CHAPTER - X

Socio-Economic and Educational Condition of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana

Varṇāśrama-dharma are the fundamental feature of the social system of Kāmarūpa, prevalent from 4th to 12 century A.D. These are the very special aspects of the Aryanisation of the society of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. Kings seem to take special care to preserve the traditional division of society, namely, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra. In the inscriptions they were frequently referred to as the protector of Varṇāśramadharma, upholder of the duties of all classes. In the Nidhanpur grant, Bhāskaravarman is described as being created for the purpose of re-establishing the institution of classes and orders, which had for a long time past became confused. It is said of king Indrapāla that during his reign the earth was happy and greatly flourishing, and became law that, yields all desires as in the time of Prthu, because the laws of the four Āśramas and of the four varṇas were observed in their proper divisions.

It should however be noted that varṇa (colour) had by this time lost its original significance, became synonymous with jāti,
the system which laid emphasis on birth and heredity. Consequently the original division of the people into four varṇas had been submerged and numerous new castes and sub-castes had been evolved, mainly by the development of different arts and crafts and professions. Tribal social and religious factors were also at work and gradually adding to their number. But unfortunately except in a few, the epigraphs mention very little about social organisation.

In the inscriptions, however, the four stages (āśrama) into which man’s span of life itself was classified shows the pattern of life. Brahmačaryya (a stage in which the three varṇas, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya studied in teacher’s house), Gārhasthya, the second stage when one enters in a family life by completion of education and discharges his debt to his ancestors by getting sons and he was able to perform sacrifice to get god’s grace. When he becomes aged he enters to the stage of Vānaprastha. After spreading the third part of his life in the forest he spends the rest of his life as a Yati or Sannyāsin. Some scholars doubt the proper practice of it in the forest in two stages. However there is constant evidence of the abdication of king who embraced a life of renunciation, detached from the world.
After the fall of the imperial power of the Guptas in the later part of the 5th century A.D., caused the migration of a large number of Brāhmaṇas to Kāmarūpa. It is evident that the patronage which Kāmarūpa kings extended to learned men and religious teachers attracted a large number of learned men to the country. The Nidhanpur charter alone reveals that the kings adopted a systematic polity of settling Brāhmaṇas in the kingdom by gift of land and by the system of an agraḥāra for their religious pursuits. The Khanāmukhi plates recorded a gift of land by king Dharmapāla to a learned Brāhmaṇa who hailed from Madhyadeśa, “the well known place of Brāhmaṇas who constantly performed sacrifices and were reluctant to accumulate riches.” According to Silimpur grant king Jayapāla persistently pressed the Brāhmaṇas of Puṇḍra to accept nine hundred gold coins in cash and a grant of land yielding an income of 1000 coins. According to Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva, “Gifts and donations to Brāhmaṇas were regarded as good fruits and fresh sprouts.” In fact on account of the constant royal patronage Kāmarūpa seems to have become a resort of the Brāhmaṇas of the neighbouring provinces. Moreover, as the tide of Buddhism began to subside in Northern India, the Brāhmaṇas of Kāmarūpa began to migrate westward. It is observed by the scholars that
most of the Brāhmaṇa families of modern state of Assam, West Bengal are the descendants of Brāhmaṇs of Kāmarūpa.

The social organisation of Brāhmaṇas are distinguished by gotras and Veda-Sākhās. Both were important fundamentally in matters relating to inheritance, marriage, worship, sacrifice, the performance of daily sandhyā prayers and so forth. It meant that when one traces his descent from the ancient sage, Yamadagni, his gotra is Yāmadagni. Similarly, there are Vāsiṣṭha, Kāśyapa, Bhāradvāja, Sāndilya gotra etc. They were originally attached to certain Veda-śākhās and so also their progenitors maintained the same. The grant of Vanamāla refers to a Brāhmaṇa of the Sāndilya gotra of the Yajurveda. The grant of Balavarman refers to a section belonging to the Kāṇva-śākhā of Kapila gotra. The copper plate of Dharmapāla refers to Brāhmaṇas of Kaustuma-śākhā, as well as to the Suddha Maudgalya and Krṣnayaśa gotras. It also mentions the Angirasa pravara. The conception of pravara is closely interwoven with that of the gotra; the word pravara came to denote one or more illustrious ‘ṛṣīs’, i.e. sages, who were claimed as co-ancestors of the same Veda-śākhā performing sacrifices with the original ancestor of the sacrifices. The title given to the most of the Brāhmaṇas of the epigraphs are Deva Sarman and Svāmin. Their names generally end in Bhaṭṭa, Datta, Deva,
Dhara, Dāsa, Ghoṣa, Kara, Kunda, Mitra, Nandi, Pālita, Sena, Soma and so forth. It is, however, not possible to say whether these name-endings were real hereditary family names. Many of them are still hold as surnames by the Kāyasthas of Assam and Bengal. But it is interesting to note that they are not in use among Brāhmaṇas now. The Brāhmaṇas of Kāmarūpa seem to have lived on the whole in conformity with the canonical tests and credited with living of a holy and righteous life. They are said to have assiduously practiced the six-fold duties, Yajana, Yājana, Adhyayana, Adhyāpanā, Dāna and Pratigraha. They daily performed the ritual of *snāna* which were of six kind. The grant of Balavarman indicates the prevalence of *kriyāṅga snāna*. The Brāhmaṇas observed the *sandhya* (prayer) three times a day in the twilight and *japa* of Gāyatri. Besides study of Vedas, Brāhmaṇas cultivated various sciences and art. Puspabhadra grant of Dharmapāla describes the grand-father of the donee as having possessed qualities like the donor, a knowledge of five arts (*samyak-kalābhiyatan*) which were generally acquired by Kṣatriyas alone. Further, the inscription record academic titles such as Śrutidhara, Paṇḍita and Kahaniṣṭha, usually borne by Brāhmaṇas. Brāhmaṇas expert in Veda and Vedāṅga were given Brahmadeya grants.
Of the other castes, information was available of Karanaṣas and Kāyasthas found in epigraphs as state officials. There are also reference to Lekhakas and Gaṇaka castes. Similarly, we find the reference of Vaidya as a caste in Subhaṅkarapāṭaka grant. Grant of Balavārman refers to Bhīṣaka or physician. Alongside Kāyasthas, the Kalitās are the predominant caste of the province. They are the purest Śūdra of Assam from whose hands higher castes still take water. They claim to same rank as Kāyasthas and actually rank next to Brāhmaṇas. The unorthodox character of the Kalitās is revealed in their custom of re-marriage of widows and marriage of grown up girls, both being contrary to the Hindu practice. It should also be noted that differences of sub-castes among the different sub-divisions of the Kalitās are neither welmarked nor rigid. The Tezpur rock inscription refers to a Kaivarta who was in charge of collecting state toll on the rivers. Of the other professional castes we have reference to Kumbhakāras (potters), Tantuvāya (Weavers), Nauki (Boatman) and Daṇḍi (tower of boats). The offspring of Brāhmaṇa and a Vaiśya have reference to the antyaja (low castes) in the Puṣpabhadra grant of Dharmapāla. In describing the boundary marks of the land granted, the epigraphs refer to Dijjarati-hāḍī, whose land marked the east-south boundary. The Hāḍīs are
antyajas and are connected with Ḍoma and Caṇḍāla.

The smallest unit of society was the family. Joint-family was also broadly prevalent as we find reference to Nidhanpur grant, where half or more shares of land were granted jointly to several brothers of a family. Nevertheless, cases of division of property among brothers were also not unknown. In Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant of Dharmapāla separate shares of a pāṭaka are assigned to two brothers, Himāṅga and Trilocana indicating that they were no longer members of a joint family. Among social institutions marriage is the most important social function. Different systems of marriage were prevalent. They are (i) Rākṣasa, (ii) Gāndharva, (iii) Paiśāca, (iv) Āsura, (v) Brāhma, (vi) Daiva, (vii) Ārṣa and (viii) Kāya or Prājāpatya. As per the system in the law books the first three of these modes are recognised as peculiarly appropriate to the Kṣatriyas, and the fourth is allowed only to the Vaiśyas and Śūdras. The remaining four modes are regarded as particularly suitable to Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhma form was widespread among the Brāhmaṇas of our country. The Puṣpabhadra grant throws some light on the actual rites with which this form of marriage was attended. The practice of child marriage was not in vogue. Marriage within the varṇa and khila was the prevailing custom.
The position of women was high in the society. The inscriptions made it plain that they were cultured and pious women. They were also praised in the society. The chastity of Brāhmaṇa women were mentioned in the epigraphs. Motherhood was one of the outstanding aims in married life; women are represented as mothers of ideal sons. Widowhood was considered to be the highest calamity of women, but there is no mention of Satī. The purdah system was unknown. There is reference of vēṣyā and vārastrī in Bargāon grant. There was prevalence of custom of appointing women as dancers and courtesans in connection with temple services. They were known as naṭī and daḷuḥāṇganā. devadāsis were prevalent in the temples. It appears that many of the women, specially of the Brāhmaṇa caste, were not only educated but skilled in the arts of poetry and rhetoric.

Rice, fish, meat, fruits and vegetables constituted the chief article of food. The Yoginiṭantra recommends emphatically the eating of meat and fish in Kāmarūpa. Sacrifice of various kinds of animals were considered meritorious. In Assam both Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇavas eat meat and fish without any social bar. Interest taking out of lending money in general is not encouraged; use of different types of pāṇ-leaves and tambūla was prevalent. The Yoginiṭantra enjoins the worship of Goddess Kāmeśwarī with
wine, meat and blood (*bali*). In temples different types of drums were used.

Cotton cloth was extensively in use. Masses were made up of *karpāsa* (cotton) *kambala* (wool), *balkala* and *kośaja* (silk) from cocoons. Kambala was a fixture of fine wools (sheep’s wool or goat hair). Hiuen Tsang refers to *ho-la-li* which Bhāskaravarman presented to him. It was made out of course skin lined with soft down, and was designed to protect the pilgrim from rain whilst on the road. Also Bhāskara sent as presents to Harṣa *kṣauma* cloths pure as the autumn moon’s light. *dukula* was the ritual name for the finest *kṣauma* and it is referred to in the Bargāon grant as being used for flags. Bāṇa, too, mentions that the Ābhoga umbrella sent to Harṣa by Bhāskaravarman was wrapped in *dukula*. It is, therefore, evident that Assam even in the fourth century A.D. was celebrated for *dukula* fit to be referred as held-up cloth (*sanovastram*) which was probably worn by ordinary people. *kośaja* or *kauśeya* seems to be silk obtained from the cocoons of various kinds of worms. The silk cloth is known as *patrona* to Kauṭilya. Kauṭilya says that *patronas* was obtained from Magadha, Puṇḍra and Suvarṇakauḍyaka. Wild silk of the best quality, it is significant to note, has been still

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1. *Kṣauma* was made of fibre of *kṣama*, *Amarakoṣa*, II. 6. 113
produced in those districts. The three other varieties being *kṣauma*, *dukula* and *karpāsika*. *kṣauma* was a course variety of linen. Also sometimes it was mixed with cotton. It was available both in Puṇḍravardhana and Benares. More fine form of linen was known as *dukula*. It was known with the place of production.

1. Vaṅgaka (in Lower Bengal: white and soft)
2. Puṇḍraka (in North Bengal: Black in colour and as soft as the surface of a gem, and

*karpāsika* in general meant cotton fabrics. In Vaṅga and in six other regions best quality was produced.

**Higher Education in Ancient Kāmarūpa-Puṇḍravardhana and Śrīhaṭṭa:**

Ancient Indian social system called students as Brahmacārins. Students were sent to Gurukulas or home of their teacher for their education. Here, they went to beg food for themselves and their teacher, performed their household work, and studied. Main subjects of study were the Vedas, Aṅgas and other subjects. Technical subjects were also taught by Gurus at their home. Some of these Gurukulas attracted a large number of students
and were considerably big. In this system usually a teacher taught only a small number of students intensively.

With the growth of urbanization developed urban centres of education; among these Takṣaśilā and Vārāṇasī were more important. Brāhmaṇical educational system revolved round a teacher imparting knowledge to a few students. This system, however, gradually changed with the growth of urbanization. As a result urban centres of education comparable to modern Universities developed. Such institutions required help from government and individuals to maintain themselves.

With the growth of monastic religious systems in the sixth century B. C. some educational activity shifted to monasteries. Initially these monasteries were meant only for the monks of the concerned religious orders. Later, however, others too came to study there. Royal grants provided them for their maintainance. As a result some of these monastic educational establishments grew into famous centres of learning. Of these Nālandā, Vallabhi, Vikramaśilā and Odantapuri are some of the most important ones. Their reputation as great centres of learning seems to have grown from sixth-seventh centuries. Of these Nālandā became an internationally famous centre of education particularly Buddhist learning. Established in the Gupta period it attracted both monks and
other students from far off places, including some from abroad. In addition to Buddhist lore, according to Hiuen Tsang, Nālandā also had provision to teach Logic, Grammar, Hindu Philosophy, Vedas and Medicine. Nālandā admitted students on the basis of an entrance test. It was so tough that very few students could pass and get admitted. Inspite of this there were several thousand students. Education was free. Nālanda 'University' had a distinguished faculty and a large number of supporting staff.

Brahmanical system of education in Gurukulas and Āśramas continued side by side with Buddhist and Jaina centres of learning. Brāhmanical monasticism, though not new, seems to have developed into well organised and managed institutions from a time after Śaṅkarāchārya. A number of mathas, belonging to different Brāhmanical sects, are known from different parts of the country. Some of these mathas became very famous. Temples also managed and maintained educational institutions. It seems that Buddhist vihāras, Jaina pallis, and Brāhmanical Gurukulas, and later the mathas educated not only monks but others as well in different branches of learning and thus contributed not only to the dissemination and growth of knowledge but also led to a better mutual understanding and tolerance.
The position of Brāhmaṇical education and institutions in Śrīhaṭṭa during the ancient period is a subject of research. It is possible that there may have been individual scholars teaching Brahmachārins at their homes. There may also have been some Āśramas, as there were in other parts of the country. Unfortunately we do not have any detailed evidence of such early institutions in the region. During the early medieval period the educational institutions at Nālandā, Vikramaśīlā and Odantapuri etc. must have attracted, at least some students from this area as well. The broad device of Śrī-Chandra for educational grant speaks of an excellent pedegree of education at Śrīhaṭṭa.

The Paschimbhag copperplate grant of Maharājādhirāja Śrī-Chandradeva² of the Chandra dynasty of Vikramapura, recording three land grants in Garalā-viśaya, Pogārā-viśaya and Chandrapura- viśaya of the Śrīhaṭṭa-maṇḍala of Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti, assumes a far greater significance than has been realised in the light of the history of education in the region. Part of this grant, bearing evidence on the history of education in this area, forms the subject matter of this research study.

The grant refers to Chandrapura, also called Brāhmaṇapura or the city or abode of Brahma. Chandrapura, being the headquar-

ters of a viṣaya of the same name must have been a small town. By this charter Śrī-Chandradeva gave away three grants. The first of these was for a matha of Chāndra-Vyākaraṇa, the second was for four deśántariya and four vāṅgāla mathas teaching the four Vedas, and the third was meant for six thousand Brāhmaṇas.

The details of these grants are as follows:

I. i. Upādhyāya of Chandra(-gomi ?) 10 pāṭakas

   ii. For food and clothes to 10 chātras 10 pāṭakas

   iii. For daily meals to 5 apūrva Brāhmaṇas

      (perhaps visitors) 5 pāṭakas

   iv. For the mahattara Brāhmaṇa

      (Supervisor or in charge of the management of the matha) 1 pāṭaka

   v. For Gaṇaka 1 pāṭaka

   vi. For Kāyastha 2½ pāṭakas

   vii. For 4 Mālākāras

      2 Tailikas

      2 Kumbhakāras

      5 Kahalikas (drum beaters)

      2 Sankhavādakas

      2 Dhakkavādakas

      8 Dragdikas (Kettledrum beaters)
### II. The other grant was made to a group of eight mathas - four of which are called Deśāntariya and the four others are called Vāṅgāla mathas. These mathas are named Vaiśvānara, Yogeśvara, Jaimāni (Jaimini ?) and Mahākāla. These mathas were provided land for their maintenance as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. For 8 Upādhyāyas of the 10 pāṭakas each</td>
<td>(Rg, Yaju, Sāma &amp; Atharvavedas) 8 X 10 = 80 pāṭakas</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. For 5 Chhātras in each of the</td>
<td>8 mathas @ 5 pāṭakas  = 40 pāṭakas</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii. For Naṭa</td>
<td>2 pāṭakas</td>
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<tr>
<td>iv. For 2 Sūtradhāras (Carpenters)</td>
<td>2 Sthapatis (Masions) 2 Karmakāras (Blacksmiths) 2 pāṭakas each  6 X 2 = 12 pāṭakas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. For 8 Chettikas (Maids) 3/4 pāṭakas</td>
<td>= 6 pāṭakas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. For 9 Karmmas</td>
<td>= 47 pāṭakas</td>
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<tr>
<td>vii. For 22 Karmmakāras (artisans and attendants) and Charmakāras (Cobblers) 1/2 pāṭaka each</td>
<td>47 47 X 1/2 = 23 1/2 pāṭakas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii. For Naṭa</td>
<td>2 pāṭakas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xix. For 2 Sūtradhāras (Carpenters)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL = 120 pāṭalas.³
iii. For 8 Mālākāras
  8 Nāpitas
  8 Tailikas
  8 Rajakas $32 \times \frac{1}{2} = 16 \text{ pāṭakas}$

64 Karmakāras & Charmakāras
  @ $\frac{1}{2}$ pāṭaka each $64 \times \frac{1}{2} = 32 \text{ pāṭakas}$

iv. For 16 Chettikas @ $\frac{3}{4}$ pāṭaka $16 \times \frac{3}{4} = 12 \text{ pāṭakas}$

v. For 9 Karmmas to each matha
  @ 10 pāṭaka $8 \times 10 = 80 \text{ pāṭakas}$

vi. To the 2 Mahattara Brāhmaṇas,
  for the two groups of mathas
  @ 2 pāṭakas each $2 \times 2 = 4 \text{ pāṭaka}$

vii. For 2 Vārikas (water carriers)
  @ 2 pāṭaka $2 \times 1/2 = 3 \text{ pāṭakas}$

viii. For 2 Kayasthas
  @ 2$^{1/2}$ pāṭaka $2 \times 1^{1/2} = 5 \text{ pāṭaka}$

ix. For 2 Gaṇakas
  @ 1 pāṭaka each $2 \times 1 = 2 \text{ pāṭaka}$

tax. For 2 Vaidyas (Physicians)
  @ 3 pāṭakas each $2 \times 3 = 6 \text{ pāṭakas}$

Total $= 280 \text{ pāṭakas}^4$

III. The third grant recorded in the inscription was made to six thousand Brāhmaṇas in Chandrapuri, who were settled there by Vaiṣṇava Vināyaka born at Kāligrama. Only a few of these six thousand Brāhmaṇas are mentioned by their name in the grant and were given an equal share.5

II

K. Gupta took the Deśāntariya mathas as foreign monasteries and Vāṅgālā mathas as situated in Bengal. He observed “the four foreign mathas were situated outside the kingdom of Śrī-Chandra. The four mathas of Vāṅgālā might have been included within the kingdom of Śrī-Chandra because those were not qualified by the word Deśāntariya’ (foreign).6 This view cannot be accepted. Both the Deśāntariya and Vāṅgālā mathas were situated at the same place. The fact that the mathas were named Vaiśvā-nara, Yogeśvara, Jaimini and Mahākāla shows that these names were shared by two mathas each one Deśāntariya and the other Vāṅgālā. Each Veda was taught in two mathas, one


As the Vāṅgālā and non-Vāṅgālā mathas were included in the Pundravardhana-bhukti, it may be taken to suggest that the whole kingdom of Śrī-Chandra is indicated by the term Vāṅgālā. The word Deśāntariya would, therefore, be suggestive of the rest of the country—Assam, Bengal and Bihār, as well as distant parts of the country.
Desantarīya and the other Vāṅgālā. Perhaps the Vāṅgālā mathas taught the Vedas according to Vedic schools prevalent then in Bengal. Desantarīya mathas taught them according to schools prevalent in other parts of the country. According to one authority, students of the Vedas were required to study two or three recensions other than the one to which they themselves belonged. This suggestion of Medhātithi is perhaps based on the practice commonly followed during his period. It certainly explains the establishment of two groups of Vedic mathas called Desantarīya and Vāṅgālā, to teach the Bengal and non-Bengal recensions of the different Vedas are taught at the same place. The grant itself suggests the location of these mathas in Chandrapura. The first grant of land is made to the matha that taught grammar, Chandra-vyākaraṇa. There is no doubt that it was situated in Chandrapura. The second grant of land made to the Vedic mathas is mentioned in the same continuation. The inscription providing the boundaries of the viṣayas in which grants were made mentions Chadrapura, which had the monastery that specialised in the teachings of Chandra-Vyākaraṇa, to which the first grant of 120 pātakas of land was made. Thereafter, the relevant part of the inscription runs as follows:

7. R. C. Majumdar (Ed.), Age of Imperial Kanauj, (Bombay, 1964), p. 366
Had the Desantarlya and Vangala mathas really been situated at different places their location must have been provided. As they were situated at the same Brahmapura-Chandrapura, where the school of Grammar was, it was not necessary to give their location a second time. As grants are made separately to the schools of Grammar and the Vedas, it is possible to assume that they formed two different schools independent of each other. There is no doubt that all the institutions were at the same place.

III

The three grants made through this charter fall into two groups. The first two grants were for the first group and the third forms the other. The third grant is made to six thousand Brâhmaṇas who were settled in the viṣaya by a certain Vināyaka from Kāligrāma. These donees were granted an equal share each in their names. Due to practical reasons, the names of only some Brâhmaṇas could be given in the inscription.9 The reference to

8. D. C. Sircar, ibid, pp. 92-94, 98; K. Gupta, ibid, p. 92

The view expressed by some scholars that the descendants of the Brâhmaṇas mentioned in the Nidhanpur grant had multiplied to six thousand by tenth century cannot be accepted. The descendants of the Nidhanpur Brâhmaṇas contd........
their being settled in the area shows that they were either brought from some other area or were forced to migrate due to some natural or man-made calamity.

The two other grants are of a different nature. These grantees are *mathas* (monasteries) in the nature of educational institutions. According to the grant each *matha* had one Upādhyāya each who enjoyed the produce of 10 *pātakas* of land.

The teacher student ratio differed in the two *mathas*. In the school of Grammar ten students were taken, but in the Vedic schools each teacher had to take only five students. One *pātaka* of land was sufficient to meet the necessities of a student for a year.

The provision to provide for the maintainance of the students during the period of their study by the state shows that the practice of Brahmachārins going out for bringing their food had gone out of vogue. The small number of pupils per teacher, however, was still largely followed.

The provision of five *pātakas* of land made in case of the school of Grammar, for feeding five *apūrva* Brāhmaṇas every...
day is not met with in case of Vedic schools.

Mahattara Brähmaṇas were in-charge of the institutions. They looked after the management aspects of the schools concerned. The Mahattara Brähmaṇa of the school of Grammar was provided only one pātaka of land for his management. On the contrary his counterparts in the two Vedic mathas were provided at the rate of two pātakas each.

A number of other professionals are also mentioned together with their respective shares in the land granted. The 2 Kumbhakāras, 5 Kahalikas, 2 Saṅkhavādakas, 2 Dhakkavādakas, 8 Dragdikas, 2 Sūtradhāras, 2 Sthapatis and 2 Karmakāras (Blacksmith) are mentioned in case of the school of Grammar. A nāta was also attached to this school but is not mentioned in connection with the vedic mathas. Of these the Sūtradhāras, the Sthapatis and the Karmakāras enjoyed two pātakas each, but the vādakas (Instrumentalists) of various kind enjoyed only half pātaka each. Perhaps they were all part-timers and were required only at the time of the daily worship etc. of the presiding deity of the school of Grammar.

There are other professionals who were attached only to the vedic mathas. They are 2 Vaidyas (Physicians), 2 Vārikas (Water carriers), 8 Nāpitas (Barbers), and 8 Rajakas (Washermen) The
Vaidyas enjoyed three *pātakas* each, the Vārikas were provided one and a half *pātaka* each and the rest, i.e. Nāpitas and Rajakas were provided half a *pātaka* each.

The other employees are common to all the three *mathas*. Their share in the granted land is also the same in both the cases. The school of Grammar had one Gaṇaka and one Kāyastha. They looked after the records and accounts of one *matha* only and were paid one, and two and a half *pātakas* of land, respectively. For the Vedic *mathas* two Gaṇakas and two Kāyasthas were provided but their remuneration remained the same. It was not enhanced as in the case of the two Mahattara Brāhmaṇas, looking after the four Vedic schools each. The enhancement of the remuneration in case of Mahattara Brāhmaṇas, thus may be due to their high social status rather than the increase in the workload. N.P. Likewise 4 Mālākāras and 2 Tailikas are provided for the Chandra *matha* at the rate of half *pātaka* each. In case of the Vedic *mathas*, in all having eight schools only 8 Mālākāras and the same number of Tailikas are provided. They too share half a *pātaka* each. The *matha* teaching Vyākaraṇa was provided with 22 Karmakāras and Charmakāras. The two Vedic *mathas* were provided with sixty-four of them (each Vedic school being served by 8 Karmakāras and Charmakāras). In both the
cases they are provided half pāṭaka each. This discrepancy noticed in case of the *mathas* concerned cannot be satisfactorily resolved. One reason may be that the Chandra-*matha* was perhaps part of a temple establishment; hence, it was provided with a number of instrumentalists and a larger number attendants than the Vedic *mathas*.

The Vedic *mathas* probably had their own temples of Vaiśvānara, Yogēśvara, Jaimini and Mahākāla, after whom they were named. The worship in case of these deities being a private affair of the schools concerned must have been performed by the teachers and the students only. It is difficult, however, to be absolutely certain about it.

IV

Paśchimbhāg inscription refers to Chandrapura as Brāhmaṇapura also. It was probably called Brahmapura because it had a temple of Brahmā to which was perhaps attached the Chandra- *matha*. The names given to the Vedic *mathas*, at least three of them, Vaiśvānara (Agni), Yogēśvara (Śiva) and Mahākāla (Śiva) are those of the gods.\(^{10}\) Jaimini is supposed to have re-

\(^{10}\) The inscription is referring in this case to Brāhmaṇical gods as the presiding deities of the *mathas* concerned teaching Vyākaraṇa and the Vedas. As such, these were purely Brāhmaṇical institutions. They have nothing to do with Mahāyāna Buddhism or even the so-called mixed Hindu and Buddhistic society. Such observations of K. Gupta (*Copperplates of Sylhet*, pp. 150-151) are incorrect and untenable. Buddhism was a monastic religion. It contd.********
ceived the Sāmaveda from Vedavyāsa. As per the tradition he is the Rṣi of Sāma and may have been worshipped by both teachers and students of this Veda. It is possible that these *matha* had their own temples but were not attached to any other religious establishment. If it is accepted then these Vedic *matha* will have to be taken as purely academic institutions. We, however, believe that the Vedic *matha* too formed part of the same temple of Brahmā suggested by the name Brahmapura but had their own administrative set up. Perhaps some of the employees, like the Sūtradhāras and Sthapatis, were to look after the repairs etc. of all the *matha* and temples. That is why they do not figure additionally in connection with the Vedic *mathas*.

There are a number of inscriptions from different parts of the country suggesting that educational institutions were run and maintained by temples and other religious establishments during the early medieval period. There are a large number of epigraphic reference to this effect. We are referring here only to a few.

1. The Pratapgarh Pillar Inscription of king Mahendrapāla-II (A.D. 946) refers to the grant of a village to the goddess

had no society of its own. It had only lay devotees who came from the Brāhmaṇical social order and worshipped deities belonging to both the religions. The Pāla and Chandra kings of Bengal inspite of their devotion to Buddha remained Brāhmaṇical Hindus in their socio-religious observances is well indicated by their land grants.
Vatayaksinīdevī. Her temple was connected with the matha of a Brāhmaṇa of Dāsapura, named Haṃśvara (....dāsapura-
caturvedyahrīvṣeṣvara-māṭha-sambandhyamāna śrī-
vatayaksinīdevvai....)\textsuperscript{11}

2. The Malkapuram Stone Pillar Inscription of Rudrāmbā (Distt. Guntur, A.P.) of Śaka 1183 (A.D. 1261) refers to a Śaiva matha to which were granted three lakh villages. The inscription refers to other grants “allotted in three shares to the following, the first to the god Pinākin, the second to the students and the ‘Śuddha Śaiva’ matha, and the third to the maternity home, the hospital and the establishment offering free food to the Brāhmaṇas, — 3 teachers of the Vedas, viz. Rk, Yajus and Sāman, interpreters of the Pada, Vākya, Pramāṇa, Sāhitya and Āgama and the Vaidya and Kāyastha, — 2 Pātikas to each of these 10.”\textsuperscript{12} The inscription also refers to “the Sāmavedin Brāhmaṇas of Śrīvatsagotra, hailing from Purvagrama in Dakṣiṇas-Rādhā in the Gauḍa country” who received “300 Puttis”. Additionally, “for keeping the account of the income and expenditure of the property they also received 150 puttis”\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{ibid}, p. 575
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{ibid}, p. 576
3. In far South also the temple establishments maintained schools of Veda, Vyākaraṇa and other subjects.\textsuperscript{14} N.P. the Paśchimbhāg inscription thus is in line with tradition followed in the rest of the country. Later line 51 of the inscription states that, thus, are granted lands to Brahmā, Agni, Yogēśvara, Jaimani, Mahākāla and to the six thousand Brāhmaṇas.\textsuperscript{15} This shows that the school of Grammar was attached to Brahmā temple and the two schools each of Rg, Yaju, Sāma and Atharvavedas to Agni, Yogēśvara, Jaimini and Mahākāla, respectively. As Brahmā is also very closely associated with four Vedas it is possible that the four Vedic schools too were part of his temple but had their own presiding deities and management.

The Deśāntāriya Vedic \textit{mathas} at Chandrapura definitely had non-VAṅgāla teachers, and possibly even some students. It is not unlikely. Just as Gauḍa Brāhmaṇas were employed in a distant establishment at Guntur in Andhra, similarly Lāṭa \textit{dvijas} were entrusted with the worship etc. of Lord Ananta-Nārāyaṇa in Bengal.\textsuperscript{16} The Senas, a ruling family of Bengal, were also Karnāta Brāhmaṇas. They probably came to the area with some

\textsuperscript{14} K. A. N. Shastri, \textit{Aspects of India’s History and Culture}, Delhi, 1974, pp. 131ff. and 127ff.
\textsuperscript{15} “aśeṣa-bhūmiḥ / ityeva-brahmā-agni-yogeśvara-jaiminī-mahākālaḥ / saṇḍbrāhmaṇa sahasreṇbhyaśa / upari-likhita........”
\textsuperscript{16} Khalimpur grant of Dharamapāla, D. C. Sircar, \textit{ibid}, p. 68, li. 50.
military adventurer and did not return to South. It is not unreasonable to assume, therefore, that at least some Vaṅgālā. Brāhmaṇas in ancient India, it seems, were very mobile and kept moving to distant lands in search of livelihood.

V

The Brāhmaṇas listed in Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskara-varman who were granted land in Chandrapuri-viṣaya during the reign of Bhūtivarman probably are the first Brāhmaṇa settlers in the Chandrapura region. They or their successors must have started the religio-academic activity in the region. It was on the modest foundations laid down by them and their successors that in the 10th century Chandrapura was turned into a major centre of Brāhmaṇical academic activity, more like an institution of higher learning, comparable to Vedic University. Chandapura, thus, can well be styled as the only town of higher learning in the Barāk-Surma Valley during the ancient periods of its history.

17. In some of their inscriptions the Sena kings are styled as Brahma-Kṣatriyas (Devapārā inscription of Vijayasena, v.5) meaning Brāhmaṇas who became Kṣatriyas by changing their profession. They are also supposed to have come to Bengal from the Karnāṭa area. Sāmantasena, the hero of a battalion in Karnāṭa, in his old age retired to the forests on the banks of Gaṅgā (ibid, vv. 5-12), perhaps in some part of Bengal.

18. The Chandrapuri-viṣaya mentioned in the Nidhanpur grant has to be identified with the Chandrapura-viṣaya of the Paśchimbhāg grant of Śrī-Chandra-deva. The location of the viṣaya in Purnea district of Bihar is not justified on a closer scrutiny of the evidence. (cf. Jai Prakash Singh, Viṣṇu in Art Thought and Literature (Ed. G. Kamalakar, Hydorabad, 1993) p. 104
The Vedic establishment at Chandrapura in Ancient Śrīhaṭṭa provides sufficient evidence to suggest the prevalence of Vedic learning in ancient Vāṅgāla. The suggestion of some modern scholars that Vedic learning was absent in ancient Bengal, cannot be accepted any more in the light of the evidence discussed above.

The *maṭhas* teaching Vyākaraṇa and the Vedas may have started earlier than the tenth century. We do not know when. Likewise, we do not know how long they continued with their religio-academic activity. A copperplate grant of king Viśvarūpasena (c. 13th century) refers to grants made by the members of his family to Brāhmaṇa Halāyudhaśarman of the Vatsya-gotra, and a student of the Kāṇva-śākhā of Yajurveda. Halāyudha was the son of Adhyadeva, grand-son of Devadharadeva and great-grand-son of Lakṣmīdharadevaśarman. Halāyudhadevaśarman perhaps is the famous scholar of Veda and Mīmāṁsā philosophy, and the author of *Brāhmaṇasarvasva*. In this work he has also explained a number of hymns of the *Yajurveda*. We do not know if he, or one of his predecessors, were associated with the Vedic-Jaiminīya *maṭhas* at Chandrapura either as student or as teacher at any stage. For the grant of Viśvarūpasena, N. G. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, pp. 140-148, 177-180 may be noted.