CHAPTER III
STUDY ON INSCRIPTIONS
PART-I GENERAL STUDIES

The inscriptions of the rulers of ancient Assam constitute the most reliable source material for the study of history of the period. Inscription literally means any writing engraved on some object and epigraphy is the study of inscriptions. Inscriptions are usually engraved on permanent materials. Durable non-metallic and metallic objects were used as base to make the writings long lasting. The Nagajari-Khanikargaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription is the earliest inscription so far discovered in Assam. Till recently it was held that the Umācal Rock Inscription datable to A.D. 5th century was the earliest inscription of Assam. But after the discovery of the Nagajari-Khanikargaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription it has been accepted earlier than the Umācal Rock inscription although both of them are placed in A.D. fifth century on palaeographic consideration. But D. Chutia places the Nagajari-Khanikargaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription to around c. 400 A.D., if not earlier. He suggests that the inscription is more akin to

the Susuniya Rock Inscription of Chandravarman (c. 340-360 A.D.) not only in respect of palaeography but also in the matter of content and style. The discovery of a few inscribed lithic pieces bearing Brāhmi letters of earlier phase as unearthed in Dubarani located in the Doiyang- Dhansiri valley of Assam may push the date further back to c. 2nd -c. 3rd century A.D. at least, if not earlier.

Inscriptions of ancient Assam may be studied under the following headings:

3.1.1. Classification of Inscriptions:

In ancient Assam, three types of materials were used in recording the inscriptions. These were stone or rock, metal and clay seal. On the basis of the material used for writing the record, inscriptions may be classified as the following:

3.1.1.1. Stone Inscriptions:

3.1.1.1.1. Inscribed Stone pieces:

Individual letters incised on small chiselled stone pieces are included in this group. The Dubarani finds are the representative of this group belonging to the ancient period, palaeographically which are datable to c.2nd-c.3rd century A.D.

3.1.1.1.2. Inscriptions on Stone and Pillar

This group consists of the inscriptions engraved on the surface of stone blocks or slabs or pillars. Chiselled stone blocks/slabs or pillars either round or flat in shape are found to have been used for engraving records. The Nagajari-Khanikargaon

5. D. Chutia, 'A Note on the Umachal Rock Inscription', Archaeology of North-Eastern India, P. 234.
7. Ibid.
Fragmentary Stone Inscription, Dubarani Stone Slab Inscription, Stone Inscription of Samudrapala, Gachtal Pillar Inscription fall in this group. The data of this type of inscription is mostly the recording of land grant, establishment of religious institution, victory or a great contribution to society and state by ruling figures. Such inscriptions are very much regal in nature.

3.1.1.3. Inscriptions on Stone Image:

In this category included the stone image sculptures bearing some inscriptions. Quite a few of them bear some details about the identity of the concerned deity along with the name of the donor or the issuing authority, while the others are connected with the making of the image, installation and worship of the deity. The inscribed Hari-Hara image, the Visnu image of Deoparni fall in this category.

3.1.1.2. Rock-cut Inscriptions:

In this category included the Umācal Rock Inscription, the Barganagā Rock Inscription, the Tezpur Rock Inscription and the Kāṇaiharasībowā Rock Inscription. The Rock-cut Inscriptions also commemorate the establishment of religious institutions or victory or represent royal decree.

3.1.1.3 Clay Seals:

Three clay seals discovered so far, the fragments of two clay seals of Bhāskaravarman discovered at Nalanda and the other clay seal of Vasundharavarman in Golaghat District in Assam.
3.1.1.4. **Inscriptions on Metal:**

Copper plate inscriptions, mostly of land grant charter issued by the rulers from time to time is a major group included in this category. Altogether twenty three copper plate grants have been discovered in Assam so far. The common use of copperplates in Assam may indicate (a) unfavourable climatic nature in Assam for stone or rock inscription and (b) the durability of copper plates easy for preservation in the house of the donees, as most of the copper plates were issued by the royal authorities for purpose of accolade and honorific investiture. Moreover, these copper plate grants remain the sources for the claims over a stipulated area of land with specified local boundaries and they were generally bounded by a royal seal which indicates the impact of the sovereign power over the concerned action. Besides land grant charter we have found an inscription on a copper bell and two bronze Images bearing inscription and inscribed coins of gold copper and bronze.

3.1.2. **Format of the Inscriptions:**

A specified format for inscriptions is difficult to ascertain because many inscriptions are incomplete and even the complete records are not uniform in nature. But we find the copper-plates have almost a set pattern. Most of the copperplate inscriptions begin with a symbol and verse of invocation. It is followed by the genealogical and individual details of the donor. Then the date and aim of the grant are mentioned. Subsequently the details of the donee, including his greatness are recorded. Afterwards the details of the land granted along with its
boundaries (sima) are recorded. Finally there are to follow the verses of benediction and imprecation, with a note to the other rulers, to succeed, is made to protect the previous rulers' grants.

On the other hand rock inscriptions do not have any prologomenary formula or records of benediction or imprecation. Some inscriptions record the auspicious symbol svasti at the beginning and some inscription commemorate an event or display royal decrees or records the date of the grant. The stone inscriptions are with a verse of invocation, details of donor, donee and the details of the grant. Benediction, imprecation and details of the date are not found in all the records. Thus, most of the rock and stone inscriptions are very much without uniformity.

In Assam, copperplate grant consists of plates of varied numbers. The maximum number of plates is seven, while its minimum number is three. Majority of them are however of three plates. There are only three grants which consist of more than three plates. The Dubi and the Nidhanpur Copperplate Grants of Bhāskaravaraman both of which consist of six and seven plates respectively and the Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva, which consists of five plates. There are some grants of which one or two plates are missing, for example, the last plate of the Dubi and one (either fourth or fifth) of the Nidhanpur Copperplates and the first and last plates of the Hayunthal Copperplate Grant of Harjaravarma. All the plates are joined together by a ring, the ends of which are secured in a seal of the king. In each case we find that the obverse of the first and reverse of the last plates are kept
blank and the middle plate or plates is / are inscribed on both the sides. The text of the Kuruvāvāhī Copperplate Grant begins from the left upper end of the second plate facing the inscribed side of the first plate, which contains the latter portion of the contents of the inscription.

The size of copper plate usually depended upon the contents, length of the writing to be engraved and the size of the letters of the copperplate. For instance the Suwałkuchi Grant of Ratnapāla is 31 cm. in length and 22 cm. in breadth and the Hayunthal Copperplate Grant of Harjaravarman is 8 cm in length and 5 cm in breadth.

3.1.3. Seal:

The authentication and genuineness of the copperplate charters are indicated by the royal seal affixed generally to the left of the plate. All the copper plate grants of ancient Assam have a seal and joined together by a ring, the ends of which are secured in a seal of the king. The seal bears the emblem of the king. Seal attached to the Dubi Copperplate Inscription is a ladleshaped lump of bronze the surface of which is oval. On the upper part of it is counter sunk the elephant figure in full standing form to the front in an attractive posture. About two -thirds of the seal below this royal emblem are covered by the legend giving the genealogy of the king of the Varman line. The fragmentary Nalanda Seal of Bhāskaravarman also has the same type of emblem i.e. an elephant and has the same short legend. The Kuruvāvāhī Copperplate Grant of Harjaravarman also attached with a ladle shaped lump of bronze, the surface of which is the pattern of an asvattha leaf. Here also the seal is divided
into two parts by a horizontal ridge and the frontal part of a sitting elephant is counter-sunk in the upperhalf while the lower half contains a legend consisting the name of the king and his title. All the seals attached to the charters of subsequent rulers of Kamarūpa kingdom upto the Puspabhadra Grant, so far discovered are of this leaf shaped pattern. The Kamauli Copperplate Grant attached to the hook-like band of the handle of a ladle-shaped seal containing simply the figure of a seated four handed Ganesha. Some seals are now not available.

3.1.4. Classification of Contents:

3.1.4.1. Auspicious Symbol:

Usually a charter begins with an auspicious invocation by using the symbol with a sign Chandrabindu (♀) or anunasika (♀) before it. This symbol stands for the auspicious siddham meaning 'Let there be success' which is found at the beginning of numerous early records. Another auspicious symbol used at the beginning of inscription is svasti- 'Let there be welfare to all', a benediction. The purpose of the benediction is to invoke God or any Supreme power for the benefit of auspiciousness and they are followed by a prayer of the favourite God.

As regards the opening formula of the copper plate inscriptions of ancient Assam, there is not any hard and fast rule. The Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant begins with 'Om'. The Tezpur Copperplate Grant of Vanamāla begins with siddham svasti.

Many inscriptions of the Pāla kings of Bengal also begin with the sign 'S'.

10. Ibid., P.92.
P.N. Bhattacharya has contributed a substantial paper on this subject. According to him it is a sign of अफ़ज़ि. This symbol may be read as siddham. Copper plate grants of the king of ancient Assam from Vanamāla to Dharmapāla start with siddham svasti except the Gachtal Copperplates which starts with the siddham Oṁ and after the salutation to the deity mentions svasti. The Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva also starts almost in the sameway with words “Om namah Bhagavate Vasudevaya”.

A few inscriptions, like the Kānāibaraśibowa Rock Inscription, the Gachtal Pillar Inscription and others do not have any particular prologomenary formula. But some rock and stone inscriptions begin with auspicious symbol. The Bargaṅgā Rock Inscription and the Tezpur Rock Inscription begin with the word ‘svasti’ and ‘Oṁ svasti’ respectively. Stone inscriptions like the Deopāṇi Viṣṇu Image Inscription starts with ‘siddham’ word while both Hari-Hara Image Inscriptions begin with ‘siddham namah’.

3.1.4.2. Invocation:

Symbol siddham or the word ‘svasti’ was generally followed by the praise of the favourite deity of the donor. Almost all the inscriptions of ancient Assam upto the Gachtal Copperplate Grant of Gopālavarmaṇ invocation was made to Śiva. In the Khanāṁukh and in the Subhaṅkarapātaka Copperplate Grants of Dharmapāla invocation was made to Yuvatīśvara (i.e. composite figure of Śiva and Pārvati).

12. Readings in the History and Culture of Assam, PP. 9-11.
In the immediately next plate, the Puspabhadra Copperplate Grant of Dharmapala invocation was made to Visnu in the form of a Boar. Later we find invocation to Lord Vasudeva in the Kamauli Copperplates of Vaidyadeva. In the Deopani Visnu Image Inscription invocation was made to Hara, the Lord of the three world. A benediction in the name of Lauhitya is seen in the Tezpur Copperplate Grant before the invocation to Siva. This is seen also in the Parbatiya (V.1) Copperplate Grant of Vanamala, the Nowgong Copperplate Grant of Balavarman (V.2), the Bargaon Copperplate Grant of Ratnapala (V.2), the Gauhati Copperplate Grant (V.3) and the Guwakuchi Copperplate Grant (V.3) of Indrapala. Most of the Rock Inscriptions do not include invocation.

3.1.4.3. Eulogy:

An elaborate eulogy follows the invocation of the inscription. The eulogy comprises (1) the genealogical list and individual details of the donor, (2) names of the place of issue and (3) addresses in respect of the grant.

3.1.4.3.1. The Genealogical list and individual details of the Donor:

The first section of the eulogy carries genealogical list which are of two types. In one case the entire genealogical details since the mythical period tracing the origin of the donor is found. In the second case only the donor with a small note of two or three generations or even without that note are mentioned.

The copperplate inscriptions of the rulers of ancient Assam upto the Puspabhadra Grant of Dharmapala traced their origin from Naraka who was the son of Varaha-Visnu and the Earth. In the Puspabhadra Copperplate Grant we have reference
to Brahmapāla, Gopāla and Harṣapāla after tracing their ancestry from Naraka. In the Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva, tracing the traditional origin of the ruling dynasty from Naraka was changed and Vaidyadeva proudly declared his ancestry from ministers Vigrahapāla and Rāmapāla. The Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva also traces the ancestry from the Chandra dynasty and mentions the names of his four ancestors. Stone inscriptions mention the names of the donor king only.

While the genealogy compared with various virtues and powers, adoring kings with those of the divinities like Indra, Viṣṇu, Śiva, their queens were also compared with the best qualities of the goddesses. Moreover both of them are compared with the heroes and, heroines of the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata. The Dubi Copper Plate is the first inscription to include this type of mythological allusions. The allusions of our inscriptions were imitated, though not bodily borrowed, from the Gupta inscriptions, such as the Allahabad Pillar Inscription, the Bihar Stone Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta, the Apshad Inscription of Adityasena etc, where this sort of mythological allusions are found.15

The rulers of the Sālastambha and the Pāla lines also used mythological allusions in their records but they are imitated from the records of the Varman line, mentioned above. The second half of the eulogistic verses commemorate the achievement of the donor king.

15. C.I.I., III, P. 77; 1-18, 47-52, 52-56.
3.1.4.3.2. Name of the Place of Issue:

The second part of the eulogy contains the name of the place of issue and address in respect of the grant. Royal charters were generally issued from the capital of the donor king. But the copperplate grants of ancient Assam reveal that the charters were issued from various places like Karnasuvarna, Haruppesvara, Hadappesvara, Durjaya, Hadapyaka, and from Kamarapanagar. M.M. Sharma opined that Karnasuvarna originally was a military camp which was later on turned into a capital and remained a capital during the period C.612 AD to C.650 AD. Haruppesvara, the capital city of Harjara reads by P.N. Bhattacharya as Hatappesvara. M.M. Sharma opined that the city used to be called Hadappesvara or Hatappesvara. According to M.M. Sharma, during the time of Harjara Hatappesvara was a military camp which was turned into administrative head-quarter (Skandhavara). By the time of Balavarman it became a full fledged capital well fortified with the army. Durjaya was identical with the old city of Pragjyotisa. Hadapyaka, according to him was identical with Hadappesvara and

17. Hāyunthal Copperplate Grant, P.N. Bhattacharya, K. S., P.50.
18. Tezpur Copperplate Grant, L.1.
23. Ibid; P.56.
27. Ibid, P.222.
28. Ibid.
continued to be a second seat of government for regional administration.\textsuperscript{29} Kamarūpanagāra was identified with Rangpur\textsuperscript{30}, Kamatapura\textsuperscript{31}, North Guwahati\textsuperscript{32} and Balujhora Mouza in between Bhaṭṭabara and Phulbari of the West Gāro hill District of Meghalaya bordering the present Dhubri District of Assam.\textsuperscript{33}

But P.C. Choudhury opines that Prāgjyotisa has been referred to in the inscriptions as the capital city and not a single inscription is found to have mentioned Hadapyaka or Hadappesvara as the capital city. Dūrjjayā was mentioned within the four walls of the city of Prāgjyotisa. Therefore Hadappesvara and Dūrjjayā may stand for a temporary administrative residence of a ruling prince or a ruler.\textsuperscript{34}

3.1.4.3.3. Addresses in respect of the Grant:

Usually in time of the issue of a grant the king addressed the subordinates and officials and the inhabitants of the area where the donated land or village was situated. The Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant\textsuperscript{35} addressed the subordinate officers who issued hundred commands and who had received the five great Sabdas; the headman of the Viṣaya, the dispute settler (Nyāyakaranika), the controlling officer, (Vyavahārī) the clerk (Kāyastha), the composer(Sasayita) and the writer (Lekhayita) of the grant, the master of treasury (Bhāndāgaradhirāta), tax collector

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.\textsuperscript{30} N.N. Vasu, Social History of Kamarupa, Vol., 1 P.174.\textsuperscript{31} P.N. Bhattacharya, K.S., Intro., PP.29-34.\textsuperscript{32} K.L. Barua, E.H.K., P.93.\textsuperscript{33} History & Archaeology, Prof. H.D. Sankalia Felicitation Volume, PP.20-24.\textsuperscript{34} P.C. Choudhury,H.C. P.A, P.231.\textsuperscript{35} M.M. Sharma,I.A.A., PP.53-54 ;Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant, L. 126 to 136.
(Utkhetayita) and the coppersmith (Sekkyakar). In the Uttarbarbil Copperplate Grant king Balavarman III passes his orders (Samādisati) for all those who are present in, or concerned with the plot of the donated land, and for all those who will happen to be so (bhāvino’pi)\(^{36}\). So far as the inscriptions of ancient Assam are concerned, we find the mention of these dignitaries for the first time in this grant. In the later inscriptions, however, it is found to have been a common practice. The Kamauli Grant mentions some new officers belonging to the District administration viz, Catta, Bhatta and the Visayillaka\(^{37}\).

**3.1.4.4. Notification** :

After address comes the item of notification. The item of notification is the central theme of a charter which comprises. (1) specifications of the gift, (2) name of the donee (3) date (4) occasion (5) purpose of the grant (6) boundaries and (7) conclusion.

**3.1.4.4.1. Specifications of the Gift** :

Normally the grant might be for one or a number of villages or a plot of land to individual or religious institution. The Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant mentions 166 1/16 amsā (measures of land) demarcated by eight boundaries parcelled out among 208 Brahmanas including seven units for bali - caru - satra\(^{38}\). In other charters made by succeeding kings, the unit of land is not mentioned rather measure

\(^{36}\) Ibid, PP. 140,146,147; Uttarbarbil Copperplate Grant, L.36-40.

\(^{37}\) Kamauli Grant, L.49.

\(^{38}\) M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., PP. 76-81.
of paddy yield of the plot is referred to. The Tezpur Copperplate Inscription mentions the grant of a village which contains both land and water to a qualified Brāhmaṇa. The Parbatīyā Copperplate Grant of Vanāmala clearly mentions the donation of a village Ḥaposagrama, besides reference to matchless villages donated to the temple Hetukasūlina. The Uttarbarbil Copperplate Inscription mentions the grant of a plot of land to a Brāhmaṇa producing 2000 units of paddy. The Nowgong Copperplate Grant of Balavarman III mentions the grant of an area of land called Hensivā, having an yield of 4,000 units of paddy. The Kamauli Copperplate Grant mentions that two villages were granted including the water, dry lands along with four hundred inhabitant workmen. The Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva (VV.15-22) mentions the establishment of an alms-house and for maintenance of this alms-house granted along with the bushes and trees, villages, inhabitants, water and dry lands, seven villages duly situated within their four boundaries and outside this boundary granted six hamlets and also five assistants along with their sons and wives.

Some charter attached special privileges like being free from visits of policemen and army men and also obligation to pay the taxes payable by temporary tenants. Their privileges were extended in the latter grants. The Uttarbarbil Copperplates mention some more privileges which rendered freedom from all troubles on account of fastening of elephants, searching of thieves, inflicting punishment, tenants’ taxes, duties due to different causes and grazing of the animals.

39. The Parbatīyā Copperplate Grant, L. 49.
such as elephants, horses, camels, cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep. Even entries of Rāja, Rājñī, Rājaputra, Rāṇaka, Rājavallabha and Mahallaka Praudhika were forbidden in the donated land. The donee was also exempted from providing 'chatravāsadi' to royal umbrella bearer. After this grant we find such a statement of privileges in all the later copper plate grants of the Kāmarūpa kings.

The inscriptions reveal that among the Brahmānas some enjoyed revenue free holdings while others did not. Exemptions, too were not the same for all the Brahmānas who owned revenue free lands. Haposagrāma was not a revenue free holding, but was given to a Brahmaṇa, Cudamani, with some concessions like free from the entry of Catta-Bhatta and from Uparikara. Kings granted revenue free land to Brahmānas on special occasions like the festivity of Sakrothana or the performance of Laksahoma and the like. But sometimes the Brahmānas themselves approached the king for a piece of revenue free land as a mark of favour. Brahmaṇa Srutidhara, for example, after completing his study at gurugrha, desired to start the life of a householder and approached king Balavarman on Visuvat day for a place of residence; the king favoured him with Hensivabhumi, yielding 4,000 (dronas of) paddy granted to him as revenue free holding.

3.1.4.4.2. **Name of the Donee:**

A charter mentions the name of the donee, their ostensible place of origin and ancestors with their specific qualities along with their duties. The Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant mentions 208 Brāhmaṇas with their gotras, vedasākhās and prāvaras. The Tezpur Copperplate Grant mentions the name of the parents of the donee, their gotra and vedasākhā. The Uttarbarbil Copperplate Grant mentions the details of three generation i.e. the father and grand father of the donee. Afterwards almost all the copperplate grants mention the details of the ancestors of the donee for their three or four generations.

3.1.4.4.3. **Date:**

Most of the inscriptions of ancient Assam are not dated. Some inscriptions bear the regnal year of the rulers. In all, only seven records are dated. They are dated in two eras-the Saka era and the Gupta era. The Tezpur Rock Inscription of Harjaravarman is dated to 510 G.E. (A.D. 829-830). The five inscriptions bearing the Saka era are the Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva dated 1107 S.E. (A.D. 1187), the Kanaibarasibowa Rock Inscription dated 1127 S.E. (A.D. 1206), the Ambāri Stone Inscription of Samudrapāla dated in 1154 S.E. (A.D. 1232). The Gachtal Pillar Inscription was dated 1284 S.E. (1362 A.D.). It is thus evident that in the ninth century A.D. the Gupta era was in use in Kamarūpa and in the 13th century the Saka era was in use. From the records it is not clear when the Gupta era

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49. P.C. Choudhury, Churning of Nectar, PP. 52-56.
came to be used in Assam and when the Saka era became popular and replaced the former. But the cause of the disuse of the Gupta era might be with the downfall of the Guptas, their almanac also became unpopular. However, some era was to take place of the Gupta era in Assam. There is mention of a Kāmarūpī era which was probably started by Bhāskara in A.D. 594. When Sālastambha usurped the throne after overthrowing the direct successor of Bhāskarvarman, the era was discarded out of hatred towards the preceding dynasty and the Gupta era was used. When the dynasty of Sālastambha came to an end, the new dynasty started by Brahmapāla inaugurated the more popular Saka era. But inscriptions of ancient Assam give no clue to the existence of any indigenous era.

3.1.4.4.4 Occasion:

In earlier inscriptions, the royal grants were generally made on auspicious occasions such as eclipses of the Sun and the Moon, Full Moon, New Moon and the holy tithis on a lunar day. The copperplate inscriptions of ancient Assam also mention some auspicious days as the occasion of the land grant. These were on the day of the annual celebration of Sakrotthana, on the moment of Visnupadasamkranti, Visnuvatī(Samkranti) on Vaisakha on an Ekadasi(tithi), or after having a ceremonial bath. Some inscriptions however did not specifically

51. Ibid.
52. D.C. Sircar, Indian Epigraphy, P.222.
53. Uttarbarbil Copperplate Grant, V.30.
54. Bargāon Copperplate Grant, V.20.
55. Kamauli Copperplate Grant, L. 52.
mention the occasion of issuing the grant and sometimes the occasion of the grant was implied.

3.1.4.4.5. **Purpose:**

The purpose and objective of the grant were mentioned in almost all the inscriptions. These were made for acquiring religious merit of the parents of the donor king or to increase the merit and fame of parents and the donor king, or gaining the other world for the parents and the donor king. Thus the purpose specified in the grants is religious and spiritual. The donees are given land/village/villages for performing certain religious rites in the case with the temples and for cultivating some branch of Vedic learning or running a religious cum educational institution but the grants do not ask the beneficiaries to perform these functions on face resumption. On the other hand the successor princes are threatened with all kinds of calamities if they resume the grants. The political or social obligations of the beneficiaries towards the donor are hardly stated.

3.1.4.4.6. **Boundaries:**

The land grant inscriptions usually defined the boundaries of the granted land. The Nagajari-Khanikargaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription provides the name of the locality of the donated land called Gaurīvātaka, mentioned its eastern boundary Dibrumukhaḍāh and the southern boundary is marked perhaps by a fig tree. In the north there was thirty bread-fruit trees and perhaps a big mango tree but

56. Nowgong Copperplate Grant, V.32.
57. Tezpur Copperplate Grant, V.32.
58. Parbatīyā Copperplate Grant, L. 57-58.
the portion indicating the boundary in the west is lost. The Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant refers to the donated land called Mayūrasālmāla was in the Candrapurivisaya and bounded on the east by river Kauśikā, on the south-east by dried Kauśikā marked by hewn fig tree, on the south-west by the dried bed of Gangaṇika, on the north-west by a potter’s pit and on the north-east by the pond of a Vyavahārī named Khāṣaka. The Parbatiyā Copperplate Inscription describes the eight boundaries viz, Aksidāhika in the east, the tank of Cāṇḍīka in the south-east, Dīrpāṅga in the south, a banyan tree in the south-west, a bamboo-bush in the west, a Śālmalī tree in the north-west, the highroad (or the high embankment) in the north (and ) the tank of Dhavala in the east.

From the eleventh century onwards the description became much more complicated as with each boundary line was included sub-boundaries. In the ninth century, in delineating the eastern boundary line of a particular plot only one proper name is used i.e. Aksidāhika. However in the eleventh century, the eastern boundary of the donated land is marked off not only by a number of alis, but also by a jack fruit tree, three privately held lands and a village settlement as well. The description of the eastern boundary in this grant is from lines 49 to 51 whereas the description of the eastern boundary in the ninth century grant covered only half of line 48.

59. Nowgong Copperplate Grant, V.32.
61. The Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant, L. 127-132.
63. Ibid.
3.1.4.4.7 Conclusion:

The conclusion formed the exhortation made by the donor to the future king and to other royal house and the decendants, his own officials and the subject of his kingdom to protect his grant. Benedictory verses were included extolling the benefits of making a grant. Imprecatory verses were also included, warning the future kings and others against depriving the donee of the grant with punishment. Thus the main aim of imprecation was to ward off notoriety by most lawful means like warning and describing mythical sins and curses, one has to acquire by transgression. The Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant states that the giver of land rejoices in heaven for sixty thousand years and he who confiscates assets lives in hell for the same period. Again the charter mentions one who confiscates the land given by the king or others becomes worm of the filth and rots with the manes.65

The Kamauli Copperplate Grant and the Assam Plates also included the benedictory and imprecatory verses. But some charter do not include this type of exhortation verse. The exclusion of these verses might have esteemed from the fact that they make the inscription unnecessarily long. Moreover traditionally the past kings had not deprived any donee to whom lands were donated by any of their predecessors. For instance, the Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant was originally issued by Bhūtivarman, one of the predecessors of Bhāskara and later when it was burnt Bhāskara himself reissued it to the successors of the respective donees.

64. The Guwākuchi Copperplate Grant, L. 49-51.
65. Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant, VVs. 26-27.
66. Kamauli Copperplate Grant, VVs. 36-38.
67. Assam Plates, VVs. 25-29.
Copperplate inscriptions of ancient Assam do not have any closing formula. Most of the copperplate grants have at the end a description of boundaries of the land donated. Sometimes the names of the engravers of the grant occur at the end. The Guwākuchi Copperplate Grant of Indrapāla depicted at the end a figure of Garuḍa holding a Sāṃkha, Padma, Cakra and a Sarpa. It seems therefore that the engravers of the inscriptions were not particular about the closing formula.
CHAPTER III
PART- 2 SURVEY OF INSCRIPTIONS

Below we are holding a detailed discussion on the records classified in part 1.

3.2.1. **Stone inscriptions:**

3.2.1.1 **Inscribed Stone pieces:**

In 1978, P.C. Saikia, unearthed a number of inscribed stone pieces together with a stone plate bearing a figure of a scaly fish lying at a depth of 120cm. from Dubarani in Barpathar. These stone pieces bear individual Brahmi characters, and identified as $\bar{a}$ = a, $\bar{y}$ = a, $\bar{j}$ = i, $\bar{f}$ = va, $\bar{c}$ = ga, $\bar{t}$ = ja, $\bar{a}$ = ma, $\bar{r}$ = ya and $\bar{s}$ = ra, and different types of $\bar{a}$ = a and $\bar{a}$ = a, which are supposed to bear numerical significance. P.C. Saikia noticed a particular letter which either looks like su or a and wants to explain to stand for the sun, for the letter either look like su for Surya or a for Aditya. According to H.N. Dutta, the palaeography of some of these individual letters bear the characteristics of North Indian Brahmi alphabet that was current during c 2nd-3rd century A.D. and seem to indicate numerical figures and probable use as individual seals for stamping the owners name.

2. Ibid.
or as seal impression for maintaining records of some commercial nature.

The animal like figure with the letter 'w' found in a stone piece might represent a deity to be counterfeit on seals. These inscribed stone pieces are now preserved in the Anthropology Department, Dibrugarh University.

Another piece of round stone, inscribed with numerical figures in late Brahmi character has been recovered from Tengrajan in Barpathar mouza of Golaghat District, identified as \( \underline{\hline} = \text{two}, \underline{\hline} = \text{three}, \underline{\hline} = \text{one}, \underline{\hline} = \text{two}, \underline{\hline} = \text{seven} \) and \( \underline{\hline} = \text{eight} \) by Dr. Dharmeswar Chutia, the date of which can not be determined.

As early as 1936 T.N. Ramachandran noticed a slab bearing an amalaka design inscribed in late Nagari characters reading dhi, \( \underline{\hline} \), vya or (gha) datable to A.D. 1100. H.N. Dutta also collected two inscribed stone blocks in Nagari character which possibly read \( \underline{\hline} = \text{agni}, \underline{\hline} = \text{math} \) and \( \underline{\hline} = \text{sa} \) and \( \underline{\hline} = \text{ha} \).

### 3.2.1.2 Inscriptions on Stone and Pillar:

#### 3.2.1.2.1 Nagajarī-Khanikargaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription:

**History:**

The Nagajarī-Khanikargaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription, two fragments
of which are recovered so far has been studied by several scholars and published
its reports.

Contents:

The record consisting of the two parts appears to be a royal land grant
charter. The first fragment mentions the eastern and western boundaries of
the donated land while in the second fragment the reference to the northern and
the southern boundaries are made. The first fragment contains the names of village
officials e.g. Mahattara Brahmadatta and Vaji while in the second fragment the
name of the locality of the donated land 'Gourivataka' and that of the donor
Vasundharavarmman are given.

The term Dibrumukhadah found in the third line of the first fragment seems
to imply the mouth of the river called Dibru, stated to have been the eastern
boundary of the donated land. T.P. Verma noticed a quarter of a verse "Yavat Kirttir
Manusyaśya" which he claims to be from the Adi Parva (Ch. 202) of the
Mahābhārata. Mahattara Brahmadatta seems to be the village headman who might
have apparently been connected with village administration. The second fragment
of this inscription, seems to refer to the gift of an agrahāra Gourivataka to some
Brahmanas along with another field therein. It is said to be a very rich fertile land

PP. 61-64; For fragment discovered in 1994-J.A.R.S., Vol. XXXIII, No. 1, 1996, PP. 32-40;
10. M.M. Sharma, Ibid.
12. T.P. Verma: "Fragmentary Stone Inscription from Khanikargaon" paper read at Indian
Epigraphical Society Seminar in 1987 at Guwahati, P. 3.
producing all kinds of crops.

In the second fragment, the surviving letters (Su-ndha-ra) towards the right end of the damaged second line might have been the part of a naming word, like (va) sundhara. The reconstructed word (va) sundara implies the name of the donor king since the name Vasundharavarman could also be read in the legend on a burnt clay seal and on the Dubarani Stone Inscription. The palaeography of the said seal and inscription is quite akin to that of the record understudy in regards to the style, execution and shape of the concerned letters in all the records appear to be the exact copy of each other.

**Importance:**

If we accept the interpretation then Vasundharavarman must have belonged to a hitherto unknown royal house holding their sway over this region, since his name is not to be found in the genealogy of the house of the Varman founded by Puṣyavarman of Pragjyotisa-Kāmarupa. Vasundharavarman may be a scion of the family of Vajradatta (the brother of Bhagadatta) who had obtained the Lordship of Uparipattana which seems to be the region of Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley with the contiguous upper Assam region. The inscription was inscribed in the Brāhmī script, an alphabet which was used for the first time in India prior to the Asokan era. By

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the fifth century A.D. the script had reached the peripheral state of Kāmarūpa is
evidenced from the inscription. The inscription is also of great historical
significance as it stands a testimony to the spread of Brāhmaṇical culture in Assam
as far as the foot of the Naga hill region in the early centuries of the Christian era,
if not before that. Archaeological objects and structural evidence recently
recovered from the area under the auspices of the State Directorate of
Archaeology support the fact.16(a)

3.2.1.2.2. Dubaraṇi Stone Slab Inscription:

**History:**

A stone slab inscribed an inscription (44x23x8.8 cm) was found in Dubaraṇi
at Barpathar by H.N. Dutta (Exploration officer, Directorate of Archaeology, Assam).

**Contents:**

At the beginning of the inscription, a schematically combined
triśūla-parasū domaru type emblem was engraved as the auspicious symbol. The
inscription has been tentatively deciphered by H.N. Dutta as follows:

अद्वैय दृति उन्मलिंग श्री वसुदास नमः

A tentative meaning of the inscription is that the imperishable river wharf
or river bank (अद्वैय दृति ) has been created (उन्मलिंग ) by Sri Vasundaravarmania.

16. (a)"Report of the Archaeological Exploration and Excavation in Dhansiri Sub-division of
case study of the Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley in Assam.” J.I.A.H.C. 8th session, PP. 25-30; H.N.
Dutta relates the story about the recovery of the inscribed slab in a pamphlet, “A new light on
History and Art of Ancient Assam.”.
According to D. Chutia the record seems to announce the creation of a permanent endowment by making gift of boundless wealth by Vasundharavarman.\(^{19}\)

**Importance:**

The characters engraved Eastern Brāhmī to c. A.D. 400-500 are ornamental in its style of execution. The emblem bears atleast five motifs or symbols in it. From the top these symbols are the trisūla, an axe, a horizontal line and a kumbha or an ardhacandra, at its bottom. The kumbha or ghaṭa at the bottom represents water principle the apa. The horizontal line above it probably signifies to the earth principle called the khiti, the crescent moon obviously stands for the energy principle, the teza. These symbols together with the other two motifs i.e. the axe and the trisula at the top may suggest the combination of five gross elements of creation namely, khiti (earth), apa (water) teza (energy), marut (air) and byoma (space) as referred to in the Indian Silpasāstras.\(^{20}\) According to D. Chutia these combined symbols seem to imply male principle as the anji symbol implies the Kundalini—the female principle.\(^{21}\) All these seem to signify that Saivism as religion enjoyed royal patronage in ancient Assam and was highly developed during c AD. 400-500 if not earlier. According to H.N. Dutta river wharf or river ghats played a vital role in the socio-cultural life in ancient Assam, the inscription glorifies the cause of building river wharf by Vasundharavarman during C.A.D. 400.

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3.2.1.2.3 Stone Inscription of Samudrapāla:

**History:**

This Stone inscription was discovered at Ambāri, Guwahati, at the time of laying the foundation of the Assam Textile Institute which is contiguous to the present archaeological site at Ambāri. Most of the characters of the inscription are in mixed Devanāgarī and old Assamese. The inscription was edited by P.C. Choudhury.

**Contents:**

The inscription has recorded that Samudrapāla who was like the Sun God had this sattra establishment within his jurisdiction, in which rituals were performed and was attached to the royal residence, the inmates of the sattra being the yogīs or siddhas, residing at a particular spot called Yogīhāṭī. The sannyāsīns (siddhas) say that piety accrues from dana. The inscription is dated Śaka 1154 (A.D. 1232) and was composed by one Mudha. (Possibly the name of the composer himself in a vaisnava manner as ignorant).

**Importance:**

Samudrapāla of the text above is not found mentioned in any other records. P.C. Choudhury identified him as one of the successors of Jayapāla, though not his immediate successor on chronological ground. This inscription shows that the Pāla rule in Kāmarūpa continued for about one century more i.e. upto the middle

23. Ibid.
of the 13th century after Jayapala. According to this inscription Samudrapala was a great patron of the Tantric-Buddhist Siddhas as shown by the establishment of a Savāsika sattra attached to the royal palace at the capital city. The term sattra and ḍhat found in the inscription constitute a part and parcel under Neo-Vaiṣṇavism in Assam. The belief that their institutions were based on the Buddhist system finds confirmation from this inscription. The identity of Yogiḥati is not established, except that it was situated in the kingdom of Samudrapala. P.C. Choudhury suggests that the Ketekībari sattra, on the bank of the Dighali-Pukhuri, though a purely Vaiṣṇava institution, bears the legacy of this old sattra establishment.

3.2.1.2.4 Gachtal Pillar Inscription:

**History:**

Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua discovered a stone pillar octagonal in shape containing 24 lines of inscription in the midst of the ruins of a Śiva temple at Gachtal, two miles west of Davaka.

**Contents:**

N.K. Bhattasali studied the inscription and according to him it was issued in the Saka year 1149 (1227 A.D.) and that it refers to king Viśvasundara-deva. Late R.M. Nath claimed to have established the reading of the entire inscription, its contents giving the information, stating that it has a reference to the sacrifice

24. Ibid.
performed by one Visvasundara deva in Saka 1149, on the 8th of Vaisākha at Davakā. According to him Visvasundara deva was a powerful monarch of the areas of Kachar, Jaintia and Lanka defeated the Mlechas in a battle. The language of the inscription appeared to Bhattasali to be Sanskrit prose. But according to P.C. Choudhury the inscription which is written in old Assamese script, interspersed with some five to ten Devanāgarī characters are inscribed in Saka 1284 (AD 1362) and not in 1149 Saka (1227 AD). According to him it contained no reference whatsoever to Visvasundara deva but the inscription graphically described a Muslim invasion which is not mentioned in the Assamese Buranji literature, Tabaqat-i-Nasiri and Riyāz-us-Salātin. However neither the name of the Kāmarūpa king involved in the war nor the name of the Muslim general and the outcome of the final battle is mentioned in the inscription. D. Sarma also accepted Dr. Choudhury’s text of the inscription.

According to P.C. Choudhury the invader was Sikandar Shāh and as this significant invasion was not mentioned in the Persian sources, it seems to indicate that Sikandar Shāh was finally defeated in 1362 A.D. by the Kāmarūpa army, possibly by the combined forces of the Kamata-Bhuyan-Kachari Kings.

**Importance:**

The inscription is important as it reflects the political condition of ancient Assam immediately after 12th century A.D. The writing in the inscription also indicates the gradual evolution of the Assamese language, and disproved the use...

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31. Ibid.
of Brajabuli, having been taken from outside. The discovery of the inscription may be said to have revolutionised the view on the antiquity of Assamese prose literature. The location of Davakā within the district of Nagaon in Assam has finally been settled by the inscription.

3.2.1.3. **Inscriptions on Stone images:**

3.2.1.3.1. **Deopāni Viṣṇu Image Inscription:**

**History:**

A caturbhūja Viṣṇu image in Samapada stanaka posture was recovered from Deopāni, bearing an inscription of four lines on its back. This inscription incised in matrika alphabet, datable to 8th century AD. has been variously studied and was finally edited by M.M. Sharma.

**Contents:**

The inscription of this Viṣṇu image pays homage to Hara, the Lord of the three worlds (Haraṁ-trilokanāṁ) and records a proclamation that the goddess (devī) who in association with Siva worshippable for the Śudras, the twice born classes and women. The goddess (Bhagavati) is indeed identical with Viṣṇu. The inscription has recorded the name of the priest (Mathapati) in charge of the temple, he is one with the prefix 'pi'.

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32. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
Importance:

The inscription bears an unquestionable testimony to the spirit of religious tolerance and the spirit of syncretism. It seems that the orthodox Brahmanical doctrine was relaxed in order to bring the lower order of inhabitants of the region into the Brahmanical fold. Another point of great significance is the catholicity of outlook evidenced by way of declaring Visnu as worshippable for the twice born classes, the Sudra and the women alike. The clear mention of the bhaktas show that the cult of Bhakti was already gaining some ground in the religious life of ancient Assam. The term 'Sudra' occurs for the first time in this inscription of our period. The image which bears the inscription itself is a piece of important art object.

3.2.1.3.2. Sankara - Narayana Stone Image Inscription:

History:

The Hari-Hara image from Deopani bears an inscription of three lines in the Eastern variety of the North-Indian Brahmi script of 8th century A.D. This inscription has been variously studied and the text of the inscription finally edited by M.M. Sharma. The Hari-Hara image inscription is named as the Sankara-Narayana Stone Image inscription, because of the occurrence of this name in the text of the inscription and for distinguishing the two similar images recovered from that site and assigned to the same date.

36. Ibid.
37. Ibid, P. 310-311.
38. Ibid.
Contents:

After the aṅji sign and the word ‘namah’ the inscription records in the kingdom of Maharajadhiraja Śrī Jīvara, the son of an accomplished siddha (ascetic) was the preceptor and priest incharge (Mathapati) of the family temple. The inscription has recorded the chanting (kirttana) of the nāma of Sāṅkara-Nārāyaṇa before (ādau) the consecration of the image of the deity in the concerned temple. It has been engraved by an idol attendant (sailāṭa) named Balāhi.

Importance:

The syncretic Hari-Hara image from Deopani and the occurrence of name Sāṅkara-Nārāyaṇa in the text of the inscription give a clear picture of the development of Hari-Hara cult in the valley and the cult of nāma-saṅkīrtana as a mode of paying homage became prevalent in Assam as early as in the 8th century A.D.

3.2.1.3.3. Hari-Hara Stone Image Inscription from Deopani:

History:

The Hari-Hara stone image from Deopani contains in its body three lines of writing in the Eastern variety of the Brahmī script assigned to the 8th century A.D. and has been studied by various scholars.

Contents:

After aṅji and the benedictory words namah and ‘svasti’ the inscription has

39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
recorded that in the kingdom of Mahārajaśramaṛī Śrī Diglekhavaran, this image of Hari-Hara was given to the son of Kākhyā with the chanting of hundred names of Hari. Importance:

Like the previous inscription, the inscription is also very important because of recording the tradition of nāmakīrttana, which came to assume a very significant role in the religious life of Assam specially in the Neo-Vaisnava movement in the medieval period.

3.2.1.3.4. Inscribed Sun Image from Kāki:

History:

The miniature image was found at Kāki, Nagaon in Assam. There is an inscription in prose on the back of the image. This inscription was deciphered by P.D. Choudhury, the then Director, Directorate of Archaeology and State Museum, Assam. The inscription bears no date. On palaeographical ground it placed to the ninth century A.D.

Contents:

The inscription begins with ‘Om svasti’ and records that in the reign of Śrī Vanamāladeva this image of the Sun god was given over to Bhatta Ravi, the grandson of Vasistha.

Importance:

The inscription is important since we have here in this early period a specific

42. M.M. Sharma, Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. D.Sharma, K.S., PP. 179, 56-57.
45. Ibid.
and clear mention of donation of Sun image by the king which indicate royal patronage and prevalence of Sun worship in ancient Assam.

3.2.2. **Rock-cut Inscriptions:**

3.2.2.1. **Umācal Rock-Inscription:**

**History:**

The Umācal Rock Inscription was discovered in 1955. Late R.M. Nath made it known to the scholarly world. D.C. Sircar and P.D. Choudhury, the then Curator of the Assam State Museum, edited the inscription and finally M.M. Sharma incorporated the same in his Inscriptions of Ancient Assam.

**Contents:**

The inscription was incised in a rock measuring 10' x 12' which commemorates the construction of a cave temple of Lord Balabhadra by Maharajadhiraja Sri Surendravarna. 

**Importance:**

The name Maharajadhiraja Sri Surendravarman is not noticed in any other inscription connected with Assam. Surendravarman is identified with Mahendravarman of the Bhauma-Naraka dynasty. He has been assigned a reign period between 470 A.D. and 494 A.D. i.e. the limits suggested for the reign of Mahendravarman.

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46. The north-eastern part of the Nilacal hill near Guwahati is known as Umācal. Svami Sivananda discovered the inscription in his Umācal asrama.
50. Ibid., P. 3.
The language of the inscription is Sanskrit and the script belongs to the Eastern variety of the Gupta alphabet assignable to the period between the 4th and the 6th century A.D. The present inscription supplies us with the only instance of the construction of a cave temple and the worship of Balabhadrāsvāmin in the region of ancient Assam which is important to study the religious and cultural history of our period.

3.2.2.2. Bargāṅga Rock Inscription of the time of Bhūtivarman:

**History:**

The Rock inscription lies by the side of the small river Bargāṅga, situated 19 miles from the Davaka Bazar at present in the Nagaon District of Assam. The existence of the inscription was first made known by R.M. Nath and then studied by various scholars.

**Contents:**

Dr. Bhattacharya presented the text of inscription accompanied by a running English rendering as follows:

1. svasti-srī-paramadāivata-paramabhāgavata-mahārāja

2. dhiraj-asvamedhayājina-rī bhūtivarmanya-padaṇam-sam

Translation:

"May success attend. The year 200 30 4 (the month of) Ma(gha) of the feet of Mahārajādhirāja-srī Bhūtivarmā, the devout worshipper of Viṣṇu, the performer of the Asvamedha sacrifice. This religious asylum of Āryaguna, Minister for state (is established)." Dr. D.C. Sircar pointed out certain discrepancies in Dr. Bhattasali’s reading suggested that the intended reading might be yājīnaḥ-srī or yājīna-srī in place of yājīn, and śrī-vishay-āmātya-sārmanasya in place of ma-vishay-āmāty-āryagunasya of Dr. Bhattasali’s reading. However, the most important suggestion made by Dr. Sircar in this connection was about the supposed date as read by Dr. Bhattasali. In his opinion ‘the date of the Bargangā inscription is year 244 of the Gupta era corresponding to 563-64 A.D.’ But after personal verification of the original site and also from fresh stampages of the record taken by Dr. Sircar, found that the inscription did not bear any date in the Gupta era at all. D.C. Sircar had corrected many errors in the readings of Dr. Bhattasali e.g. paramabhāttāraka in place of Bhattasali’s parama-bhāgavata, and asvame dha-yājīna (h)-srī-Bhūtivarmā(nah)-padān(am) āyushkāmanam-vishay-āmātya-avagunasya in place of ‘asvamedha-yājīn-srī-Bhūtivarmā padānām-sam-200 30 4 ma visayāmāty-āryagunasya’. Thus, Dr. Sircar suggests that ‘the Badagangā inscription speaks of..."
Parmadaivata-Paramabhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Bhūtivarman, a performer of the Asvamedha sacrifice, during whose reign a royal officer named Avaguna, who was the governor of a district of Bhūtivarman's kingdom, made an āśrama at the findspot of the epigraph for the longevity of his master.” Dr. Sircar pointed out that Bhūtivarman was not credited as the performer of an Asvamedha sacrifice in the legend of the Dubi Seal and credited Narāyana varman, and not Mahendra varman, as is generally believed with the performance of two Asvamedhas (dvir-turaga-medhahartta)\(^{56}\). But M.M. Sharma firmly asserted that the epithet (dvir-turaga-medhahartta) should be connected with Mahendra varman\(^{57}\). D. Chutia also supports the view of M.M. Sharma\(^{58}\). M.M. Sharma placed the inscription tentatively in the fifth decade of the sixth century A.D.\(^{59}\). The script of the inscription is Eastern variety of the Gupta alphabet almost similar to the Umācal Rock Inscription of Surendravarna.\(^{60}\)

**Importance:**

Dr. Sircar suggested that the area governed by Avaguna seems to have comprised parts of the present Nagaon District of Assam and the adjoining area and that "the Nagaon-Sibsagar area formed part of the dominion of the Bhauma-Naraka kings of Kāmarupa at least during the reign of Bhūtivarman (c. 6th century A.D.)." If it was so, it followed that the early kingdom of Davaka, mentioned in the

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60. Ibid., P.7.
Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta,\textsuperscript{61} and located in that area was no longer in existence at the time of the present record. Apparently, the kingdom of Davakā perhaps merged in the kingdom of Prāgyotisa-Kāmarupa either during the reign of Bhūtivarman or earlier during the days of one of his predecessors.

Thus the record is an important document to study Gupta-Kāmarupa relations and also stands as an index to the spread of Aryan culture up to the Kapili valley in ancient Assam.\textsuperscript{63}

\textbf{3.2.2.3. Tezpur Rock Inscription of Harjaravrāma:}

\textbf{History:}

This short inscription of 9 lines incised on a big boulder has been found lying on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra river, slightly towards the western side of the Tezpur town, the Headquarter of the present Sonitpur District of Assam. Just near the middle above the first line, there is a figure of trisula or trident. Immediately below the 9th line a date is incised as G.E. 510, corresponding roughly to 829 A.D. and the date is boxed in two parallel lines in a rectangular form. The script belongs to the Eastern variety of the North Indian script of the ninth century A.D.

\textsuperscript{61} E.I., Vol. XXX, P. 66.
\textsuperscript{62} P.C. Choudhury, H.C.P.A., PP. 138ff.
\textsuperscript{63} M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., P. 7.
\textsuperscript{64} The inscription is first brought to the notice of Sir Edward Gait, the then Director of Ethnography of Assam (Report on the progress of Historical Research in Assam 1897, P.4 paras). Government Epigraphist Rao Saheb Krishna Shastri managed to decipher the whole text. The inscription was studied by various scholars- M.M. Dr. H.P. Sastri, J B O R S, 1946, PP. 508-14; N N Vasu, Social History of Kamarupa, Vol I, PP. 159a-159b; P N Bhattacharya, K.S., PP. 185-192; M M Sharma, I.A.A., PP. 82-88; D Sarma, K.S., 170-172.
\textsuperscript{65} Dynastic History of Northern India, Vol. I, P. 243. This is not seen in my investigation mentioned in any other reports.
Contents:

The inscription refers to a straight dispute which has been presented on a day when Śrī Sucitta, the great feudatory king and chief of the army staff was on the chair of the judge (for judgement in the court) of the prospering victorious kingdom of Mahārājā Paramesvara Paramabhattāraka Parama Mahēśvara Śrī Harjaravarmadeva, who has the pride of the valour of the prowess of his own army and who is stationed in the city of Hārūppesvara. (Lines 1-4)66. According to Krishna Shastri three parties namely (1) Kaivartta, the boat tax collector (2) Naurajja (or the controller of the affair of pulling the boats with ropes) and (3) Nakkajosādhikarān were involved in the dispute. But Naurajja (the controller of the rope-pulling) did not present himself in the case. Savarnī, Citragharadakṣa, Bhattajī, Lahilī Jhā (i.e. Lāhīdi Upādhyaya), the south Indian Dalākavārāváthese army chiefs and Somadeva, the son of the Paṁcakula Brahmaṇa Samkarabhatta and others who have brought Samantasila-kuttakas under their complete control have determined the four boundaries of the land as follows: East - mountainous country corroded by salt water, West - Nakkajosa, South - Pravara-bhumī, and North - Abor Hills.

One who will violate the rule of rowing the boat in the mid stream will be liable to pay a fine of five butti-ka (i.e., one hundred cowries)67.

The translation of Krishna Shastri is interpreted differently by

P.N. Bhattacharya. According to P.N. Bhattacharya Nauksī, the fisherman (Kaivartta)
who was Svabhāsaka sādhani, toll collecting officer, Naurajja, the owner of (the place named) Nakkajosa (etc. on one side) and Sāvārṇi, Śrī Citragharadatta, Bhattajī, Dinajī, Lahilī Jha and Dalakavavā of the southern direction (i.e. southern bank of the river Brahmaputra). These army officials, the feudatory Silākutta kavaleyā, Somadeva, the son of Sānkarabhatta of the family of Paṃcakula and others (on the other side) were involved in the dispute (in respect of a right to use the water ways). M.M. Sharma supports the view of P.N. Bhattacharyya and suggests that the dispute was between the royal naval force and the ordinary boatmen of the locality around Tezpur where the royal capital might have been situated.69

The inscription seems to be a royal edict inconsequence of a dispute, to demarcate the eastern and western boundaries for the rowing of the boats of the civilian fisherman, (Kaivartta) any one rowing the boat outside these boundaries, would be liable to pay five buttikas (i.e. 100 cowries) either as a fine or more probably as a tax.

**Importance:**

For the first time the inscription refers to a Kaivartta who in all probability a fisherman and holds office. It seems that Kaivarttas were organised community who placed their protest for violation of their traditional right of movement by boats etc. against a number of army officials, Sāmanta and famous Brahmānas. Reference to the Mahāsāmanta Śrī Sucitta who was a Senādhyakaśa and acting as the judge in the kingdom of Harjaravarman was one important point to study.

69. M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., P. 84.
socio-political condition under Harjaravarman. The reference of ‘a fine of five buttikas’ which means one hundred cowries indicates fine as a source of revenue and use of cowries in transaction. This inscription is the earliest record of use of cowries in ancient Assam.

3.2.2.4. Ḍānaibarasibiwbā Rock Inscription:

History:

The rock known as Ḍānaibarasibiwbā located at North Guwahati bears an inscription. This inscription was discovered and deciphered by Sonaram Choudhury and translated into English by P.R.T. Gordon, the then Commissioner of Assam Valley. Later, it was studied by various scholars.

Contents:

The text of the inscription inscribed as the following:

The inscription refers to in Saka 1127, when the Turuski (Musalmans) coming into Kamarupa were completely annihilated on the 13th day of Caitra of the Saka year 1127.

70. Ibid.
73. The date put first in numericals is confirmed by words also.
Importance:

The inscription refers to the fact that in 1206 A.D. (Saka 1127) the army of Mahammad-i- Bakhtiyar that entered Kāmarūpa was destroyed here which was the first Muslim invasion. The Kānīibarasi Rock Inscription is the second dated inscription in Saka era of the Kāmarūpa kings so far discovered.

3.2.3. Clay Seals:

3.2.3.1. Clay Seal Inscriptions of Bhāskaravarmaṇ:

History:

Fragments of a clay seal of Bhāskaravarmaṇ was found by Dr. Spooner during the excavation of the ruins in site No. 1 of Nalanda in the year 1917-18.

This seal provides the genealogy of the Kāmarūpa kings partially from Ganapativarman upto Bhāskaravarmaṇ. Some more fragmentary clay seals were discovered in 1927-28 from Monastery No. - 1, Nalanda of which two fragments were found which belonged to the same seal and having a representation of the usual Kāmarūpa emblem of the elephant, whose front view was only portrayed. The legend and the seal were believed to be of king Bhāskaravarmaṇ.

Contents:

This seal supplies the genealogy of the Varman dynasty in a more complete form, from Naraka and the kings from Puṣyavarman and both the king and queens.

75. 1917-18 Seals-Diksit.
from Samudravarman are named. The genealogy laid here generally agrees with the genealogy supplied by Nidhanpur Copperplates, seal attached to the Dubi Copperplates of Bhāskaravarman and the Harṣacarita of Baṇabhata except Dattavati, the name of the queen of Samudravarman, which is named as Dattadevi in Bhāskaravarman's Copperplate charter. Further, it appears that Mahendravarman and Sthitavarman each of them performed two Asvamedha sacrifices.

**Importance:**

The performance of Asvamedha sacrifices appear important as it was vague in Kāmarūpa from as early a period as the fifth century A.D., if not earlier. This also indicates the independent status of the Kāmarūpa rulers. This indicates the settlement of Vedic Brahmans in Kāmarūpa at that early age. The seal used the epithet 'turagamedhahartta' in relation to Mahendravarman. K.L. Barua suggests that Mahendravarman either restored the performance of this sacrifice in Kāmarūpa or introduced it there for the first time. The next Kāmarūpa king who also performed such sacrifice was Sthitavarman in relation to whom the epithet used is simply 'Asvamedha yaji'.

Mr. Dishit supposed that these seals actually accompanied the epistles which Bhāskaravarman addressed to Silabhadra, the chief monk of Nalanda at that time. In that case also according to K.L. Barua, the seal reveals the full genealogy from

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80. J.B.O.R.S., Vol. VI, P. 151
Puṣyavarman, the titles of the king in full such as ‘Maharajaḥiraja-Sri Pragjyotisendra
and also recounts such exploits of particular kings as the performance of Asvamedhas,
which confirm their status.

3.2.3.1 Clay Seal of Vasundharavarman:

History:

An oval shaped burnt clay seal, has been found (Measuring 11 cm x 7 cm) at
Alichiga Tengani near Barpathar in Golaghat District, Assam. It bears a four-lined
legend in relief in Eastern variety of the Northern Brāhmī alphabet similar to the
Nagajari-Khanikargaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription and the Dubarani Stone Slab
Inscription.

Contents:

The text of the seal legend as deciphered by Dr. Dharmeswar Chutia is as
follows-

1.1. उन्नत

1.2. [bob] दिन वामुद्विश (’)

1.3. [shi] अर्घुधर

1.4. अद्वितिय

The seal contained the name of Vasundharavarman and the short legend seems to
refer to a perpetual endowment (aksayavṛtti) comprising of “some eight plots of
land” (Khandastam = astakhandam; khanda = a plot of land) made by Vasundharavarman.

82. D. Chutia, “Two short Epigraphic records of the time of Vasundharavarman
obtained from Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley”, Bhaktirath, 2007, PP. 154-159.
Importance:

The seal of Vasundharavarman does not contain any emblem like the rulers of Pragjyotisa-Kamarupa. As such he was at all a ruling prince having the surname 'Varman', then Vasundharavarman was the descendant of a royal house other than the Varman of Pragjyotisa-Kamarupa.

3.2.4. Inscription on Metal:

3.2.4.1. Copperplate Inscription:

3.2.4.1.1. Dubi Copperplate Inscription of Bhaskaravarman:

History:

The Dubi Copperplate Inscription of Bhaskaravarman was discovered some times around 1950 near a Siva temple called the Pariharesvaradevalaya in the village Dubi in the Barpeta District of Assam. P.D. Choudhury, the then Curator of the State Museum, Assam, edited the text and afterwards studied by various scholars.\(^83\)

At the time of the discovery the Dubi Grant consists of 6 plates and strung together on a ring, the two end of which are secured in a ladle shaped lump of bronze containing the seal. Unfortunately either the sixth or the last plate is said to have been broken soon after the discovery. The language of the inscription is Eastern variety of the North-Indian alphabet prevalent in the sixth and the seventh centuries A.D. There is no date in the inscription. The date of issue of the inscription is assigned to the first

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half of the seventh century and believed to be earlier than the Nidhanpur Copperplate
Grant of the same ruler on palaeographic ground. 83(a)

Contents:

The inscription begins with the salute to the God Siva who ‘wears the moon as
the crest jewel, who is lovely and holds the Pinakabow and decorated with particles of
ashes’ and then mentions that the grant was for the benefit of the prosperous Brāhmaṇas.

After this maṅgala verse the inscription traces the genealogy of king
Bhāskaravarmā from Naraka. Naraka was the son of the Boar incarnation of the
Lord Viṣṇu and the Earth. Naraka was very powerful who defeated Indra in the fore
front of the battlefield and snatched away the earrings from his mother. He had a
son named Śrī Bhagadatta. Vajradatta, the son of Bhagadatta was also as powerful
as Indra, the holder of the bolt. He studied the four Vedas along with the Āṅgas
(ancillary lores) and Grammar and Logic entirely within one year, acquired the
knowledge of subduing and training of elephant, about the breed, nature,
excellence of horses as well as the views of the preceptors of the devas and the
asuras respectively. He performed a number of horse sacrifices of great munificence.

In that very family Śrī Puṣyavarma founder of the dynasty became the king.
He was the destroyer of the enemy soldier. His wife was compared with Laksmani
who found in Puṣyavarma another Viṣṇu. He performed innumerable meritorious deeds
and obtained a son named Samudravarman. He became king and after a long reign he

83.(a) T.P. Verma, Development of Script in ancient Kamarupa, P. 37.
retired to the heaven with the help of Yoga. Balavarma, the son of Samudravarma and Dattava was pious and performed several sacrifices, accompanied by gifts. Kalyanavarma, the son of Balavarma and Ratnadevi became the king when Balavaran died with the help of Yoga. Kalyanavarma’s son Ganendra varma was equal in lustre to the sun and also similar to Ganendra (i.e. Ganesa). Ganendra varma’s son Mahendra varma was enthroned by his father in front of an assembly of people and then retired to the heaven. Mahendra varma extended his kingdom up to the shore of the sea and performed a number of sacrifices like the great Indra. His wife Suvara was the epitome of all good conduct and intelligence of Mahendra varma. She was compared with Saci and Aditi. Her son Narayanavarma was like a human form of Narayana, the holder of the cakra. Narayanavarma married Devamat who was compared with Padma and assuming a very high status. Narayanavarma and Devamat was compared with Siva and Parvati respectively. Their son Mahabhatta varma who was like Kirttikeya and was a repository of supernal abilities and famous for his armour was installed as the king by his father. Mahabhatta varma performed a horse sacrifice. He gave birth to a son named Candramukha varma by his queen Vijnavati who became the king when Mahabhatta varma died with the help of Yoga. Candramukha varma gave birth to a son named Sri Sthiravarma. He was delighted to see his son prospering with learning, wealth and victory. He established his son to the throne and retired to heaven. Even after his death he was delighted by his son in the other world like king Dasaratha who was delighted by his son king Rama. Sthiravarma after duly paying oblations to
his father, ascended the throne like a lion in the auspicious time. The Brahmanas performed Coronation ceremony along with the sound of conch-shell and dundubhi drum. After spending some days in the old city, he built up a new city on the bank of the holy river (i.e. the Brahmaputra). Sthiravarman thoroughly studied Vedas and various Sastras. His beautiful wife was as beautiful as Sri (i.e. Laksmi) and like Paulomi (Saci) to Indra and Durga to Pasupati. She had given birth to a son named Sri Sush Histavarma. He delighted his mother like Parvati by Skanda, like Aditi by Visnu and like Devaki by Lord Krsna, the enemy of the demons. He was a very powerful king and assumed the protection of the world like king Prithu. He studied Grammar, Polity, Sankhya, Mimamsa, Logic and Nyaya. He was devoted to Lord Samkara who removes all the ills like Visnu. He had two sons by his wife Dhruvalaksmi named Supratisthitavarna and Sri Bhaskaravarna like Skanda and Vinayaka of Siva. They were adorable to the whole world for their victory and other qualities. They had to face an invasion from Gauḍa after the death of their father. Though they were young in age they appeared on the spot like Bala and Acyuta. However they were defeated and brought to Gauḍa by the enemy. But their good qualities soon enabled them to return home. Then Supratisthitavarman died and Bhaskaravarna assumed the throne. His valour had become far reaching on the strength of the knowledge of polity accruing out of taking shelter from Siva (Mahesvara) and his intellect matured by learning various sastras and the faculty of a poet was evidenced by the composition of various styles endowed with elegant and various perspicuous words and various types of figures.
He reestablished the deviating virtue by completely destroying the Kaliage, restored the glory from the clutches of the wicked like a dear from the trap, and accepted Fortune as his own after rectification after she had been a victim to the intoxicating influence of luxury.

The long eulogy and individual details of the donor king is followed by the notification where simply mentioned that the charter was originally issued by Bhūtivarmā but that became worn out on all sides and Śrī Bhāskara renewed this charter for the same purpose to those very Brāhmanas after once again brightening up the text. As the last plate of the grant was lost of its boundaries and occasion of the grant is not known to us. The donees of the charter were Vājasaneyī Brāhmanas belonging to the Kausīka, Maudgalya, Māndavya, and Ātreya gotra.

**Importance:**

The Dubi Copperplate Grant of Bhāskaravarman gives a picture of the political condition, administration, society, religion and culture of our period of study. The society of the time of Bhāskaravarman was influenced by the Brāhmanical religion. Bhāskaravarman seems to be a strong patron of the Brāhmanical religion as he reestablished the deviating virtue by completely destroying the Kaliage.

In the grant the king traces his origin from Naraka who was the son of the Boar incarnation of Viṣṇu and the Mother goddess Earth. But the inscription begins with honour and respect to a particular god Siva, shows his prominent feature occupying the prime and supreme position in the field of religion. Various gods and goddesses and figures of Hindu mythology were also referred to in the inscription.
Their popularity in the society is testified by the comparison of their quality, morality and physical beauty with almost all the kings of the dynasty. They were also acquainted with Vedic sastras along with Mīmāṃsā, Saṅkhya and Nyāyasastras.

The word ‘Ramayana’ as a literature is not found in the inscription. But from this grant it appears that most of the names as Janaka, Dasaratha and Rama were mentioned in the inscription in A.D. 7th century Kāmarūpa.

3.2.4.1.2. Seal attached to the Dubi Copperplate Inscription of Bhāskaravarman:

History:

A ladle shaped lump of bronze containing the seal has been discovered and found attached to the bundle of the Dubi Copperplate Grant. "The surface of the seal is oval, its diameter being 3.4 length wise and 3.1 breadthwise. On the upper part of it is countersunk the figure of an elephant to the front. About two thirds of the seal below this royal emblem covered by the legend in 11 lines, there being a straight line demarcating the figure of the elephant and the legend".

Contents:

The seal refers to the great king of kings Śrī Puṣyavarma the lord of Prāgijyotisa and a grand son of the illustrious Naraka belonging to the family of Bhagadatta and Vajradatta. His son Śrī Samudravarma was the king of kings. His son from Dattadevi was the king of kings named Śrī Balavarma, from whom was

85. D.C. Sircar, Ibid.
born in queen Śrī Ratnavati the king of kings Śrī Kalyanavarma. His son from Gandharvavatī was Śrī Gana pativarmā. His son from Śrī Yajnavatī was Śrī Mahendra, the performer of two horse sacrifices. His son born from Śrī Suvaratī was Śrī Narāyanavarma. His son born from Śrī Devamatī was Śrī Bhūtivarmā. His son born from Śrī Vijnānavatī was Śrī Candra mukhavarmā. His son born from Śrī Bhogavatī was Śrī Sthiravarmā, the performer of two horse-sacrifices. From him was born Susthiravarmā. His wife was Śrī Dhruvalaksmī. From him was born Śrī Bhāskaravarmā.86

Various scholars interpreted differently the reading 'श्री यज्ञवती तनयीर 
मार्त्य अभ्रस्तनयी' of the Dubi seal. D.C. Sircar interpreted it as male descendant87. M.M. Sharma interpreted as a grand son88. D. Sarma interpreted as a descendant of the lineage of Bhagadatta and Vajradatta born from Naraka89. Prof A.J. Shastri interpreted the text differently and strongly suggests that it should be Pusyavarman, the (or a ) son of a personage named Naraka90.

**Importance:**

The genealogy agrees generally with the genealogy supplied by the Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant, the Nalanda Seals of Bhāskarvarman and the Harsacarita.91 The seal attached to the Dubi Copperplate Grant confirmed that Puṣyavarman was the Lord

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86. M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., P. 33.
89. D. Sarma, K.S., P. 66.
91. M.M. Shrma, I.A.A., P. 34.
of Pragjyotisa. His successor Mahendravarma performed two horse sacrifices and his successor Sthiravarma also performed two horse sacrifices. The performance of horse sacrifices showed the prevalence of Vedic culture in ancient Assam. The Asvamedha or horse-sacrifice was meant to secure all blessings for a prince, including even imperial sway.

3.2.4.1.3. The Nidhanpur Copper plate Inscription of Bhaskaravama:

History:

The Nidhanpur Copper plate Grant, consisting of seven copper plates with a seal was discovered in 1912 in the village of Nidhanpur of Pancakhanda Pargana of Sylhet now in Bangladesh by a peasant. The peasant sold the plates to different persons but fortunately Padmanath Bhattacharya recovered the first, second, third, sixth, seventh and one more which may be either the fourth or the fifth and discussed in various journals. Finally he edited the inscription in the Kamarupasasanavali. Later on various scholars studied the inscription and reproduced with certain improvements.

Contents:

The grant begins with ‘Om’ to salute Mahadeva. Then the grant states that the charter belonged to the Brahmanas was burnt for which the letters of the inscription has been rebrightened (rewritten). After that the inscription invokes svasti and

mentions that the inscription has been issued from the royal residence of Karnasuvama which referred to the Jayaskandhāvāra. Then the inscription salutes Dharma. After the invocation it begins with the genealogical list of the kings which starts from Naraka. His son Bhagadatta succeeded him. After Bhagadatta his son Vajradatta became the king. After three thousand years when the kings of this family attained the state of gods Puṣyavarman became the Lord of the world. Like the Dubi Copperplate Grant the Nidhanpur Grant also refers to his successors with their achievements. According to the grant, Bhāskaravarman was created by the lord Brahmā for the purpose of the proper distribution of the duties of various castes and stages of life which had for a long time past became mixed up. He propagated the light of Aryadharma by dispelling the darkness of the Kaliage, by means of a proper expenditure of his revenue. Due to his power of keeping order, modesty and close acquaintance with them he won over the loyalty of his subjects. He could be compared with king Śivi for offering succour to the needy by self sacrifice and in the matter of timely application of six political expedients. He was the very life of Dharma, the abode of justice, the home of virtues, the treasury of supplicants, the shelter of the fearful and the temple of plenty of Sri.

After this long eulogy begins the address to the subordinate officers present and future district officers as well as the courts of justice in the district of Candrapuri and state the occasion, specification of the gift, name of the donees, purposes of the grant and boundaries. The document states that the original copper plates in the custody of the successors - interest were destroyed by fire. During the
reign of Bhāskaravaranmaṇ i.e. about a century after the original grant of Mahābhūtivarman, probably the officers of the state belonging to the Revenue Department, in the absence of any valid document tried to assess land revenue on the revenue free donated land in the possession of the descendants of the original donees, who had been enjoying the grant at that time. At the instance of the descendants of the original donees, Bhāskaravaranman having informed the Jyesthabhadras (elder noble men or senior officials) addressing the present and future Visayapatis (District officers) and Adhikaranas (Courts of justice) of Candra puṇīyavaya (Candrapūr District) order for a fresh copperplate charter of renewal of the revenue free land and in the name of the then beneficiaries, i.e. the descendants of the original donees who have already been enjoying the grant in the manner of Bhumi-chidra so that no tax is levied on it. The names of the Brāhmaṇas are given in the lines 34 to 54. The total area of the donated land is not known, but the names of the Brahmana donees, including their gotra, vedasakha, and the number of shares (āmsah) are clearly mentioned in the text. As one of the seven plates could not be recovered the total number of donees and shares cannot be ascertained. The available plates contain the list of 208 donees and they are given 159 11/16 shares. In addition to these seven shares (āmsah) are allotted for the purpose of balī (worship), caru (oblation) and satra (hospitality). The produce of the land found as an extension (due to drying up) of the Kausika river will go to the Brahmānas, the donees of the grant, but the land, found as an extension (due to the drying up) of the Gangini shall be equally shared by the Brahmānas as recorded.
The grant demarcated boundaries of each plot of land on eight sides. To the east lies the dry Kausika, to the south-east that very dried Kausika was marked by a hewn fig tree; to the west the dried river bed (Gangini) by a cut down fig tree; to the west now the boundary is the dried river bed Ganginī; to the north-west a potter's pit and the said Ganginī bent eastward to the north a large jatali tree; to the north-east the pond of the controlling tradesman Khāsoka and the dry Kausika.

After the demarcation of the boundaries the inscription refers to the officers who were related to the issue of the grant. The officer issuing hundred commands is Śrī Gopāla who has received the five great sabdas. The officers who mark the boundaries are the head man of the Candrapūrī named Śrī Ksikunda, the dispute-settler (Nyāyakaranika) Janārdanasvāmin, the controlling officer (Vyavahāri) Haradatta and the Kayastha Dundhunātha and others. The composer and writer of the grant is Vasuvarṇa. The Master of the treasury is the Mahāsāmanta Divākaraprabha. Tax collector is Dattakārāpūrṇa. The coppersmith (i.e. the maker of the plates) is Kaliya.  

In conclusion benedictory verses were included where 'sixty thousand years' of paradise could be enjoyed by the grantor of the land and the same period of hell for those who dared forcibly to take lands donated to the Ṣrāmanas. Another imprecatory verse also included in the conclusion which warns those who confiscates

95. By the earlier translators Śrī Ksikunda alone is named as 'the officer who marks the boundaries', Vide, M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., P. 75.
the land given by himself or by others, becomes worm of the filth and rots with the manes.

At the bottom of the document states that no one should question the genuineness of this document (i.e. renewal) because the characters of the letters engraved were not exactly the same as those of the original plates destroyed by fire.

**Importance:**

The Nidhanpur Copperplate Inscription of Bhāskaravarman gives us a good idea of the Brahmanical religion and culture of the time. Brahmanas were the sole custodian of the Vedic culture and religion. The renewal of the grant shows the royal patronage to the Brahmanas for the spread of Vedic culture and religion. By the grant 208 Brahmanas belonging to more than 50 gotras were granted land in the Mayurasāmalāgrahāra. The names and their gotras were clearly inscribed in the grant. The share of the granted land against the names of the Vedas with their sākhās are also found. These are Vajasaneyi, Carakya, Taittiriya of Yajurveda; Chandoga of Sāmaveda; Bāhurcvya of Rgveda. The grant again states that Bhāskaravarman reestablished the institution of the Varnāśramadharma which had for a long time past become mixed up. Varnāśramadharma was the most striking feature of ancient Indian society. The inscription refers to some professional classes like Karanika, Kāyastha, Kumbhakara, Vyavahārī (tradesman) and Sekyakara.
3.2.4.1.4. The Hayunthal Copperplate Inscription of Harjaravarman:

History:

Three copper plates tied with a chain inside layers of brick slabs were discovered at Hayunthal in the Karbi-Anglong District of Assam. At present only one plate is available which has been obtained in a very damaged condition and as such in many places the text could not be read. P.N. Bhattacharya studied the inscription and included it in the Kamarūpasāsanāvali\(^\text{96}\). Afterwards it was studied by various scholars.\(^\text{97}\) Language of the inscription is Sanskrit and the script is similar to the Tezpur Rock Inscription of Harjaravarman.

Contents:

The available plate is the middle one. Owing to loss of the first and the third plates the purpose of the grant and the name of the receiver cannot be determined. Who is addressed in the inscription by the word \(\text{दि} \cdot \text{रि} \cdot \text{वर} \cdot \text{ष} \cdot \text{ण} \) is not known but it may mean a progeny of Prthiṣṭha or the earth, suggest that the king who is addressed belongs to the Bhauma-Naraka dynasty. The descendants of this king, however would be known as Mlecchas due to some reason given in the corroded portion. Then the inscription mentions Bhagadatta. After that the inscription introduces Sālāstambha as the king of the earth. After him Vijaya, Paśa, Kumāra and Vajradeva became kings and disappeared in succession. Harṣavarman, who was famous and endowed with noble qualities and virtues protected his subjects

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like his own children. Harṣavarman was succeeded by his son Balavarman. Cakra and Arathi were two brothers but they were disloyal to their preceptors and therefore the son of Arathi succeeded to the throne. Then the inscription introduces Jivadevi. Sīrī Harjara was born from her as Yudhīṣṭhira was born from Kuntī and Abhimanyu from Subhadra. Harjara ascended the throne having been surrounded by the vassal kings as Indra is surrounded by the gods. He was sprinkled at the time of Coronation, with the water of all sacred places, contained in a silver pitcher, by the merchants and the princes of noble birth.

The charter mentions that Harūppesvara was the royal capital and Harjaravarmadeva who was Parama Parameśvara Parama bhattaraka Parama Mahēśvara, who meditated on the feet of his parents was living in the city. His queen Mangalasrī, who was like Laksminī gave birth to Vanamaḷa who commands to Mahā-Sainyapati (Commander in chief) Sīrī Gana who delights the whole world like a decoration of the circle of vassals, Mahā-Dvārādhīpāti (chief of the gate keepers) Sīrī Jayadeva, Mahā Pratiharā (chief usherer) Janārdana, Mahā-Amātya (chief counsellor), Sīrī Govinda and Madhusūdana, Brahmānādhikāra (officer in charge of the welfare of Brāhmans) Bhatta Sīrī Kantha. Here ends the second plate of the charter.

**Importance:**

The inscription shows that the Sālastambha dynasty also traces their descent from the Naraka-Bhagadatta though they were termed as Mleccha. Other important

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98. Here Prālamba, the son of Arathi is referred to. see, D.C. Sircar, E.I., Vol. XXIX, No. 22, PP 145-159.
references of the inscription are the Coronation ceremony celebrated by Harjaravarman, their capital city Harūpapesvara and one special officer for the welfare of the Brāhmaṇas - Brāhmaṇadhiśkara mentioned in the list of officers whom Vanamāla, the son of Harjara commands probably for the occasion of the issue of the grant, all indicated royal patronage and expansion of Brāhmaṇical religion in the kingdom.

3.2.4.1.5. The Kuruvāhī Copperplate Inscription of Harjaradeva:

**History:**

The Kuruvāhī Copperplate Grant of Harjaravarmadeva was discovered at the Kuruvāhī Sattra in Nagaon District of Assam. The grant consists of two copper plates along with a seal in the pattern of an asvattha leaf. In the frontal part of the seal a sitting elephant is counter sunk in the upper half while in the lower half a legend reading upto 

\[ \text{ придийи } \] 

is engraved.

The two plates together contain 34 lines of writing - 18 lines in the second plate containing the earlier portion of the inscription and 16 lines in the first plate, which constitute the latter portion. The execution of the writing is good, the letters being almost uniform and distinct in the undamaged portion. The first plate is worn out, damaged in parts and the characters mostly not very legible because of age and corrosion, while in places the letters have become flat. The script belongs to the Eastern variety of the North-Indian Brāhiṃī, resembling more or less those in the Tezpur Rock Inscription and the extant Hāyuṅthal grant of the same king.

However the script of the seal bearing the royal legend appear to be of an earlier variety. The language of the inscription is Sanskrit. The composition is partly in verse and partly in prose.

**Contents:**

The inscription starts with the auspicious symbol \( \text{Ś} \) (ānjī) followed by the word ‘svasti’. The benedictory verse is devoted to the adoration of Rūdra (Śiva), the tutelary deity of the early Kāmarūpa kings. This is followed by the legend of the uplifting of the Earth from the abysmal water by Viṣṇu in his Varāha incarnation, and the subsequent birth of Naraka as a result of their union and Naraka’s conquest of Kāmarūpa and his seat of government at Prāgjyotisapura, his stealing of the gold earrings of Aditi, the mother of gods and his ultimate death in the hands of Viṣṇu - Kṛṣṇa in a fierce battle. The inscription then describes Naraka’s son Bhagadatta and his younger brother Vajradatta who succeeded the former. The line of rulers by dint of their prowess ruled the earth with forests as ramparts and the canals in the form of outer boundaries and Śalastambha was born in this family. He was followed by Palaka, Vijaya and others after whom in that dynasty Harjaravarman was born. The inscription gives a description of the personal qualities of the king. The present document records the grant of a plot of land by Śrī Varāha Paramesvra Paramabhātāraka Maharājadhīrāja Śrīmat Harjaravarmadeva. The plot of land that produced four thousand putaka of paddy is located in a certain field where a sacrifice was performed or alternatively a field of a certain sacrificer, in the Dijjina visaya.
In the restored portion of line 33 there is an indication of granting another plot of land that produced some two thousand units of certain measure of paddy in the same locality. But as most of the letters and the final line being damaged owing to corrosion, nothing can be read with certainty as regards the location of the said plot as well as the name of the recipient.

The royal order regarding the grant was addressed to the state officials headed by Viṣayakaraṇa, Vyāvahārika, Rāja, Raṇī, Raṇadhiṅta and others like Raṇajanyaka, Raṇaputra, Raṇaballabha etc.

The grant was made in favour of a dvija, (twice born) named Dharesuta, son of Bhavadeva, who was the son of the famous Kumāra dvija who belonged to the Naidhruva - pravara of the Kuṇḍinya gotra and follower of the Kaṇvaśākhā of the Yajurveda. Dharesuta seems to be the sacrificer himself. The donee is further described as one who spent his days in comfort, and who was engaged in the act of devotion to guru, deva and dvija. The grant was made in a day of eclipse, and it appears that the land belonged to the same place where the sacrifice was performed.

**Importance:**

The word putaka (m) is noticed here for the first time in the epigraphic records of ancient Assam. It is worth noting that similar records of subsequent times, the measurement of an area of land was indicated in terms of the quantity of paddy yielding by it e.g., in thousands which appear to be a collective number of a certain measures of paddy. It has been assumed that the amount implied refers to the
drona unit of measurement which was prevalent in Assam till recently. P.C. Choudhury suggests that five bighas of land could yield 2,000 dronas of paddy\textsuperscript{100}. It is quite probable that the word putaka in the epigraph is used to stand for a measure of grain equal to an Assamese purā or pāchī, weighing 15 seers or 12.86028 k.g. in case of rice, 10\textsuperscript{1/2} seers or 9.6452 k.g. incase of paddy. Thus, the word putaka may mean 4000 purā/ pāchī or about 1000 mounds or about 385.81 quintals of paddy. It is therefore probable that the donated land is equivalent to an area that produced such a measure of paddy.\textsuperscript{101}

By this grant, it seems that Harjaravarman extended his patronage to spread Brahmanical religion in his kingdom. Yajnapālabhūmi probably was shelter or specified area reserved for the performance of sacrifice alone.\textsuperscript{102}

3.2.4.1.6. The Tezpur Copperplate Inscription of Vanamāla:

**History:**

The Tezpur Copperplate Grant of Vanamāla was discovered at Tezpur and published along with an English translation in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal\textsuperscript{103}. The original plates of the grant was lost beyond recovery. We can study the text from the Kāmarūpasāsanāvali where P.N. Bhattacharya reproduces the text of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal with certain intelligent improvement\textsuperscript{104}.

M.M. Sharma opined that the records have come down in a corrupt form in respect of many

\textsuperscript{100} M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., P. 139.
\textsuperscript{102} D. Chutia, J.A.R.S., Vol. XXVI, P. 79.
\textsuperscript{103} J.A.S.B., Vol. IX., P. 766, 1840.
\textsuperscript{104} M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., PP. 95-113.
information. But on the strength of the newly discovered Parbatiyā plates of Vanamāla in origin the wrong information of the present grant may be corrected. The grant consists of three copper plates. The seal attached to the grant contains the following legend. "Sidham svasti. The illustrious Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Vanamalavarmadeva, who belongs to the family of the Lords of Prāgjyotisa".

Contents:

The inscription begins with the auspicious symbol anjī and svasti and benediction in the name of river Lauhitya Sindhu and Lord Siva.

The eulogy of the grant narrates the genealogy of the donor king which traces from Naraka like the grants of earlier kings of Kāmarūpa. Naraka was killed by Lord Kṛṣṇa but spared life of his two sons Bhagadatta and Vajradatta. Bhagadatta became the king of Prāgjyotisa. He worshipped Siva with penance and received the lordship over Uparipattana and also the overlordship over Prāgjyotisa to his progeny for the future. According to the Parbatiyā plates Bhagadatta got Prāgjyotisa and his brother Vajradatta became the Lord of Uparipattana. The inscription then introduces a latter king of Prāgjyotisa who belonged to the family of Bhagadatta who named as Pralambha. The inscription specially refers to his predecessor kings beginning with Salastambha and ending with Śrī - Harisa. His brother Aratha died in a battle. His (Aratha) wife Śrī Jīvāda was adorable to many and the progenitor of a great light like the morning twilight. She was the mother of Śrī Harjara. The inscription refers

105. Ibid.
106. Parbatiyā Copperplate Inscription, V.5.
to a number of qualities of Harjaravarman and compared him with Yudhisthira in the discussions on dharma; Bhûma amongst the enemies, Jiñna (i.e. Arjuna) in the battlefield. Laksmi attracted by the qualities and colour of Harjara, left the bosom of Viñna and took human form to become the chief queen with the name Srimattara. According to the Parbatiya plates Prâlambha should be read as Salambha. Salambha was succeeded by his brother Arathi and the name of his wife was Srimangalan and not Sri Mattara. Harjara's mother was Jivadevi and not Jivada. Harjara had a son from this queen whose name was Vamanala. Vamanala extended his world up to the limits of the rows of forest lying on the shores of the ocean. He rebuilt a fallen temple of the god 'Hetukasulinah' and endowed it with matchless villages, people, elephants and prostitutes (who were attached to the temple as devadasis). On numerous occasions he made gifts of plenty of gold, silver, elephants, horses, land and women.

Then the inscription gives a vivid description of the city of Harûppesvara, the river Lauhitya and the boats which embellished the regions adjoining both the banks of the river.

Harûppesvara was the city where all the people belonging to all the castes and all the stages (ãšrama) of life were extremely happy. The city was the residence of innumerable fortunate and honest scholars. The broad roads remained crowded and the city was protected by the innumerable military potentialities. The capital

107(a) In the J.A.S.B., the deity is referred to Hetuka-Sûlina while P.N. Bhattacharya gives the reading Hatakasulina. But in the Parbatiya plates the reading is clearly Hetukasulina.
city stands on the bank of the river Lauhitya.

The water of Lauhitya became fragrant by the odour of flowers falling down from trees, trembling through the hissing sounds of serpents, frightened by the sound of moving peacocks, the waves of the river are rendered fragrant by the clouds formed by the smoke of black aloes burnt by the forest fire in the parks of the city of Harūppesvara. The region on the banks of the river remain plunged in the aroma of the secretions of the musk deer. The water of the river Lauhitya have become purer on account of constantly flowing over the slopes of the mountain Kamakūṭa on the top of which was installed the god Kāmesvāra and the goddess Mahāgaurī. Then the inscription refers to the women (vilāsini) who have taken a plunge in the river.

The inscription compares the boats, their decoration, speed and charm with various characters of harlots. Like harlots they embellished varieties of ornaments, display their bodies, wear jingling bells like small girls, covered their heads with chowries, (cāmara )like chārmadharinīs they have red teeth, like the damsels of the harems of (ten-headed ) Rāvana. Their speed is compared with the women of Karnāta who get excited by hard assaults, and speedy like the consort of Pavana (Vāyu). Their charm is compare with the charm of the beautiful women of Duluha who charm one and all. Their trembling is compare with the trembling of dancing girls whose trembling increases with the approach of dancers.

Then the inscription refers to the place of issue of the grant. Maharājādhirāja
Sn Vanamaladeva who was a devout worshipper of Mahesvara, meditated on the feet of his parents, issued the charter from Haruppesvara. By this charter Sn Vanamaladeva gifted a village to a generous Brähmana, named Indoka. His father Bhijjata was like a lamp in the family of the Brähmanas of Sândilya gotra. He studied the whole of Yajurveda along with the ancillaries (ángas). He married Sabhāyikā according to the customs of the Brähmanas. The name of the village was Abhisūravatāka, situated on the western side of the river Trisrotā and contains both land and waters and was demarcated by eight boundaries. Eastern boundary is common to that of Dasalāṅgala; south-eastern boundary to that of Candrapuri, southern boundary to that of Avari, south western boundary to that of Puṣkariṇī (i.e., the tank). Western boundary is common to that a Naukuva, north-eastern boundary to that of Dasalāṅgala. These are the eight boundaries.

According to the Parbatiyā plates the name of the capital city was Haḍapēśvara.108

Importance:

The grant throws light on the socio-religious and cultural life of the people of our period. Ānji, the symbol of the Tantric divinity Kundalinī, was used in the inscription for the first time. Benediction to the river Lauhitya is seen for the first time in the inscription which indicates the growing importance of Lauhitya in the socio-cultural life of the people. Benediction to Śiva, reconstruction of

108. The Parbatiyā Copperplate Grant, L. 47.
the temple Hetukasūlina with endowment of matchless villages, people, elephants and prostitutes, the temple of Kāmesvara and Mahāgaurī throws light on the religious life of the people. Gift of women, description of luxurious ladies, references to harlots, chāmaradhārīṇī, Duluha women and Naṭīs expressed the knowledge of the scholar on the science of erotics.

3.2.4.1.7. The Parbatiya Copperplate Inscription of Vanamāla:

**History:**

The Parbatiya Copperplate Grant of Vanamāla was discovered at Parbatiya village, three miles away from the Tezpur town of Sonitpur District, Assam. The grant consists of three copperplates along with a seal which contains the following legend “Svasti Śrīmāṇ Prāgjyotisadhipānvayo maḥārajādhirāja Śrī Vanamālavaranādheva (ḥ)”

P.D. Choudhury and D.C. Sircar edited and published the text of the inscription. Later on it was studied by M.M. Sharma and D. Sarma.

The inscription is not dated nor any regnal year is mentioned there. On the basis of the Tezpur Rock Inscription of Harjara, which is dated in Gupta 510 corresponding to 829 A.D. M.M. Sharma placed the inscription in the middle of the ninth century A.D. The language of the inscription is Sanskrit and the script belonged to the East Indian variety of the Siddhamatrika or Kutila script of the ninth century A.D.

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The formal part of this grant from the beginning up to Vanamālavarmadeva kusali (in line 48 of the present grant) is common with the Tezpur Copper plates of the king except in case of two passages of considerable length, which have been omitted from the present inscription. By this grant the king donated a village called Haposingrama which was attached to the mandala or district of Svalpa māṅgoka situated in Uttarakūla. The gifted village is said to have been made free from a Chaṭṭa-Bhatta Pravesa (i.e. not to be entered by regular or irregular troops or more probably by policemen and peons) and Muktoparikara (i.e. not endowed with the right to enjoy taxes from temporary tenants)112. Jejjata, a Brāhmaṇa, belonged to the Sāndilya gotra and Sāmaveda carana was living in that village. The Brāhmaṇa was respected by the king. It is said that his four sons Cūdamani, Deṭobha, Garga and Sambhu were all living jointly without separation out of fear for the loss of Dharma. The king made the grant in favour of the eldest son of the aforesaid four brothers.

The grant was made with a view to increasing the merit and fame of the parents of the donor and for himself with great care on an auspicious day and hence requested to approve by all.

In conclusion the grant refers to many kings beginning with Sagara who have donated land to others and enjoyed appropriate merit for donation of land.

112. Ibid., PP. 125-126.
The grant warns one who confiscates the land given by the king or by others rots with manes assuming the form of worms in vistha.

**Importance:**

The grant throws light on the joint family system as well as the system of inheritance in ancient Assam. Reference to Śaṅcarana indicates that in ancient Assam there was a tradition of Śaṅaveda studies.

### 3.2.4.1.8 The Kaliabor (Dīghaligāon) Copperplate Inscription of Vanamālavarmadeva:

**History:**

A set of three copper plates, measuring 32 cm. x 20cm. held together by a copper ring with a ladle-shaped seal similar to those found with the charters of the kings of Prāgyotisa -Kāmarūpa, bearing the royal insignia and the usual legend with the name of the donor king has been found buried under ground by a ploughman while tilling a plot of land in Dīghaligāon village in Kaliabor Circle of Nagaon District. The findspot of the plate is about 2 km. to the east of the historic Chamdharāgarh.

The Kaliabor Copperplate Grant was issued by the king Mahārajādhirāja Śrī Vanamālavarmadeva, son and successor of Śrī Harjaravarmadeva, of the royal house of Sālastambha, who ruled the ancient kingdom of Kāmarūpa with their seat of administration at Haḍapesvara. Vanamālavarmadeva is generally ascribed to A.D. 835-865 A.D. The writing covers the inner side of the first and third plates and both sides of the middle plate. There are a total of 63 lines in writing, i.e. 17 lines each in the first three pages and 12 lines in the 4th page.
Contents:

The text of the charter has two sections, i.e., the eulogical and the operative sections. The eulogical section of the text, generally agree with the texts of the eulogical parts of the king’s earlier two land grant charters, viz. the Tezpur Copperplate Grant and the Parbatiya Copperplate Grant discovered earlier, with minor differences, the details of which are being worked out. The grant, along with the corroborative evidence of the Parbatiya Grant helps to correct many errors in the published transcript of the Tezpur Grant and removing doubts and settling a number of controversies in regard to the history of the family of Sālastambha, also called the Mleccha dynasty, vis-a-vis the history of ancient Assam, as discussed along with the Tezpur Copperplate Grant of Vanamāla.

The operative section records the grant of a plot of land equivalent to a Khandalaka of land in the Purjjikapradesa, situated in the Daksinakula to six Brahmanas, viz., (1) Bhatta Gallahara, (2) Bhatta Gayahara, (3) Bhatta Yasohara, (4) Bhatta Talahara, (5) Candamāna and (6) Katyayāna. The first four are stated to be brothers being the offsprings of Jatadeva, born in the Kausika gotra. The relationship of the last two to each other or with the former are not mentioned.

The first five are alloted 2 parts of land each, the last one is alloted only one part. The actual measure of land indicated by amsa is not certain.

3.2.4.1.9. The Uttarbarbil Copperplate Inscription of Balavarman III:

History:

A set of three copper plates with a seal was discovered at the Uttarbarbil village of Howraghat area in the present Karbi Anglong District of Assam. The inscription has been studied by many scholars. The seal contains the following legend. "Śvasti Śrīmān Prādjyotisadhipanvayo Mahārajādhirāja Śrī Balavarmadevah". The language of the inscription is chaste Sanskrit. The script is similar to that of the Parbatiya Plates of Vanamālavarmanadeva. The inscription assigned to the last quarter of the ninth century A.D.

Contents:

The inscription begins with the auspicious symbol ‘aṅgī’ and ‘svasti’ and then paid homage to Lord Rūdra. The lustre of Rūdra is capable of dispelling the darkness and cause the peace of the world since the night of universal destruction. After Rūdra the inscription again pays homage to the sea like river Lauhitya whose pure water dispelled sins. After the maṅgalavārse the inscription traces the genealogy of the donor from Naraka. The inscription narrates the story of Naraka’s birth in the Boar incarnation of Upendra (i.e. Viṣṇu) with the Earth, his stealing away the two ear-rings of Aditi (the mother of the gods), his conquest of Kāmarūpa and the city of Prādjyotisa that he used to live, areca-nut trees.

encircling with betel leaf and the black sandal trees by the cardamon trees in Prāgjyotisa and his killing by Viśnu. He was succeeded by Bhagadatta who regulated all castes and all āśramas. Vajradatta, his brother succeeded him. After a number of kings in that family Śālastambha became the king who was followed by a number of kings like Pālaka, Vijaya, Harjara and his son Vanamāla. Vanamāla was a devotee of Siva and after handing over the royal throne to his son Jayamāla he merged in the glow of Mahēsvara through a process of fasting. Jayamāla married Ambā. Their son Balavarman was endowed with all the good qualities. Jayamāla overwhelmed by a disease which was beyond the control of the physicians, placed his son on the throne on an auspicious day. After receiving that large kingdom, Balavarman, the Paramesvara Paramabhāttarāka Mahārājādhirāja resides in the illustrious city of Hadappesvara.

After the genealogy the charter records the grant and address to subordinates and officials. According to the charter Balavarman donated a plot of land capable of yielding two thousand units of paddy, sliced off from the Vappadevapataka which belonged to the Varasepattanaviṣaya.

The plot of land consisting of homestead land, paddy fields, ponds and mounds and was rendered free from all troubles on account of the fastening of elephants, searching of thieves, inflicting punishment, tenants' taxes, duties due to different causes and grazing of animals such as elephants, horses, camels, cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep as recorded in the charter.

The king issues an order to all the citizens beginning with the Brāhmaṇas, the
scribes and the administrators to be duly present in the plot of land besides others like Rajanaka, Rajaputra and Rajavallabha etc. associated with the Raja and the Rajni and the Ranaka and also to all who will happen to be there in course of time. After notification and address, the grant mentions in details the name of the donee and his ancestors. The donee was Syamadeva who was a great scholar of Vedic lores and a great performer of penances. His father Gabhisthira learnt the hymns of the three Vedas along with their application, mastered all the Sastras and performed sacrifices. His mother was also compared with Soma-creeper and devoted to her husband like the wife of Vasistha, mother of a great progeny like Saci, the beloved of great Indra and was like the Earth in respect of patience. His grand father Garga was a superior Brahmana of the Upamanyu gotra, a master of the entire Vedic lore, reputed through the performance of several sacrifices and a follower of the Kanva school of Vedas and was a reputed scholar of the Yajurveda.

Balavarman donated the aforesaid land to that Bhatta i.e. Syamadeva for the merit of his parents and for his own welfare in full conformity to rules in the fifth year of his reign and on the day of the annual celebration of Sakrotthana.

The charter was concluded by giving the boundary of the donated land. The boundaries are as follows: to the east a bush of Vaikanaka trees, to the south-east a silk-cotton tree, to the south a Palasa tree, to the south - west a Kadamba tree, to the west a cane tree (bush) lying on the path laid down for demarcation of fields, to
the north-west a banyan tree standing in the bush of Viti-trees (?), to the north a black berry tree, and to the north-east Sonāru (suvarṇadāru) tree (lines - 52-54).

**Importance:**

Tāmbūla plays a very important role in the cultural life of the people of Assam since very early times. The abundance of areca-nut and betel leaf in Prāgjyotisa is significant from that point of view. It is also significant that the capital city of Prāgjyotisa has derived its modern name Guwahāti from rows of tāmbūla trees. 114(a)

Popularity of Saivism and royal patronage to the religion is proved by the reference of Vanamāla’s religious suicide to merge in the glow of Siva. His royal patronage to Saivism is confirmed by his Tezpur Grant.

Balavarman III continued the policy of making land grants to the Brahmanā’s which not only consisted homestead land but also included paddy fields, ponds and mounds which was again rendered free from all troubles and the grant was confirmed by important administrative officers as well as persons relating to the granted land. The donee of the grant belonged to a Brahmana of Upamanyu gotra and a follower of Kāṇva school of Yajurveda. His family was reputed for generations for their knowledge on Vedas and performance of sacrifices. Balavarna’s land grant to this reputed scholar along with the statement of privileges accelerated the process of the growth and development of Brahmanical culture in the region.

114.(a) M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., P. 137.
3.2.4.1.10. The Nowgong Copperplate Inscription of Balavarman III:

**History:**

The Nowgong Copperplate Grant of Balavarman III was discovered in the village Sutargaon of Nagaon District of Assam. Dr. Hoernle published the text with translation and notes and photograph of the seal and the plates in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1897\(^{115}\). Later on it was studied by P.N. Bhattacharya\(^{116}\), M.M. Sharma\(^{117}\) and D. Sarma\(^{118}\).

The grant consists of three copper plates held together by a ring attached to a ladle shaped seal, similar to that of the Uttarbarbil Grant containing the same legend of the Uttarbarbil Grant with an initial अँग्रेज़ी.

The grant bears a date, at the end of its last line, but unfortunately it is illegible. Hoernle reads ‘संव’ XX Vai X. He suggests after ‘संव’ there were either one or two signs, possibly numerical ones, ‘vai’ may stand for Vaicakhe in the month of Vaicakha, after it there must have been one sign probably numerical, giving the day of the month, possibly the reading was संवत्सरे where ‘vai’ stands for a numeral\(^{119}\). P.N. Bhattacharya put संव (t va ) sau.\(^{120}\) The number symbol word ‘vasu’ means eight. It is also an auspicious word, meaning wealth, which is the first number symbol word used by Pingala, who is the founder of the very mechanism of the

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120.P.N. Bhattacharya, K.S., P. 88.
The charter was issued in the 8th year of the rule of Balavarama III. The first 25 verses are common to the Uttarbarbil plates. The immediately following prose portion ending with the word ‘kusāli’ (line 36 of the Uttarbarbil plates) is also common. Then follows the description of the donated land, the designations of the subordinates and officials addressed by the king in connection with the grant, and the privileges attached to the donated land.

Contents:

According to the grant Balavarama donated an area of land called Hensivā, having an yield of 4000 units of paddy. Like the previous grants he addressed the citizens beginning with the Brahmanas, the scribes and the administrators and to Rājā, Rājjī and the Rānaka and also to the future officers. The donated land also consisting of homestead land, paddy fields, dry lands, ponds, grounds and mounds and was also rendered free from all the trouble makers like the Rājjī, the Rājaputra, the Rānaka, the Rājavallabha, the old female guard of the harem, the collectors of the Hastibandha tax and the Naukabandha tax, the officer-in-charge of the recovery of stolen property, the policeman, the inflictor of punishment, all the collector of the tenants’ taxes and duties and the (royal) umbrella bearer.  

The name of the donee was Srutidhara. His father Devadhara was a sacrificer who performed the Vedic rites in an unbewildered manner. His father Maladhara Bhatta was a follower of Kavasakha and belonged to the Kapila gotra. Srutidhara, coming back as a graduate from the home of the preceptor with a desire to enter into the life of a householder came to the court as a supplicant. Balavarman III donated the chartered land to Srutidhara after taking a ceremonial bath with a desire of gaining welfare in the other world to his parents and himself.

In conclusion the grant mentioned the eight boundaries of the donated land.

**Importance:**

The grant shows the gradual extension of privileges to the Brāhmaṇa class by making donated land free from all trouble makers for the promotion of Aryadharma in different parts of the kingdom.

According to this grant Brahmacarya and the Gṛhastha asrama were prevalent in ancient Assam. By granting land to Srutidhara, Balavarman III extended patronage for the expansion of Vānasramadharma in his kingdom.

3.2.4.1.11. The Ulubari Copperplate Inscription of Balavarman III:

**History:**

The grant was discovered in the no. 1. Ulubari village of the Naharhabi Mouza of the Sonitpur District, Assam. The plates have been deciphered for the first time by Sri Chidananda Baruah and Shri Kanak Chandra Sarmah. Later it was studied

123. Assam Bani, June 17, 1977.
by M.M. Sharma\textsuperscript{124}. There are three copperplates in the grant which was bounded together by a ring attached to a seal containing a legend which is similar to the other two seals of king Balavarman III.

The grant has been issued in the 13th regnal year of the king and the text upto Śrī Balavarmadeva ‘kusāli’ is identical with the texts presented from the beginning upto the word ‘kusāli’ in the other two grants, in line 36 of the Uttarbarbil Grant and line 33 in the Nowgong Grant of the same king. In the remaining portion also, the text describing the privileges attached to the donated land (L. 38-43) is similar to the corresponding texts of other two grants. Only the portions which describe (i) the location and the magnitude of the land (ii) the donee (iii) the occasion for making the gifts and (iv) the boundaries of the donated land are not common.\textsuperscript{125}

**Contents:**

Maharajādhirāja Balavarman III donated a plot of land capable of yielding two thousand units of paddy, sliced off from the land known as Dikkūra, belonging to the Manjaivisaya in the Uttarākula. The donee of the grant was Bhavadeva. His father Budhadeva was a learned man. His father (Budhadeva’s) Visnudeva belonged to the Parasara gotra, a follower of the Kāṇyasākhā of the Yajurveda and was famous amongst the reciters of the Yajurveda in the whole world. His lustre and the divine splendour resulting from the knowledge of the Vedic lore could surpass the Fire god.

\textsuperscript{124} M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., Appendix, No. 5, PP. 313-315.  
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
Balavarman III donated the plot of land with the desire to be blessed with welfare, on the occasion of performing a hundred thousand homas at the holy juncture of the sun's passing into the north of the equator.

In conclusion the inscription also refers to the eight boundaries of the donated land as follows: To the east the eastern bank of the Dimdau river; to the south-east the same river and two cane trees; to the south a Patali tree; to the south-west the eastern side of a rampart constructed by the king; to the west a Saptaparna tree and also the river; to the north-west a Jari tree; to the north the Dimdau river and two madar trees; to the north-east a Varuna tree, and there ends the account.

**Importance:**

For the first time we get the reference to the performance of a hundred thousand homa sacrifice and the Fire god. The reference to the 'narapatikaritadhara-purvapatah' interpreted by M.M. Sharma as rampart constructed by the king known in Assamese as rajgarh.

3.2.4.1.12. The Coratbari Copperplate Inscription of Ratnapaladeva:

**History:**

The Coratbari Copperplate Grant of Ratnapaladeva was found at the village Coratbari in Nagaon District of Assam. The inscription was studied and published by P.C. Choudhury and also studied by M.M. Sharma.

128. M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., PP. 0.21-0.24.
Contents:

The grant was issued by Ratnapāla in the 12th regnal year from Haḍapyaka.

The grant consists of three copper plates bound together by a copper ring with the customary royal seal of bronze, with the legend ‘Svasti Śrīmān Prāgjyotisadhipati Mahārājadhirāja Śrī Ratnapālavarmadevah’. The first plate of the grant was broken in the middle and the letters of the third one are extremely worn out. But upto ‘gaṇadosavido bhavasya’ (V,15) occurring in line 26 of plate II. A, the text is same as in the other two grants i.e. the Bargaon and the Suwālkuchi Copperplate Grant of the same king. Again the text beginning with Yathāyatha (म) samupasthita (occurring in line 55) upto sarvavāpaśā sāsanikṛtya (in line 60) is common with the corresponding text of the Bargaon Grant. There are in all 23 verses of which the first 15 are common to other two grants. The text of the other portion devoted mainly to a beautiful description of the city of Haḍapyaka and king Ratnapāla, the description of the donee and the boundary of the donated land.129

The grant was issued from Haḍapyaka. There is a copious description of the place (L.26-43). There were innumerable rows of the buildings, both religious and secular, inhabited by rich people, with beautiful gates, flags having been flung over them. The four fold divisions of the army with fortresses were stationed there.

129. M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., PP. 0.21-0.24.
With this charter Ratnapāla donated land capable of yielding 4000 units of paddy, sliced off (apakrsta) from the Sāntidasapattaka and Bhattayapattaka belonging to the Havngavisaya on the day of the Dhanuh-samkranti (i.e. the Maṅgh Bihu) to a donee named Siddhapāla (Bhatta), son of Nidhipāla and Dattayika and grandson of Jayapāla. Jayapāla belonged to the Kāṇva sākha of the Gautama gotra. This Siddhapāla was like Brahma or Indra and versed in Yajurveda, who enhanced the prosperity of the king by imparting lessons on Arthasāstra. It appears that the donee was either the court pandita or the minister in charge of finance.

The donated land, included plots for homestead, pastures for cattle, cultivation etc, and the donee was made immune from paying any kind of revenue and from official harassment. In conclusion the grant mentions the boundary of the donated land. The mention of Dibbaisa river forming southern boundary and Saica the south-western boundary led P.C. Choudhury to identify the Havngavisaya with Habung country lying to east of the river Suvanśir during the 10th -11th century A.D. Habung, comprising present Dhakuakhana region was for centuries a centre of Aryan culture.

**Importance:**

The grant refers to the name Hadapyaka in line 26 and the same city is referred to once again in line 36 by the name Hadappesvara. This reference is an

important data to settle the controversy related to the capital city of the rulers of the Salastambha dynasty.

3.2.4.1.13. The Bargāon Copperplate Inscription of Ratnapāla:

**History:**

The exact place where this grant was discovered is not known. But it has been recovered from a cultivator of the Naharhabi village of the Bargāon Mauja of Tezpur Sub-Division of Sonitpur District. Dr. Hoernle edited and published the inscription. Later it was amended by P.N. Bhattacharya and also studied by M.M. Sharma and D. Sarma.

The grant consists of three copper plates bound together by a ring attached to a ladle shaped seal. The seal having the mark of an elephant head has the legend ‘Svasti Pragjyotisadhipati Maharajadhiraja Śrī Ratnapālavarmanadevaḥ’.

The language of the grant is Sanskrit and the script is similar to that of the plates of Balavarmana III. The charter is not dated. The charter has been issued in the 25th year of Ratnapāla’s reign.

**Contents:**

The inscription begins with the symbol ‘svasti’ and then paid homage to Śaṁkara and the river Lauhitya. The inscription describes Śaṁkara as the source of

welfare and prosperity (Śrī), as the supreme dancer (Naṭesvara), dancing the
cosmic tāndava dance, as the supreme yogīn (Yogesvara) because of possessing
irresistible will (Prākāmya) and also as being similar to the supreme self because
of appearing as many while remaining essentially one.  

Because of the whiteness of the water of Lauhitya there is a confusion
whether the moonlight assuming a physical form, or melting crystals or
auspicious power of Śiva was capable of destroying sin.

After the mangala verse the inscription traces the genealogy of king Ratnapāla
from Naraka who resided in Prāgijyotiṣapura and succeeded by Bhagadatta and
Vajradatta. In course of time the kingdom ruled by the successors of Naraka was
occupied by Śālastambha, the lord of the Mlecchas. Tyāgasimha, the twenty first
king of this line died without an heir for which his subjects nominated
Śrī Brahmapāla belonging to the Bhauma dynasty as the king. Brahmapāla defeated
his enemies in the battle field like Hari, Hara, Bhīṣma and many others. He
married Kuladevī. Their son Ratnapāla resembles the jewels (ratnas). His
battlefield also shone like a market of jewels and warriors as merchants. Brahmapāla
died after placing Ratnapāla to the throne. Ratnapāla used to reside in the city of
Durjjayā in the kingdom called Prāgijyotīṣa. The inscription gives an elaborate
description of the city.

Durjjayā was a residence of great men. The city was full of warriors. Here

137. Ibid., PP. 160-161.
the orb of the sun used to be covered from view by the tops of the thousands of white-washed mansions as white as the smile of the intoxicated beautiful damsels. Learned men and preceptors made the city a place of poetical figures. Like the peak of the mount Kailásá, which is the abode of Paramésvara (i.e. Lord Siva) this city was also the abode of Paramésvara. Like the peak of the mount Kailásá inhabited by the god Kuvera the city was also inhabited by rich men (Vittesás).

The outskirts of the city of Durjjaya were covered by a rampart, which was invincible for the kings of the Sakas, Gurjjaras, Gauḍa, Kerala, Bahika and Tayika. The city of Durjjaya was beautified by the sea like Lauhitya which was the remover of the fatigue caused by the erotic dalliances of the beautiful damsels and like a bejewelled mirror of the damsels of the heaven working as an aid to their preparation for amorous sports. The inscription describes various characters of people living in the city. They were free from dullness, fickleness, breach of trust and from any ‘upasargas’ and crookedness in their relations to others. Their sense of apathy was only towards the wrong doers, drinking of wine and taking of meat.

The city of Durjjaya which can vie with the abode of Vāsava (i.e. Indra) where resides the Maharajādhirāja Paramesvara Paramabhattāraka Śrī Ratnapālāvarmadeva who ever devoted to the worship of the feet of Maharajādhirāja Śrī Brahmapālāvarmadeva. After the elaborate description of the capital the inscription refers to a number of qualities possessed by the king. Then the inscription addressed to the subordinates and records privileges of the donee. According to the charter king Ratnapāla donated a plot of land having the capacity
to yield 2000 units of paddy situated in the field of Lavukuti, comprising also a plot of land sliced off (apakrsta) from the Mahādevapāṭaka and belonging to the Viṣaya named Trayodasāgrama of the North bank along with its homesteads, paddy fields, dry lands, ponds, grazing grounds, refuse lands etc, lying as it is within its boundaries and rendered it free from all troubles as mentioned in the Uttarbarbil Grant. Addresses to the subordinate officers was also similar with the Uttarbarbil Grant.

After notification and address the charter refers to the donee and his family. Donee Viradatta was the foremost Brahmaṇa having the knowledge of sastras. His father Sadgangadatta was a performer of sacrifices who even engaged himself in six fold duties of a Brahmaṇa. His wife Śyāmāyika was also accomplished with character and qualities and devoted to her husband. His father Devadatta belonged to the Parasara gotra and was the foremost amongst the followers of the Kāṇva sākha of the Vajasaneyī samhitā (of the Yajurveda). Ratnapāla donated the aforesaid land to Viradatta on the auspicious moment of the Viṣṇupādi śāmkṛanti for the fame of his parents and for his own merit in the twenty fifth year of his reign. In conclusion the inscription refers to the boundaries of the donated land.

**Importance:**

The charter is the second of the three grants of king Ratnapālavarmadeva which has been granted in the twenty fifth year of his reign. The inscription refers to a number of important data related to the socio-cultural history of the period. It gives us an idea of Saivism as well as refers to the doctrine of Advaitavāda.  

The description of the city of Durjaya shows its invincibility. The city was a centre of learning and culture. The inscription analyses the characters of the people of the city as well as of the king.

Description of the donee gives a picture of the Brāhmaṇical culture and the characters of the best Brāhmaṇas of the period.

3.2.4.14. The Suwālkuchi Copperplate Inscription of Ratnapāla:

History:

The grant of Ratnapāla has been discovered in the village Suwālkuchi of Kamrup District (Rural) of Assam. Dr. Hoernle studied and published the grant in 1897. Later it was studied by various scholars.

The grant consists of three plates in the manner of the Bargāon Grant and also contained a seal which is slightly larger than that of the earlier grants and the legend is slightly different from that of the Bargāon Grant. The legend reads:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Sruti} & \text{ Prapatiśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīśrīশরিঞ্চনা}

Contents:

The first of the three plates of the grant is lost. But the literary portion of this grant is common to the earlier grants. In the second page of the middle plate of

this grant upto Śrīmān Ratnapālavarmadeva 'kusāli' it is similar to the text of the Bargāon grant ending in the 52nd line of the second page of the middle plate. This portion is followed by the reference to the location of the donated land as follows:

Kalpaḍa

कल्पदुः किष्तान्त: पाति धान्यवित्ता स्तलाराजलि रिपू धनालि कुर्य ष्टु—-ष्टु

Three letters preceding the word मू म are not readable. There was the name of the particular plot of land from which the donated plot of land capable of producing three thousand units of paddy seems to have been sliced off. The donated land belonging to the Kalangāvisaya. After this reference to the plot of land we have the typical anusāsanavakya common to both the grants (covering lines 53 to 58 in the Bargāon Grant). After this we have five verses and 7 lines in prose which is not common to the Bargāon grant. This portion refers to the donee and his family and the boundaries of the donated land.

The grand father of the donee belonged to the Bharadvāja gotra and was a follower of the Vājasaneyī (samhitā) of the Kaṇvasākha. His son Vasudeva was a famous scholar. Ccheppayika, the wife of Vasudeva was adorable to the people. Their son Kamadeva was a famous Brāhmaṇa. Ratnapāla donated land to Kāmadeva in the twenty sixth year of his reign for the merit of his parents and of himself.

After the description of the donee and his family the charter refers to the boundary of the donated land on its eight sides as follows: To the east Sarkkaramula tree and a mango tree with a bent situated on brick-field on the common boundary

of Candenauki. To the south-east (a cluster of) cane tree on the boundary common to Dakṣapatinauki. To the south a Hijjala tree on the boundary common to Sadhavanauki. To the south west a tree known as Bhadrakṣa. To the west the silk-cotton tree, recently planted on the boundary common to Candenauki. To the north-west the southern part of (the land of) Kalangadāndi, a Coraka tree on the southern part of (the lands of) Sadhava and Kalangadandi at the end of an eastward curve, then the northern part (of the land) of Kulasonta at the end of a southward curve; again a Varuna tree situated at the northern part of Sadhava and Kulasonta along an eastward curve, and a Hijjala tree along a northward curve. To the north of the northern bank of Diyambārajola, and to the north-east a cane tree was there at the end of a plot-dividing the lane. Here ends the grant.

**Importance:**

This charter is important to study the people of the donated area. The whole area where the donated land was situated seems to be full of rivers. Most of the inhabitants seem to be boatmen. The term Nauki, seems to mean a boatman. The term Danḍi also supposed to mean some one connected with the rowing of boats. Most important fact is that all these Kaivartta people possessed land like peasants.

3.2.4.1.15. The Gauhati Copperplate Inscription of Indrapala:

**History:**

The Gauhati Copperplate grant of Indrapala was discovered in 1863 A.D. in the village Barpanara of the Patidarrang Mauja of Kamrup District (Rural), Assam.
Dr. Hoernle edited and published the text for the first time. Later it was amended by P.N. Bhattcharya and studied by M.M. Sharma and D.Sarma.

The grant consists of three copper plates and a seal attached to the grant contains the following three lines: “Svasti Pragjyotisadhipati Maharajadhiraja Śrīmad Indrapalavarmadeva”.

Indrapala was the grandson and immediate successor of Ratnapala. This grant have been issued in the 8th year of his reign. The Language of the grant is Sanskrit and the script is similar to that of the grants of Balavarman and Ratnapala.

Contents:

The preamble of the inscription begins with the symbol ‘āṇji’ and ‘svasti’ and depicted the story of Gaurī’s traditional jealousy against Ganga. Gaurī defeated Lord Sambhu in the game of dice and won all his properties like the khatavānga, the axe, the bull and the digit of the moon, but returned back all to Sambhu except Ganga who will remain with Gaurī as a maid servant for fetching water. In the second verse homage pays to the Lord Mahāvaraha in the form of Pasupati and the Lord of the whole mankind. The third verse pays homage to the river Lauhitya to wash off sins of the Kaliage because he washed away the thick blood (Lohita) of

143. P.N. Bhattacharya, K.S., PP. 116-129.  
the axe of Jamadagnya. After the maṅgala verse the inscription narrates how Lord Hari, in the form of the Boar, rescued the earth in time of the universal deluge when the form of the ocean was completely shattered. His union with the Earth got Naraka as son who was an illustrious king. Naraka resided in the city of Pragjyotisā which was the very seat of Lakṣmi. Naraka was succeeded by Bhagadatta and Vajradatta. In this family Brahmāpala became the king. His son Ratnapāla had commendable qualities for which he was compared with Rāma or Kṛṣṇa. He erected many white washed Śiva temples, the dwellings of the Brahmans to be stuffed with various types of wealth, the places of sacrifice to be littered with sacrificial posts and due to his military expeditions all the quarters were studded with victory-pillars. His son Purandaraṇa was a great poet. His son Indrapāla studied Grammar, Mīmāṃsā, Logic and Tantra. When he became the king he effected a proper division of the four Asramas and the four Varnas. He resided in the illustrious city of Durjaya.

According to this grant Indrapāla assumed the title Paramesvara Parama bhattaraka Maharajadhiraja, the Lord of Pragjyotisā, meditates on the feet of his illustrious father, Paramesvara Parama bhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Ratnapalavarmadeva, donated a plot of land in the 8th year of his reign, which was capable of yielding four thousand units of paddy sliced off from the Bhavisabhūmi of the Kasipataka, belonging to the district of Hapyoma of the Northbank to a Brahmana named Desapala who belonged to the Kasyapa gotra and was the follower of the Yajurveda. Daśapala’s grand father was a devotee of Śiva named
Haripala and his father (Desapala) named Savarapala was a devoted follower of Aryan customs. Like the previous grants the land was rendered free from all trouble makers.

The charter was concluded by giving the boundary of the donated land. The donated land was surrounded to the east by the eastern bank of the Kosthamakkiyana bil and the field dividing lane lying on the boundary of the Mukutimakkiyana bhumi under the occupation of Kambhava and Kuntivita. To the south-east there were Mukutimakkiyana and a larger road on the boarder of the lands of Kuntavitalakkhavabhoga and the Kasipataka. While the south the larger road and turning a little to the north, and then to the south the Bhogadirghika (i.e. the pond for the own consumption of fish) of the Svalpadyuti Kaivarttas and field dividing lane of Kostha and also three bamboo bushes. Towards the south west of the land was Dirggumma river which flows to the north and then turns to the east. The north east was demarcated by the field dividing lane of Kosthakasipataka. The west and the north-west were demarcated by the Dirggumma river. The north of the land was demarcated by a Sakhotaka tree lying on the border of the Bhavisabhumi which was under the occupation of Aditya bhattaraka, as granted with a charter by Tathagata and the southern bank of a pond made by Pasuputi and a field dividing lane. To the north-east were the same land and the eastern bank of the Kosthamakkiyana bil.

**Importance:**

1. Saivism was a very popular religion at this time. The grant describes
different properties of Siva and narrated traditional legend of conflict between Gaūrī and Ganga. Royal patronage to Saivism and Brāhmaṇas by constructing a number of Siva temples and residences to Brāhmaṇas with sacrificial ground by Ratnapalā was mentioned in the grant.

2. Indian system of education was imparted as the donor king was acquainted with the knowledge of Grammar, Mīmāṃsā, Logic and Tantra.

3. Indrapalā effected a proper division of the four Āśramas and the four Varnas and the earth became a wish-yielder and a source of pleasure as it was under king Prthu.

4. Indrapalā donated land to a Brahmaṇa who belonged to a noble Brahmaṇa family and extended all the privileges as his predecessors for the respect to his father Ratnapaladeva.

5. The description of boundaries throw valuable light on the settlement pattern of the land as well as the inhabitants of the localities. References to a number of Patakas adjacent to the donated land and larger roads on the border, field demarcating lane show that the area was an organised administrative unit. Reference to pond made by Pasupati, Bhogadirghika of the Svalpadyuti Kaivarttas, Mukutimakkhiyana bhumi under the recent occupation of Kuntavita and Khambhava show individual land holding in the locality. The grant also refers to land under possession of Aditya bhattaraka which was granted with a charter by Tathāgata (i.e. the past king). \(^{147}\)

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3.2.4.1.16. The Guwakuchi Copper plate Inscription of Indrapala:

History:

This is the second land grant charter of Indrapala which has been issued in the 21st year of Indrapala’s reign, i.e. 13 years later than his Gauhati Grant. The inscription was discovered at Guwakuchi village at present in the Nalbari District in 1925. P.N. Bhattacharya published an article on the inscription in the Rangpur Sahitya Parisad Patrika and incorporated in the Kāmarūpasāsanavali\textsuperscript{148}. Later it was studied by M.M Sharma\textsuperscript{149} and D. Sarma\textsuperscript{150}.

This grant consists of three copper plates bound together with a ring attached to a ladle shaped seal with a legend similar to the Gauhati grant of Indrapala. The text of the grant is also similar except the location, boundary, the donee and the concluding verse.

Contents:

The land granted by Indrapala was sliced off from the Pandurī Bhūmi belonging to the district of Mandi in the north bank and was capable of yielding two thousand units of paddy to a Brahmana named Devadeva who lived in a village named Vainama in Savathi and was a follower of the Kāvyaśākha of the Yajurveda. The charter compares the village with a fort resorted to by virtue out of fear for sin, in the Kaliage. Somadeva, the grand father of Devadeva was an incarnation of Lord

\textsuperscript{148} P.N. Bhattacharya, K.S., PP. 130-145.
\textsuperscript{149} M.M. Sharma, I. AA., PP. 193-206.
\textsuperscript{150} D.Sarma, K.S., PP. 268-270.
Brahma himself and his father Vasudeva was like Vasudeva who was a friend of Nanda and a source of delight to Purusottama. His wife Anuradha was compared with the wife of sage Vasishtha and the river Ganges could remove the sins of the Kaliage.

The inscription was concluded by giving a description of the donated land. The boundaries of this land are as follows- To the east, a jack-fruit tree on the road bordering the Pandari bhumi, Rajaputra pataka and Markkamyokokva belonging to (divine) Mahagauri and Kamesvara, a field-dividing lane (ali); again the same land taking a westward curve; a field-dividing lane bordering the Pandari bhumi and the Mukutikumyara belonging to Vira. Taking a southward curve a field-dividing lane is there on the margin of the same land (lines 49-51). To the south a field-dividing lane along the boundary of that land and the north bank of the (river)Kaharavijola is also there. To the south-west the head of a field-dividing lane stands at the boundary of that land. To the west a field-dividing lane at the boundary of that land and the Pandari bhumi belonging to (God) Vasumadhava, and Jingani tree are stated. Following an eastward curve and then a northward curve, there are the southern bank of the (river) Sakhotakajola and a field-dividing lane at the boundary of that land. (lines 53-55). To the north-west there is the head of a field-dividing lane at the boundary of that land. With a curve running to the east there is the southern bank of that (i.e. Sakhotakajola) river at the boundary of that land. This boundary runs to the north, then to the west. With a northward curve there is a road at the boundary of that land.... a mango tree standing on the south bank of .......jola (lines 56-58). To the north, the south bank of Srotaṣijola is lying
at the boundary of that land and Pidakagrama (Savrddha-grama) bhumi. The boundary then runs to the north. With a curve to the east, (the boundary becomes identical with) the south-eastern bank and the south bank at the boundary of that village. (lines 58-60). And to the north-east, a homestead-dividing road is there at the boundary of the Pandari bhumi belonging to Mahagauri and Kamesvara and the said bhumi (lines 60-61).

The boundary description follows eleven (11) lines in prose giving 32 names (i.e. epithets) of the patron king Indrapala. At the close of the text giving 32 names, there are three more two-lettered words in three successive lines, presenting a vertical column of three small words. The words are:

sani (in the 72nd line)

dhani (73rd line)

ani (74th line)

M.M. Sharma suggests that the first two may be scribe cum engravers while the third may be the poet, the names of which had written in abbreviation. In the same level of the vertical column formed by the three names sani, dhani and ani there are four sketches, from left to right. The first is a figure of a bird (probably the Garuda) sitting on something like a snake. The second one is a lotus (Padma) followed by the pictures of a Sankha and a Cakra. Below the sketches of Padma, Sankha and Cakra there is the last line of the inscription containing the words: ‘त्रयो माता अष्टेष्ट’

152. Ibid., P. 194.
P.N. Bhattacharya suggests that it is the Prakrtised version of a Sanskrit expression *pustam sri astakena*, presumably implying that the pictures have been drawn by some body named Astaka. The word ‘pusta’ means plastering or painting of any work of clay.  

**Importance:**

1. Reference to the temple Mahāgaurī-Kârnesvara indicates the popularity of Sakta cult in the land.
2. Thirty-two epithets of Indrapāla suggest an attempt of deification of the patron king.
3. The grant refers to strong evidence in favour of the popularity of Viṣṇuism in this period by referring to various names and avatāras of Viṣṇu; devottara land grant to the temple of Vasumādhava and the pictures of Garuḍa, Padma, Saṅkha and Cakra, which symbolise Lord Viṣṇu himself.

**3.2.4.1.17 Gachtal Copperplate Inscription of Gopālavarmā:**

**History:**

Two Copperplates were discovered at Gachtal near Davakā in Nagaon District Assam in 1966. Dr. P.C. Choudhury, the then Director of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam, deciphered the text and published it. M.M. Sharma and D. Sarma also studied the text of the inscription.

The grant as contained in the two plates is incomplete. The details about the boundaries of the land, for the donation of which the present plates had been

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153. Ibid., P. 206.
156. D. Sarma, K.S., PP. 203-211.
inscribed and the name of the donee should have occurred in the third plate which is missing. The seal of the grant is also lost. The inscription is undated. The script is North Indian Brahmī with mixed Devanāgarī and Old Assamese. The prasasti was composed in beautiful Sanskrit verses.

Contents:

The inscription begins with the word svasti and invocation of Siva in penance and the sacred Ganga having come out of his jata. Then the inscription invokes Lord Viṣṇu and the river Lauhitya. Lord Viṣṇu is mentioned as adīrghadeva or the Dwarf god (i.e. Vāmana) and who is described as the source of the whole creation as Padmanābha, i.e., the progenitor of Brahma. After this the inscription invokes the celebrated ocean in the form of (the river) Lauhitya whose water presents a semblance of the beauty of Lord Siva in the beginning of his dances. After the invocation the legend of the uplifting of the Earth from dissolution by the Boar incarnation of Viṣṇu and the birth of Naraka as a result of their union is stated. This Naraka had his capital at Prāgijyotisa. He was followed by Bhagadatta and his successors, and it was in this line of rulers that Brahmapāla, the progenitor of the Pāla family was born. The successor of Brahmapāla was the mighty king Ratnapāla. The grant, besides referring to his career, gives him the credit of defeating by strength of his own arms, one Rajyapāla of Gauda, in a terrible encounter.

Ratnapāla’s son was Purandarapāla who have possessed fine qualities.

Purandarapala expired as a crowned prince. King Ratnapala in his old age placed his grand son Indrapala (son of Purandarapala) on the throne. The inscription refers to his successful naval engagement with Kalyanacandra, son of Sri Candra, the king of Vanga and the conqueror of Gauda. Indrapala had as his queen Rajyadevi who was born in the Rastrakuta family. Indrapala constructed a series of white-washed temples of Sambhu. Sri Gopala was born from Indrapala and Rajyadevi. The inscription states that after the death of Indrapala the Earth took shelter in his victorious arms, enthused with strength and was reminded of the Lordship of Rama, the vanquisher of Ravana, over the whole world, after Dasaratha had retired to the abode of gods.

The inscription records that the Paramesvara Paramabhattaraka Maharajadhiraja the illustrious king Gopala Varman, is well known by his overlordship of Pragjyotisa, who meditates on the feet of Paramesvara Paramabhattaraka Maharajadhiraja the illustrious Indrapalavarmadeva belonging to the family of Sri Varaha (i.e., Sri Visnu) reigns with prosperity, grants a plot of land capable of yielding eight thousand units of paddy sliced off from the Kharikonakoncibhumí, that belongs to the district (visaya) of Barasrojambuba, pays his due compliments to the people of the countryside beginning with Visayakaraná and the Vyavaharika and others like Rajás, Rajnis and Ránakas, Rajanyakas, Rajaputras and Rajavallabhas who are present and also to all those who will happen to be in future time in the respective positions and commands. The last part of the grant contains the description of the donated land which is identical with
that of lines 38 to 40 in the Gauhati Grant of Indrapāla.

**Importance:**

The Gachtal Copperplate Grant throws new light on the history of the kings of the Pāla dynasty. D.C. Sircar says that on the basis of the palaeography of the inscription of Ratnapāla, Indrapāla and Dharmapāla, Brahmapāla was assigned to the close of A.D. 10th century and Dharmapāla to the beginning of A.D. 12th century while the reigning periods of the four intermediate kings, viz., Ratnapāla, Indrapāla, Gopāla and Harṣapāla were placed in the 11th century A.D. The newly discovered Gachtal Copperplates of Gapāla, as Sircar says, throws light to arrange new chronology of the Pāla kings.

As the dates of the Pāla and Gauḍa rulers, contemporaneous with the Pāla rulers of Kamarūpa are known, it is easy to know at least the approximate period of the rule of our kings also. In this way Sircar says that Ratnapāla did not rule in the first half of the 11th century, but more than half a century earlier. In the same way Indrapāla did not rule about the middle of the 11th century, but more than half a century earlier. Likewise, the new inscription throws fresh light on the history and chronology of the Brahmapāla line of kings whose dates are to be pushed upwards now. Another kind of information of great importance is that Gopāla of Kamarūpa had his capital city of Haḍapyaka, which was doubtlessly no other city but Haḍappesvara, the capital of the Salastambha line of kings, identified as modern Tezpur on the picturesque Brahmaputra.  

158. R.D. Choudhury, Archaeology of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam, PP. 10-11.
3.2.4.1.18. The Khanāmukh Copperplate Inscription of Dharmapāla:

History:

The Khanāmukh Copperplate Inscription of Dharmapāla was found at Khanāmukh, a village in Barbhagia Mauza of the Nagaon District of Assam. The inscription was first published with an English translation by P.D. Choudhury. Later on it was studied by various scholars.

The charter consists of three copperplates each measuring 9" x 6", held together by a ring, attached to a seal. The seal is like a miniature boat with a hollow interior and divided into two parts by a horizontal line. The upper part contains the figure of an elephant to front and the lower half contains the legend in three lines reading:

\[त्वक्ति स्त्राण्यातिशापितप्रिति - \\
हृदानाखिणि श्रीधरम् - \\
भालमर्गदैव।
\]

The first and the third plates of the inscription are inscribed only on respective inner sides and the middle plate has writing on both sides. The language of the inscription is Sanskrit. The script is Nāgarī as it was in the eastern part of India in the 12th century A.D.

162. Ibid.
The inscription begins with the auspicious symbol ‘svasti’ and then salute to Ardhayuvatśvara. The inscription describes the god who is the foremost of all gods, wears a blue lotus and the jewel of the hood of the snake as the ornament of the respective ears, besmeared with saffron, applied to the large and high breast, and with ashes, and he is the only embodiment (i.e. creation) of both erotic sentiment (Srṅgāra) and the sentiment of anger (Raudrarasa).

The mangala verse is followed by the genealogy of the donor king which begins from Naraka, who was the son of Lord Viṣṇu in his Boar incarnation with mother Earth. Naraka defeated the Lords of the directions beginning with Satakratu (i.e. Indra) ruled over his kingdom for a long time from the city of Prāgjyotīṣa.

His son Bhagadatta defeated many kings and Bhīma, the endless valour was also become unconscious in a battle with him. Brahmapāla belonged to this royal family of Naraka. His son Ratnapāla defeated a number of kings. His son Purandarapāla died as a prince, after giving birth to a son named Indrapāla. Indrapāla vanquished the enemy by dint of his might and performed sacrifices which satisfied Indra. He was followed by his son Gopāla. Sri Harsapāla, the son of Gopāla was a man of noble character who was able to satisfy Sarasvati (i.e. Bharati, the goddess of learning) and Lākṣmī (i.e. the goddess of fortune). In the battlefields he defeated a number of kings. His wife Ratnā was endowed with a pure fame earned by

163. Presumably in the corroded portion of the plate there occurred the anjī symbol, Vide, M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., P. 230 (f.n. 85).
virtue of various merits. Their son was king Śrī Dharmapāla, who was the Lord of the Earth girdled by the oceans and the ornament of the three worlds. Though he was devoted to Dharma, he equally protected the cause of Kāma and Artha in proper time.

After this long eulogy the composer Prasthānakalasā narrates that Dharmapāladvarman, the Paramesvara Paramabhattāraka Maharājādhirāja, the overlord of Prāgjyotisa, who meditates on the feet of Paramesvara Paramabhattāraka, Maharājādhirāja, the illustrious Harṣapālavarmanadeva belonging to the family of Śrī Varāha notified with reference to the territory of the hamlet of Meru yielding 2000 (units of ) paddy, sliced of the territory of Digalaṇḍi situated in the district of Puruji to the people of countryside beginning with the Viṣayakarana and the Vyavahārika and Rajās, Rajñīs and Rānakas and also others like the Rājanyakas, Rājaputras and Rājavallabhas and also to those who will happen to be in future in the respective positions and commands that the king Śrī Dharmapāla has given that land producing 6000 unit of paddy to an illustrious Brahmana named Mahābahu, in the first year of his reign. Like the Uttarbarbil Copperplate Grant, the grant also consists along with its houses, paddy fields, dry lands, wells, grazing grounds, refuse lands etc. and freed from all troubles as mentioned in the Uttarbarbil Copperplate Grant (lines 36-40). Ummoka, the ancestor of the donee was born in Madhyadesa and held the post of a Rathika. But he was a great performer of sacrifices, performed number of sacrifices, like the Agnistoma, proficient in the Vedāṅgas, as well as in all the sastras and used to the practice of Yoga. He belonged to the Kāśyapa gotra and was a follower of the Kāṇvaśākhā of the Yajurveda. He had a heroic son
interested in the use of weapons and śāstras alike, whose name was Visṇu and he was like another Visṇu belonging to the earth. His beloved wife Manorama was like Gaurī to Sambhu and Laksṇī to Visṇu. Mahabahu was their illustrious son, who regularly studied Mīmāṃsā.

After this elaborate description of the donee and his family the inscription mentions the boundary of the donated land.\textsuperscript{164}

\textbf{Importance:}

1. Of all the Kāmarūpā inscriptions, the grant for the first time gives a mangala verse in the name of Ardhayuvatīśvara form of Siva. The concept of the Ardhanārīśvara (i.e. Ardhayuvatīśvara) form of Siva is a more developed form of the concept of the duel of Siva-Sakti, being more suggestive of the advaitatattva.\textsuperscript{165}

2. Dharmapāla was devoted to Dharma and at the same time he also protected the cause of Kāma and Artha.

3. The grant throws light on the life of Brahmanas of the period. They were proficient in the Vedāngas and in all śāstras and Mīmāṃsā. They were great performer of sacrifices like the Agniṣṭoma. But inspite of that Ummoka, the grand father of the donee held the post of Rathika and his son Visṇu was also interested in the weapons and śāstras alike.

4. Boundaries of the donated land indicate the concentration of villages, viz., Pancāpātaka, Daksināpātaka, Merupātaka, Cokkāpātaka, Paścināpātaka,

\textsuperscript{164} M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., P. 233.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., P. 234.
Pannavanadaksinapataka, Uttarapataka and Sankhupataka. Individual landholding as well as chartered land have also been noticed in the boundary. The grant refers to a number of ponds some of which seem to be of individual holder as to the pond of Bhavadeva, the pond of Valabhadra and the streams indicate a well organised field for paddy cultivation.

3.2.4.1.19. *Subhankarapataka* Copperplate Inscription of Dharmapāla:

**History:**

The find place of this inscription is not known. This charter is named *Subhankarapataka* because the land donated by this charter belonged to a locality called *Subhankarapataka*. Various scholars studied the inscription. This inscription is now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (Vide Acc. No. 18314). The charter is not dated.

The charter consists of three copperplates, each measuring 9″ x 4 1/4″ approximately. The language of the charter is Sanskrit and the script is Nagari, as it was in the eastern part of India in the 12th century A.D. Alongwith the plates a broken seal have been discovered. The upper portion containing the elephant mark is not available. The legend, which seems to have occupied a comparatively a smaller area is very clear.

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169. Ibid.
The legend of the Seal is as in the following three lines.

Contents:

The text of the Khanamukh Copperplate Grant upto kusaliṇah in line 29 is identical with the Subhankarapataka grant upto the same word in line 30. The remaining portion of the grant describes the donated land, the donee and the boundaries of the donated land.

The area of the land called Subhankarapataka has yield of six thousand units of paddy and belongs to the Dijjinavisaya which includes the land of Kanjiyābhītvi and a plot sliced off from the area known as Olinda.

Then the inscription refers to the donee and his family. The donee of the charter was Himanga who was a charioteer and accomplished in all the martial acts. His father named Bharata was above all sins and similar to Sākya (Buddha) and the sole source for the origin of Sama (quietism) and Dama (restrains). He devoted to the six karmans, remained aloof from the inauspicious; polite and was the best amongst the good and the meritorious men. His wife Pauka was possessed of merits and chastity and a good character. Bharata’s father Ramadeva was born in a village named Krosanja, in Sravasti. Due to the sacrifices in the village the sin of the Kaliage could not enter into the village. Ramadeva was the foremost of all the
Brahmanas and the followers of the Kauthumasākhā belonged to the Sāndilya gotra and he was never to be defeated in a controversy by the scholars of Śāmaveda. Himāṅga belonged to this family. Dharmapala donated a plot of land named Subhāṅkarapataka, which includes a portion of the land of Olinda and Kanjiyakabhiṭṭī which was capable of yielding six thousand units of paddy. The king also donated a plot of land producing two thousand units of paddy to Trilocana, the brother of the donee along with this charter.

To the east of this land was the boundary of the land of the twenty four tantras and a Śākhota and walnut tree standing on the boundary of the chartered land belonging to Kurmanātha. To the south - east there is the field demarcating foot-path (ksetrali) on the boundary of the land belonging to Vīra. To the south and south east flows the Dijjināra river. To the west a holy fig tree on the boundary of the chartered land of Kurmanath and a locana tree. To the north west there was a planted silk cotton tree, a field demarcating foot-path and on the margin of that land there was an odiţamma tree.

The boundary of the land of Kanjiyakabhiṭṭī, including the locality called Olinda was bounded to the east by a Locana tree on the boundary of the land of Orangitantras. To the south east there was a zigzag bend and a Hijjala tree and a silk-cotton tree. To the south there is a Kaṇṭāvakkara tree on the boundary of the land apportioned for the ‘Victory fortune navy’ (Vijayasrī-nau-bhūkta), a bamboo bush and Oracosajola and a Hijjala tree, a field dividing foot-path, a holy fig tree, a bamboo grove, a Lahuca tree and a dummbari mastaka (i.e., the head of the dummari).
To the south west the border of the land of Bhallabhithi which was the holding of Dhumaradeva. To the west there was a banyan tree with hanging roots and a hedge of bamboo and the north west was a bamboo bush touched the land of the 'Victory fortune navy'. To the north there was a field demarcating foot-path and a silk cotton tree following the Oracoṣajola and a Kasimla tree at the margin of the land of Brhadrāvā. Then a holy fig tree and a field dividing foot path. The north-east of the land touched a Bahūala tree standing on the boundary of the land of Orangi tantras.

**Importance:**

1. Dharmapāla granted land to Himāṅga who was a Rathika and proficient in martial art but he belonged to a famous Brāhmaṇa family of Krosāṅja village in Śravastī. The inscription depicted Śravastī to be an important seat of Brāhmaṇical culture. References to Saṃaveda Brāhmaṇas, Saṭkarma-the six sacred duties of a Brāhmaṇa, detailed description of the ancestors of the donee indicate the prevalence of Brāhmaṇical culture in this region under Dharmapāla.

2. The charter refers to the grant of two separate plot of land to two brothers indicates that they were no longer members of a joint family.

3. The charter mentions land of Orāṅgitantras (i.e., weavers from Orāṅ), land of Dhumāradeva, land of Brhadrāvā (chief Rabhā) and land apportioned for the ‘Victory fortune navy’ throws light on land holding systems of ancient Assam.

4. The inscription refers to a number of trees in reference to the demarcation of the boundary. These were Locana, Hijjala, silk-cotton, Kantavakkara tree, bamboo bush, fig tree, Lahuca tree, banyan tree, Kasimla tree, holyfig (vata) tree etc.
3.2.4.1.20 Puspabhadra Copperplate Inscription of Dharmapala:

History:

This grant was discovered by a cowherd boy from the dry bed of the Puspabhadra river, in North Guwahati. This inscription is now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (Vide. ACC. No. A. 18314, a -d). The inscription was first deciphered by Hemchandra Goswami and studied by various scholars. The grant consists of three copperplates in very good condition tied up with a ring and the royal seal containing the legend:

1. प्राचीनातिपतिः
2. श्री श्रीमती
3. वाममृतयु

A few letters in the last line of the second plate and the first line of the third plate are not in good condition. The script of the grant is North Indian Brahmi prevalent in this time. No date is found in this grant, however M.M. Sharma places the grant roughly in c. 1130 A.D. and K.L. Barua gives the date as c. 1110 A.D.

Contents:

The inscription starts with the victory to God Visnu as a saviour of the earth. Visnu in his Boar incarnation gave birth to Naraka with the Mother goddess Earth. From him Bhagadatta was born. In this great family Brahmapala was born and

founded the famous Pala dynasty. Gopāla was born from Brahmapāla. Harṣapāla was the son of Gopāla. Dharmapāla was born to Śrī Harṣapāla. Dharmapāla was dedicated to Dharma and through this inscription he appeals to the future kings to give up vanity on account of possessing the kingdom which was as transitory as the streak of lightning and to follow Dharma, which is the perennial source of pleasure. Then the inscription mentions that king Śrī Dharmapāla, who was the son to the lotus of the Pala dynasty, the crest jewel of the circle of poets, a possessor of the whole host of arts, an ocean (i.e., repository) for the jewels (ratna, i.e. best of best) in the form of virtues, who is endowed with pure fame has composed this prasasti.

Then the inscription refers to svasti Śrī Varāha (i.e., one who can trace his origin from the Boar incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu) Paramesvara Paramabhattaraka Mahārajādhirāja, the illustrious Dharmapalavarma-devapada, who was the Lord of Prājyotisa and who had demolished his endless enemies with his superior power for the wellbeing of his state and people made the proclamation that in the land of Guhesvara Digdola Vṛddha grāma 'presided over by' (or containing the land of god) Śrī Madhusūdana, capable of yielding ten thousand units of paddy, granted to Madhusūdana, who was a pure Brāhmaṇa with best of the qualities. The land donated was in the Pujarīviṣaya.

The inscription gives detail information of the donee and his ancestors. The inscription mentions that the village Khyātipali was adorned with a host of good Brāhmaṇas, was a dispeller of vices and seems to have been created by the creator
with great care as a temple of virtues. The Brāhmaṇas were always busy with performing sacrifices and chanting of the four Vedas and destroy their own sins by muttering the Prasamamantras in the time of taking bath in the three junctures of time (trisandhyāyam). In that place, there used to live the Brāhmaṇas, who studied the Madhyandinasakha of the Yajurveda and were born of the pure Maudgalya gotra having the pravaras viz; Autathya, Maudgalya and Āṅgirasa. In that family Brāhmaṇa Naravahana had a son named Bhaṣvara who was a chief Brāhmaṇa endowed with wealth and duly gifted with skill in arts. His intellect was rich with the knowledge of Mīmāṁsā and was a repository of the treaties of Cāṇakya. This Brāhmaṇa has taken vow to follow the path laid down by the Śruti (i.e., the Vedas) and the Smṛti (i.e., the Dharmasastras). Bhaṣvara, in order to be a house holder took the hand of Jīvā, who was born of a pure family and endowed with a charming beauty and commendable form of person, embellished her hand with bangles (kaṅkana) with his own hand, adorned with the auspicious matrimonial thread. From that couple a celebrated son named Sutanu was born. He was full of good qualities and good habits. He married Netrā a beautiful woman like a beautiful creeper of emerald, a green lotus-stalk, a creeper sprouting out of a bulb of delight and had her eyes like those of a young deer. Their son named Madhusūdana who from his boyhood ever instituted the details of the worship of the lotus-feet of Lord Mādhava. His wife was Patrā who was an inexplicable creation of a female form by the creator. Dharmapāla granted the above mentioned land to this Brāhmaṇa Madhusūdana from Kāmarūpanagar. This portion of the prasasti has been composed by one named Śrī Aniruddha with a
desire to earn merit by recounting the virtues of the high born ones. The grant was 
engraved by the engraver Śrīvīṁśa.

The inscription mentions the boundaries of the donated land in detail. The 
donated land was surrounded in the east by Nokka Debbaripāla, Govabha, Bhoga 
and Alipana. The border of the land was marked by the western bank of the tank of 
Sobbadi, a land dividing foot-path having reeds and the western bank of the Camyala 
joli (a stream), the south-east border was marked by the south bank of the Jaugalla 
river, and two streams named Nekkadeuli and Singadi running to the south and the 
south eastern side of the land of Dijjaratihadi. To the south the river Bekkasuska. To 
the south-west a land dividing foot path having reeds. To the west at the boundary of the 
land of the Abanci Kaivarttas having Abanca as the occupant, there were Thaisadobbhi 
and Cakkojana (a stream) and a stump of Parali tree. At the north west there 
were three bamboo trees. To the north there was a stump of a Suvarṇadaru tree at 
the south bank of the Dijamakkajola (a stream). The north - west curves bounded by 
the same land and the land under the possession of Māno, and belonging to Nokkataḍa 
and half stream of the Dijamakka which also bounded the north-eastern side. The 
half stream of Dijamakkajola was at the border of the lands of Debbaripāla, Bhoga 
and Alipanā and the stump of a sweet Asvaththa tree.

**Importance:**

The Puṣpabhadra Grant gives immense source material to study the 
political, social, religious and economic life of the people of ancient Assam.

1. The most special feature of this inscription is that Dharmapāla paid his homage to
Lord Viṣṇu instead of Lord Siva. This is a somewhat very striking point regarding religious history during the later part of the reign of Dharmapāla. Here we have found the unique change of life and philosophy of the king Dharmapāla as he described himself in the earlier two grants as hero (Jitavīrāticakra) in his young age; and in the present grant due to his old age he describes himself as a consummate poet (kavicakra vālacudamani).

2. Dharmapāla was leaning towards Vaisnavism, for which he generously made a gift of land of ten thousand unit of paddy to a Vaiṣṇava Brahmaṇa. It is quite natural to assume that in his old age Dharmapāla paid homage to Lord of the Lords Śrī Viṣṇu to get renunciation after enjoying a heroic life with Dharma, Artha, Kāma and the last effort, the Mokṣa, he is supposed to gain by worshipping Lord Viṣṇu.

3. This period also witnessed a new vigour in the Brahmānical religion. Brahmaṇas also well organised by enriching themselves with the knowledge of Śruti, Mīmāṃsā, Smṛti and other important studies like Caṇakya (Arthasastra). By referring to four generations of the ancestors of the donee, the composer of the inscription tried to indicate the purity and status of the family of the donee.

4. The boundary description refers to individual land holding by one Māno, chartered land to temple, land holding Kaivartta, various trees, rivers etc supply important data to study socio-cultural life of the people of this period.

3.2.4.1.21 Kamauli Copperplate Inscription of Vaidyadeva:

History:

In October 1892 twenty five copperplate inscriptions together were found
in the village Kamauli situated at Varanasi. Arther Venis, the then Principal of the Benares Sanskrit College studied these inscriptions. Three of the said twenty five inscriptions make the present grant of Vaidyadeva. Various scholars studied the inscription. The present charter is now available in the Lucknow State Museum (Accession No. E. 38 with surplus Nos. S. 2967 (the Royal Seal), 68,69 and 70 (vide catalogue of Archaeological exhibits in the U.P. Provincial Museum, Lucknow. Pt. I. Inscriptions, by Pt. Hirananda Shastri.

Arther Venis has fixed the date of the inscription as 1142 A.D. and the same date generally remains undisputed till today. The grant consists of three copperplates attached to the hook-like band of the handle of a ladle-shaped seal containing simply the figure of a seated four handed Ganesa. The plates measure 93/4 by 7. The script is Devanāgarī which has been current in the 12th century A.D. The language of the inscription is Sanskrit. It contains 38 verses in various metres and fifteen lines in prose. The prose portion is full of Desi words and the verse portion also exhibits a good deal of influence by the local Prakrt of the day.

Contents:

The inscription begins with the word ‘anāṁ’ and syllable ‘Om’ and salutes to Lord Vasudeva and then mentioned the word ‘svasti’. Then the inscription praises victorious Hari who was the pillar for measuring the space and the pitcher for the

175. M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., P. 274.
preservation of the seed of the Universe and who assumed the form of Boar.

The maṅgala verse is followed by the genealogical list of Vaidyadeva. Vaidyadeva’s father Bodhideva was a minister of Rāmapāla, son of Vigrahaṇapāla. Vaidyadeva was also a minister of Kumārapāla, the Lord of Gauda. The inscription refers to a battle in Southern Banḍa where Kumārapāla became victorious. Kumārapāla, the king of Gauda, appointed Vaidyadeva in the Eastern Land, in place of king Tingyadeva after hearing of his (Tingyadeva’s) hostility. Vaidyadeva defeated Tingyadeva in a battle with the energy of his own arms and became the king himself. Then the inscription mentions that Śrī Vaidyadeva attained a vast glory as the result of performing a sacrifice and shone resplendent having performed a homa (i.e. sacrifice) with the offering a Śrīphalaś appearing in the form of the rows of chopped off heads of the enemies, and then offering the Pumahūti (i.e., the final oblation) with the body of the hostile king in a fire, produced from the (friction of the) Arāṇi woods in the form of arms, fed by faggots in the form of the crowds of soldiers, and adored in the form of battles. The grant, compares Vaidyadeva with all the qualities of the ocean except the ocean is an abode of water and vanquished by Rāma but Vaidyadeva was not. He was compared with Brhaspati in knowledge, a sun in valour, a Viṣṇu in noble personalities, an ocean in fortitude, a Kuvera in wealth and a Karṇa in generosity, but of all his numerous qualities he was similar only to his own self. His brother named Śrī Budhadeva resembles with the younger brother of Śrī Rāma (i.e., Laksmana) and was an abode of the wealth of piety and good conduct. He had a shining fame resulting from the prowess of his arms as well as he was similar to the
wish-yielding tree (i.e. the Kalpavrksa) because of his gifts, fresh sprouts in the form of good fruits, and because of giving pleasure to the host of birds (dvijas) in the form of the host of Brahmaṇas. The description of genealogy and personal achievements of Vaidyadeva is followed by the description of the donee and his family. The donee of the grant is Śrī Śrīdhara. His grand father Bharata belonged to the great Kausika gotra who had far extending fame and lived in the strongly administered village called Bhāva in the Varendrī region. His son Yudhisthīra was foremost amongst the Brahmaṇas and the intelligent ones, the abode of an intelligence purified through the learning of śastras and Vedas and repository of brilliant fame arising from his skill in Vedic rites. His wife Pai was of boundless beauty and was a repository of good character, generosity and grace and was the very solace to his (Yudhisthīra’s) heart. As a result of the maturity of good deeds done in several previous births, their son Śrī Śrīdhara was born. He was adored by the best of Brahmaṇas. Śrī Śrīdhara became the foremost of the learned Brahmaṇas because of visiting holy places, study of Vedas, offering of gifts, teaching, performance of sacrifices and rigid observance of vows. Even in the Kaliage he could draw out the Lord Somanatha (i.e. Śiva) from a Guggulu tree and propitiate him by taking the vow of not begging and by fasting both by day and night. He was the foremost amongst the scholars well versed in the Karmakanda and the Jñānakanda of the Vedic literature and repository of all sorts of penances. He became as celebrated as Brhaspati through his mastery in the Sruti and the Smṛti literature. To this Brahmaṇa, king Vaidyadeva has given this charter on the
Visuvatī (saṁkranti) on Vaisākha on an Ekādāsi (tithi) for gaining heaven.

The inscription refers to the issue of the charter from illustrious, victorious royal head-quarter situated at Hamśakonci by the great devotee of Siva, the great devotee of Viṣṇu, the Mahārajādhirāja Paramesvara Paramabhaṭṭaraka illustrious Vaidyadeva. The king in perfect state of health, greets, informs and commands, as they deserve in order of superiority and proximity, the Karsakas and other citizens beginning with the Catta, the Bhatt and the Visayillaka, belonging to the villages of Sāntibāda and Maṇḍara possessed by Gangadhara Bhatta and situated in the Viṣaya of Bāda in the Maṇḍala of Kāmarupa, in the Bhukti of Prāgjyotisa. The grant was issued according to the principle of Bhuccidra and consisting of waters, dry lands, whole forests, gardens and grazing lands, provided with all sources of income and free from all types of taxes and levies and shall be enjoyed as long as the sun and the moon shall endure.

The boundary description of the donated village Sāntibāda and Maṇḍara-grāma is abound in non-Sanskritic words and none of the scholars has been able to provide the precise meaning of the boundary. The eight boundaries of the villages of Sāntibāda and Maṇḍara taken together, are determined as follows:

In the eastern direction, the boundary extends from the whole of the land of Digdaṇḍidhara up to the western bank. In the north-eastern direction......... In the northern direction............... up to Dīghadāndi there is the boundary of the south-eastern direction. Thus eight boundaries (are indicated). (lines 53 to 61)

In conclusion the grant refers to the imprecatory and benedictory verses,
names of the composer and engraver, the causes of issuing of the grant and state words of sages. In the imprecatory verse the king warns those who appropriate the grant will see the destruction of his children and then will have to live in the hell for a full cycle. In the benedictory verse the grant states that the honourable man, who would protect it will prosper with sons and wealth and then after enjoying the heaven will attain the adorable abode of Viṣṇu for ever. The inscription states that the eulogy has been composed by Śrī Manoratha, the son of a Brāhmaṇa Śrī Murāri, the preceptor of the king. The engraver of the grant has been the highly intelligent artist-Karnabhadra who is courteous, modest and skilled in his work.

The inscription states that the king desired to create a legend by showing valour in respect of the circle of enemies. The fame of Brāhmaṇa Śrīdhara has also been constantly increasing and the king has donated this grant with pleasure to that foremost Brāhmaṇa simply because of a single word of learned Gonandana, the Superintendent of religious affairs.

At last the inscription added the words of sages and state that one who confiscates the land given by himself or others, become worm of the filth and rots with the manes. By stealing a cow or a single gold coin or even half a finger of land one goes to the hell and all the wealth accumulated by one also gets plunged.

Land has been donated by many kings beginning with Sagara. Who so ever happens to be the master of land, gets the results of the donation.

**Importance:**

1. For the first time the Kamauli Copperplate Grant invokes Lord Vāśudeva and
praises Hari in the Boar incarnation in the mangala verse. The newer interest in the cult of Vasudeva indicates the growing popularity of Vasudeva cult in ancient Assam. The grant also indicates another important fact that the donee of the grant engaged himself in performance of sacrifices, rigid observance of vows, could draw out the Lord Somanath from the Guggulu tree, well versed in the Karmakanda and the Jnanaakanda. The imprecatory and benedictory verses indicate predominance of Brahmanical culture in that time.

2. The elephant mark of the seals of the earlier Kamarupa kings has been very conveniently converted into the figure of Ganesa. This conversion assumes a greater significance because the Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva begins with a mangala verse addressed to Ganesa.\textsuperscript{176}

3. The inscription proudly declares that Vaidyadeva was the son of a minister named Bodhideva who served under Ramapala, the son of Vigrahapala. Vaidyadeva also started his career as a vassal of Kumrapala and presumably after the death of Kumrapala by the fourth year of his rule declared independence.\textsuperscript{177}. The inscription also mentions the killing of Bhi, the Kaivartta ruler of North Bengal by Ramapala.\textsuperscript{178}

4. Hamsakoncii, Vaidyadeva's victorious camp, from which he issued his grant, appears to have been within the modern district of Kamrup. K.L. Barua says, “the suffix koncii, Kunchi, or Kuchi occurs in the names of numerous villages in this

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., P. 287.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., P. 288.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
District, e.g. Sualkuchi, Kamarkuchi, Ranakuchi, Patacherkuchi, Vyahkuchi, Kahikuchi, Majkuchi, Dongarkuchi etc. Such names are rare even in the contiguous District of Goalpara, Darrong and Nowgong.\(^{179}\) The reference of Hamsākoñci also indicates the expansion of Vaidyadeva’s territory towards the east.

3.2.4.1.22. Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva:

**History:**

The Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva have been presented to the Asiatic Society of Bengal by W. Winkler, the then Assistant Executive Engineer of Tezpur. The text of the inscription has been published for the first time by Hultzsch. Meanwhile in February, 1886 Fleet took an excellent impression of the document and Kielhorn re-edited the text on the basis of the same impression. M.M. Sharma reproducing the text on the basis of the photo-lithograph given by Kielhorn, with necessary improvements.\(^{180}\)

The document consists of five copperplates of uniform size measuring approximately \(8' \times 5'\), bunched together with a ring passing through holes given in the middle of upper margin of each plate. The ring must have been again connected with the seal, which is now not available. The writing has been found in a very good state of preservation. Plates I to IV are numbered with numeral figures engraved in the middle of the right margin of the second page of each of these plates. The script of this inscription belongs to the Eastern variety of the northern

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\(^{180}\) M.M. Sharma narrates the discovery of the Assam Plates in his anthology, I.A.A., P. 191.
alphabet as it was current in the 12th century A.D. The language of the script is Sanskrit.

Contents:

The inscription begins with the ओऽ sign and the syllable Om. The ओऽ sign of other inscriptions till that of Vaidyadeva is like the Devanāgarī ‘nine’, while the ओऽ of this inscription is like the Assamese / Bengali ‘Seven’ and salutes Lord Vāsudeva. Then the inscription invokes Lambodara and Viṣṇu who in the form of a hog rescued the Earth from the Pātāla (i.e., the nether world).

After this mangala verse the inscription traces the genealogical list of Vallabhadeva from Bhāskara who belonged to the Candra dynasty. From this celebrated Bhāskara, king Rayārideva was born who was dear to the earth because of generating a confidence, a leader in battle, a banner as it were, of the sacrifice meant for causing the widowhood of the wives of the enemies, a killer of lakhs of adversaries with whom residing the goddess Fortune for whole of his life though she is fickle. That king Rayārideva rendered fruitful service against a majestic war where he confronted with the foremost elephants of Vāṅga and known as Trailokyasimha (i.e., a lion of the three worlds). Udayakarna sprang up from king Rayārideva who acquired a position over the heads of the kings while giving delight to all the people with reasonable taxes and heaps of wealth. Udayakarna alias Nihsāṅkasimha and his wife Ahiavadevi received a matchless boon of having the

181. M.M. Sharma writes that the ओऽ is represented by Kielhorn in the text by the syllable Oṁ.
son Vallabhadeva, who used to be sung as Nārāyana by the valorous sons of the kings like Garudas. He knew the art of sword as a weapon, dagger and the supreme in the science of archery and the rider of the host of Kāmboja horses and best elephants. After the description of genealogy and personal achievements of Vallabhadeva the inscription states that Vallabhadeva, the son of Nīhsāñkasīṃha gave an alms-house for the hungry ones, at the instance of his father, for his mother’s obtaining the heaven, for ever. The alms-house was near the temple of Mahādeva, situated at the centre of the Hāpyācā mandala and at the vicinity of the town of Kīrtipura. For the maintenance of this widely celebrated alms-house, the illustrious Vallabhadeva in the Saka year 1107 at the sun’s auspicious northwardly course in an auspicious moment under a favourable rāsi (i.e., a sign of zodiac) granted along with the bushes and trees, villages, inhabitants, waters and dry lands, seven villages, duly situated within their four boundaries. The names of the seven villages and their four boundaries are Cadi, Devumkoncī Sajjāpīga, Vangaka, Samsrahīkoncīka together with Dosipātaka and Soñcipātaka. On the east of these villages is Munṭakasvastha, on the west Gosārīdhara, on the north Rajakāni and on the south Karddamālika. Outside this boundary, in between Maitaḍā and Dvāripāṭa six hamlets are given and Acaḍahēḍi, Thāṭhi, Padharu, Vathola, Lohataḍi and Rasāyana- these five assistants are also given along with their sons and wives.

In conclusion the grant appeals to his successors to protect the grant and in case, his own family becomes extinct and some other king occurs then also he requests not to obliterate his fame. In the imprecatory verse the inscription
states that if any person at any time violates the grant then the Primordial Hog would forth with mete out punishment to them. One who confiscates the land given by himself or by others, becomes worm of the filth and rots with the manes. In the benedictory verse (the inscription refers to those religious) minded by nature and pays attention solely to religious deeds, would enjoy in this life wealth with children and grand children and in the life here after would obtain the various delights of heaven in large measures. Land has been donated by many kings beginning with Sagara, whoever happens to be the master of the land gets the result of the donation.

**Importance:**

1. The grant is silent if Vallabhadeva was a king of Kāmarūpa or his seat of government. P.N. Bhattacharya\(^{183}\) did not recognise Vallabha to be belonging to Assam and Sir E.A. Gait (A History of Assam) did not make any mention of the Assam Plates. Scholars like H.C. Ray\(^{184}\) N.N. Basu\(^{185}\) and N.K. Bhattasali\(^{186}\) recognise Vallabhadeva and other three as belonging to ancient Assam as successors of Vaidyadeva. R.C. Majumdar identifies the Kāmarūpa king mentioned in the Deopāra inscription\(^{187}\) as Vaidyadeva but H.C. Roy\(^{188}\) identifies him as Rayārideva. K.L. Barua\(^{189}\) opines that Rayārideva fought on the side of the Kāmarūpa king who was

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183. P.N. Bhattacharya, K.S., Bhūmikā P. 43.
184. H.C. Ray, Dynastic History of North India. I.
188. H.C. Roy, Dynastic History of North India, I.
probably Vaidyadeva himself. In the opinion of M.M. Sharma, Vallabhadeva ruled in Kāmarūpa, most probably as an independent ruler and his kingdom comprised the modern district of Kamrup and probably also of some more adjoining areas. His suggestion rests on the following grounds.\(^{190}\)

a) The names ending konclī and dhara are typically Kāmarūpa names.

b) He identifies Hāpyaca maṇḍala on the plates of Vallabha with the name Haṇposa grāma of the Parbatīya Grants of Vanamāla and the Hāpyomaviṣaya of the Gauhati Grant of Indrapāla. Both Haṇposa and Hāpyoma belonged to the Uttarākula.

M.M. Sharma inclined to identify Samsrāhi koṇcīka with Saṅsārī, at a distance of 10 km to the north of Brahmaputra, opposite of Pandu. Maṇḍhava, the donor of the Nīlācala plates whose primary deity was Gaṇesa and describes himself as Nihsaṅkasiṁha Kāmarūpesvara (line, 4) donated land in the Pandu area in the south bank. M.M. Sharma presumes that as Maṇḍhava belonged to the line of Vallabha (Nihsaṅkasiṁha Udayakarna was the father of Vallabha) and donated land in the Pandu area, Vallabha also belonged to the same land and donated land in the modern Saṅsārī, in the northern bank of the Brahmaputra river and immediately opposite to Pandu.\(^{191}\) The view of M.M. Sharma also strengthened by two references to the Boar incarnation of Viṣṇu found in the Assam Plates of Vallabha (VV. 2 and 5).

c) Another important fact reflects in the charter is the grant of Taṭhi, Padharu,

\(^{190}\) M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., PP. 300-301.

\(^{191}\) Ibid.
Vathola, Lohataji and Rasayana along with their wives and sons to the same free feeding alms-house. The inscription thus throws light on the system of supply of labour to religious institution by the patron king.

3.2.4.1.23 A Fragmentary Copperplate Inscription from Nagaon:

**History:**

In 1988 the Assam State Museum has acquired a copperplate inscription from Karaiyani Bamungaon, Palasani in Nagaon District of Assam. It is reported that the inscription was found while digging earth in an old tank. The inscription was deciphered and studied by Dr. D. Chutia.

The inscription along with the seal is said to have been found encased within a stone box, consisting of two halves which are not hinged. The upper half or the cover measures 0.58 metre X 0.46 metre X 0.11 metre with the sides sloping out. Similarly, the lower half of the box measures 0.58 m X 0.46 X 0.14 m.

The inscription, in all probability a land grant charter is damaged, and whatever remains of it is very badly preserved. At present we have four fragments of it, representing the Museum accession No. 4793-4796 along with an elephant seal. The largest piece, (accession No. 4796) measuring 21cm X 11cm, appears to be the first plate, since it has writings only on one side; this is also confirmed by the contents, which forms part of the eulogical section of the epigraph, similar to other such records. This plate contains the remnants of eight lines of writing. Sections of the

writing on either end of the plate, lengthwise, have been lost. A portion of the plate at the bottom, likewise, containing at least 3/4 lines, if not more, has also been lost, another piece, representing No. 4795. (size - 11 cm x 7 cm) having remnants of writing on either page appears to be a fragment of the middle plate. The other two pieces, exhibit No. 4793 (size 16 cm x 6 1/2 cm. and No. 4794 (size 10 cm x 5 cm) which contain writing on one side only, and thus appear to represent the last plate. Thus, it can be safely presumed that the charter under study consisted of at least three copper plates, if not more. The writings are in a very bad state of preservation, some letters having been erased due to corrosion, and thus, having lost their identity, it is very difficult to restore the text containing pieces of information of vital importance. The seal however, remains intact.

The script of the epigraph resembles to that of Viṣṇu and Saṅkara-Nārāyaṇa. Image Inscriptions obtained from Deopāñi. The language of the inscription is Sanskrit. The record appears to be a land grant charter. From the two fragments (No. 4793 & 4794), indications seem to have been made about the boundary of the land donated at a certain Viṣaya to a Brāhmaṇa from Kāmarūpa. The donor of the epigraph is Mahārājādhīrāja Śrī - Jīvarāja, which is evident from the legend in the seal attached to the record.

Contents:

The record seems to begin with a salutation in the first verse. This is followed as usual by a reference to the legend related to Viṣṇu’s assuming the form of the Boar and rescuing the goddess Earth from the deluge, and causing in the process
the birth of Naraka from Earth. There is mention of Bhagadatta and his son Vajradatta, after which there born an illustrious prince whose name is missing in the extant text. There is also a reference to the goddess Kamiksa in the last available line. Whether this goddess Kamiksa of the present text is the same as Kamakhya is not known. The description of the deity is found in the fragment of the middle plate. A reference to the family of a Kamarupa Brahmana probably the donee of the charter is made in the other side of the fragment.

The Seal:

The seal (Museum accession No. 4792) found along with the inscription is oval in shape, measuring 8.5 cm. x 7.5 cm. at its broadest part and very finely modelled. It has a raised rim around about 0.2 cm. thick and 0.6 cm. high with a hollow inside. The seal, thus is of the shape of a ladle which is typical of the seals of the rulers of ancient Assam.

In the upper part of the sunken inside of the seal, there is the counter sunk figure of an elephant standing in face, the emblem of ancient Pragjyotisa. Below it is, in three lines, the legend of the ruling prince, which runs as 'श्री महाराणाधिकार | श्री नीवर्त | नरध'. The characters of the script are similar to the script of the inscription. However, the present seal differs in certain respects, from those of the rulers of the three royal houses of ancient Assam. The shape inside the seal of the early Kamarupa rulers are conical in shape and a ridged horizontal straight line passing centrally has divided the inner hollow into two halves, the upper half containing the elephant emblem either in standing or sitting posture, and the lower half containing the
legend. The outerface of the present seal resembles the Dubi seal. But the shape inside the present one is oval and the horizontal ridge is absent. On the other hand the legend in case of the Kamarupa rulers runs as “..... svasti-sriīnān-Pragjyotisa-dhipāvayomahārajādhiraja-srī.....” But in case of the present one the first part, viz “svasti.........anvaya” is omitted.

All these differences raised suspicion whether Mahārajādhirāja Śrī Jīvarāja belongs to any of the three ruling houses of Prāgjyotisa - Kamarupa kingdom.

Identity of the king:

Scholars on Assam history suggest various interpretation regarding the identity of the king.

1. The Śaṅkara-Narāyaṇa Stone Image Inscription refers to a ruler, named Mahārajādhirāja Śrī - Jīva, bearing some amount of affinity to the name of the donor of the present charter. Dr. M.M. Sharma suggests that since ‘Jīva’ does not make any sense, the name of the king was Śrī-Jiva and the syllable ‘ra’ is an excess addition due to scribal mistake. But Dr. D. Chutia thinks that the name of the said king was Śrī-Jīvarāja, the syllable ‘ja’ was by mistake or oversight, missed by the scribe at the time of copying, due, perhaps, to his confusion with the subsequent two similar syllables ‘ra’ and ‘jya’. But if we accept this explanation then also appears another question related to the location of the kingdom of Śrī-Jīvarāja.

The find spot of the Śaṅkara-Narāyaṇa Stone Image Inscription is Deopāni, at present in modern Golaghat District, indicates that Mahārajādhirāja Śrī Jīvara (ja ) held sway over the area. The discovery of a number of inscriptions and other

193. M.M. Sharma, I.A.A., Appendix No. 3 f.n. 1., P. 310.
archaeological objects in the Deopānī and Davāka region prompted Dr. Chutia to identify the region under the pale of the once famous Davāka kingdom mentioned in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta (c. 330-38 A.D.). Kalyanvarman of the Varman dynasty annexed the kingdom of Davāka with Kāmarūpa in the 5th century A.D.194 Many scholars attempt to identify Maharajadhiraja Sri Jivara of the Sākara-Narayana Stone Image Inscription as the immediate successor of Balavarman II195. H.N.Dutta identifies this region with the Doiyang Dhansiri Valley which is an additional (Upari) territory or hinterland, not directly under Pragjyotisa.196 The Royal epithet ‘Maharajadhiraja’ is indicative of the status of a paramount sovereignty197.

3.2.4.2. Inscription on Copperbell: The Copper bell Inscription of Sri Kumāra:

**History:**

The big Copperbell was discovered among the hoards of the Narakasur hills, Kahilipara, within greater Guwahati, Assam (The hoard was discovered by chance sometime in the year 1964.)198 The inscription on the copperbell was deciphered and published by Dr. P.C. Choudhury199 and D.Sarma200.

The height and the circumference of the bell are 10 and 1.4 respectively. The inscription is undated. Most of the letters of the inscription have similarities with

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those of the Hāyuṇṭhal Grant of Harjaravarmadeva and the rest with his successors of the 10th-11th century A.D. and even of the Ḍanaibarasibowa Rock Inscription.

Contents:

The writing of the inscription is as follows: “Sri Kumāra - Devarājeva sa yatmanā Devasuraraa (Devayuvaraja) hastyantaka - dadhyakabhuttacya puja iyam (iva) tena (yena) devatakāryyadikantaisa ghantaka datta”. P.C. Choudhury translated the inscription as follows: “Sri Kumara who was like Indra and was the killer of the elephants belonging to the king of Devas and Asuras, meaning Indra again (kings and princes) was or became the protector of this worship of (Indra). This bell was given by him (Kumara) for use in the worship of the deities.”

Importance:

Indra is the Prime Heavenly deity in the Vedas. As Indra worship is specially mentioned here, it is evident that the said worship of the deities centered round the deity of the Vedas.

The donor of the bell as well as the objects of the said hoard was Śri Kumara. Kumāra, the name of a Kamarūpa king occurs in the Hāyuṇṭhal Grant of Harjaravarman who belonged to early 9th century A.D. P.N. Bhattacharya places the date of his reign in the 8th century. Therefore it was the king who built a temple, dedicated to the said deities or introduced the worship of the deities centering round Indra in a temple or temples that were of long existence.

201. P.C. Choudhury, Churning of Nectar, P. 93.
3.2.4.3. **Inscription on Bronze Images:**

3.2.4.3.1. **Inscribed Sun Image on Bronze (Narakasur Hoard):**

**History:**

The Sun image on bronze was also discovered in the Narakasur hoard.²⁰³ There is a short epigraph on the back side of the sun-disc or the nimbus placed behind the head of the central deity. The epigraph is in a very bad state of preservation.

**Contents:**

The inscription was deciphered and studied by Dr. D. Chutia²⁰⁴ as follows:

1. sri - divya - aditya
2. narayanah - harjjara - de-
3. vasya - rajye

English translation of the inscription is “This illustrious and magnificent (image of god) Aditya Narayana (was made) during the reign of (or in the realm of) the (king) Harjara Deva.” Thus, according to the epigraph, it is an image of Aditya - Narayana made during the reign of king Harjara Deva (c. 835 A.D.).

**Importance:**

The syncretic images in Hindu iconography illustrate the fusion or rapprochement between two, three or even four rival cults. Hari-Hara murti has emphasised the reconciliation between Vaishnavism and Saivism. In the light of this the expression Aditya Narayana is synonymous with Surya - Narayana. Dr. D. Chutia

identifies the central image or the rider of the central deity as Garuḍa, who is a co-uterine brother of Aruna and a vahana of Viṣṇu. Another important point is that the inscription bears the evidence of development of the art of metal iconography in ancient Assam.

3.2.4.3.2. Sun Image from Titabor:

**History:**

A bronze icon of Sun was recovered in 1988 from Amgurikhat in Titabor. The pedestal of this image contains a short inscription in characters datable to c. 900-c.1000 A.D. This inscription was deciphered by Dharmeswar Chutia which he read as Visvakundasya Kirti, perhaps was the name of the artist who sculptured the image.

The inscription also bears the evidence of sun worship and development of the art of iconography in ancient Assam.

3.2.5 Inscriptions on Coins:

**Coinage of the Varman Dynasty:**

In early 1972, not less than thirty one gold coins were discovered at Paglatek near Goalpara, Assam. The State Museum, Guwahati was able to recover fourteen pieces of coins. One of the fourteen coins, the best among the lot bears the name Śrī Kumāra. The description of the coin is given below:

Obv.: Within a border of large dots, a royal (male) figure with long hair (?) stands

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in 'Tribhanga' pose, with the head turned to the right. The right hand wields an arrow, while the half raised left hand holds a bow. Behind the right hand stands an object, probably a standard embedded in a pot. The legend below the left arm elbow reads $\text{Sri} \text{Kumāra}$ (in two lines) in Prakrit Brahmi script. The letters, which may be assigned to the seventh century A.D. on Palaeographic grounds, are clear and bold. 

Rev: Within a border of large dots and a circle, an eight armed female deity stands in the tribhanga pose, with her head turned to her left, two hands holding an object. There are traces of some letters along the margin.

Metal: Gold: Wt. 5.7 grams (Intended weight - half Satamana); Diam, 19mm.  

Except the coins of Sri Kumāra the coins of the hoard has been identified with the kings of Samatata. All the coins in the hoard are of typical Samatata types, similar to pieces found in the Mainamati area. On stylistic grounds, the coin of Sri Kumāra is placed as the earliest piece. On the basis of Mainamati gold coins, B.N. Mukherjee suggests that Sri Kumāra ruled after Devavarman. But at present it has been accepted that since Samatata was under Bhaskaravarman after the end of Sasānaka's reign Bhaskaravarman struck these coins in this region rather than in the capital at Prāgijyotisa, primarily for use in Samatata region where gold coins were already being struck. Thus the gold piece of Sri Kumāra can be regarded the first numismatic evidence from the kingdom of Kamarupa.

**Coinage of the Mleccha Dynasty of Salastambha:**

A series of hoards discovered in various parts of Assam assigned to the 9th

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210. Ibid., P. 14.
211. Ibid., PP. 17-18.
212. Ibid.
century A.D. which conclusively proved that copper coinage was introduced in the Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa kingdom by some of the Mleccha rulers. In May 1977 a group of thirty three copper coins was discovered at Dhulapadung Tea Estate. These coins bear one letter legends in the proto-Assamese script. The reverse of the coins are plain. Details of the coins are given in an article by R.D. Choudhury. D.C. Sircar expressed the opinion that the two letters Va and Ha could be ascribed to the 9th century A.D. and that attribution has been generally accepted ever since. It is to be noted that long before the collection of the Dhulapadung hoard, two similar coins came to light through the Kāmarūpa Anusandhāna Samiti, Guwahati. In subsequent years a number of coins was discovered in many parts of the State Viz; the Tulip hoard (2195 pieces) discovered at the Tulip Tea Estate, at Nakuchi Bargaon (781 pieces) in Kamrup District, at Neogpara, Kalaigaon in Udalguri District. (2 pieces) and in Marigaon District (10 pieces).

The coins of the Tulip hoard and the Nakuchi Bargaon hoard bear a single letter legend Ha, Ta, Va, Ga, and reverse Va. The two copper coins found at Kalaigaon and the ten coins found at Patrabari, Marigaon bear single letter legend Ha and Va respectively. It has now been accepted that Ha represents Harjaravarman, Va

probably indicates the names of Vanamālavarmā, Balāvarman and perhaps also Virabahu, while Ta stands for Tyāgasimha. One coin of Tyāgasimha not only bears the initial letter Ta, but also his name in abbreviated form, in the local Prakṛt dialect as Tyaa Sia (Tyāgasimha-> Tya’ asīha-> Tyasia). The Ga letter probably indicate Ganda as there are no king to represent the letter Ga. The use of the local Prakṛt language or Kamarupi Prakṛt in inscription was very common in this part of the country during the ninth century A.D. 220 One of the Nakuchi Bargāon coins bearing the letter Ta was noticed to be shining like silver and very different from the copper coins from the Tulip hoard. the Tulip coins were made of 99.9% copper where as in the Nakuchi coins, copper is present only 62.29% and 28.23% are tin. 221 It appears that at a certain stage the Mleccha kings changed from a copper to a bronze alloy for their coins. Bronze is not found as a natural alloy, so the tin and the copper must have been mixed intentionally. After the end of the Mleccha dynasty around 900 A.D. no further copper coins were issued by the rulers of Pragjyotisa-Kamarapa. 222

Possible Coinage of the Pāla Dynasty:

Besides these hoards two more gold coins have come to light. Ajit Ghose who first Published the coins, had read the legend as (a) Sri (b) ma (c) harsa (d) va (e) n deva (f) Pala. 223 Ghose identifies this king with Devapaṇa of Bengal. Lallanji Gopal had later

222. Ibid, P.43.
on incorporated the particulars of the said coin in his Monograph. D. C. Sircar expressed his doubt on the reading by Ghose. According to him the correct reading should have been “the illustrious Harsavat Devapala.” J.P. Singh discussed all the aspects of the coin and comments that Śrī Harśapāla of the Pāla dynasty has a better claim to be the issuer of the coin. But the superb style of the coin led Mr. Rhodes and Bose to think whether the metal workers in Kāmarūpa in the twelfth century were capable of producing such a piece, so it is very unlikely to have originated from Assam.

The other gold coin which is very crude of the imitation of Gupta type is attributed to king Prthu of the 13th century AD. J.P. Singh has also proposed him the Kāmarūpa king Prthu who ruled during the first quarter of the 13th century A.D. The gold coin of Prthu is too similar to the Paglatek coins and according to R. Rhodes and S.K. Bose the coin is similar to the coin of Prthubala of Samatata and no examples have been discovered in Assam.