali.

Raghunath Rath had noticed about a legend which is widely prevalent in G.Udayagiri area of Phulbāṇī district.
According to it in the south of this area there is a hill named Dedasaru Badesaru covered with jungle. In the middle of the hill three brothers namely Futa Bhaňja, Mayûr Bhaňja and Theša Bhaňja were born from three eggs of peafowl. They were the decents of Admu and nursed by an adibāsī (aboriginal tribe) as his younger brothers. The three brothers born from three eggs of peafowl grew their family and became zamindārs of eighteen forts or Aṭharagaḍa. The elder brother of the Bhaňjas remained in the high place of Kandhamāl in the centre of north and south. In the north remained Mayûr Bhaňja and in the south remained Thesa Bhaňja, the younger brother. Basing on this Kondh legend Rath concludes 'The Bhaňja dynasty has originated from Kondh tribe in G. Udayagiri Tahasil of Phulbānī district and spread to Baud and Mayûrbhaňj in later days, during the early centuries of the Christian era. Establishment of Keonjhar, Kanikā and Dašapallā are historical facts. So it is proved that the Bhaňjas are the offshoots of Kondh tribe of Orissa who have themselves kṣatrianized by fabricating legendary accounts, and mythological personages'.
B. Mishra\textsuperscript{43} considered all the Bhaṅjas of Orissa to have emanated from a common stock on the following grounds.

i) The use of the affix ‘bhaṅja’ is peculiar to the Bhaṅjas only.

ii) The use of any affix by one ruling family is never repeated by the members of any other royal families of Orissa.

iii) At present all the Bhaṅja families of Orissa harmoniously trace their origin to the egg of a peahen. In the epigraphs of the Bhaṅjas of Khijjiṅga and Khiṅjali we find the same story about their progeny. Evidently, the Khiṅjali line was not different from Mayūrbhaṅj line of the Bhaṅja family.

R. D. Banerji and K. C. Panigrahi who have worked on the Bhaṅjas are not explicit in their acceptance or rejection of the theory of the Bhaṅjas of Khiṅjali being a branch of the Bhaṅjas of Khijjiṅga. Banerji\textsuperscript{44} has expressed his impossibility saying ‘in the present state of our knowledge to connect them (Khijjiṅga Bhaṅjas) with any of the kings of the dynasty founded by Śilābhaṅja I. Panigrahi\textsuperscript{45}, rather hesitatingly says ‘--- but they originally belong to one and the same family, can not be proved by any clear evidence’.

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\textsuperscript{43} B. Mishra, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{44} R. D. Banerji, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{45} K. C. Panigrahi, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 184.
The legend of Vīrabhadra of Khijjiṅga family, having been born out of an egg and the expression *Sakalajano andaṇja varinśa prabhavah* in the charters of the Bhaṇjas of Khīṅjali has led him to conclude ‘Apparently there was some family relation between the Bhaṇjas of Khīṅjali and the Bhaṇjas of Khijjiṅga Koṭṭa, but this relation can not be clearly established’.

T.C.Rath\(^{46}\) is of the opinion that all the Bhaṇjas hailed from the same stock. Mayūrbhaṇj being the earliest Bhaṇja pocket, the Bhaṇjas of Keonjhar, Baud, Ghumusar and Daśapallā were descended from the Bhaṇjas of Mayūrbhaṇj (Khijjiṅga Koṭṭa). According to him a scion of the Mayūrbhaṇj royal family carved out an independent territory by conquering the hill tribes of Baud-Phulbāṇi area which came to be known as Khīṅjali.

By analyzing and examining the different theories advocated by various scholars we are able to reach in the conclusion as mentioned below.

The theory propagated by R.C.Majumdar that the Bhaṇjas of Khijjiṅga Koṭṭa and Khīṅjali are two separate family does not seem sound. The existence of an intercepting territory

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\(^{46}\) *Utkala Sahitya*, Pt.XXV, Nos.11 & 12, p.411.
between the two kingdoms of the Bhañjas is not a reasonable ground
to presume them to be of different origins. The emergence of the
Śulkis as a substantive political power in the intervening territory
named as Kodālaka maṇḍala, might have indirect patronage of the
contemporary imperial powers like the Bhauma-Karas of Toṣali to
drive a wedge into the body politic of the Bhañja kingdom bringing
thereby the contumacious Bhañja chiefs under sustainable control.
Difference between the style of opening verses and contents of the
charters of both the lines is not a basis of not accepting them to be of
some origin. The style of composing the text of a charter is
primarily determined by the court priest to suit the prevailing
practice of the area from where they were issued. The Bhañjas of
Khiñjali, while holding a place of strategic importance in the
contemporary geo-political situation of Orissa, were highly
ambitious to maintain an imperial status. To fulfill that requirement
they made every attempt to be recognized as an independent entity.
The use of high-sounding sobriquets like Samādhigata
Pañchamahāśavda and Mahārāja in their charters which is purely
different from that of others, and issuing a large number of land
grants are a few instances to be cited.
We have already seen that the Khinjali Bhañjas claim their descent from Anḍaja-Vaṁśa. This piece of evidence gives us the surest proof that the Khinjali Bhañjas and the Khijjingga Bhañjas belong to one and same family because Anḍaja can be no other than Ādibhañja Vīrabhadra of Kōṭṭāśrama or Khijjingga Koṭṭa who is said to have miraculously born of a peahen’s egg. There is also tradition preserved by the ex-ruling family of Baud that their ancestor Bīrakisorbhañja came from Keonjhar and was adopted as son by the then Brahmin king of Baud who was issueless. As a mark of respect and gratitude the Rāj family of Baud still offer libation to Gandhamārdana Deva every year. The names Bīrakisorbhañja and Gandhamārdana Deva appear to be fictitious but yet the tradition seems to have preserved a sub-stream of historical truth. Certain conventions are also to be noticed in the copper plate grants of both the Bhañja dynasties. The grants of both open with an invocation to Śiva. Some members of both the kingdoms claim to have been favoured by certain deities. For example Raṇabhañja I of Khinjali claims to have obtained boon from Stambheśvarī and Śatrubhañja of Khijjingga Koṭṭa claims to be born through the grace of Goddess Sarasvatī. In some of the charters of both the kingdoms it is stated that the chief queens and the heir apparent (Yuvarājjas) were present.

during the time of their issue. It is a convention not to be traced in the charters of any other ruling family of Orissa and therefore it was peculiar only to the Bhanja copper plate grants indicating that the Bhanjas of both the tracts on account of their common ancestry shared the peculiar tradition. K.C. Panigrahi says 'All the Bhanjas of Orissa believe in a common origin and as such inter marriage is forbidden among them'.

No information of the Bhanjas of Khijjiṅga Koṭṭa is available from the date of its foundation to the reign of the first king Koṭṭabhaṅja. It is probable that during this period a branch of the Khijjiṅga Koṭṭa family migrated to Khinjali where they founded a new kingdom. The name Khinjali appears to have been coined after the name Khijjiṅga. Khinjali does not appear to be a geographical name in any record of any other ruling family of Orissa. The northern part of Khinjali which was contiguous to Sonepur and in which Gandhatapāti was situated has been described in the copper plate grants of the Somavamśī king Yayāti I as Kośala. In other copper plate grant of the same king Šilābhaṅjapāti which like Gandhatapāti was certainly named after Šilābhaṅja (perhaps

Śilābhaṇja I) which has been described as situated in Oḍra or Orissa\(^{52}\). This place seems to have been situated in southern Toṣali. Thus it appears that the tract which was known as Khiṇjali in the Bhaṅja records was known as such to the people and other royal dynasties that ruled contemporaneously with the Bhaṅjas. We have therefore reasons to think that it was created by them and used by them along.

**GENEALOGY:**

The Bhaṅjas have not followed a consistent principle in dating their records. While most of their copper plates were recorded in the regnal year of the donors, a few were dated in Samvat year of a particular reckoning. Therefore the chronology of the Bhaṅjas has become a subject of controversy. Scholars differ in their opinion on the issue of the genealogy. Since a good number of copper plates have been discovered so far, on their basis a fresh study on the genealogy can be constructed.

The genealogical tables prepared by different scholars are not tally with each other and are fragmentary in character. The Bhaṅja charters were issued from different headquarters and the list of the pedigrees available there from have sometimes no connection

\(^{52}\) Ibid., Vol.III, pp.351-55.
with each other\textsuperscript{53}. Hence a careful study of all the Khinjali Bhañja land grants warrants the modification of the genealogical tables prepared by scholars.

The Baud charter\textsuperscript{54} of Neṭṭabhañja who was ruling over Dheṅkānāl-Angul region, making Nava Aṅgulakapāṭana as his capital has been regarded by R.D.Banerji\textsuperscript{55} and R.C.Majumdar\textsuperscript{56} as the earliest king of the Bhañjas of Khinjali maṇḍala line. Although there is no direct evidence in the charter to support their views still it can be presumed basing on its paleography. This charter of Neṭṭabhañja I neither refers to any pedigree or descendants of the donor nor also it provides any clue to establish his relation with the subsequent Bhañja kings of Khinjali. His relation with the Bhañjas of Dhṛtipura can be established only basing on the identification of the places donated by him, which are also found in the charters of the Dhṛtipura branch\textsuperscript{57}. The actual relation between Neṭṭabhañja I with the rulers of Dhṛtipura cannot be said until any concrete

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\item \textsuperscript{53} The Tekkāli or Gurāṇḍi copper plate charter of Śatrubhañja alies Maṅgalarāja was issued from Salvaḍa Viśaya; \textit{I.O.}, Vol.VI, pp.144-49.
\item The Baud charter of Śolaṇabhañja was issued from Vakaisinga; \textit{E.I.}, Vol.XXVI, pp.276-79ff. The Antirigrām plates of Jayabhañja Deva was issued from Kolāḍa-Kataka, \textit{E.I.}, Vol.XIX, pp.41-45ff.
\item \textsuperscript{54} \textit{J.B.O.R.S.}, Vol.XVIII, pp.104-18.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, pp.163-65, 189-90.
\item \textsuperscript{55} R.C.Majumdar, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.26-27.
\item \textsuperscript{56} R.C.Majumdar, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.26-27.
\item \textsuperscript{57} The Baud charter of Neṭṭabhañja I refers to the village Chaturāghāṭa which is also found mentioned in the N.K.Sahu Museum plates of Raṇabhañja I. Raṇabhañja I is known to have inherited this village along with the adjacent area from Neṭṭabhañja I, \textit{I.O.}, Vol.VI, p.238, Line-23.; \textit{N.A.H.O.}, Vol.II (Jyotivihar, 1980), p.12, Line-16.
\end{itemize}
evidence is available. It appears that the Šulkis of Kodālaka maṇḍala drove the Bhaṇjas to Baud-Sonepur region, with Dhṛtipura as the capital. Šilābhaṇja I was probably the successor of Netṭabhaṇja I and was not far removed from the former. No charter of this king has been discovered so far and he is known to us from the charters of his son and grand son. Two charters\(^{58}\) of Šatrubhaṇja I and thirteen charters\(^{59}\) of Raṇabhaṇja I issued from Dhṛtipura help us to prepare the genealogical table as mentioned below:

\[
\text{Silābhaṇjadeva alias Aṅgaḍi} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Šatrubhaṇjadeva-I alias Gandhata alias Netṭabhaṇjadeva-II} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Raṇabhaṇjadeva-I alias Maṅgalastambha.}
\]

\begin{itemize}
  \item \(^{59}\) Kumurakela charter of Šatrubhaṇja, \textit{J.B.O.R.S.}, Vol.XII, pp.429-35.
\end{itemize}
No grant from Dhṛtipura is available after Raṇabhaṅja-
I. It appears that after him the Bhaṅjas left Baud-Sonepur region
and migrated to Gaṅjām region to establish themselves with
renewed strength and vigour. The Komanda charter, the Peṭtasara
grant, two sets of Gaṅjām charter and two incomplete plate of
palimpsests issued by Neṭtabhaṅja III alias Kalyāṇa Kalaśa testifies
to the fact that the Bhaṅja capital was located at Vaṅjulvaka.60
These grants further mention Neṭtabhaṅja III as the son of
Raṇabhaṅja I. The Orissa Museum plates or the Balugān charter of
Śilābhaṅja II state that Raṇabhaṅja I had another son named
Disabhaṅja.61 Disabhaṅja is known as Digabhaṅja in the grants of
Vidyādharabhaṅja. He might have been killed along with his father
Raṇabhaṅja I in the clash between the Bhaṅjas and the Somavarāḥīs.
That is why after the death of Raṇabhaṅja I the throne passed in to
the hands of Neṭtabhaṅja III. He is the earliest known ruler of
Vaṅjulvaka branch. After Neṭtabhaṅja III the throne passed to the
house of Disabhaṅja. It proves that Disabhaṅja was the elder
brother of Neṭtabhaṅja III. The sons of his elder brother were
probably young and inexperienced at the time of Disabhaṅja’s death
and the Bhaṅjas wanted a strong ruler to retrieve their fortune.

60. E.I., Vol.XXIV, pp.172-75ff; Ibid., Vol.XVIII, pp.282-300ff;
Therefore Nettabhaṇja III was chosen as the ruler of Vaṇjulvaka. He was succeeded by his nephew Śilabhaṇja II, who issued the Balugān charter. This charter described Śilabhaṇja II as the son of Śri Raṇabhaṇja. Śilabhaṇja II was succeeded by his son Vidyādharabhaṇja as known from his Gaṅjām and Orissa plates. Vidyādharabhaṇja had at least two sons namely Śilabhaṇja III and Nettabhaṇja IV alias Kalyāṇa Kalaśa. No charter of Śilabhaṇja III, the eldest son of Vidyādharabhaṇja has been discovered so far. He is known to us only from the copper plate grants of Śatrubhaṇja II.

We have no source to know about Śilabhaṇja III, who probably predeceased his father or was too weak to rule. It can also be presumed that he might have ruled for a short period and was succeeded by his brother Nettabhaṇja IV. The Daśapallā and the Gaṅjām grants of Śatrubhaṇja II alias Tribhūvana Kalaśa II, dated in Samvat 198, attest to his accession to the throne of Vaṇjulvaka after the death of his uncle Nettabhaṇja Deva IV. Śatrubhaṇja II alias Tribhūvana Kalaśa II died issueless. Nettabhaṇja V who issued the

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62. Ibid.
64. Ibid., Vol.IX, pp.271-77ff.
Orissa Museum plate was the last known Bhañja ruler of Vañjulvaka branch. He is described as the son of Rāyabhañja and grandson of Prthvībhañja. No direct relation can be established with certainty between Śatrubhañja II and Neṭtabhañja V as the genealogy given in the record is altogether different from other records issued from Vañjulvaka. However, we presume to identify Prthvībhañja, the grand father of Neṭtabhañja V with Neṭtabhañja IV alias Prthvī Kalaśa. If our identification will be taken in to consideration than it will be seen that again the throne passed from the elder branch to the younger branch due to internecine war. It might have also happened that due to the death of Śatrubhañja II leaving no legitimate heir to succeed him to the throne, the throne might have passed to the younger branch as because no charter of his son or grandson has been discovered so far.

Besides the main line of Vañjulvaka some minor branches of the Bhañjas are known to have established in different parts of Khiñjali. The Jurāḍā grant, issued from Kumārapura reveals that a Bhañja chief named Neṭtabhañja was ruling over Gada viṣaya of Khiñjali maṇḍala with Kumārapura as its headquarters. Neṭtabhañja described himself as Mahāmaṇḍalesvara as well as son

69. Ibid., Vol.XXIV, pp.15-20ff.
of Raṇabhaṅja and grandson of Brhad Neṭṭabhaṅja who has been identified by N.K. Sahu with Neṭṭabhaṅja III, the first ruler of Vaṇjulvaka. Raṇabhaṅja of the present charter is a different person and should not be confounded with Raṇabhaṅja I of Dhṛtipura house, who was a very powerful ruler bearing the title of ‘Rāṅka’, ‘Samādhigata Pañchamahāśavda’ and ‘Mahārāja’ whereas Raṇabhaṅja of the Jurāḍā grant neither bears any title nor known to have exercised any sovereign power. He may be named as Raṇabhaṅja II. The royal emblem of this house was a pitcher (Kalasa) in place of a lion. The style and form of their charters were also different from those of the Vaṇjulvaka house. The eldest son of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Neṭṭabhaṅja of Jurāḍā grant was Yuvarāja Rāyabhaṅja. Whether he succeeded his father is not known so far. The Bhaṇjanagar copper plate charter states the name of another Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Neṭṭabhaṅja who was the son of Rājaputra Maṅgala Kalaśa and grandson of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Neṭṭabhaṅja. The latter may be identified with the donor of the Jurāḍā grant and Rājputra Maṅgala Kalaśa with Yuvarāja Rāyabhaṅja of the same grant. The Bhaṇjanagar copper plates are known to be issued from Kholipāṭi.

The Tekkāli or Gurāṇḍī copper plate charter72 of Śatrubhaṇja alias Maṅgalarāja creates a difficulty in working out the genealogy of this branch of the Bhaṇjas. It mentions Mallagambhiradeva and Yathasuhhadeva as the grandfather and great grandfather of Śatrubhaṇja. These names do not show any Bhaṇja suffix as it is found in Śatrubhaṇja and his father Śilābhaṇja. Śatrubhaṇja Maṅgalarāja also describes himself as the frontal mark of the Bhaṇja family. Taking into consideration of the above grounds R.D.Banerji73, R.C.Majumdar74 and B.Mishra75 are of the unanimous opinion that the genealogy provided in the Tekkāli grant represents the first four generations of the Bhaṇja family. Therefore they identify Śatrubhaṇja Deva, son of Śilābhaṇja Deva of Sonepur grant with Śatrubhaṇja Maṅgalarāja of Tekkāli plates. There are of course some serious objections to their views. There is no mention of either the Bhaṇja principality or its capital in the Tekkāli plates. On the other hand the convention as followed in the writing of the charter of Vaṅjulvaka house are ardently followed here. The opening line of Tekkāli plates is ‘Jayati Kusumavāṇa’, a prayer to Lord Śiva. The preamble of the first three verses is also a replica of the Vaṅjulvaka charters. Such form is not found in the Dhṛtipura

74. R.C.Majumdar, op.cit., p.27.  
75. B.Mishra, op.cit., p.55.
branch. Secondly the bull is the royal emblem of the Dhṛtipura and
lion is the emblem of the Vañjulvaka branch. Thirdly Śatrubhañja
of Sonepur grant was a Parama Vaisnava where as Śatrubhañja of
the Tekkāli grant was a Parama Māheśvara. In paleography also, the
Tekkāli plates are assigned to a much later period than the Sonepur
grant. Thus the views of Banerji, Majumdar and Mishra on the
genealogy of Tekkāli plates do not hold good. Śatrubhañja
Maṅgalarāja belongs to Vañjulvaka family. In the genealogy of the
Vañjulvaka family we come across two rulers bearing the same
name of Śilābhañja Deva. One Śilābhañja (whom we call as
Śilābhañja II) was the father of Vidyādharabhañja and another
Śilābhañja (whom we call as Śilābhañja III) was the father of
Śatrubhañja Deva II. Śatrubhañja II used feudatory titles like
Rāṇaka and was known as Tribhūvana Kalaśa. But Śatrubhañja of
Tekkāli grant was known as Maṅgala Kalaśa and he did not use any
feudatory title. So these two ruler can not be taken as identical. If
we take Śatrubhañja of Tekkāli plates as the son of Śilābhañja II, he
would either be identified with Vidyādharabhañja or would be his
brother. The identification between Śatrubhañja and
Vidyādharabhañja is not corroborated by any evidence. Their
officers were also completely different persons. This indicates that
they were rival to each other. Vidyādharabhañja ruled from the
capital Vañjulvaka where as Śatrubhañja ruled from Salvaḍa viṣayā which was probably a place outside the main capital. It appears that Vidyādharabhañja drove away his elder brother Śatrubhañja from power and himself occupied Vañjulvaka. Thus Śatrubhañja of Tekkāli plates may be taken as the eldest son of Śilābhañja II. There was perhaps a connection in this line of Bhañja dynasty that Śatrubhañja and Śilābhañja were alternately used by the king in case he was the eldest son and the younger son succeeding to the throne took the name of Neṭṭabhañja Deva. In view of the discussion made above the genealogy chart of the houses of Dhṛtipura and Vañjulvaka was given below.

(1) Neṭṭabhañja (Aṅgulakapāṭana)
   ↓
(2) Śilābhañja alias Aṅgaḍī)
   ↓
(3) Śatrubhañja-I alias Gandhata
    alias Neṭṭabhañja-II
    ↓
     Raṇabhañja-I
     ↓
         Digabhañja or Disabhañja
     ↓
(5) Śilābhañja -II alias Tribhūvana Kalaśa-I
(4) Neṭṭabhañja -III alias Kalyāṇa Kalaśa
     ↓
     Raṇabhañja-II
Likewise another group of Bhāṇja chiefs ruling over Khīṇjali country from Kulāḍa Kaṭaka is known from two Antirigām charters issued by Yaśabhaṇja and Jayabhaṇja. The genealogy found from both the charters are as follows:

Rājādhiraṇya Devabhaṇja

Rāyabhaṇja-II

Vīrabhaṇja

Rāyabhaṇja-II

Yaśabhaṇja

Jayabhaṇja

One of the later Bhañja kings named Solañabhañja as known from his Baud plates\(^77\) traces his origin to the family of sage Kāśyapa. He was a Mahāmaṇḍalādhipati and his territory roughly comprised the Sonepur, Baud and Āṭhmallik regions of Orissa. Another Bhañja king named Kanakabhañja, son of Durjabhañja and grand son of Solañabhañja as known from his another Baud plates\(^78\) also does not trace the origin of the family to the egg of a peahen, but states it in a vague and general way on the basis of the gotra name of the family, that the Bhañjas in olden days descended from Kāśyapa muni. The seal of Kanakabhañja contains the emblem of a lotus which is completely different from those used by the earlier Bhañjas of Khiñjali maṇḍala or Khijjiṅga maṇḍala. The geographical list found in these two sets of Baud plates are as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Śilābhañja alias Śolañabhañja} & \quad \rightarrow \\
\text{Durjayabhañja} & \\
\text{Śolañabhañja} & \quad \rightarrow \\
\text{Kanakabhañja} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{77}\) _E.I.,_ Vol.XXVI, pp.276-79ff.
CHRONOLOGY:

More than thirty-five copper plate records of the Bhañjas of Khiñjali mañḍala have been brought to light so far. The task of arranging them in a chronological order has become difficult and scholars differ widely on this subject. The date of the Bhañja kings can not be determined with certainty. However, in the light of the paleographic consideration of the script inscribed in their charters they can be ascribed to eighth century A.D. at the earliest. The Bhañjas were seen in the political picture of Orissa when after the decline of the Šailodbhavas, the Bhauma-Karas rose in to power and prominence in Toṣali subjugating all contiguous principalities. This powerful dynasty had introduced a new era of reckoning dates which was also been adopted by their feudatory dynasties like the Bhañjas of Khiñjinga Koṭṭa, the Šulkis of Kodālaka mañḍala, the Bhañjas of Khiñjali mañḍala, the Gaṅgas of Švetaka mañḍala and many other powers. The astronomical data provided by the Daśapallā charter of Šatrubhañja II which corresponds 23 March 934 A.D., provides a definite clue to work out the actual date of beginning of the era in which some Bhañja charters are dated. The very important point in this document is its date which is clearly mentioned as Samvat 198, Vaiṣṇava Saṅkrānti Pañchamī.
Margásira nakṣatra”, which has helped S.N.Rajguru to fix the commencement of the Bhauma era at 736-37 A.D. Besides the Samvat reckoning, the Bhaṅjas are also known to have used their own regnal year which indicate their semi-independent status. The use of their own regnal year by different Bhaṅja kings in their charters have enabled us to fix the tentative period of respective donors. Synchronisms like Mahābhāvagupta Janmejaya I’s killing the Oḍra king, who was definitely a Bhaṅja ruler, the contemporaneity of Yaśabhaṅja and Jayabhaṅja with the Imperial Gaṅga monarch Aniyaṅkabhima III (1211-1238 A.D.), and events like Śilābhaṅja alias Solanabhaṅja’s snatching away Gandharvādi maṇḍala from the Somavārāṇsīs are certain landmarks in fixing the date of the Bhaṅja kings of Khiṅjali.79

The Baud plates of Nettabhaṅja I of Aṅgulakapāṭana mention a date which has been deciphered by B.Mishra as Samvat 90.8 Karttikava di 13. S.Tripathy is of the opinion that the Samvat should be read as either 65 or 75 instead of 98 as read by Mishra. D.C.Sircar, however, suggests that the date of the charter should be

   Lines 3-4 of the Baud plates of Śolanabhaṅja, O.H.R.J., Vol.XIII, No.2, pp.44-45.;
read as 18. He has further suggested that the charter may roughly be
ascribed to the eighth century A.D. Neṭṭabhaṇja I flourished in such
a critical period when the entire territorial possession of the
Śailodbhavas in Orissa was thrown in a state of chaos and confusion
after their decline. Petty tribal chiefs like Neṭṭabhaṇja I assumed
sovereignty and asserted power over their immediate
neighbourhood. This resulted in a struggle for existence out of
which the Bhauma-Karas emerged as the most powerful. In such a
critical period the reign of Neṭṭabhaṇja I for a period of 98 or 65 as
proposed by Mishra and Tripathy appears quite improbable. Apart
from that no copper plate record of Neṭṭabhaṇja I except the Baud
charter has been discovered which proves that he ruled for a brief
period. Therefore the view of Sircar that the date of the charter
should be ‘Samvat 18’ is supported by us. Neṭṭabhaṇja actually
flourished in the second quarter of the eighth century A.D. and
acknowledged the suzerainty of the Bhauma-Karas when the latter
emerged as a potential power to be reckoned with. Under such
circumstances he may be assigned a period of twenty years i.e. from
cir.730-750 A.D.

Nothing is known definitely relating to the immediate
successor of Neṭṭabhaṇja I. No discovery of other inscription of the
Bhañjas from that area leads us to believe that the Bhañjas were no more in possession of Aṅgulakapāṭana after Nettabhañja. On the other hand the discovery of the Sonepur and Kumurakelā charter of Śatrubhañja I alias Gandhata issued from Dhṛtipura testify to the fact that the Bhañjas established their kingdom making Dhṛtipura as their headquarters. Probably the rise of the Śulkis in the second half of eighth century A.D. compelled the Bhañjas to leave that area. Śilābhañja Deva I alias Aṅgaḍi, one of the successors of Netṭabhañja Deva I established the rule of his family at Dhṛtipura sometime in the last quarter of the same century by his own prowess. No charter assigned to him has been discovered so far. He is known only from the charters of his son and grand sons. The struggling career and insecure political position of Śilābhañja I Aṅgaḍi shortened his rule which did not permit him to issue charter as a testimony of his royal authority. He may be assigned tentatively a period of ten years of rule from cir.765-775 A.D. in the fitness of the dates mentioned in the charters of his remote successors.

Śatrubhañja I, the son and successor of Śilābhañja I is known from his own charters and that of his son Raṇabhañja I and the latter’s son and successors. His Kumurakelā charter, which is his last charter is dated in the 15th regnal year of the donor. The

charters of his son describe him as a powerful ruler who consolidated the position of the Bhaṅjas of Khiṅjali. Śatrubhaṅja Deva, whose last known date is his 15th regnal year must have ruled for a period of more than two decades and therefore he may be placed between cir.775 to 798 A.D. Raṇabhaṅja Deva I who succeeded his father Śatrubhaṅja Deva I to the throne of Dhṛtipura was the most prolific among all the rulers of the Bhaṅjas of Khiṅjali maṇḍala. He is known to have issued as many as 13 sets of copper plate charters and the last two are dated to 58th regnal year of his reign. All the charters assigned to him are dated in his own regnal year which indicates that he was an independent ruler and only owed nominal allegiance to his Bhauma-Kara overlords. Basing on his last two set of charters, issued in his 58th regnal year he may be assigned 60 years of reign and may be placed between cir.798 to 858 A.D. This is also supported by another evidence. The Brahmeśvara temple inscription84 of Kolāvatī Devī states that Mahābhāvagupta Janmejaya I of Kośala in his 8th regnal year killed the king of Oḍra. The king of Oḍra deśa, killed by Svabhāvatuṅga Mahābhāvagupta Janmejaya I, who snatched away his fortune was no other than Raṇabhaṅja I85. Oḍra deśa of the Somavamsī charters is the same as

Odra of the Tirumalai inscription of Rajendra Chola I and refers to the region over which the Bhañjas once upon a time held their sway. In his 8th regnal year Janmejaya achieved victory over the king of Odra desa and issued his Nāgpur Museum charter from Murāsimā donating the village Satallamā in Kośalāda viṣaya to a Brahmin of that country. In his 34th regnal year Janmejaya I issued the Kālibana charter. From this it can be said that he ruled for about 35 years and was succeeded by his son Mahaśīvagupta Yayāti I. The Cuttack Museum plates of Yayāti I, issued in his 9th regnal year, record the grant of village Chandragrāma in Maradā viṣaya of Dakṣīṇa Toṣali in favour of a Brāhmaṇa of Odra desa. He could donate this village situated in the Bhauma-Kara territory as his sister Prthvī Mahādevī was ruling over Toṣali with the support of the Somavāṁśis. The only date of Prthvī Mahādevī was Samvat 158 i.e. 894 A.D. when she donated her Baud grant. The 9th regnal year of Yayāti I therefore was not far removed from Samvat 158 (894 A.D.). Yayāti I might have ascended the throne in about 885 A.D. (as his 9th regnal year falls in 894 A.D.) after the death of Janmejaya I. So the ascendancy of Janmejaya might have taken place in about 850 A.D. Janmejaya killed the king of Dhṛtipura in about his 8th regnal

89. Ibid., Vol.XX, pp.210-20.
year i.e. in 858 A.D. After that the Bhañjas migrated to Vañjulvaka leaving Dhṛtipura where they started their new Khiñjali maṇḍala. After leaving Dhṛtipura some time might have passed in searching and locating a place like Vañjulvaka. So approximately after two years in around 860 A.D. the Bhañja rule at Vañjulvaka was founded by Neṭṭabhañja Deva Kalyāṇa Kalaśa. The Komanda plates, the Peṭṭasara charter, the two sets of Gañjām grants and the incomplete plate of palimpsests from Dharākoṭe, issued by Neṭṭabhañja III from Vañjulvaka attest to the fact that after the death of Raṇabhañja I the Bhañjas were forced to migrate further south from Dhṛtipura who established their political headquarters at Vañjulvaka. The Komanda grant was issued in the 31st regnal year of Neṭṭabhañja III. But there is difference of opinion among the scholars regarding the date of Peṭṭasara grant. According to S.N.Rajguru90 the Peṭṭasara grant was issued in the 59th regnal year of the donor. C.C.Dasgupta91 who re-edited it read the date as 279 and considered to have been dated in Harṣa Era corresponding to 606 + 279 = 885 A.D. D.C.Sircar while giving an editorial note on the charter published in Epigraphia Indica (Vol.XXVII, pp.337-40) on the charter expressed his difference of opinion with Rajguru and Dasgupta. The correct reading of the two signs, what Rajguru has

deciphered as 59 may be 10.2 i.e. 12 years of Nettabhañja’s reign, ascertains Sircar. Dasgupta’s contention that the date of the Peṭṭasara charter to be 279 year of Harṣa Era is not acceptable for the reason that by the time Nettabhañja III flourished Harṣa Era was no more in vogue in Orissa. The most popular reckoning of dates in Orissa by that time was the Bauma Era. Rajguru’s description of the year 59 to the charter is also not acceptable. Further it is evident from all the charters of Nettabhañja III and his successors that one Durgadeva has served at least four generations of the Bhañjas i.e. from Nettabhañja III alias Kalyāṇa Kalaśa I to Nettabhañja IV alias Kalyāṇa Kalaśa II as Akṣaśālika. Thus it is clear that Nettabhañja III and his three successors ruled for a very short period because Durgadeva, the royal engraver was a human being and he might have lived approximately from sixty to sixty five years. Moreover as he was a royal engraver he must have passed atleast fifteen to twenty years to be expert in his profession. So actually he had engraved the copper plates of the four successive rulers starting from Nettabhañja III that means he engraved these copper plates of the four kings within 45 years of his life. This suggests the plausibility of Sircar’s opinion that the charter was issued in the 12th regnal year of the donor. Subscribing the opinion of Sircar and accepting the

92. Ibid., p.340.
year 31 as the time of Komanda charter Nettabhañja III may be assigned for a period of thirty-five years of reign i.e. from cir.860 to 895 A.D.

Nettabhañja III was succeeded by his nephew Silābhañja II. Only one charter i.e. the Balugān charter was issued by him in his second regnal year. As we have no evidence about him after second regnal year he may be assigned a period of five years i.e. from cir.895 to 900 A.D.

Vidyādharabhañja alias Amogha Kalaśa succeeded his father after his death in around 900 A.D. His Gañjām charter is dated in Samvat 100.70.4 which is 174 years of Bhauma Era corresponding to 910 A.D. His Orissa Museum charter, however, bears no date expressed in numerical symbols. However, S.Tripathy deciphers the last two letters of the inscription, failed to be noticed by its editor F.Keilhorn as ‘tha’ and a ‘full stop’ and consider them denoting 20 and 6 respectively. Basing on it we may ascribe a period of 26 years to Vidyādharabhañja i.e. from cir.900 to 926 A.D. Vidyādharabhañja was succeeded by his son Nettabhañja IV in 926 A.D. While his Daśapallā plates are undated his Orissa

Museum plates are recorded in Samvat 917 which according to K.C. Panigrahi is a subscribe error for 197. Since the Bhañjas were ruling as the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas and used Samvat year of their overlord, the present date is ascribed to Bhauma Era corresponding to 933 A.D. Nettabhañja IV ruled for 8 years at best i.e. from 926 to 934 A.D. as the two charters i.e. the Daşapallā copper plates and Gañjām plates of his nephew Šatrubhañja II were issued in Samvat 198, the very year of his accession to the throne of Vañjūlvaka. The Samvat used in these inscriptions are popularly known as Bhauma Samvat. Therefore the approximate year of the issue of these inscriptions is 934 A.D. Šatrubhañja Deva II may be placed between cir.934 to 943 A.D. He was succeeded by Nettabhañja Deva V alias Tribhūvana Kalaśa III. The relation between the former and the latter is not known to us. The Orissa Museum plates of Nettabhañja V is the last known Bhañja charter dated in Samvat 213 of the Bhauma Era corresponding to 949 A.D. Nettabhañja V may be ascribed between 943 to 950 A.D. as because he is not known to us after the above said grant. The period that immediately followed the death of Nettabhañja V is shrouded in

97. Ibid., Vol.IV, p.67-76ff.
98. Ibid., Vol.XII, pp.100-08ff.
mystery. No record is available so far to maintain the continuity of the rule of his successor.

Two sets of copper plate charters assigned to Solaṇabhaṇja and Kanakabhaṇja have been brought out from Baud which attest to the rule of the Bhaṇjas in Sonepur-Baud region. These kings trace their origin to sage Kāśyapa. The scripts of these charters are proto-Oriya and have affinity with another couple of charters discovered from the village of Antirigām in Gaṇjām district. The language of these inscriptions is Sanskrit with an admixture of Oriya. The Baud charter of Solaṇabhaṇja informs us that his grand father Śilābhaṇja Deva liberated Gandharvāḍī maṇḍala from the clutches of the Somavāṁśis. This indicates that Śilābhaṇja seized Gandharvāḍī from the Somavāṁśis when the latter were undergoing the strain of diversities due to Kalachuri invasion from the west and Gaṅga attack from the south. It was probably during the reign of Janmejaya II (cir.1065-1080 A.D.) or Puranjaya (cir.1080-1090 A.D.) that Śilābhaṇja recaptured Gandharvāḍī maṇḍala and his son and grandson ruled over the territory as Maṇḍalādhipatis with their headquarters at Suvarṇapura. The

100. Ibid., Vol.XXXVI, pp.276-79ff.
Dirghāsi inscription, dated in Saka year 997 (1076 A.D.) states that the Gaṅga king Rājāraja I sent his general Vanapati, who defeated the chiefs of Veṅgi, Khimiḍi, Kośala, Gidrisiṅgi and Oḍḍa\textsuperscript{104}. This very likely forced the Bhaṅjas of Gandharvāḍī maṇḍala (which formed a part of the Oḍra deśa of the Somavarāṇis) to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Gaṅgas. Further Kanakabhaṅja’s claim to have routed out the elephant crops of the Gauḍeśvara, is not an empty boast. The Kendupāṭīnā copper plate of Narasirṇha Deva II bears testimony to Chodagaṅga’s victory over the king of South Bengal (cir.1125 A.D.)\textsuperscript{105}. Kanakabhaṅja fought the battle successfully in favour of his Gaṅga overlord and hence boasted of his victory over an elephant crops of the Gauḍeśvara. Since Choḍagaṅga flourished between 1077 to 1147 A.D. and the Bhaṅjas of Gandharvāḍī acknowledged the overlordship of the Gaṅgas, the time of Solaṇabhaṅja and Kanakabhaṅja may be ascribed to the first half of twelfth century A.D.

The Antirigāṃ charters of Yaśabhaṅja Deva and Jayabhaṅja Deva confirm their rule over Khiṅjali with their headquarters at Kolāḍa Kaṭaka. Dearth of source materials prevents

\textsuperscript{104} I.O., Vol.III, Pt.I, p.20..

\textsuperscript{105} J.A.S.B., (1896), pp.235-37.

The king of Gouḍa defeated by Choḍagaṅga was probably Kumār Pāla. N.K.Sahu (ed.), \textit{op.cit.}, p.358.
us to know their actual relationship with the Bhañjas of Dhṛtipura, Vanjulvaka and Gandharvādi maṇḍala. The charters of Yaśabhañja Deva, who bears the title of Samasta Khīnjalyādhipati provide an important clue to work out the actual time when they flourished¹⁰⁶. The donees of both the charters is one Jagadhara Śarmā who also appears as one of the donees in the Kopateśvar plates of Aniyaṅkabhima III who ruled from 1211-1238 A.D.¹⁰⁷. Yaśabhañja and Jayabhañja being contemporary of Anaṅgabhima III, must have flourished some time in the first half of thirteenth century A.D. Yaśabhañja’s claim to have achieved victory over one Jagadekamalla was because of his participation in the battle against the vanquished as a subordinate alley of the Gaṅga monarch.

Thus on the basis of the above mentioned study it is presumed that the Bhañjas ruled over Khīnjali maṇḍala from cir.

¹⁰⁶ In his charter Yaśabhañja claims victory over one Jagadekamalla whose identification has led scholars to differ from one another. Bhandarkar has suggested that he should be the Western Chalukya king Premajagadekamalla II (cir. 1138-1151 A.D.). List of the Inscriptions of Northern India, p.379 note. H.Krishnamachari confirms Bhandarkar’s identification. But he also suggests that the defeated king may be one of Premjagadekamalla’s subordinate. E.I., Vol.XVIII, p.290ff.
R.D.Banerji considers Jagadekamalla of Antirigām plates to be same as Mehera chief Jagadekamalla, a feudatory of Chalukyabhima II of Gajurat (V.S.1264 i.e. 1207 A.D.). R.D.Banerji, op.cit., pp.185-86.
Some scholars suggest that Jagadekamalla of the charter under discussion may be identified with Narasimha Jagadekabhusana, the Chhindaka Naga king of Chakrakoṭṭa who is known from the Jatanpal Inscription of Soka year 1147.
eighth century A.D. to cir. fourteenth century A.D. having many ups and downs in their political career.