CHAPTER – FIVE

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM
The Bhañjas of Khiñjali maṇḍala were not only famous for their military prowess but also they established themselves as efficient administrators whose sole motto was the welfare of the people. They introduced an effective system of administration with the help of their efficient bureaucracy.

This chapter deals with the administrative system of the Bhañjas along with an account of the territorial extent of their kingdom. Our main sources in this regard are the inscriptions of the dynasty which furnish us some details about their administration. The Bhañja administrative system is an echo of the Bhauma-Kara administration. Being a subordinate ruling house of the Bhauma-Karas, although at times rebellious, it is quite natural on the part of the Bhañjas to adopt an administrative system that was in vogue in the kingdom of their overlords. Consequently we notice that most of the titles of the Bhañja officials found in their copper plate charters tally with those of the Bhauma-Karas.

Territorial Extent of the Kingdom:

It is supposed that Khiñjali maṇḍala was an extensive territory and in the epigraphic records it has often been referred as Ubhaya-Khiñjali, which indicates that this maṇḍala was divided into
two parts and it was the river Mahānadi which divided Khiṅjali maṇḍala into North and South Khiṅjali. The capital of Khiṅjali maṇḍala was Dhṛtipura, identified with the modern town of Baud where a series of archaeological monuments testifying the glorious period of the Bhaṅja rule are found.

During the ninth century A.D. the Bhaṅjas were ousted by the Somavamśīs from the Baud-Sonepur region. After that they migrated to the south-east and established themselves in the Ghumusar-Daśapallā region comprising the modern Gaṅjām and Nayāgarh districts. The new territory was also named as Khiṅjali maṇḍala and its capital was Vaṅjulvaka, which has been identified with the modern village of Baṅjaniā near Ghumusar town in Gaṅjām district. No charter of the Bhaṅjas of Khiṅjali gives any precise description of their territorial extent. On the basis of a detailed study of the charters of the Bhaṅjas it can be said that Khiṅjali maṇḍala embraced at one time or the other the whole of modern Phulbānī, Baud and Suvarṇapur districts, Āṭhmallik sub-division of Angul district, parts of Daśapallā and Nayāgarh sub-divisions of Nayāgarh district and Bhaṅjanagar sub-division of Gaṅjām district. It was surrounded in the south and east by Khīṇḍiraśrīga maṇḍala.

1. N.K. Sahu, *Utkal University History of Orissa*, (Bhubaneswar, 1964), Vol.I, p.120.
Śvetaka maṇḍala and Toṣali, in the north by Kodālaka maṇḍala and in the west by South Kośala that often influenced the political changes in Khiṇjali⁴. The natural geography of Khiṇjali maṇḍala proves that it was a combination of dense forest and plain land, gifted with thorough network of river systems which made its soil fertile.

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION:

King:

In Khiṇjali maṇḍala monarchical form of government was in prevalent. At the head of the administration was the king who was the supreme head and final authority in all matters. He not only led in war and defence with his Senāpati or commander-in-chief but also fought in the battlefield himself. He received petitions from his subjects and meted out prompt justice. He made appointments, collected secret information from the spices and issued ‘Śāsans’ or orders for the guidance of the people. Kingship was hereditary as it was in other part of India. Normally succession passed to the eldest son of the ruler or to the next claimant in order of seniority, but sometimes this principle was not followed.

We find several cases of succession that if a king died issueless, the crown passed to his younger brother. The practice of selecting the hair apparent during the lifetime of the ruling king, as laid down in the Smritis\(^5\) was followed by the Bhañjas sometimes for we do come across many references to Yuvarāja or crown prince in their records\(^6\).

The Khiñjali Bhañjas appear to have been originally the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas and the Somavamśis as none of the rulers except a few is focused in the records to have borne the sovereign titles of the rulers of this period. They have used in their copper plate records such titles as Rāṇaka, Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara, Udbhaya-Khiñjalyādhhipati, Samasta-Khiñjalideśādhhipati, Samādhigata, Pañchamahāśavda and Mahāsāmanta which indicates their feudatory status. They however appear to have assumed full independence whenever their overlord families were at a disadvantage or in a weak position. None of the copper plate of the Bhañjas refers to an overlord but this does not mean that they were always independent. The custom of referring to an overlord in the copper plate grant was not in vogue among all feudatories of

Orissa\textsuperscript{7}. Among the earlier rulers, Raṇabhaṇja I, who was a Raṇaka (subordinate) in his initial period of reign is known to have asserted independence in the last decade of his long reign as known from the assumption of title ‘Mahārāja’ in the N.K.Sahu Museum plate\textsuperscript{8} issued in his 52 regnal year. A courageous king and veteran warrior Raṇabhaṇja probably discarded the suzerainty of his overlord, the Bhauma-Karas. About that time the Somavāṁśī monarch Svabhāvatunā Janamejaya I of South Košala invaded Khinjali maṇḍala. The Bhauma-Karas did not come to assist him because of his refractory attitude. He was thus left alone to fight with the Somavāṁśīs. He offered a stiff resistance but was killed in the battlefield\textsuperscript{9}. During the period of crisis towards the final phase of Bhauma supremacy in Orissa, the Khinjali Bhaṇjas must have assumed a sort of independent status. This is evident from the title Mahārāja which was borne by Vidyādharabhaṇja and his son Neṭṭabhaṇja IV. Vidyādharabhaṇja had married to Trikalihga Mahādevī who appears to be a Somavāṁśī princess. The Somavāṁśīs are known to have claimed themselves as the lord of Trikaliṅga\textsuperscript{10}. It is probable that the enmity between the Somavāṁśīs and the Bhaṇjas had been brought to an end and close relation was

\textsuperscript{9} R.P.Mohapatra, \textit{op.cit.}, p.57.
\textsuperscript{10} \textit{El}, Vol.XVIII, p.336.
established between these two dynasties. Vidyādharabhañja and his son Neṭtabhañja IV enjoyed considerable power being helped by the Somavaṁśīs and assumed the dignified sobriquet Mahārāja. But after that the Somavaṁśīs perhaps reduced them again to the feudatory status which supposition is borne out by the fact that Śatrubhañja II, the successor of Neṭtabhañja IV has stated himself as Rāṇaka in his charters.

The assumption of the title Ubhaya-Khiṅjalyādhipati by Śatrubhañja I and Raṇabhañja I indicates that the kingdom of Khiṅjali maṇḍala was divided into two parts namely Uttarapalli viṣaya and Dakṣiṇapalli viṣaya, the river Mahānadi probably being the dividing line. While the former included the Baud-Sonepur area the latter included Bīrmāhārājpur area.

The king was the head of both military and civil administration and was virtually a despot. The copper plate records of the Bhañjas dynasty describe the king as a divine being after comparing him with mythological figures. The Undated Sonepur

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grant of Śatrubhaṇja\textsuperscript{15} describes Śilābhaṇja I, his father as ‘grave like Ocean, still like Earth, energetic like Wind, radiant like Fire and his creditable name was as white as Moon’. In the said grant Śilābhaṇja is compared with Brhaspati in learning.

The status of Khinjali Bhaṇja queens in the king’s court is not definitely known to us, but they seem to have enjoyed privileges such as granting lands and making donations to temples and to have exercised considerable influence upon their husbands. The Komanda grant\textsuperscript{16} and the First Undated Gaṇjām grant\textsuperscript{17} were issued by Mahāmāyā, the queen of Neṭtabhaṇja III. His another grant i.e. the Second Undated Gaṇjām grant\textsuperscript{18} was sealed by Jachhikā, who was probably his another queen\textsuperscript{19}. Queen Trikaliṅga Mahādevī, the wife of king Vidyādharabhaṇja is known to have sealed his Gaṇjām plates\textsuperscript{20} and Orissa plates\textsuperscript{21}. The Daśapallā plates\textsuperscript{22} and Orissa Museum plates\textsuperscript{23} of Neṭtabhaṇja IV were sealed by his queen Śrī Jaya Mahādevī. Queen Prithvī Mahdevī, the wife of king Śatrubhaṇja II alias Tribhūvana Kalaśa is known to have

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{E.I.,} Vol.XI, pp.99-100, Lines 4-9 of the charter.
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.,} Vol.XXIV, pp.172-75.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.,} Vol.XVIII, pp.293-95.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.,} Vol.XVIII, pp.295-96.
\textsuperscript{19} N.K.Sahu and Others, \textit{op.cit.}, p.133.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{J.B.O.R.S.,} Vol.VI, Part-II, pp.274-79.
affixed the seals of Daśapallā copper plates and Gañjām copper plates assigned to him. The Orissa Museum plates of Neṭtabhaṅja V alias Tribhūvana Kalaśa were sealed by his queen Jivaloka Mahādevī, while the Jurāḍā grant of Mahāmaṇḍaḷesvara Neṭtabhaṅja issued from Kumārapura was sealed by his queen Śrī Santoṣa Mahādevī. Māyādevī Śrī Mahāyi, the queen of another Mahāmaṇḍaḷesvara Neṭtabhaṅja sealed the Bhaṇjanagar copper plate charter issued from Kholipāṭi. The most interesting thing is that the donors of the Bāṇatumba plates of Neṭtabhaṅja issued from Vāraḍā are his three queens namely Rājñi Kṣatri Devī, Kaivarta Devī and Rājaputri Meghāvali Devī.

Minister:

Generally in every state there is a mantri pariṣad to assist the king in discharging his duty. It is an advisory body of ministers whose devotion to duty, integrity and wisdom has been fully tested. But in the Bhaṇja records there is no reference what so ever to the ministry or an advisory council, which was regarded as

25. Ibid., Vol.IV, pp.67-76ff.
27. Ibid., Vol.XXIV, pp.15-20ff.
an important organ of the government by *Arthaśāstra*\textsuperscript{30}, *Manuśmṛti*\textsuperscript{31} and *Kamaṇḍaka Nitiśāstra*\textsuperscript{32}. There are however many references to Sandhivigrahi or the minister of war and peace in the Kumarakelā charter of Śatrubhaṇja I\textsuperscript{33}, Baud grant of Raṇabhaṇja I (issued in his 54 regnal year)\textsuperscript{34}, his another Baud grant issued in 58 regnal year\textsuperscript{35}, Komāṇḍa grant\textsuperscript{36}, First Undated Gaṇjām grant\textsuperscript{37}, Second Undated Gaṇjām grant\textsuperscript{38} and Peṭṭāsara grant\textsuperscript{39} of Netṭabhaṇja III alias Kalyāṇa Kalaśa, Orissa Museum plates of Śilābhaṇja II\textsuperscript{40}, Gaṇjām plates\textsuperscript{41} and Orissa plates\textsuperscript{42} of Vidyādharabhaṇja. Daśapallā plates\textsuperscript{43} and Orissa Museum plates\textsuperscript{44} of Netṭabhaṇja IV, Daśapallā copper plates\textsuperscript{45} and Gaṇjām plates\textsuperscript{46} of Śatrubhaṇja II, Orissa Museum plates\textsuperscript{47} of Netṭabhaṇja V, Antirigām plates of Jayabhaṇja\textsuperscript{48}, Bhaṇjanagar copper plates of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Netṭabhaṇja

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\item\textsuperscript{30} *Arthaśāstra*, I, Ch.3.
\item\textsuperscript{31} *Manuśmṛti*, Ch.VII, p.53.
\item\textsuperscript{32} *Kamaṇḍaka*, IV.
\item\textsuperscript{33} *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol.II, pp.429-35.
\item\textsuperscript{34} *E.I.*, Vol.XII, pp.321-25ff.
\item\textsuperscript{36} *E.I.*, Vol.XXIV, pp.172-75ff.
\item\textsuperscript{37} *Ibid.*, Vol.XVIII, pp.292-95.
\item\textsuperscript{38} *Ibid.*, Vol.XVIII, pp.295-96.
\item\textsuperscript{40} *E.I.*, Vol.XXVIII, pp.272-78ff.
\item\textsuperscript{41} *Ibid.*, pp.282-300ff.
\item\textsuperscript{42} *Ibid.*, Vol.IX, pp.271-77ff.
\item\textsuperscript{43} *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol.VI, Part-II, pp.274-79.
\item\textsuperscript{44} *O.H.R.J.*, Vol.XI, No.1, pp.9-17ff.
\item\textsuperscript{46} *Ibid.*, Vol.IV, pp.67-76ff.
\item\textsuperscript{47} *E.I.*, Vol.XXVIII, pp.272-78ff.
\item\textsuperscript{48} *Ibid.*, Vol.XIX, pp.41-48ff.
\end{itemize}
(Kholipāti branch). The Sandhivigrahika, as the designation implies, was the minister of war and peace and was the chief of foreign department as well. Although the Arthaśāstra of Kautilya explicitly defines the activity of the Sandhivigrahika, the term did not come into existence until the ascendancy of the Imperial Guptas. In the record of the Bhauma-Karas they are known to have assisted the Mahāsandhivigrahika in discharging his duties. The Sandhivigrahika was in charge of maintaining diplomatic relations with the neighbouring kingdoms as well as with the imperial court of the Bhauma-Karas. It is important to mention here that the Sandhivigrahikas of the Bhañjas were often assigned the responsibility of writing the land grants made by the king. The Kumarakelā charter of Śatrubhañja I and the Baud grant (54 regnal year) of Raṇabhañja I refer to Sandhivigrahika Sarvadatta and Himadatta as the writers of the respective grants. Similarly the Komanda copper plates and Peṭṭasara grant of Neṭṭabhañja III mention the name of Sandhivigrahika Savarāja and Kakkāka as the writers of the respective grants. The names of the Sandhivigrahikas which are found in the records of the Bhañjas of Khinjali maṇḍala with their respective overlords are mentioned below.

a) Sarvadatta - Šatrubhañja I  
b) Himadatta - Rañabhañja I  
c) Sarvarāja - Neţtabhañja III  
d) Kuvera - Neţtabhañja III  
e) Kakkāka - Neţtabhañja III  
f) Namañi - Šilābhañja II  
g) Stambha - Vidyādharabhañja  
h) Śri Khamba - Vidyādharabhañja  
i) Jayastamba - Neţtabhañja IV  
j) Śaṅkara - Šatrubhañja II  
k) Pāṇa - Neţtabhañja V  
l) Punanāga - Jayabhañja  
m) Śri Bhimā Maṇḍala - Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara  
    Neţtabhañja (Kholipāṭi)

Other Officers:

Apart from the ministers there were large numbers of officers in the kingdom who were entrusted various responsibilities. The officers of Khiñjali maṇḍala mentioned in the Bhañja records are mentioned below.
1. Antarāṅga:

The term Antarāṅga is not found mentioned either in the copper plates of the Māṭharas or of the Eastern Gaṅgas. We have come across this term for the first time in the record of the Śailodbhavas. The Daśakumāracharita of Dāṇḍin and the Ghugrahāti plate of Samāchāra Deva of Bangal refer to this term. F.E. Pargiter, while editing the plate has interpreted this term as 'Privy minister'. N.K. Bhattasali rendered the term into English as 'One of the intimate class servants of His Majesty'. According to B. Mishra Antarāṅga was a kinsman of the king but according to Sircar he was a royal physician. In all probability the Antarāṅga was a royal physician enjoying the confidence of the king.

2. Kumārāmātya:

The function of the Kumārāmātya who figured very prominently in the epigraphic records of the Mauryas, Guptas and other dynasties of northern India varied from time to time. Sometimes they served as ministers and some times as provincial or

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district heads\textsuperscript{55} J.F.Fleet\textsuperscript{56} defines the term as the councilor of the crown prince. Bloach interprets it as prince's minister\textsuperscript{57}. J.Marshall considers the Kumārāmātya to be the councilor of the hair apparent\textsuperscript{58}. R.C.Majumdar has suggested their involvement in the district administration\textsuperscript{59}. The Kumārāmātya of the Bhañja charter was probably the crown prince who was a probationer in the art of state crafts. At times he was functioning as the deputy of the king to co-ordinate the district administration.

**Mahāpratihārin:**

The Mahāpratihārin was the head of a group of Pratihārins. He acted as a bridge between the king and the Pratihārins and was appointed to regulate their activities. The Orissa Museum plates of Naṭtabhañja IV mention the name of the Mahāpratihārin as Kumaḍaka.

**Pratihārin:**

The Pratihārin or chamberlain was the royal doorkeeper\textsuperscript{60}. He was appointed to safeguard the gates of the royal

\textsuperscript{55} A.S.Altekar, *op.cit.*, p.137.
\textsuperscript{57} *A.S.A.R.I* (1903-1904), p.103.
palace and the capital city. We find the mention of Pratihārin in several Bhaṇja records. The Daśapallā plates of Neṭṭabhaṇja IV refer to Bhaṭṭa Vāpula, Daśapallā plates and Gaṇjām plates of Śatrubhaṇja II refer to Prabhākara and Divākara, Orissa Museum plates of Neṭṭabhaṇja V alias Tribhūvana Kalaśa to Baula, Antirigām plates of Jayabhaṇja of Kolaḍā Kataka to Bhopāla, Jurāḍā grant of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Neṭṭabhaṇja of Kumarapura to Śrī Bhavilla as Pratihārin.

Uparīka:

During the time of the Guptas and Harṣavardhan the Uparīka was acting as the governor of the province with considerable autonomy. In the Bhauma-Kara government he was the head of the revenue administration of the province. This is brought out by the fact that he is invariably mentioned in the charters of the Bhauma-Karas along with other officers and is directed not to interfere with the rent-free holding of the donee. Besides the Uparīka carried on the revenue settlements of his

63. Ibid., p.191.; Ibid., Vol.IV, pp.67-76ff.
65. Ibid., p.211, L.10.; Ibid., Vol.XIX, pp.41-45ff.
province with the help of his subordinate officers\(^67\). Under the Bhaṅjas he was appointed by the king as the head of the revenue administration and was responsible to him. The Uparika also acted as a bridge between the Viṣayapati and the king.

**Dūtaka:**

The Dūtaka was the executor of royal charter who conveyed the royal order to the provincial and district heads. Generally the officers of the accounts and record department used to hold this office\(^68\). In Manuśmṛti\(^69\), the dūta is described as the Chief Minister having special confidence of the king. His primary function was to communicate the king’s sanction and order in connection with the land grants to the local officials who finally have the charter drawn-up and delivered to the donee. From the Bhaṅja record it is known that sometimes the Mahāsāmantas and Sāmantas were also deputed as Dūtaka. The Tekāli plate of Śatrubhaṅja alias Maṅgalarāja\(^70\) mentions the name of Kṛtavarman who was a Mahāsāmanta and a Dūtaka. Besides the Komanda grant\(^71\) and Peṭṭasara grant\(^72\) of Neṭtabhaṅja III, Orissa Museum

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\(^{67}\) U.K.Subudhhi, *op.cit.*, p.100.  
\(^{68}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{69}\) *Manuśmṛti*, VII, pp.63-65.  
\(^{70}\) *I.O., Vol.,VI*, p.144.  
plates\textsuperscript{73} of Śilābhaṅja II, Gañjām plates\textsuperscript{74} of Vidyādharabhaṅja and Gañjām plates\textsuperscript{75} of Śatrubhaṅja II mention the name of Bhaṭṭa Sumanāgala, Rāja Kāntaka Deva Śrī Bhaṭṭa Stambha Deva, Chāchika Vārgula and Bhaṭṭa Rājaḍa respectively as Dūtaka. Apart from these the Second Undated Gañjām grant\textsuperscript{76} of Netṭabhaṅja III also mentions the name of Dūtaka which is not legible.

\textbf{Rājā :}

The Bhaṅja records refer to the term ‘Rājā’ often which means king. But when the king himself assumed the sobriquets like mahārāja, the title of rājā was perhaps conferred upon a subordinate chief of considerable power whose contribution towards the betterment of the kingdom was noteworthy.

\textbf{Rājaputra :}

Generally Rājaputra refers to the son of the king. But V.S.Apte states ‘Rājaputra’ refers to a man of the military tribe\textsuperscript{77}. B.Mishra has interpreted the term as descendants of degenerate ruling families\textsuperscript{78}. He further says that the modern term Rājput

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p.126.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p.132.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p.191.
\textsuperscript{77} V.S.Apte, \textit{Students Sanskrit-English Dictionary}, (Delhi, 1963), p.467.
\textsuperscript{78} B.Mishra(2), \textit{op.cit.}, p.97.
denoting a practical class of people in Orissa is the contracted form of the term Rājaputra. The Rājaputra of the Bhañja records was probably the representative of a subordinate ruling family or the envoy of the friendly neighbours.

**Yuvarāja:**

Yuvarāja was perhaps the crown prince who was selected to succeed him during his lifetime. The practice of selecting the heir apparent during the lifetime of the ruling king as laid down in the Śmrītis was followed by the Bhañja kings for we come across many references to the Yuvarāja or the crown prince in their records. The Jurāḍā grant of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Netṭabhañja issued from Kumārapura, Antirigām plates of Jayabhañja, issued from Kolāḍakataka and Bhañjanagar copper plate charter of another Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Netṭabhañja, issued from Kholipati refer to Śrī Rāyabhañja, Vīrabhañja and Śrī Prthvībhañja as Yuvarāja.

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Rājanaka:

The term is found following the title rājā in the Bhañja records. According to V.S. Apte\textsuperscript{83} most probably he represented the Kṣatriyas in the royal court. The Kṣatriyas as a warring tribe all along played an important role in the Indian polity. As a mark of honour the Bhañjas probably facilitated their representation in the royal court. The Antirigāṃ plates\textsuperscript{84} of Jayabhañja refer to Lakṣmi Kalaśa as Rājanaka.

Mahāsāmanta:

Probably the title of Mahāsāmanta was conferred to powerful feudatory. B.C. Chhabra\textsuperscript{85} opines that the Mahāsāmantas were some dignitaries rather than subordinate chiefs and were officers in charge of the frontiers. The Tekkāli charter\textsuperscript{86} of Śatrubhañja alias Maṅgalarāja and Bhañjanagar copper plates\textsuperscript{87} of Mahāmaṅḍaleśvara Neṭṭabhañja, issued from Kholipāṭi mention the name of Śrī Kṛtavarman and Bhimalli as Mahāsāmanta. The Mahāsāmantas were occasionally appointed as dūtaka or messenger.

\textsuperscript{83} V.S.Apte, \textit{op.cit.}, p.467.
\textsuperscript{84} I.O., Vol.VI, p.209.
\textsuperscript{85} E.I., Vol.XXIV, p.133.
\textsuperscript{86} I.O., Vol.VI, p.144.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., p.220.
to convey the royal command about the land grant to local officers as known from the Tekkali charter.

Sāmanta:

The term Sāmanta has variously been defined by scholars. V.S.Apte\(^88\) defines it as ‘bordering or neighbouring and when applied in connection with a kingdom, will denote a neighbouring king or a subordinate official ruling over the periphery of the kingdom. Sometimes the title of Sāmanta was conferred upon an official as a mark of honour and occasionally this title is used with the prefix Śrī\(^89\). Thus the Tekkāli or Gurāṇḍi plates of Śatrubхаṅja alias Maṅgalarāja give the name of a Śrī Sāmanta as Dhavalaka who was the engraver of the plates. Like the Mahāsāmantas, the Sāmantas were also appointed as dūtaka to convey the royal command about the land grant to the local officers of the periphery area. This led B.Chhabra to presume that the Sāmanta was a high dignitary working in the royal court rather than a subordinate official or king holding office in the periphery or ruling over the neighbouring territory.

\(^{88}\) V.S.Apte, *op.cit.*, p.598.

Mantrin or Amātya:

The meanings of Mantri and Amātya are same in the general sense. But as they are mentioned separately in the Bhañja charters, it may be surmised that they differ from each other in status. Amātya was probably the ordinary minister and mantrin was superior to him who commanded the confidence of the king. The Gañjām plates90 and Orissa Museum plates91 of Vidyādharabhañja, Daśapallā plates92 and Orissa Museum plates93 of Neṭtabhañja IV alias Prithvi kalaśa refer to Bhaṭṭa Keśava Deva, Bhaṭṭa Stambha Deva, Vāgulika Puṇḍarika and Śri Bhaṭṭa Vāpudeva respectively as mantrin.

Aksapaṭali:

The early literature does not bear any testimony about Aksapaṭali. The earliest reference to Aksapaṭali is found in the Rājatarāṅgini of Kalhāna which states that royal charters were issued under the authority of this office94. E.J.Monahan has interpreted the term Aksapaṭala both as an accountant's office and a

91. Ibid., pp.138-43.
92. Ibid., pp.150-55.
93. Ibid., pp.156-61.
94. M.A.Stein(tr.), Rājatarāṅgini of Kalhāna, (Westminister, 1900), Vol.IV, pp.397-98.
general record room. V.S.Apte defines Aksapatalam as court of law. So the Aksapatali may be regarded as the chief judicial authority of the Bhañja kingdom. By virtue of his office he also looked after the royal records and made arrangements for the proper execution of the royal land grants so as to avert future disputes. The Antirigām plates of Jayabhañja, issued from Kolāda Kataka and the Jurāḍā grant of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Neṭtabhañja, issued from Kumārapura refer to Vajradatta and Śri Ajānanda as Aksapatali.

Apart from the above said officers, the king is also known to have appointed two members from among the Brāhmaṇas and Karaṇas which clearly proves that both these communities enjoyed position of importance in the social structure of Khinjali. The Bhañjas issued numerous land grants to the Brāhmaṇas to induce them to settle down in their kingdom which was predominantly a tribal area. This resulted in the large-scale migration of the Brāhmaṇas who settled down in the villages and exercised their influence upon the regional activities. The head of the Brāhmaṇa community, as mentioned in the charters was Brahma-pradhāna. The Karaṇas were perhaps appointed in such

posts dealing with maintenance of records, and their representative in the royal court was known as Karana pradhana

**District Administration:**

The Bhañja kings of Khiñjali mañḍala had divided their kingdom into a number of Vişayas or districts. Their copper plate records refer to as many as 18 vişayas within its territory. They are Royara, Uttarpalli, Dakṣiṇapalli, Tullāśrīṅga, Salvaḍa, Olaśrīṅga, Machchhāḍakhaṅḍa, Ramalava, Nanavakhaṅḍa, Sāraḍḍā, Māṇḍiddā, Vāsudevakhaṅḍa, Voda, Vodakhaṅḍa, Khiñjaliyagoda, Vasvakhaṅḍa, Tullāsidga and Khatiyā viṣaya. The head of the viṣaya was Viṣayapati. Like the Uparika he also enjoyed considerable revenue power. He was perhaps appointed directly by the king and was responsible to him.

for all course of his action. He assisted the officials of the central
government in collection of revenue and recruitment to the army.
He is frequently mentioned in the charter among the officers and
requested not to disturb the possession of the donated lands enjoyed
by the donees. The title of Biṣoī or Biṣayaī was no doubt the corrupt
form of Viṣayapati119

Tadāyaktaka:

D.C.Sircar interprets the Tadāyaktakas as the head of
the sub division120. This dignitary appears to have been below the
rank of the Viṣayapati, the head of the Viṣaya or district. They used
to assist the Viṣayapati in running the administration.

Village Administration:

Under the Bhaṇja administration each Viṣaya was
divided into a number of Grāmas. The Grāmas was the lowest unit
of administration. The head of the Grāma was called Bhogi. Grāma
of the Bhaṇja charter does not correspond to modern village. The
ancient Hindu texts121 define a village as ‘that piece of land whose
area is a Koṣa’. The Bhaṇjas are supposed to honour this

prescription of the ancient texts. Thus the villages Jaintamurā and Kumarakelā, identified with modern village of Janmurā and Kumarkeli in Bīramahārajpur Tahasil were situated in the Uttarapalli visāya on the left bank of Mahānadi. The modern village Patrāpali represents the headquarters of Uttarapalli visāya. The village of Koṇatiṇṭhi and Amvasarasara which may by identified respectively with the modern village of Kaṇtuāṇi and Sarasara, were included in Khatiyā visāya which constituted the area bordered by Mahānadī in the north and the river Vyāghra in the west. The village boundaries were demarcated by rivers, streams, trees, high lands and mounds. Stone pillars were posted on the borderline. The Baud grant of Raṅabhaṅja I\textsuperscript{122}, issued in his 26 regnal year records the donation of village Vallarsṛṅga, identified with the modern Balāśiṅga on the bank of river Sālaṅki where it meets river Mahānadi. The village was included in Khatiyā viṣaya and was demarcated by river Sālaṅki in the west, Mahānadi in the north, two Pippal trees in the east and by a chiseled rock (Kutaniśilā) in the south\textsuperscript{123}.

**Judicial Administration:**

The Bhaṅja copper plate records do not provide much information about the judicial administration of Khinjali maṇḍala.

\textsuperscript{122} E.I., Vol.XII, pp.325-28.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
Probably the king was the head of the judicial department of the state. The Daṇḍapāśika was also the authority of law and order. He was appointed by the king directly and was responsible to him. The Daṇḍanāyaka was also another officer in judicial department. The Bhaṅjanagar copper plate grant of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Netṭabhaṅja\textsuperscript{124} mentions the name of one Sarbheśvara as Daṇḍanākaya.

\section*{Revenue Administration:}

The Bhaṅja records do not furnish sufficient information about the sources of revenue of the kingdom. However from the available sources it is known that the main sources of revenue were nidhi, upanidhi, bhāga, bhoga and hiranya. Nidhi\textsuperscript{125} was as like as modern income tax, Upanidhi means a sealed deposit. Here it may refer to that amount which was paid by the people to the authority who guaranteed the safe custody of their deposits. Bhāga refers to the state share of the total output of the lands possessed by an individual. It was the quarter part of the total produce\textsuperscript{126}. Bhoga was a kind of tax imposed upon the people for enjoying benefits of the amenities provided by the king. Hiranya was perhaps collected

\textsuperscript{124} I.O., Vol.VI, p.220.
\textsuperscript{125} V.S.Apte, \textit{op.cit.}, p.288.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Ibid.}, p.402.
from those people who used precious metals and jewels. Besides this the Bhañjas also imposed taxes on various professionals, such as weavers (tantavāya), cowherds (gokuṭa), distillers (Saunḍhika), hamlets (Sakheta), landing place (ghāṭa), ferries (Nadirasthāna) and thickets (Gulmaka). The right given to the donees over the taxes derived from the weavers, cowherds, distillers, hamlets, landing places, ferries and thickets as shown above would suggest that duties were levied on textiles, pasture, liquor, hamlet, river transport and thickets during the Bhañja period. The donees of different villages by the Bhañja rulers were empowered to collect a sort of taxes from the people of the donated villages and utilize the amount for their own betterment. Sometimes villages were donated to temples and the revenue collected from these villages were spent for the maintenance of these concerned temples. The Pāṭnā Museum plates127 of Raṇabhañja I, issued in his 22 regnal year record: the donation of village Vāhiravādā by his queen Vijayā Mahādevī to God Vijayeśvara.

Military Administration:

The Bhañjas had established their rule over Khinjali maṇḍala as the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas and Somavaṁśīs as

none of the rulers is focused in the records to have borne the sovereign title of the rulers of this period. They have used in their copper plates such titles as Rāṇaka and Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara which indicates their feudatory status. They however appear to have assumed full independence whenever their overlord families were at disadvantage or in weak position. None of the copper plates of the Bhaṅjas refers to an overlord but this does not mean that they were always independent. The custom of referring to an overlord in the copper plate grants was not in vogue among all feudatories of Orissa.

The military system under the Bhaṅjas appears to have been strong and efficient or else the small principality founded by them would not have developed into a vast kingdom. Like their overlords, the Bhauma-Karas the Bhaṅjas had maintained a standing army. Besides this they also depended on irregular troops which constituted the local militia. The minister in charge of war and peace was Sanḍhivigrahika, who was in charge of the overall management of the army. The Daṇḍapāśika was another officer who was actively involved in the military administration. He was performing the police duties during peace and military duties during war. The Bhaṅjas were the master of ‘Chaturaṅgavāla’ namely the
foot soldiers, the cavaliers, the elephant riders and the charioters\textsuperscript{128}. The Samavyi or Samavāji was the chief of the cavalry\textsuperscript{129}. The Jurāḍā grant of Mahāmaṇḍalesvara Neṭṭabhaṅja I\textsuperscript{130} refers to an officer named Samavāji. The Chātas and Bhātas were regular and irregular forces of the army. It is evident from this classification that the ruler, besides having a regular army also depended on irregular troops which constituted local militia. B.Das\textsuperscript{131} interprets them as junior officers who qualified not only military duties but also political duties. They were the subordinates of the Daṇḍapāśika.

**Towns:**

The Bhaṅja and the Somavarṇī records refer to a number of towns having political importance that existed in Khiṇjali maṇḍala. Those are mentioned below.

**i) Aṅgulakapāṭana:**

Aṅgulakapāṭana finds mention in the Baud copper plates of Neṭṭabhaṅja I\textsuperscript{132}. This town has been identified with the

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., Vol.XI, p.100, Line 10-13.
\textsuperscript{129} U.Subuddhi, op.cit., p.105.
\textsuperscript{130} E.I., Vol.XXIV, pp.15-20ff.
\textsuperscript{131} B.Das, op.cit., p.131.
modern town of Angul by Pandit B. Mishra\textsuperscript{133} and with the village of Naṅguliābedā, situated between Merāmaṇḍali and Angul town by S. Pattanaik\textsuperscript{134}. However, N. K. Sahu\textsuperscript{135} has identified it with the village Puruṇāgarh near Angul town which is accepted by us.

\textit{ii) Dhṛtipura:}

The \textit{Undated} Sonepur grant of Śatrubhaṇja I\textsuperscript{136} is the earliest charter referring to Dhṛtipura. After it a large number of copper plates grants of the Bhaṇjas refer to this town. Dhṛtipura literally means strong fortress. It was the capital of Khinjali maṇḍala under Śatrubhaṇja I and Raṇabhaṇja I till it was occupied by Mahābhāvagupta Janmejaya I in his 8\textsuperscript{th} regnal year. Dhṛtipura has not been identified yet properly. The inscriptions issued from this town are generally found in Sonepur, Baud and Daśapallā regions. However N. K. Sahu\textsuperscript{137} observes that 'the rich antiquities of Baud town warrant strong supposition that this place was the headquarters of the Bhaṇja kings of Khinjali maṇḍala before it assumed its Buddhistic significance'. His view is generally accepted by modern scholars.

\textsuperscript{134} I. O., Vol. VI, p. 231.
\textsuperscript{135} N. K. Sahu and Others, \textit{History of Orissa}, (Cuttcak, 1979), p. 130.
\textsuperscript{136} I. O., Vol. VI, pp. 51-57.
\textsuperscript{137} N. K. Sahu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 120.
iii) Šilābhaṅjapāṭi:

The town Šilābhaṅjapāṭi finds mention in the Cuttack Museum plates of Yayāti I\textsuperscript{138} of the Somavārī dynasty. It was probably founded by Šilābhaṅjadeva I or his successor to commemorate him. But it is sure that this town had already existed during the reign of Yayāti I as has been referred to in the above said charter which states that the donee of this grant was a resident of Šilābhaṅjapāṭi.

iv) Gandhatapāṭi:

The town of Gandhatapāṭi is identified with the modern village of Gandharāḍi\textsuperscript{139}. Situated on the right bank of the river Mahānāḍī at a distance of about 12 K.M. from the town of Baud it contains the twin temples of Siddheśvara and Nilamādhava built by king Raṇabhaṅja\textsuperscript{140}. The town was named after king Šatrubhaṅja I alias Gandhata. Gandhatapāṭi finds mention in the Kumurakelā charter\textsuperscript{141} of Šatrubhaṅja I which states that the donee Bhaṭṭa Manoratha settled in Gandhatapāṭi.

\textsuperscript{139} K.C.Panigrahi, \textit{op.cit.}, p.105.
\textsuperscript{140} See Chapter 8.
v) Vañjulvaka:

In the Soma-Bhañja war king Rañabhañja I was killed and after him the Bhañjas were forced to shift their headquarters to Vañjulvaka where they are known to have established their new Khinnjali mañḍala. Vañjulvaka is mentioned as Vijaya Vañjulvaka in the Bhañja records. Most of the Bhañja charters were issued from Vijaya Vañjulvaka. Vañjulvaka, the capital of the Bhañjas of Khinnjali mañḍala has also not been properly identified. Most of the copper plate grants issued from this place have been discovered in the Gañjām district. Again some of the place names mentioned in these records have been identified with the villages situated in this region. B.Mishra\(^2\) has identified this town with Bañjaniā in the Ghumusar region of Gañjām district.

(vi) Kolāḍa Kaṭaka:

Kolāḍa Kaṭaka is found mention in the Antirigām charter of Mahāmañḍaleśvara Jayabhañja\(^3\) as his administrative headquarters and place of issue of the charter. The town is identified with modern Kulāḍa near Bhañjanagar in Gañjām district. The traditional account of Ghumusar states that Kulāḍa was

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conquered and made the capital in the later part of twelfth century A.D.\textsuperscript{144}

vii) Kumarapura:

The Jurāḍā grant of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Netṭabhaṇja\textsubscript{1}\textsuperscript{145} refers to Kumarapura as the place of issue of the charter. Kumarapura has been identified with a village of the same name near Berhampur of Gaṅjam district\textsuperscript{146}. One Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Netṭabhaṇja, son of Raṇabhaṇja and grandson of Netṭabhaṇja is known to have ruled over Khinjali maṇḍala with Kumarapura as his capital as known from the Jurāḍā grant.

viii) Kholipāti:

The Bhaṇjanagar copper plate charter of another Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Netṭabhaṇja\textsuperscript{147} refers to Kholipāti as the place of issue of the charter. Kholipāti is identified with the modern town of Kholikoṭe in Gaṅjam district.

\textsuperscript{144} I.O., Vol.VI, p.214.
\textsuperscript{145} E.L, Vol.XXIV, pp.15-20.
\textsuperscript{146} N.K.Sahu and Others, \textit{op.cit.}, p.134.
\textsuperscript{147} I.O., Vol.VI, p.220.
ix) Suvarṇapura:

Suvarṇapura is found mention in two set of copper plate grants found from Baud assigned to Solaṇabhaṇija\footnote{E.I., Vol.XXVI, pp.276-79ff.} and Kanakabhaṇija\footnote{J.B.O.R.S., Vol.II, p.367f.} as the political headquarters. It appears that for some time the Bhaṇjas established their headquarters at Suvarṇapura when they seized this tract of land from Somavamśīs towards the later part of their reign. This town is identified with the modern town of Sonepur situated on the confluence of the river Mahānadi and Tel.