CHAPTER-V

SECTION-A

THE RULE OF THE PĀLAS

The last of the first three historical royal dynasties to rule in early Assam (sic. Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa) for several hundred years was the house of the Pālas. The earliest known Pāla record, viz., the Bargāon copperplate grant, has been issued in about 1035 A.D. by Ratnapāla, the second Pāla ruler to ascend the throne of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. From the way the many-sided qualities of the patron king, Ratnapāla, his career and achievements, as well as his capital city, Śrī-Durjjayā, have been described, it can be presumed that Ratnapāla issued this copperplate grant in the middle or the last part of his reign, i.e. in the 26th regnal year. But as this grant gives no indication of his old age, it can, in the same breathe, be said that it was issued in about 1035 A.D. according to our system of chronology, leading to the conclusion that Ratnapāla ascended the
throne in about 1010 A.D. Now this piece of knowledge can be used to say that his predecessor, Brahmapāla, the founder the dynasty, definitely appeared on the scene between 990 A.D. and 1010 A.D., taking him to rule Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa for about twenty years, as he evidently ascended the throne right after the death of Tyāgasiṁha, the twenty-first king of the Sālastambha dynasty.

Evidently, Brahmapāla was not the man to sit comfortably satisfied on the throne for the rest of his life without embarking upon a career of conquest. In the Khanāmukh and the Šubhaṅkarapāṭka copperplates of Dharmapāla, the fifth Pāla ruler, Brahmapāla and his achievements have been described thus:

"In that royal family there happened to be a king, of the celebrated name Brahmapāla, who was like a Kulācala and was similar to Indra. He was thought of by the enemies, and by the accomplished persons as well, with fear and admiration, respectively." (v 4, IAA, p-230).
In the Gachtal copperplate grant of Gopālavarman, the fourth ruler, he has been described thus:

“As a moon of that very ocean in the form of that family (the Bhauma-Nāraka family), a moon amongst the kings named Brahmapāla, took birth (like the moon rising from the ocean); he had a pure birth, he was sober, cold (in temperament) and he was the best of his family.” (v 12, IAA, p. 214).

Both the Gauhati and Guwākuchi grants of Indrapāla, the third king in succession, however, have simply mentioned Brahmapāla as the father of Ratnapāla who was the most illustrious of all the Pāla kings. But v 11 in the Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla, the most nearest evidence to the actor is all praise for Brahmapāla. It reads thus:

“That Brahmapāla has defeated his enemies in the battle-field all alone is nothing strange, for, there is indeed the example of Hara (Śiva), Hari, Bhīṣma and many others (in this respect) — thus thinking, when his
soldiers observed him (i.e., Brahmāpāla) and saw that he remained in his own place, and (yet) his enemies were fleeing away in eight directions, they (themselves) became astonished.” (v 11, IAA., p. 162).

Brahmapāla has been also addressed as mahārājādhirāja. Thus, his prowess and his career of conquest did earn for him this title. Unlike Puṣyavarman and Śālastambha, the Bargāon grant clearly states that Śrī-Brahmāpāla was nominated by the people to take the reins of administration of the country. Though it is mentioned earlier that Brahmāpāla, through his prowess, had expressed his desire to rule the country and influenced the decision (if he was not nominated, then he would have surely waged war against the new king) in offering the kingship to him, Brahmāpāla received the power and position of Tyāgasimha immediately after the death of the latter and, that too, in a peaceful manner. This leads to the conclusion that Tyāgasimha was also not a holder of the title of mahārājādhirāja, indicating a gradual decline of the power
of the kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa under the Sālastambhas after the death of Balavarman III. It is likely that Brahmapāla, after becoming king, had to face several enemies who opposed him, but he waged successful wars against them, thus consolidating his position. To note, the epigraphic records make it definitely clear that opposition to the existing king from the numerous autonomous tribal rulers, who lived all over the Brahmaputra valley in a scattered way, was a general feature of the political condition of ancient Assam. These petty rulers mostly constituted the band of powerful feudal lords in case of Assam. The clear reference to Brahmapāla as ‘the moon amongst the kings’ indicates that he won over all his enemies and rebuilt the platform from where his successors, particularly Ratnapāla, made several successful attempts in integrating the old and glorious kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, and here lies the real credit of Brahmapāla. The reference that Brahmapāla was ‘thought of by the enemies and by the accomplished persons, as well, with fear and
admiration, respectively', speaks of his qualities as a war hero as well as a good administrator.

Brahmapāla's contemporary Pāla emperor of Bengal was Mahipāla I (c 988-1038 A.D.). Mahipāla I succeeded Vīgrahapāla II. During the reign of Vīgrahapāla-II (c960-988 A.D), and his predecessor Gopālavaranma II (c 940 A.D.) there were three well-defined kingdoms, viz., the Chandra kingdom comprising east and south Bengal, the Kamboja-Pāla kingdom comprising north and west Bengal and Pāla kingdom proper, comprising Aṅga and Magadha in the erstwhile Pāla empire of Bengal.1 Thus, both these kings experienced the misfortune of losing the paternal territory, though ruling over other parts of the empire. Mahipāla I tried very much to restore the fortune of his family and he succeeded to a considerable extent as he not only re-established the Pāla authority over a large part of Bengal, but also probably extended it upto Benares² for a time being. More than that, he had to face the formidable

1. HB., p.138.
2. ibid., p.141.
invasions of Chola emperor Rājendra Chola in the middle part of his reign (c 1021-1022 A.D.) and of Gāṅgeyadeva, the Kālachuri ruler in the later years of his reign (between 1026 and 1034 A.D.). Although, Mahipāla suffered reverses in the hands of both these formidable invaders, in no way, these reverses seem to affect the political condition of Bengal. This has also been argued at the same time that this success of Mahipāla was due, to a great extent, to the unstable political circumstances in Northern India, caused by the disastrous and repeated invasions of Sultan Mahmud, which exhausted the strength and resources of the great powers, and diverted their attention to the west. Anyway, Mahipāla I’s reign was a period of restoration of the imperial Pālas. No doubt, Brahmapāla, being fancied by Mahipāla and his great ancestors, named his family as the Pāla family of Prāgjyotīṣa-Kāmarūpa. He made himself busy mainly with the activity of consolidating his dynasty so that in due course of time, this Pāla family might earn a name in North India politics. It appears that the ‘kings’
mentioned in connection with Brahmapāla in the Kāmarūpa inscriptions belonged to the Brahmaputtra valley. They were mostly autonomous chiefs, but among them, also were several independent ones who surely would have raised themselves up in various places, taking advantage of the gloomy prospect of the Sālastambhas in the last years of their rule. It seems Brahmapāla, put a stop in the rise of the new independent kings and also completely brought others under his control. It is likely that Brahmapāla had no authority over North Bengal. In fact, the Sālastambhas, after Vanamālavarman, themselves lost authority over greater Kāmarūpa. Nevertheless, the Pālas of Bengal never posed as an external element to threaten the independence of Prāgjayotisa-Kāmarūpa, as we have seen already in the earlier chapter. They themselves got overwhelmed by a steady process of decline and disintegration which reduced them almost to an insignificant political power in Northern India, after the death of Devapāla. On the other hand, the Sālastambha family did produce several notable rulers who
could boast of prowess and intelligence as evident from the available local inscriptions. The expression in the Bargāon grant that like Hara (Śiva), Ḥari (Viṣṇu), Bhīṣma and many others, Brahmapāla, too, dispersed his enemies in the battle-field all alone, may really indicate the fact that after becoming king he had to quell the revolts of many an unruly and ambitious local chief who thought of raising their heads, taking the opportunity of the weakness as well as the issueless condition of Tyāgasiṁha.

The Bargāon grant also indicates the fact that Brahmapāla’s son and successor, Ratnapāla joined in a number of battles which shone like a ‘market of jewels’ as a prince and wrested victory for Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, and Brahmapāla later abdicated the throne in his favour due to old age.

The line 40 in the said grant informs us that king Ratnapāla used to reside in the befittingly named city of Śrī-Durjjayā (meaning invincible). Hence, it may be taken to mean that Brahmapāla lived in the old city of Haḍappesvara. There is indeed a striking similarity between
the foundation of the Pāla rule in Bengal and that of the Pālas in Prāgjyotिṣa-Kāmarūpa. Both Gopāla, the founder of the imperial Pālas of Bengal and Brahmmapāla, the founder of the Kāmarūpa Pālas, have been nominated by the subjects or the people of the country as the sovereign authority of the respective States. Foundation of the imperial Pāla rule in Bengal goes back to mid 8th century A.D., that means nearly 250 years earlier than the foundation of the Pāla rule in Prāgjyotिṣa-Kāmarūpa. The verse describing Gopāla's accession in the Khālimpur grant of Dharmapāla reads thus. 'His son was the crest -jewel of the heads of kings, the glorious Gopāla, whom the people (prakṛtis = people or principal officers) made, take the hand of fortune to put an end to the practice of the fishes' (mātyanyāya). Generally this has been viewed that as a period of anarchy was going on for fifty years or more since the downfall of the Chandra kings (C 725 A.D.) in Bengal and as the country got divided into a large number of independent principalities, the idea of a group of officials (presumably of one of these states) placing
somebody on the throne of Bengal or a considerable portion of it does not hold good here. Instead this has been justifiably viewed that Gopāla who seems to be a popular hero was called to the throne by the voice of the people, though perhaps the selection was originally made by a group of leaders or independent ruling chiefs. In case of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa, the nomination of Brahmapāla a man of noble birth (he has been described as a scion of the legendary Bhauma-Nāraka family) seems to be made by the principal officers of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa. Kāmarūpa contracted considerably due to the emergence of many an independent principality; the total lawlessness, as in Bengal in the early and mid-8th century A.D., was yet to take place. But at the death of Tyāgasimha being issueless, there was every possibility of the total breakdown of the administration. At this moment the top officials of the Sālastambha administration offered the throne to Brahmapāla. His candidature also might not have raised any popular resentment, because he had been proclaimed a scion

4. ibid., p.97
5. ibid., p.98
of the legendary Bhaumas (bhumānvayo). In this way, both Brahmapāla and the top officials of Prāgīyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa administration averted a possible crisis.

Ratnapāla

The Paścimbhāg copperplate of Śrī-Chandra, king of Chandradvīpa (Eastern Bengal) and Harikela (Southern Bengal) speaks of his conquest of Kāmarūpa and refers to Lauhitya and Puṣpabhadrā rivers while describing the natural beauty of the place and as Śrī-Chandra is generally believed to have ruled in 10th century A.D. or in the beginning of the 11th century A.D. (HB.p.195); it is very likely that the Kāmarūpa king who withstood Śrī-Chandra’s invasion was Brahmapāla. Śrī-Chandra might have advanced as far as modern North Guwahati area, situated on the northern bank of the river Brahmputra or Lauhitya, while the dry bed of the river Puṣpabhadrā is still existent in this place. Since, the capture of the Kāmarūpa capital city by Śrī-Chandra has not been mentioned, it is possible that he either failed in his attempt to capture the capital or
before his arrival at the capital, some treaty was signed between him and Brahmapāla. Unfortunately, the Pāla or any other Kāmarūpa record does not provide any information regarding this invasion. From the complete absence of this incident in the Kāmarūpa inscriptions, one thing is clear that this campaign in no way affected the political condition of the country.

The copperplate inscriptions of the Pāla rulers, namely the Corātbārī grant, the Bargāon grant and the Suwālkuchi grant of Ratnapāla himself, the Gauhati and the Guwākuchi grants of Indrapāla, the Gachtal grant (c 1080 A.D.) of Gopālavarmadeva, the Khanāmukh, the Šubhaṅkarapāṭaka copperplates of Dharma-pāla focus on the life and achievements of Ratnapāla, of course in the same style as in the other copperplate charters of ancient Assam. So, a detailed description is missing here, too.

The Corātbārī grant was issued in 1021 A.D. by which Ratnapāla granted land in the Havṛṅga-viṣaya to one Siddhapāla, a Brāhmaṇa by birth, in his eleventh regnal
year (Bulletin of the Assam State Museum, No. IV, 1982). Likewise, Ratnapāla issued the other two land charters in his 25th and 26 regnal years in 1035 A.D. and 1036 A.D., respectively. This time-frame put his year of accession in 1010 A.D.

Besides, describing the granted land, the Corātbarī grant supplies information about the city of Haḍapyaka (sic. Haḍppeśvara). But the Bargāon grant informs us that Ratnapāla used to reside in the 'befittingly named city of Durjjayā.' This means that Ratnapāla shifted his capital from Haḍappeśvara to Durjjayā sometime between 1022 A.D.-1035 A.D. All the three of Ratnapāla’s copperplate inscriptions indicate that he followed a policy of aggressive militarism and that his reign was an eventful one. For such a career, it is necessary that the king ruled for a comparatively long period. Ratnapāla was still on the throne in 1036 A.D., his 26th regnal year, when he issued the Suwalkuchi grant. It seems that Ratnapāla ruled for forty to forty-five years, i.e., upto the middle of eleventh
century A.D. In all his three copperplate inscriptions, Ratnapāla has been addressed as the *mahārājadhīraja-paramabhaṭṭāraka-Śrī-Ratnapālavarmadeva*. The title simply fits into his policy of aggressive militarism. In the seals attached to these charters, he has been addressed as *mahārājadhīraja*. Interestingly, this was the style of the Sālastambhas. It appears that seeing the rule of his dynasty secured Ratnapāla took up the aggressive foreign policy followed by the powerful Sālastambha rulers like Śrī-Harṣavarmadeva and Vanamālavarmadeva. Likewise, he, too, started issuing land grants to the Brāhmaṇas with numerous immunities.

The most striking revelation of the Bargāon grant is that Ratnapāla lived in a new city, named Durjjayā. No wonder, Ratnapāla deemed it necessary to shift his capital from Haṭappēśvara to a different site to give his dynasty completely a new identity. Most probably the city of Durjjayā was founded in an area which lay between Prāgjyotiśapura and Haṭappēśvara, the two erstwhile capital
cities of ancient Assam. The existence of the ruins of such a big temple complex as the temple of Uma-Maheśvara at Madan-Kāmdev near present Baihata Chariali which has been assigned to 11-12th century A.D. on stylistic ground of the sculptures and its architectural components, proves its belonging to the Pāla rule and its enjoyment of royal patronage. This in turn amply points out that the Pāla capital was situated somewhere near the temple on the northern bank itself. This line is worth mentioning in this regard:

"The city of Durjjayā was beautified by the sealike Lauhitya, which was the remover of the fatigue caused by erotic dalliances of the beautiful damsels, seated on the open tops of the palatial buildings, with the help of the particles of water, issuing out of waves very lightly stirred by the beautiful breeze mingled with the cackling of the host of intoxicated female swans, which (i.e., the Lauhitya) was like the silken banner carried by the elephant in the form of mount Kailāśa, and which
was like a bejewelled mirror of the damsels of the heaven, working as an aid to their preparation for amorous sport.” (lines 36-39, IAA, p. 163).

This beautiful description of the river Lauhitya, i.e., Brahmaputra in connection with the new capital city proves that this city was also situated on the bank of river Brahmaputra and, as we have argued above, on its northern bank. It seems that the composer of the Bargāon grant was a scholar of high order. The high standard of prose shows his literary craftsmanship and acquaintance with the works of Daṇḍin, Subandhu and, particularly Bāṇabhaṭṭa.6 Now, this can be argued that the data supplied by a scholar of such merit, like the composer of the Bargāon grant, can be accepted as quite reliable.

Now it is necessary to hold a brief discussion on the identification of the temple of Mahāgaurī-Kāmeśvara mentioned in the Guwākuchi grant of Indrapāla. The temple of Mahāgaurī-Kāmeśvara, as referred to in the record,

6. IAA, p.166
appears to be situated on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra and was a big one. By this charter Indrapāla granted a plot of land sliced out of the Paṇḍarī-bhūmi in the district of Mandi in the north bank (uttarakūla), and capable of yielding two thousand units of paddy to a Brāhmaṇa Devadeva (The Guwākuchi copper plate grant of Indrapāla; IAA. p. 194). The epigraph states that the land Markkamyikokva belonging to the temple of Mahāgaurī-Kāmesvara formed the eastern boundary of the donated land; again to the south-east of the said donated land is mentioned a lane dividing the land of Paṇḍarī-bhūmi belonging to the temple of Mahāgaurī-Kāmesvara. Thus, it is seen that the land of both Paṇḍarī-bhumi and Markkamyikokva belonged to the temple of Mahāgaurī-Kāmesvara. (vide, IAA., pp. 197-201). There is every reason to believe that this temple of Mahāgaurī-Kāmesvara is identicl with the temple of Madan-Kāmdev. The identification of Paṇḍarī-bhūmi with the present Paṇḍurī Mouza near the Rangiya Rly. junction in Kamrup district,
as well as the proximity of this land to the site of the ruined Madan-Kāṃdev (also in the north bank) gives the impression that this temple of Mahāgaurī-Kāmeśvara is identical with the Madan-Kāṃdev temple. The mention of Mahāgaurī and Kāmeśvara together indicates that the deities were worshipped together in the shrine. In the Madan-Kāṃdev temple, even today the devotees offer their homage to a large image of Umā-Maheśvara enshrined inside a stone garbha-grāha (sanctum sanctorum). Exploration in the site revealed remains of eleven stone temples, all of which were pilfered to the plinth level during the bygone days leaving only the core masonry and some massive components, such as lintels, pedestals, pillar-bases, door sills etc. Several lintels with the image of Gaṅeśa, Gajalakṣmī etc. prove that all these were relayed to Śaiva and Devī temples. Mention may also be made of the ruins of three massive Devī images, each having 3 faces and 4 hands attached to the lower intact portion of a stone temple, discovered around the garbha-grāha of the ruined
shrine. The composite image of Umā-Maheśvara has been depicted in an amorous (āliṅgana) posture. In fact, the site is full of erotic sculptures. These erotic sculptures are essentially related to the name Mahāgaurī-Kāmeśvara, i.e. God of Love, meaning here Lord Śiva. The hugeness of the stone-deity, the height being 1.60 meters, may be the reason behind the name Mahāgaurī (Great Gaurī). This may be the possible reason why the area came to be known as Madan-Kāmdev in course of time. The vast tract of flat land on the western side of the Madan-Kāmdev hill, which again is surrounded by the Bhitarsālā-Kaharā ranges and the Gopeśwar on its south-west and northern direction, respectively, is the Pāṇaḍrībhūmi and other estates of the Mahāgaurī-Kameśvara temple without any doubt. In this connection, the following points in favour of this identification are worthnoting. ('On the Identification of the temple of Mahāgaurī-Kāmeśvara of the Guwākuchi Charter of Indrapāla,' Sarma, P. C., Benudhar Sarma Commemoration Volume, 1987, pp.137-38)
1. Today's Kaharā and Kāhāravi of the charter may indicate the same place. 'To the south a field dividing land on the boundary of that land and the north bank of the (river) Kāhāhāravijola'- (Guwākuchi charter, IAA, 201).

2. Similarly, this can be reasonably argued that the stream Madankuri and the Srotasījola of the charter are the same. It has been said that the south bank of Srotasījola was lying at the northern boundary of the donated land. The present Madankuri river runs parallel to the Kāhāravijola in the northern direction of the latter.

3. It has also been sought to establish with reasonable weight that the donated land which lay between the above-mentioned two rivers was extended to approximately 560 bigas (747 bighas being equivalent to 1 square kilometer, the distance between the 2 rivers is 1 km) and was, therefore, capable of producing a huge quantity of 2000 units of paddy (2000 units of
paddy has been considered equivalent to 2000 puṭakas or 6000 dроṇas) and, in that case, it seems that each Bigha of the donated land produced 172 seers or 4.30 mounds of paddy—a medium range of production in paddy.

4. If we take the Pāṇḍarī-bhūmi of the Vasumādhava temple as that of the Hayagrīva-Mādhava temple (an ancient temple any way), this identification becomes all the more easier ‘To the west a field-dividing lane at the boundary of that land and the Pāṇḍarī-bhūmi belonging to god Vasumādhava ......’ (line 53-54, IAA, p. 201). It is, indeed, to be noted that the Hayagrīva-Mādhava temple at Hajo is about ten kilometer as the crow-flies to the west of the area concerned.

5. The vāstu-āli or the high way was the northern boundary of the donated land and ran along the boundary of the Pāṇḍarībhūmi. It is possible that this highway was the road which passed through the famous Śilsāko (or the stone bridge) which existed
about two kilometer west of Kaharā. Through the Šilsāko bridge, Bakhtiyar Khalji passed in 1206. It is possible that all the three rivers, viz., Kaharā, Madankūḍi and Cecā of the day were made to pass through this bridge, so that the highway in question could link the two famous temple townships of Hayagrīva-Mādhava and Madan-Kāmdev. 'It is also not without logic that the roadway, after linking Madan-Kāmdev in the east, took a turn towards north to go into Bhutan, which the troops of Bakhtiyar could very conveniently use to lead his army towards Tibet as mentioned in Minhaj's *Tabakat-i-Nasiri.*' This observation is yet to be proved.

Now, we must say in this connection that the Pālas proudly followed the Sālastambha tradition of giving royal patronage to a big Śaivite temple situated in or in the vicinity of the capital, as they like the Sālastambhas claimed to be the descendants of the same Bhauma-Nāraka family. It seems that the prefix *mahā* had been added to the
name of goddess Dūrgā (Pārvatī) in the Tezpur area indicating explicitly the prominence of the female deity as well as her queer nature in the case of destructing bad elements of the society and at the same time she was the loving consort of Lord Śiva or Kāmeśvara (here God of Love). This is evident from the mention of the Mahāgaurī-Kāmeśvara temple in the copperplates of Vanamālavarman. The Pālas accepted this idea (saumya and ugra) as was followed by the Śālastambhas and built a magnificent temple of Mahāgaurī-Kāmeśvara at the capital city of Durjjayā.

In the inscriptions left behind by this king, there seems to be a controversial and confusing point, that “The outskirts of the city of Durjjayā were covered by a rampart which was like a stout cage for the play bird in the form of the king of the Śakas, a fever for the king of the Gurjjaras, a kūṭapākala disease for the untamable elephants in the form of the king of Gauḍa, a bituman (śilājātu-a kind of mineral that seemed to have melted and flowed like
sweat) for the mountain in the form of the king of Kerala, a veritable source of fear for the kings of Bāhika and Tāyika, a pulmonary consumption for the kings of the Deccan; because of destroying the side of the enemies it (the rampart) was like a (white silken) cloth covering the door panel in the form of the chest of the king.” (lines 34-36, IAA, p. 163). This is to us, a very beautiful literary expression of the gigantic, magnificent rampart, king Ratnapāla seemed to have built for the protection of his new capital. Because, basically it is related to the rampart and not Ratnapāla’s relations with the kings mentioned in the copperplate inscription covering all over India. These lines cannot be taken to mean that Ratnapāla actually came into conflict with these people or the kings. Further, Bengal was in a stronger position under Mahipāla I whose reign covered more than half the reign of Ratnapāla. Mahipāla’s records do not contain any reference to Prāgyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, nor the records of his two immediate successors, viz., Nayapāla (c 1038-1055 A.D.) and
Vigrahapāla III (c. 1055-1070 A.D.). Their pre-occupation with North-Central India (the Cholas and the Kālacuris) definitely offered the opportunity to harness strength for the Kāmarūpa Pālas. The series of foreign invasions from the west and the south must have shaken the Pāla kingdom to its very foundations during the reign of Nayapāla and Vigrahapāla III. Not only Eastern, Western and Southern Bengal passed out of their hands, but in Magadha, too, their power had been reduced to a mere shadow which is evident from the four inscriptions found at Gaya. However, all these happened long past the time of Ratnapāla in the second half of the 11th century. Actually Ratnapāla’s inscriptions themselves recognise the fact that Gauḍa (North Bengal in the strict sense of the term) was having an independent king of its own. The Chandra rulers were ruling in Eastern and Southern Bengal between 900-1050 A.D. independently, however, earlier several Kāmarūpa rulers as we have already shown, made their power felt as

7. *HBR*., p. 125
far as the 'Sea'. But Ratnapāla’s inscriptions in no way give the hint that this king, too, took his victorious arms up to the 'sea'. On the other hand the adoption of the full imperial title by Ratnapāla leads us to the conclusion that he made conquest not only in the Brahmaputra valley, but also outside Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmrūpa. In fact, v 15 of the Gachtal copperplate grant of Gopālavārman, the third ruler of the Pālas, commemorates such an event: "He, having defeated in the battle field, with his two arms, Rājyapāla, the king of Gauḍa, arrogant on account of (the strength of) his lance like arms, transferred as it were, even the Ganges, having the waters thickened with the ichor of the best of elephants, into Yamunā (mandākinīmapi kalīnātimakāra)" (v 15, IAA, pp. 210, 214). But the problem here is to identify Rājyapāla. The sixth ruler of the Bengal Pālas was Rājyapāla who approximately ruled between (c. 908-940 A.D.). Mahipāla I is said to have restored considerably the lost glory of the imperial Pālas by reconquering the erstwhile parts of the Pāla empire. The
data is based on several inscriptions. His Bāngarh grant shows that Mahipāla was in occupation of Vārendra in the 9th year of his reign.\(^8\) While the Bāghāura Viṣṇu image inscription found in Brahmanbaria in the Tippera district shows that the image was set up in Samataṭa (Eastern Bengal) “in the kingdom of Mahipāla, in the year 3.” However, identification of this Mahipāla with Mahipāla I of the Pālas has not been accepted by all. Dr. D. C. Ganguly takes this Mahipāla to be the Pratihāra king of that name, who was the son of Mahendrapāla.\(^9\) It is also possible that this Mahinpāla was a local ruler of the region. Anyway, even if this king was really Mahipāla I of the Pālas then it appears that he conquered both Northern and Eastern Bengal. Because, a king having his base in Aṅga and Magadha must have proceeded to Eastern Bengal via Northern Bengal. It is to be noticed here that his suzerainty in Northern Bengal continued up to his 9th regnal year or so as is shown by the Bāngarh grant. The Tiruvalaṅgadu plates

\(^8\) ibid., p. 137
\(^9\) IHQ, XVI, p. 179ff
show that Mahipāla I in 1021-1023 A.D. had to bear the brunt of a fierce Chola campaign under a general of Rajendra Chola, the great Chola emperor. It is observed that the Chola campaign was something like a ‘hurried raid across a vast stretch of the country’ and does not seem to have affected the political condition of the country; even though it ‘inflicted losses and miseries upon the people.’ But it is also possible that though the Cholas did not permanently conquer any part of Mahipāla’s territory after this incident, North Bengal or Gauḍa again asserted independence under some local chief, named Rājyapāla. Moreover, it is also observed that several parts of Bengal were independent kingdoms at the time of the Chola invasion. These were Daṇḍabhuṣṭi (Taṇḍabutti), Southern Raḍha (Takkanalāḍam), and Vaṅgāla-deśa (Southern & Eastern Bengal). The passage goes like this: “The Chola general seized...... Taṇḍabutti......(land which he acquired) after having destroyed Dharmapāla (in) a hot battle Takkanalāḍam whose fame reached (all) directions (and
which he occupied) after having forcibly attacked Ranaśura, Vaṅgāla-deśa, where the rain water stopped (and from which) Govindachandra fled, having descended (from his) male elephant, elephants of rare strength, women and treasure (which he seized) after having been pleased to frighten the strong Mahipāla on the field of hot battle with the (noise of the) conches (got) from the deep sea; Uttiralāḍam (on the shore of) the expansive ocean (producing) pearls; and the Gaṅgā whose waters bearing fragrant flowers dashed against the bathing places.”¹⁰ In the passage, it is not explicitly stated that Mahipāla was the ruler of Uttara-Rāḍha; but we may take the king of the region as Mahipāla, as no separate ruler is mentioned for Uttara-Rāḍha as in the other divisions.¹¹ This discussion may imply that Govindachandra of the Vikramapura (in Dacca) inscription practically ruled over the whole of Śrī-Chandra’s kingdom. These two inscriptions dated in his

---

¹⁰ Shastri., Prof. N. IHQ., XIII, p. 151-52,
¹¹ HB., p. 139.
12th and 23rd year prove that Govindachandra also ruled in Eastern Bengal. However, there is no evidence to connect Govindachandra with Śrī-Chandra. And as noticed in the Chola record, Dharmapāla (most probably a scion of the Kamboja family) ruled over Daṇḍabhūkti while the Suras, a new dynasty, ruled over South Rāḍha. Thus, now it has been observed that Mahipāla recovered North Bengal, parts of East Bengal, and only the northern side of Rāḍha (Burdwan). What we want to show is that it does not sound absurd if we say that some local chief by the name of Rājyapāla soon made an attempt to overthrow Mahipāla’s authority from Northern Bengal. It is also possible that Mahipāla conquered a part (most probably western part) of North Bengal as in other cases we have seen above. Rājyapāla of Ratnapāla’s inscriptions was the defeated ruler of ‘Gauḍa.’ It is also a noticeable fact that in all the Kāmarūpa inscriptions, though Bengal has been generally
denoted by the term 'Gauḍa', in the Gachtal grant, Gauḍa and Vaṅga have been shown as two separate countries, which will be discussed later. The same may be the case here, too. Hence, considering the contemporary political condition and geographical situation of Bengal, we may well conclude that the country, Ratnapāla came into conflict and subjugated beyond the Karatoya was definitely North Bengal, the part under ‘Rājayapāla.’

**Indrapāla**

After the death of Ratnapāla, Indrapāla ascended the Pāla throne, most probably in the first decade of the second half of the 11th century A.D. Indrapāla was the grandson of Ratnapāla. His father's name was Purandarapāla who seems to have died as a prince because of illness. “The pious king Ratnapāla of Lion-Like valour, being mature and old in age, in his own initiative and in consideration of his (grandson's) adequate qualities placed the royal fortune upon his grandson Indrapāla, whose father had assumed a body of fame after retiring to the heaven.” (v 17, Gauhati copperplate grant of Indrapāla, IAA, p. 187).
In the seals attached to the Gauhati and the Guwākuchi copperplate grant, Indrapāla has been designated as Prāgyotisādhipati mahārājādhirāja Śrī-Indrapālavarmadeva as in other cases. However, in both the grants he has assumed the full imperial title of paramēśvara-paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja indicating his equivalent status with his grandfather, Ratnapāla, among the kings of eastern region. It has been stated in the Gauhati grant, that Indrapāla “was a veritable lamp of the eastern region and by whom the world was conspicuously embellished.”

The most interesting fact of Indrapāla’s reign also has been shown in the Gachtal grant of Gopalavarman, that Indrapala “once had an occasion to meet the king of Vaṅga, named Kalyāṇachandra, who was the son Śrī-Chandra and possessed undefeatable arms which earlier had the distinction of demolishing the strong king of Gauḍa, Indrapāla then took his place at the head of a cluster of boats, covered by fluttering golden wheels and chowries
and in no time defied him (i.e., Kalyāṇachandra) and annihilated him along with his fame.” (v 20, IAA, p. 215).

We have earlier mentioned that Ratnapāla conquered a part of Northern Bengal. Hence, this king of Gauḍa was someone else. And now, Kalyāṇachandra made an attempt to conquer that portion of Gauḍa which was under Indrapāla. (v 20).

The expression that Indrapāla “once had an occasion to meet the king of Vaṅga” indicates that this conflict was defensive on the part of Indrapāla. Śrī-Chandra appears to be an important ruler of Bengal who ruled in Chandrādvipa and Harikela, Eastern Bengal (Vaṅga) and the coastal regions of Southern Bengal. Four inscriptions have come to light belonging to the reign of Śrī-Chandra. All the four copperplate grants were issued from Vikramapura, near Dacca which presumably was the capital city of Śrī-Chandra who assumed the full imperial title, paramasaugata-parameśvara-paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja.

14. ibid., p.195
Sri-Chandra's inscriptions give the following genealogy:

1. Purṇachandra
2. Suvarṇachandra
3. Maharajādhirāja Trailokyachandra
4. Maharajādhirāja Śrī-Chandra

The script of Śrī-Chandra’s inscriptions dates back to the close of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century A.D.

Now another king with name ending in 'chandra', e.g., Govinḍachandra of Vaṅgāladesa, is known from the accounts of Rājendra Chola's invasion of Bengal which took place in 1021-22 A.D.\textsuperscript{15} As the name Vaṅgāla-desa occurs immediately after Takkanalāḍam i.e., Southern Rāḍha, Vaṅgāla-desa definitely refers to Southern Bengal, “Taṇḍabutti.... after having destroyed Dharmapāla(in) a hot battle, Takkanalāḍam whose fame reached (all) directions, (and which he occupied) after having forcibly attacked Raṇasura, Vaṅgāla-desa, where rain never stopped (and from which) Gavinḍachandra fled having descended (from

\textsuperscript{15} ibid., p.196
his) male elephants....."16 That Govindachandra also ruled in Eastern Bengal is proved by two inscriptions discovered in Vikramapura, issued in his 12th and 23rd regnal year. However, there is no concrete evidence to link Govindachandra's genealogy with Śrī-Chandra. It is also to be noticed here that after Govindachandra, no Chandra ruler appears in the history of Bengal. It is generally held that the Chandra kingdom disappeared before the middle of 11th century A.D. But if it is true that Govindachandra ruled over Southern and Eastern Bengal, he must have come to the scene immediately after Śrī-Chandra presumably in 1020 or 1021 A.D.

Ratnapāla was the contemporary Kāmarūpa king during the time of the Chola invasion of Bengal. Ratnapāla presumably ruled up to 1040 A.D: to be succeeded by Indrapāla who must have ruled for minimum twenty years i.e., 1040-1060 A.D. Govindachandra must have ascended the throne approximately between 1015-1020 A.D. as Śrī-

16. ibid., p.138
Chandra’s Vikramapura inscriptions belonged to the beginning of the 11th century A.D. Govinda Chandra did not die in the Chola campaign. He must have ruled for a long period approximately up to 1040-1050 A.D. Now, it seems to be clear that Kalyanachandra who was the contemporary of Indrapala immediately succeeded Govinda Chandra as the ruler of Vaṅga or Vaṅgāla. It has been clearly mentioned in the Gachtal grant that Kalyanachandra was the son of Śrī-Chandra. From this fact, it can be inferred that Govinda Chandra was also related to Śrī-Chandra’s family; most probably, he was the eldest son of Śrī-Chandra even though Govinda Chandra’s inscriptions do not testify to this fact. After Govinda Chandra’s death, Kalyanachandra ascended the throne.

The great Kālachuri ruler Karna (c 1041-1070 A.D.) is credited with successful military campaign against Vaṅga (the Eastern country). It is likely that the Chandra kingdom was finally destroyed by the invasions of Karna.

17. *ibid.*, p.197
It may be surmised that Kalyāṇachandra was the Chandra ruler who faced the invasion of Karṇa. Thus, in the final years of the Chandra kingdom, its defeat against Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa must have contributed in their final downfall.

Another striking information supplied by this inscription (Gachtal grant) is that king Indrapāla married a Rāṣṭrakuṭa princess named Rājyadevī. However, nothing more is given about this princess or about the political relation between the Rāṣṭrakuṭas and Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. There is no evidence to show that this marriage was the outcome of a military campaign either on the part of the Rāṣṭrakuṭas or the Pālas of Kāmarūpa. Contemporary history of Bengal shows that Bengal was ravaged by several Kālachuri (Gāṅgeyadeva and his successor Karṇa) and after that by Chālukyan invasions (during the time of Vikramāditya-VI and his two predecessors not long before 1068 A.D.) in the second half of the 11th century A.D.¹⁸ But no such

Rāṣṭrakūṭa invasion appears to have taken place at that time. In fact, Bengal Pāla ruler Rāmapāla’s mother was a Rāṣṭrakūṭa princess.

The Maninamati plate of Govindachandra states that Kalyāṇa-chandra caused the river Lauhitya redoubled by the tears incessantly dropping down from the eyes of the Mleccha ladies who were agitated owing to the killing of their husbands. This information goes well with the date of Gachtal inscription that Kalyāṇachandra and Indrapāla once involved themselves in a naval battle, where however, the latter inflicted defeat upon the former. Now if we remember that the king of Vaṅgāla who faced the brunt of Rājendra Chola’s campaign was Goviṅḍachandra more than twenty years before, then Goviṅḍachandra of Mainamati plate appears to be another ruler of later years. He was also a scion of Śrī-Chandra who ruled before the rise of the Varmans of Śimhapura.

19. HB., p. 147
Jātavarman of the Belva grant, most probably, originally was the ruler of Simhapura in Orissa. Later, it appears that he carved out a new kingdom in Eastern Bengal with Vikramapura as his capital. Both Jātavarman and the Bengal Pāla king Vigrahapāla III married Kalachuri ruler Karnā’s daughters. Karnā ruled between 1040-C 1070 A.D. This enables us to place Jātavarman’s rule, with some degree of certainty, in the second half, probably the third quarter of the 11th century A.D. Thus, it appears that both Kalyāṇachandra and Govindachandra of the Mainamati plate not likely to have ruled in the third quarter of the 11th century A.D. Kalyāṇachandra might have been the last ruler of the Chandras whose defeat at the hands of Jātavarman paved the way for the establishment of a new kingdom in Vikramapura under the leadership of the latter. However, this is only a possible conjecture. Further evidence will be needed to arrive at a definite conclusion.

It has been stated that Kalyāṇachandra, who was the son of Śrī-Chandra and the possessor of ‘undefeatable arms’
had earlier defeated the ‘strong king of Gauḍa’. This ‘strong king of Gauḍa’ was undoubtedly Nayapāla or Vigrahapāla III of the Pāla dynasty of Bengal. In the Kālachuri records, describing Karṇa’s Bengal expedition, too, the Pāla ruler (Vigrahapāla III) has been described as the lord of Gauḍa.

Vigrahapāla III married Karṇa’s daughter Yauvanāśī (Rāmacarita 1.9 commentary). Mahipāla II occupied Eastern Bengal but not Southern Bengal which had been evidently ruled by the Chndras till the end of their rule approximately in the third quarter of the 11th century A.D.

Bilhaṇa’s Vikramāṇikadevacarita provides us with the information that Vikramāditya, the Chālukya prince of Karṇāta, went out on a career of conquest during the lifetime of his father Someśvara I and defeated the kings of Gauḍa and Kāmarūpa, among others (3.74). Bilhaṇa was the courtpoet of Vikramāditya and his narration might have been coloured by exaggeration, so typical of a court poet. But some incidents like the establishment of the Senas
(originally a Karnāṭa Kṣatriya family) as the ruling power in Raḍha or Western Bengal and of the Varmans of Simhapura in Eastern Bengal which coincide chronologically with the Chālukyan raids, might have been direct or indirect consequences of those raids. Therefore, it is possible that these Chālukyan raids took place probably not long before 1068 A.D. This gives us scope to believe Bilhana’s statement that Vikramaditya also made an attempt to invade Kāmarūpa. But when did this Chālukyan invasion take place (during Indrapāla’s reign or his successor’s reign) is difficult to say. Because no hint is to be found in the contemporary Pāla inscriptions to co-relate this incident. It is possible that Vikramaditya without making much headway went back from Prāgjyotiśa-Kāmarūpa.

Jātavarman also claims to have conquered Kāmarūpa (Belava grant of Bhojavaran, 1st half 12th cen A.D.) “He spread his paramount sovereignty by eclipsing (even) the

glory of Pr̥thu, son of Veṇa, marrying Viraśrī (daughter) of
Karṇa by extending his domination over the Aṅgas, by
humiliating the dignity of Kāmarūpa, by bringing to
disgrace the strength of the arms of Divya (the great
Kaivarta chief of Varendra), by damaging the fortune of
Govardhana and by vesting wealth in Brāhmaṇas versed in
the Vedas. v 8” (HB.198). In this case also, Pāla
inscriptions do not provide any clue to verify this
statement. Moreover, the way the poet describes
Jātavarman’s conquests is itself difficult to accept. Because,
Jātavarman himself was the first independent king of his
family (His father, Vajravarman, the first ancestor named in
the grant is not referred to as a ‘king’.) Moreover, it seems
that he originally belonged to Simhapura in Orissa.

Under the circumstances, what seems to be the best
possible conclusion is that the sovereignty of Prāgijyotiṣa-
Kāmarūpa might have been challenged for several times by
its numerous ‘enemies,’ but each time the Pālas protected
the country by their ‘victorious arms.’
Gopālavarmadeva (third quarter of 11th century A.D.)

The Gachtal copperplaste inscription found at Gachtal near Dabaka in Nagaon district, claims to have been issued by Gopālavarmadeva of the Pāla dynasty. As we have discussed earlier, this copperplate inscription of Gopālavarmadeva has provided us with much needed information regarding all his ancestors beginning with Brahmapāla, Ratnapāla, prince Puraṇdarapāla and Indrapāla. About his own accession, Gopālavarmadeva’s above mentioned record speaks thus: “His father having gone away long back to meet the divine luster of Śiva the earth took shelter in his victorious arms, enthused with strength, and was reminded of the lordship of Rāma, the vanquisher of Rāvana, over the whole world, after Daśaratha had retired to the abode of gods.” (v 24, IAA, p. 215). We may take that Indrapāla ruled for approximately twenty to twenty five years, i.e., 1040-1060 A.D. or 1065 A.D. and Gopālavarmadeva for another 10 to 25 years. Thus Gopālavarmadeva’s succession, who was son of Indrapāla and his Rāṣṭrakūṭa queen, Rājyadevi, was a normal one.
No particular enemy has been named, nor any of his particular conflict has been mentioned as in the case of his predecessors, in the said inscription and this very fact indirectly indicates that Vikramaditya or Jätavarman’s Kāmarūpa invasions were only myths. It is also possible that these invasions took place after the issue of this grant. Even if these invasions were real incidents, they might not have posed any threat to the ‘lord of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa.’ No such invasions had been mentioned in the grant of Gopalavarmadeva’s successor Dharmapāla.

The Gachtal grant proudly declares Gopalavarmadeva to be a paramēśvara-paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja, in the same status with his two immediate predecessors. It has been mentioned that his rule was ‘unobstructed.’ It is possible that Vikramāditya, the Chālukyan prince (whose invasions took place before that of Jätavarman), invaded the westernmost part, viz., the North Bengal portion beyond the Karatoṭa occupied by Ratnapāla temporarily, though. It sounds quite reasonable because in his conflict with
Kāmarūpa, Bilhana did not refer to the Brahmaputra or the Lauhitya. Reference to this river in the description of Kāmarūpa, otherwise has been so typical of the ancient Indian literature. Noticeably, in Jātavarman’s reference to Kāmarūpa, too, there has been no mention of the Brahmaputra. His reference to Kāmarūpa, mentioned earlier, sounds quite casual. Hence, this might be a fact that Jātavarman, too, came into conflict with Kāmarūpa king Gopālavarmadeva for this area, i.e., the area beyond Karatoya, only.

It is again very interesting to note that except in Dharmapāla’s copperplate inscriptions, the Pāla records have never referred to the ‘ocean’, neither in a political expression, nor with regard to the extent of the kingdom. In fact, as we know, Eastern Bengal, for the major part of the Pāla rule, was under the powerful Chandras. Later, from the third quarter of the 11th century A.D., Eastern Bengal with Vikramapura went into the hands of a new dynasty, called the Varmans, which is known from the Belava grant of
Bhojavarmman, and references to Harivarman—in the Ramacarita, two Buddhist manuscripts and the Bhuvanesvara inscription of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, the minister of Harivarman (HB, p. 201; Pālas of Bengal, R. D. Banerjeec, MASB, Vol. V, p. 97). Hereafter till the establishment of the Sena empire, the history of Southern Bengal went into oblivion. Dharmapāla’s reference to ‘ocean’ will be discussed later.

A very important feature of the Gachtal copperplate inscription is that it provides us with the name of a city called Haḍapyaka. “That good ruler and great king (Gopālavarmadeva) had a holy city, named Haḍapyaka, inhabited by noble men of clean character as that of the gods and rendered beautiful by the women having (charming) bodies like those of the heavenly damsels” (v 31, IAA, p. 217). Although it is a new name of a city, it might have been identical with Haḍappēśvara, the capital city of the Sālastambhas. This has been clearly emphasised that Haḍapyaka was a holy city associated with Šaivism.
Now, Hadappesvara was indeed a great, perhaps the greatest, ancient city of Pragjyotisa connected with Śaivism. It was the seat of Lord Hetukasūlin (Śiva of Tezpur Rock inscription of Hajjaravarman and of Mahāgaurī-Kamesvara of Vanamāla-varmadeva’s copperplate inscriptions.) What is most important is that the city of Haḍapyaka occurs also in line 26 of the Corātbārī grant of Ratnapāla, while the name of the same city also occurs in the grant in line 36 as Haḍappesvara. Thus, it is possible that Haḍapyaka was identical with Haḍappesvara, and the same continued to be a second seat of government for the Pāla family who ruled from the city of Śrī-Durjayā.

Harspāla

King Dharmapāla’s three copperplate inscriptions, namely the Khanāmukh, Šubhaṅkarapāṭaka and Puṣpabhadrā charters provide us with the available information about Harṣapāla. It appears that after Gopālavarmadeva, Harṣapāla ruled in the last twenty years of the 11th century A.D. and the first decade of the 12th century A.D.
The following are the verses attributed to Harṣapāla:

"From him (GopālavARMAN) was born a son, named Śrī-Harṣapāla who was source of sustained joy for his father, and whose name used to be sung by noble men............." (v 8, Khanāmukh grant, IAA, p. 231).

"In the battlefields he, by breaking with weapons the foreheads of the enemy elephants, repeatedly made offering of drinks to the demons on all sides, who being thirsty drank up hurriedly the lukewarm blood mixed up with a profuse quantity of froth." (v 10, Khanāmukh grant, IAA, p. 231)

The v 11 of the said grant states that king Harṣapāla's queen was Ratnā and they had a son named Dharmapāla, the issuer of the Khanāmukh grant (IAA, p. 231).

The same is repeated in the Śubhaṅkarapātaka grant.

Interestingly, in the Puṣpabhadrā grant, the composer attributes not a single verse independently to Harṣapāla. It states thus: "That king (GopālavARMAN) who was renowned for his luster, had a queen named Nayanā of adorabe fame.
They two had a son named Śrī Harṣapāla, whose fame used to be sung in the three worlds.” (v 5 IAA, p. 263). Under the circumstances, it appears that Harṣapāla’s reign passed without any significant event.

The date c 1120 A.D. had been suggested as the date of Bengal ruler, Rāmapāla’s death.²¹ Hence, it appears that Rāmapāla was the contemporary of both Harṣapāla and his son Dharmapāla. Harṣapāla who most probably ascended the throne in 1060 or 1065 A.D. must have predeceased Rāmapāla. The Rāmacarita informs us that after recovering Vārendrī (the ancestral place of the Pālas) from Bhīma, the Kaivartta rebel chief, Rāmapāla, made a series of conquests in the east and south. The Rāmacarita tells us that while the Varman king of the east, obviously a king belonging to the well-known Varman dynasty of East Bengal with Vikramapura as the capital, accepted Rāmapāla’s suzerainty voluntarily, Rāmapāla sent his victorious arms further east to Kāmarūpa. The victorious campaign was evidently led by an allīed or

²¹. HB. p.161
feudal chief who was greatly honoured by Rāmapāla. (HI 47). Rāmapāla must have taken this mission at a later stage when he felt free in his own territory. However, with no more data available at present, it is impossible to ascertain whether Haṣapāla or his successor Dharmapāla ruled in Kāmarūpa at that time.

Dharmapāla's all the three grants are taken to have belonged to the 12th century A.D. The script in these inscriptions is Nāgarī as it was in the eastern part of India in the 12th century A.D. The Khanāmukh and the Šubhaṅkarapāṭaka grants were issued in the first and third year of his reign. The Puṣpabhadrā grant mentions no date. However, on the basis of a number of factors, it has been suggested that this grant was issued in the year c 1130 A.D.

In this connection M. M. Sharma suggests:

(i) Difference in script towards modernisation.

(ii) ‘Non-availability of the famous poet Prasthānakalaśa’

("This faultless panegyric of king Dharmapāla has been composed by the poet Prasthānakalaśa who is an expert in
respect of the letters and the measurements suitable for the speech”). (v 15, Khanāmukh grant, IAA, p. 232).

(iii) Difference in the literature of the grant such as while in the earlier grants of Kāmarūpa including the first two of Dharmapāla, homage is paid to some form of Śiva, there is no mention of Śiva in the present grant. The earlier grants of Dharmapāla describe six predecessors of the donor king, while in the present grant, with the prominence of the donor king himself, it was presumably deemed necessary to give description of only three earlier generations. The suggestion as to the course of fate and destiny, as we have in the seventh verse of the present grant, should come only from a king who is already too old and imbued with the spirit of renunciation. Dharmapāla at his younger age, liked to be described as a hero (jītvirāticakra) as described in the earlier two grants while in the present grant, presumably due to his old age, he describes himself as a consummate poet (kavīcakravālauḍāmaṇi).
(iv) That Dharmapāla made the gift of as large a plot of land was in a much advanced age of him as the donor when he was presumably more religious minded and more generous.

(v) From the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant to the Puṣpabhadra grant there must have been a long gap so as to allow a great revolution in religious outlook; so far as in the former the king was a devotee of Śiva, in the later stage, he became a Vaiṣṇava to pay homage to Nārāyaṇa in the maṅgala verse and to make gift of a large plot of land to a Brāhmaṇa who was a devotee of Viṣṇu (Mādhava) from his very childhood (cf. v 18). Hence, we presume that Dharmapāla ruled mostly in 12th century for a long time beginning probably at the end of the 11th century; we may roughly put the Puṣpabhadra grant in c 1130 A.D. (IAA, p. 257).

There is an interesting verse in the Khanāmukh grant which states thus: "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 dharmma he also protected the cause of kāma and artha in proper time.” (v 12, IAA, p. 231).

Except the Varman kings and Vanamālavarman of the preceding dynasty, no other king so far, has claimed himself to be the “lord of the earth girdled by the oceans.” Hence, a great ideal of speciality lies in the word ‘ocean’. Moreover, the expression has been made exactly in the same manner as the earlier kings did it. The following passages are worth quoting

(i) “Having conquered the earth with the ocean as the girdle and subduing the enemy through power, the king (Mahendravarman) performed a number of sacrifices like the great Indra .......” (v 24, Dubi copperplates of Bhāskara varman, IAA, p. 22).

(ii) “This largely mighty lord of the world (i.e. the king, Candramukhavarma (after having duly caused the wailing of the strong (antagonists) and damage of the
pride of his enemies having conquered the earth with the ocean as her girdle . . . . . .” (v 37, Dubi copperplates, IAA, p. 23).

Among the Sālastambhas, only Vanamālavarman has been described as “assuming the lordship of the whole earth extending up to the rows of forest lying on the seashore.” (v 17, Parbatīyā copperplates, IAA, p. 122).

As we have mentioned earlier, Dharmapāla ruled for a long period presumably up to 30 to 35 years, who most probably ascended the throne either in the last years of the 11th century or in the beginning of the 12th century A.D., Rāmapāla was the contemporary ruler of the Pāla kingdom who ruled up to 1120 A.D. and led an eventful reign making conquests in several directions including Prāggyotisa in the east. It is likely that Dharmapāla, taking advantage of Rāmapāla’s attention elsewhere made fresh conquests and went as far as south-east Bengal. However, this conquest led to no permanent result for as we know some allied or feudal chiefs under Rāmapāla evidently led
a victorious campaign against the Kāmarūpa king and for this the chief was greatly honoured by Rāmapāla (III 47). Hence, it leads to this probable conclusion that this chief defeated the king of Kāmarūpa not on his home soil but in Bengal. Thus, in his old age, Dharmapāla prefers to be addressed as a poet (the Puṣpabhadrā grant). Verse 7 of the Puṣpabhadrā grant is worth quoting here: "Oh future kings! Please listen with love to this request of king Dharmapāla, that you should give up your false vanity on account of (possessing) the kingdom, as transitory (literally fickle) as the streak of lightning, but should never give up dharma which is the perennial source of pleasure." As we have seen, in all the later expeditions of Kāmarūpa made by a number of other rulers of India, Kāmarūpa kings have been described as crushed and humiliated. But no indigenous work including Dharmapāl’s last inscription, i.e. the Puṣpabhadrā grant in no way conform to these high sounding declarations. Moreover, these are also very vague. Thus, at the most we can say that these supposed defeats of Kāmarūpa took place outside Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa.
The Silimpur Stone inscription \((El, X, III 283)\) refers to king Jayapāla of Kāmarūpa (v 22) whose name is not included in the official list of kings of Kāmarūpa. It has been suggested that this Jayapāla was either the unnamed allied king who conquered Kāmarūpa for Rāmapāla or the ‘highly honoured’ Tiṅgyadeva, whose revolt is referred to in the Kamauli grant.

But as we have already shown, Dharmapāla ruled unabated for long after the death of Rāmapāla. His sovereignty over Kāmarūpa was unobstructed and unquestioned. In the Puṣpabhadrā grant, he has been described as a ‘sun to the lotus of the Pāla dynasty.’ This grant, too, hails Dharmapāla fabulously in the following words: “Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja the illustrious Dharmapālavarmadevapāda who is celebrated on account of his lordship over the Prāgjyotīṣa.............” (lines 16-17, \(IAA\), p. 263).

King Dharmapāla is said to have transferred his capital to a new city, called Kāmarūpanagara, in the Puṣpabhadrā
grant: “In Kāmarūpanagāra there was a king, befittingly named Dharmapāla, the swan in the form of whose fame could shine even having been confined within the worn out cage of this world.” (v 20, IAA, p. 265). Significantly in the other two earlier grants, there is no reference to any capital city. That means, he must have changed his capital at a later stage of his reign. Again, it is interesting that in none of the grants of Dharmapāla, there is any reference to the river Brahmaputra. Prāgjyotiṣapura, Hāḍappeśvara and also Durjaya are characterised by their proximity with the river Brahmaputra. Interestingly this seems not to be a characteristic of Kāmarūpanagāra. For this reason, P. N. Bhattacharyya places this city in Kamaṭāpura, the capital of the Khens in later period. The ruins of this city are to be seen at a place 14 miles south-west of the modern Koch-Bihar town in West Bengal. On the other hand, K. L. Barua identifies this city with the “city of Kamrud” of the Muslim chroniclers and places it in North Guwahati near

22. KŚ, Intr. pp. 29-34
the temple of Asvakrānta. On the basis of philological similarity, this identification seems to be more probable. Besides K. L. Barua, other historians like, N. N. Vasu, P. N. Bhattacharyya, place the "city of Kāmrud," up to which the invaders advanced somewhere in North Guwahati, 'just opposite Prāgjyotiṣapura or Gauhati.' M. M. Sharma, while supporting this theory, offers two place names of the area, viz. Rajduar (actually Rajāduār) meaning 'the royal gate' and Raṅgmahal (the pleasure palace) as indicating that the king’s palace existed there. He seems to be correct in his opinion. These place names appear to have developed in pre-Ahom age. Because, no relic or ruin belonging to the medieval Ahom period can be connected with these two place names. Neither there is any legend to fix them to the Ahom age. Under these circumstances, it is possible that Dharmapāla’s new capital city was situated at North Guwahati.

According to a popular belief still current in North Guwahati, the world will come to an end the day the

23. Barua, K.L., EHKS, p.93
24. Choudhury, P. C., HCPA, p.245
25. IAA, p.224
Puṣpabhadra river is dried up. This shows that once this Puṣpabhadra river must have had played a key role in the life of the people who lived therein. Interestingly, the find spot of the Puṣpabhadra grant is the dry bed of this river in a place called Athgaon near Rangmahal. In this connection, the area called Śilsāko which presumably got the name after a bridge made of stone belonging to pre-Ahom age is also to be taken into account.

Rule of the other Contemporary Rulers

How and when Dharmapāla’s reign or his life came to an end is beyond our knowledge. After him, only few kings, namely Jayapāla, Tiṅgyadeva, Vaidyadeva, Rāyārideva, Udaykarna and Vallabhadeva appear on the stage of the history of ancient Assam.

It is almost difficult to say anything definitely about Kāmarūpa king Jayapāla of Silimpur Stone Slab inscription. We cannot say whether he was a successor of Dharmapāla or he belonged to a different royal house. The last of Dharmapāla’s inscriptions, the Puṣpabhadra grant gives no
hint about the breakdown of Dharmapāla’s kingdom into pieces during his life time. Even after expressing his indifferent attitude to be a ‘king’ (v 7), Dharmapāla also proudly claims the title of paramesvara-paramabhattaraka-mahārājādhirāja. He has been described as ‘celebrated’ on account of his lordship over the ‘Prāgjayotiṣa.....’(line 17, IAA, p. 263). It is, therefore, reasonable to hold that this Jayapāla came after Dharmapāla. Likewise, Tiṅgyadeva who has been mentioned in the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva as the king of the Eastern land having allegiance to the king of Gauḍa, Kumārapāla, must have also appeared on the scene after Dharmapāla. Now, it is also difficult to ascertain whether Tiṅgyadeva came from Bengal under the instruction of Kumārapāla or he was a feudal chief of this area, who after the death of Dharmapāla usurped the throne of Prāgjayotiṣa and accepted the suzerainty of the Gauḍa king. It is to be noticed that this Tiṅgyadeva has been described as the king of a territory in the Eastern land. But it has not been named as either
Prāgjyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa. This tempts us to believe that Tiṅgyadeva had his hold over some parts of Prāgjyotiṣa only. It is also possible that under the instruction of Rāmapāla, it was Tiṅgyadeva, who after clearing South Bengal of Dharmapāla’s army advanced towards Kāmarūpa and captured some portions of it. “The aforesaid widely celebrated Śrī Vaidyadeva was appointed ruler by the Lord of Gauḍa in place of king Tiṅgyadeva, treated with honour in the Eastern Land, after hearing of his (Tiṅgyadeva’s) hostility” (v 13, Kamauli grant, IAA, p. 284). It was Vaidyadeva, who by his victorious arms, spread his authority over a vast area of Prāgjyotiṣa in course of time presumably within four years. Because, by his Kamauli grant, he donates land in Kāmarūpa maṇḍala (sub-division) within the Prāgjyotiṣa-bhūkṭi (province) in the 4th year of his reign (lines 50-53, Kamauli grant, IAA, p. 286). One confusing problem arises here. In the grant, Prāgjyotiṣa has been described as a bhūkṭi indicating clearly that it was a province of Kumārapāla’s kingdom (Gauḍa). But at the
same time, contrary to this, Vaidyadeva claims for himself the full imperial title of *mahārājādhirāja-parameśvara-paramabhattāraka* who was again appointed by Kunārapāla as the ruler of Prāgjyotiṣa. The composer of the record should have been more explicit in describing Vaidyadeva’s actual relationship with Kumārapāla of Gauḍa. One probable answer to this question may be that after sometime of his appointment as the ruler of Prāgjyotiṣa, most probably after Kumārapāla’s death, Vaidyadeva proclaimed his independent status. The Pālas of Gauḍa by then were not in a position to counter this rising power of Vaidyadeva. Anyway, Vaidyadeva thus, saved the sovereignty of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.

The composer of the Kamauli grant is of full praise for his patron’s prowess and his family’s background which served the Pālas as ministers for generations. It seems that Vaidyadeva’s forefathers were *sāmantas* under the Bengal Pālas. Because, when Vaidyadeva was born, “the soldiers of his (Vaidyadeva’s father Bodhideva) enemies
immediately gave up food, sleep and steadiness, and became stupified.” (v 8). To note, Vaidyadeva before coming to Prāgjyotiṣa won a battle in Southern Vaṅga (v 11 Kamaulī grant, IAA, p. 283). However, nothing is to be known about Vaidyadeva’s later years of life and about his successors.

The Assam Plates of Vallabhadeva, the given date of which is 1185 A.D. (śaka 1107) supplies us with the names of four kings, viz. Bhāskara, Rāyārideva, Trailokyasimha, Udayakaṇa. Nihsāṅkasimha, and Vallabhadeva. The inscription does not mention Vallabhadeva’s kingdom and its capital, Kīrtipura, has been mentioned simply as a town in the vicinity of which in the Hāpyocā-mandaḷa, he constructed a celebrated alms house for the poor. But the names of two of the seven villages given in the grant, viz., Devuni-Koṇci and Saṅgśrahī-koṇcikā bear a Kāmarūpa tinge. Not only we find several names of villages ending in koṇci in the ancient epigraphs of Assam but such names are still prevalent in lower Assam (e.g. Hamsākonci of Kamauli
grant, Pāñcolakoñci, Daluvakoñci and Dudhavakoñci-
bhūmi of the Nilācala grant of Mādhava, and 
Khādikoñkoñci of the Gachtal copperplate grant of 
Gopālavarmadeva, etc. among the ancient ones, while 
Guwākuci, Khātkuchi, Betkuci near Guwahati, Suwalkuchi 
etc. are all modern names of places situated in modern 
Kamrup district, Assam). Likewise, Gośarīdhara (v 20, 
IAA, p. 298) resembles Digdāṇḍidhara and Śīngiādhara of 
the Kamauli grant. Then the name Hāpyacā (v-13) also 
resembles Haposā village of the Parbatīya Plates of 
Vanamāla and Hapyoma- viṣaya in the Gauhati grant of 
Indrapāla. All these might have been the names of the same 
area in different periods of time or these were neighbouring 
places, all situated in the northern bank of the Brahmaputra 
(except Hāpyacā, the other two places were situated in the 
Uttarakūla of the Brahmaputra). Palaeographic affinities of 
the epigraph with those of Kamauli and the Nilācala plates 
of Mādhava, who seems to have ruled in Kāmarūpa in the 
15th century A.D., also indicate that Vallabhadeva’s plates
were also issued in Kāmarūpa. The importance given to Lord Gañeṣa in these documents is also to be taken into account.26 Taking of the appellation Niḥśankasiṁha Kāmarūpeśvara by Mādhava also reminds us of Vallabhadeva’s father Udaykarna Niḥśaṅkasiṁha. The two references to the Varāha incarnation of Viṣṇu, given in this charter (v 2) also very strongly put forward the view that Vallabha’s family originally belonged to Assam.

Historians like N. N. Vasu27 take Vallabha’s family as belonging to Vaidyadeva’s line, who ruled after Vaidyadeva. However, the above mentioned points clearly disapprove this theory. Moreover, we cannot set the chronology of the reign of three kings within the short span of forty-three years (1142 A.D. being the date of the Kamauli grant). Under the circumstances, it sounds quite reasonable that Vallabhadeva’s family was a local ruling family which by the middle of the 12th century A.D., taking

26. ibid., p.300
27. Vasu, N.N., SHK, pp.14
the advantage of the absence of a strong central authority, started ruling independently.

It has been said in the grant that Rayārideva won a "majestic war .... which was fearful due to the presence of the foremost elephants of Vaṅga.......") (v 5, IAA, p. 297). The omission of the name of the contender put us in trouble. According to our view, if Rayārideva ruled during the time of Pāla king Dharmapāla (chronologically this theory fits well into the situation), it is all the more possible that he accompanied Dharmapāla in his invasion of south-east Bengal, i.e., Vaṅga (this issue has already been discussed earlier) and wrested victory for his master. Another alternative is that he came into conflict with either Tiṅgyadeva or Vaidyadeva both of whom came to rule Prāggyoṭiṣa-Kāmarūpa as representatives of the ruler of Gauḍa. By that time, Vaṅga has lost its separate identity. In the Kamauli grant, Vaidyadeva himself is described as being victorious in a naval battle in Southern Vaṅga (v 11, IAA, p. 284).
The general trend, as we have seen above and the dearth of evidence has tempted us to believe that after the Pāla dynasty, the process of disintegration began in the State of Prāgjyotiśa-Kāmarūpa. Naturally several independent petty States came into being. To this, the rule of the Bhuyānas gave another tinge. The rule of the Bhuyānas has already been discussed in the second chapter. Thus, by the middle of the 12th century A.D., the ancient kingdom of Prāgjyotiśa-Kāmarūpa established by Naraka came to an end. Of course, in the succeeding century another kingdom would grow up in the ruins of this kingdom centering Kāmarūpa about 14 miles south-west of modern Coch-Bihar under the leadership of the Khen dynasty.
CHAPTER-V

SECTION - B

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PĀLAS

As in the case of the two earlier dynasties, for the Pāla administration also, we are to depend upon the Pāla epigraphs as straight sources. The very first line in the Pāla sāsanas, (as also in other similar sāsanas), “Let there be welfare (to all)”, shows how much importance was given to administration of the country. Although the society was caste- and class-ridden, all seem to be included within the purview of ‘welfare’. The way, the river Brahmaputra is adored in the Bargaon copperplates shows the importance of the river in the socio-economic life of the country. “Let the world be protected, after the destruction of all the sins, by the sea in the form of the river Lauhitya regarding the current of the waters of which people may be pleased to conjecture as follows,—‘Is it the moonlight itself that
flows here after assuming a physical form? ’ or ‘Is it a flow of melted crystals’ or ‘Is it the auspicious power of Lord Śaśāṅka intently engaged in destroying the whole host of sins ?’ (v 2, IAA, p.161). Indirectly here also lies the concern for welfare of the entire people.

We are told in the Bargāon grant that it was the subjects who used to call Brahmapāla’s son as Śrī-Ratnapāla, because they well knew that ‘this king would protect with his own qualities, the highly respectable persons who resemble the jewels.’ (ratnas, v 13, IAA, p.162). In this verse, lies the importance given to the possession of high moral degrees on the part of the ‘kings’. In this connection, we, may also take the opportunity to quote some verses:

“.......... (Indrapāla) was a veritable lamp of the eastern region and by whom (Indrapāla), the whole world was conspicuously embellished. He was a destroyer of enemies, a controller of senses, a master of polity and the foremost amongst the men of character ..........” (v 15. the Gauhati copperplate grant of Indrapāla, IAA, p. 186)
Gopalavarmadeva’s character has been described in this way: ‘Śrī-Gopāla-varmadeva, who was of auspicious birth, polite and an ocean of attention and pertinence. He was a friend of the learned men; he conquered the whole world and was a follower of truth, a good archer awe-inspiring to the enemies and was the resting ground for unfathomable qualities” (v 23, IAA, p. 215)

Teachers were given tax-free land called bhaviṣā-bhūmi for the purpose of teaching the students who were mostly drawn from the royalty, the sāmantas and the Brāhmaṇa caste. The Bargaon grant mentions a bhaviṣā-bhūmi under one Adityabhaṭṭāraka, who was preferably a Brāhmaṇa teacher. (IAA, p. 190)

Thus, a king was expected to be a man of character and learning, and also a man of polity; a die-hard soldier and a conqueror. The reflection of these two interests is to be well noticed in rule of the Pālas. Of course, this has been the most common feature of the Varman as well as the Sālastambha administrations. All the three dynasties made innumerable conquests and at the same time maintained law and order in internal affairs. This must be the reason why no internal revolt
(military as well as popular) took place in Assam in the ancient period. Only king Dharmapāla appears to have deviated from this dictum. While he upholds the responsibility of good administration, he simultaneously decries military achievements: “Oh future kings! Please listen with love to this request of king Dharmapāla, that you should give up your false vanity on account of (possessing) the kingdom, which is as transitory as the streak of lightening, but should never give up dharmma, which is the perennial source of pleasure.” (v 7, Puṣpabhadrā grant, IAA, p. 263) But this change in Dharmapāla’s attitude seems to be a personal experience as we have discussed it in the previous section of this chapter. It never was a general trend.

As we know, the Pālas claimed descent from the Bhauma-Nāraka family which bestowed upon them the divinity cherished by all the royal houses of ancient India including the previous two royal dynasties of ancient Assam. As we have discussed elsewhere, this bestowing of divinity upon the royal houses by the Brāhmaṇas benefitted both these sections. The Brāhmaṇas got
the key to administration and enjoyed the fruits of large tracts of tax-free cultivable lands as donees.

Here it is to be noted, though no service grant has been discovered so far, big officers must have been granted in lieu of salary as the land grants donated to the Brāhmaṇas. The law book of Manu, compiled in the second century A.D. prescribes payment of the fiscal officers by grants of land.1 The law-givers of Gupta times afterward upheld this provision. However, we don't have an accurate idea of the mode of payment of the officers under the Gupta empire, for the Chinese evidence on this point is not clear.2 In the time of Harṣavardhana, high officers are said to have been assigned one-fourth of the royal revenue. Hiuen Tsang states that the governors, ministers, magistrates and officials had each a portion of land assigned to them for their personal maintenance.3 The designations of these great public servants included daussadhasa-dhanika, pramatara, rājasthāniya, uparika and viṣayapati.4

1. Manusmṛti, VII, pp. 115-120
2. Sharma, R.S. IF, p. 9
4. EI, II, 29, 1, 9; cited in IF, p. 9.
The high officials, like Commander-in-Chief, *amātya* etc. were appointed generally on the basis of heredity. It seems that these officers were inducted from the class of *mahāsāmantas* or the *sāmantas* who by and large were the petty chiefs of the numerous tribes that lived in the Brahmaputra valley. However, unlike in the case of the Sālastambhas, we lack such instances.

Thus, the king and his close associates formed the creamy section of the society. Existence of the feudal mode of administration naturally moulded the economy in its favour. Hence, it can be guessed very well that the condition of the general people both political and economic, differed a lot from this section. However, the existence of the self-sufficient villages (this has been a common feature throughout India right upto the beginning of the machine age, i.e., until the 19th century), at the same time, saved the situation. Personal requirement of the people were very few and these, like clothing, food, cattle, building materials, shoes etc. were locally produced and consumed mostly through the barter system. Moreover, as we know, traditionally utmost importance has always been given on
the cultivation of moral character. So, the people must have felt more or less satisfied with their minimum requirements and respective income sources. In this regard, the following lines may be quoted: “In that city of Durjayā, there used to be jadatā (i.e. liquidness) only in the (pearl) necklaces but never any jadatā (i.e. dullness) in the sense organs.” Does it mean that the people were satisfied with their needs? “There used to be canicalatā (i.e., fickleness) only among the monkeys but never any canicalatā in the minds (of people); there used to be bhaiguratā (fickleness) only in the play of brows but never any bhaiguratā (i.e., undoing or breach of trust) in respect of deeds undertaken; there used to be sopasargata (i.e., prefixing of upasargs) only in respect of roots (i.e., dhātus) but never any sopasargata (i.e., illness) in respect of the subjects; there used to be vamatā (i.e., beauty) only in the damsels (and never any vamatā or crookedness in respect of any others); there used to be skhalitum (i.e., faltering of steps) only in case of the beautiful women elated through the intoxication caused by wine (and never any skhalitā or breach of conduct of the people in general); there used to be
sense of apathy (nisprhatā) only towards the wrong-doers and desire for incessant madhupāna (i.e., sucking of honey) only in case of the swarms of bees (and niratyaya madhupānasakti or interest in incessant drinking of wine was never to be seen in case of the ordinary citizens); there used to be excessive allegiance to the beloved only in case of the cakravāka birds (and never in case of the citizens) and there used to be taking of meat (piśitasitā) only in case of the animals (and never in case of the citizens). (lines 40-43, Bargaon copperplate grant of Ratnapāla, IAA, p.164).

However, we are also not to forget about the moral responsibility thrusted upon the king of looking after the subjects as his children. Here, the following verse (v 29) from the Gatchal copperplate grant Gopālavārman may be quoted: “When he (Gopālavārman) was the king only the nights experienced cakrapīḍa (i.e., pangs of separation for the cakravāka birds) (and the people did not have to suffer from any cakrapīḍa or migraine); there used to be kaṭṭaka (thorns) only in the lotus stalks (but the people were free from any kaṭṭaka or enemy); there used
to be lack of pride (*mānahāni*) of the people only in the time of prosperity (but otherwise they all had self-respect). (*IAA*, p. 216).

From the names of officers like *viṣayakāraṇa* and *vyavahārika* etc., and other persons mostly drawn from the royalty like the *rājās*, *rājīs* (queen) and the *rāṇakas* and also others like *rājanyaka*, *rājaputras* and *rājavallabhas*, all preferably related to land, it is quite clear that the Pālas followed the same methods of administration as the Śālastambhas and the Varmans.

Divisions and sub divisions of the State also seem to be as under the Śālastambhas or even the Varmans. The state was broadly divided into *bhūktis*, *maṇḍalas*, *viṣayas* and *grāmas*. As usual *grāmas* occur most frequently in the epigraphs than the other bigger divisions. The Gauhati and the Guwākuchi copperplate grants of Indrapāla mentions two *viṣayas*, respectively, Hapyomā and Mandi in the Uttarakūla or northern bank of the Brahmaputra; the Gachtal grant of Gopālavarman mentions one Bārāsojambubā-(*viṣaya*); the Khanāmukh copperplates of Dharmapāla mentions the *viṣaya* of Puruji; the Šubhaṅkarapāṭaka and the Puṣpabhadrā grants of the same king
mention two viṣayas or districts, viz., Dijjina and Puraji, respectively. It is highly probable that this Dijjina-viṣaya and the Dijjina-viṣaya mentioned in the Nowgong grant (line 23) of the Sālastambha king, Balavarman III, are identical, and is said to have been located on the southern bank (Dakṣinakule) of the Brahmaputra. B. Kakati's definition of the word ‘Dijjina’ in Boḍo language (diya-to melt, and jina-dirt) may stand correct in this context. Apart from these viṣayas, no other divisions such as the maṇḍala or bhūkti has been mentioned in the available charters of the early three royal houses.

The rule of the Pālas is highly remarkable also because of founding of new capital cities. Unlike the previous two dynasties, the Pāla kings changed their capitals frequently. At least the kings of this dynasty established three capital cities - Durjjayā, Ḥaḍapyaka and Kāmarūpanagara. The geographical location of these cities have already been discussed. A description of the city

of Durjjayā is notable here: "The city was fit for the residence of great men, although it was full of the forests of the trees in the form of the arms of the strong warriors, ever eager to plunder the cities of all the enemies." (Lines 30-31). Here the orb of the sun used to be covered from the view by the tops of the thousands of white-washed mansions as white as the smile of the intoxicated beautiful dames (line 31-32). This city was the residence of hundreds of people devoted to enjoyment (bhogin) like the (sandal) trees, growing on the soil of the mount Malaya, which are infested by hundreds of snake (bhogins). Like the sky embellished with (the planets) Budha, Guru (Bṛhaspati) and Kāvyā (i.e., Śukra), this city was the place of poetical figures (Kāvyālāñkāras) created (or discussed) by the learned men (budhas) and the preceptors (gurus). Like the peak of the mount Kailāsa which was the abode of Parameśvara (i.e. Lord Śiva), this city was also abode of parameśvara (i.e., the king or the lord Śiva of the local temple) and like the peak of the mount Kailāsa, inhabited by the god Kūvera (i.e. vīteśa), this city was also inhabited by rich men (i.e., vīteśas). (lines 30-34, IAA, p. 163).
The above-mentioned beautiful comparisons, no doubt, establish the fact that this new capital of the kingdom of Prāgjyotisā was an ideal capital city. It was the habitat of the king who was like Lord Śiva and the numerous soldiers needed for its protection and at the same time learned men, poets and teachers thronged the place. It was also the residence of rich men. Not the least, the general people also enjoyed residing in this place. Thus, people of different tastes and categories went hand in hand in this capital. It is really noticeable that the description covered duly all the sections of people. Emphasis has, however, been laid on being a religious or a holy city in case of Gopālavarman's Haḍapyaka which appears to be identical with Haḍappesvara as discussed elsewhere.

The third city was Kāmarūpanagara which was definitely an administrative centre. It is extremely difficult to trace the reasons for shifting of the capital except for Ratnapāla's Durjaya which he definitely did to give a new tinge to the Pāla administration as Haḍappesvara was the capital of the Sālastambhas.
Unlike the Sālastambhas who had to deviate from the law of primogeniture once under compelling circumstances (in case of Cakra and Arathi), the Pālas strictly adhered to the rule. Of course, all the available sources testify to the fact that all the known Pāla kings, fortunately possessed noble character too. *mahābhiseka* or the coronation ceremony must have been an important state function, although nothing has been described regarding the coronation explicitly on the epigraphs.

The available sources are the tax-free land grants made to the Brāhmaṇas. While these grants also mention about some *bhaviṣā-bhūmis* (tax free lands used by some teachers) such as the one under Ādityabhaṭṭāraka (The Gauhati copperplate grant of Indrapāla). The Khanāmukh grant of Dharmapāla supplies us with the names of some other donees like Devanāthasatka (which appears to be a Brahmaṇical name), Kumārasatka (this Kumārasatka most probably was related to the former) and Madhumathana (who got the plot called Puraputta tax free). Kulasonta is another such land holder mentioned in the Suwālkuchi grant of Ratnapāla. Śrī-Daṇḍu belonging to some
famous Maṇḍala family might have been a high rank official or a sāmanta (maṇḍalagotrasya). Because, generally, the prefix 'śrī' was added before the names of the kings, members of the royalty and the mahāsāmantas; just as Śrī-Sucitta in the case of the Tezpur Rock inscription of the Śālastambha king Ḫarjjaravarman. This inscription also bears the name of another feudatory, Śilākuṭṭakavaleya, who has been described simply as a sāmaṇṭa without the appellation 'śrī'. The very existence of this system proves one thing that land revenue was the main source of the State income, but we are nowhere to ascertain the amount of land revenue.

Independent land holder must have paid land tax on a regular term. The Pāla epigraphs mention a number of such individual land holders who were neither Brāhmaṇa donees, nor sāmaṇṭas, like Bhavadeva of the Khanāmukh grant. (Bhavadevapuṣkariṇī, line 53), Pāṇcāka and Balabhadra of the same grant etc. (IAA,p. 233) It is very likely that these individual land holders cultivated their land under the village co-operative system which had been a common feature all over India.
The Suwalkuchi copperplate grant of Ratnapāla describes some plots of land which had been held by some boatmen. They were Candenaunikī, Dakṣapatinaunikī and Sādhavanaukī. This has been observed that the whole area of the donated land was full of rivers and the inhabitants were generally boatmen as the term naukī seems to mean a boatman (the meaning of the word nauka being a boat) (IAA, p. 177). There is no doubt that these naukīs were essentially boatmen. But it is not necessary to believe that the whole area was full of rivers. One navigable river is sufficient to have at least three naukīs. The line in the middle of plate which goes like kalarīgā-viṣayāṇṭah-pati-dhānya-trisahasra-otapattik-āpakṛṣṭa.........bhunau, (IAA, p. 174) testifies to the fact that the donated land was situated in a village belonging to the Kalarīgā-viṣaya. The main river of the Nagoan district is the Kalang river (in addition to the Brahmaputra). But unfortunately, it is not mentioned in the available plates whether the said viṣaya was situated on southern bank of the Brahmaputra. But if we notice the fact that the donated land was situated nearby a river amidst the houses of boatmen, then it is highly possible that the river
was Kalang. Being the main river of the visaya or the area concerned it needed more than one nauki for transport and communication on a regular basis. For that matter, these naukis were settled in the area with some land. However, it is certainly difficult to ascertain whether they got the land in lieu of salary.

In addition to the land revenue, other major sources of income were definitely the war booty and tributes paid by the vassal kings and the sāmantas and the mahāsāmantas. The epigraphic records mention the other taxes only casually, such as ‘duties due to different causes’ ‘tenant taxes’ etc.

In every charter, be it in case of the Sālastambhas or the Pālas, the donated land had been spared of the troubles on account of ‘fastening of elephants and boats, searching for thieves, inflicting of punishment’ and also of grazing of animals like elephants, horses, camels, cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep. Indirectly, it means that the State authority reserved the rights for all these actions anywhere it wanted and felt necessary. It had been a good way to show its coercive authority.
Although the Pala epigraphic records do not mention the household officials like the pratihara (gatekeeper of the royal palace), sthapati (the chamberlain who was in charge of the royal harem), purohita (the chaplain) etc., the household officials must have occupied a prominent and unique place in the Kamarupa administration under the P alas. Among this category of officials, the purohita occupied the prime position of honour. The office of the purohita dated back to the early Vedic times. He was the officer who planned and performed the sacrifices on behalf of the sovereign, and acted as his advisor on all religious matters.

Vallabhadeva’s Assam plates do not throw any specific light on the administrative method of the donor. As it was an institutional land grant (donated to an alms house), it may be well presumed that the method was same with the other kings of the region and with the same types of apparatus. Noticeably the term ‘manḍala’ has been specifically mentioned in the Assam plates. Here, one thing we must take into consideration is that in the epigraphic records of ancient Assam except in Vaidyadeva’s Kamauli grant, bhūkta equivalent to a modern
province has not been mentioned. Now, although these records testify to the various conquests made by the Prāgjyotīsa-Kāmarūpa kings further west near the ocean or the sea, the conquests were not permanent. So, the kingdom upto the Karatoyoā itself was of the size of a large bhūkti which was divided into a number of ‘maṇḍalas’ and sub-divided into ‘viṣayas.’ Further more, except the Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskaravarman and the Tezpur and other grants of Vanamālavarmadeva, all the land grants and other epigraphs centre round this land only. Because of these two reasons, the ancient Assam epigraphs do not offer us with the term ‘bhūkti.’

On the other hand, Vaidyadeva was a king who conquered this land if not the whole but a considerable part of it, including Prāgjyotīsa proper (the undivided modern Kamrup district). However, this conqueror settled in this land and took the epithet of mahārajaḥdhirāja parameśvara paramabhaṭṭāraka indicating his independent status. But at the same time, the composer of the Kamauli grant had never forgotten to speak about his earlier appointment as a minister of the Pāla king, Kumārapāla of
Bengal, who came to Kāmarūpa at the head of an army with a view to conquering this land in which he was, of course, fully successful and that he started ruling this country as a governor of the Bengal king. Now, as a conquered part of the Pāla kingdom, Vaidyadeva’s Prāgjiyotīśa was definitely a ‘bhūkti’ or a province which was divided into several ‘maṇḍalas’ including the ‘Kāmarūpa-maṇḍala.’ Vaidyadeva’s somewhat confused and mixed-up relationship with his paternal land, is simply reflected in the pronouncement of Prāgjiyotīśa as a bhūkti.