

## CHAPTER 12

# Slaves and Serfs in Mediaeval Cambodia

( circa 400-1300 A. D. )

In my paper on Some Aspects of Feudalism in Cambodia ( submitted to the Twenty-sixth Session of the International Congress of Orientalists, held at Delhi, in January 1964, and published subsequently in the Journal of the Bihar Research Society, Volume XLVII, Rahul Sankrtyayana Volume ), I have traced the development of feudalism in Cambodia and discussed in brief the slaves and serfs in the society. Some Soviet and Czech scholars also have turned their attention to this aspect of the Cambodian history and Mr. L. Sedov of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia, U. S. S. R., Moscow, has recently published two important papers dealing with the socio-economic history of Cambodia in the Angkor period.

Feudalism was a form of socio-economic system throughout the world at a given period of social development in history. The nature of feudalism differed from country to country and from continent to continent. In Europe, the Industrial Revolution destroyed the last vestige of feudalism, but in Asia the system continues even today, its form and nature differing from country to country. So far as Cambodia is concerned, we have at our disposal a vast mass of Sanskrit and Khmer inscriptions. In my aforesaid study, I had confined myself mostly to the Sanskrit texts and here also I have depended mainly on the same though corroborative Khmer texts ( in translation ) have been consulted as well. Religion played a great part in the daily life of the Cambodian people in the middle ages and the grants, more or less, deal usually with the religious aspect of the question. It is through the study of these grants that we get a glimpse of the social and economic life of the people during our period of review.

In Cambodia we come across with different types of land tenure. The question of the actual ownership of land is not yet very clear. It needs a separate treatise for better treatment. Both the kings and their favourites issued grants and some of the important officials owed their position to the grace or kindness ( *prasāda* ) of the rulers. The creation of powerful intermediaries in land, the mode of production, and the system of distribution are points to be reckoned with in Cambodia. In a number of Sanskrit and Khmer inscriptions, we have got the

actual details about these things. The slaves and serfs formed an important part of the feudal economy of Cambodia. They seem to have participated in production without any equivalent or appreciative remuneration. A huge surplus was created in the temple or in other properties. The mode of production was, no doubt, primitive but the surplus, thus created, paved the way for a few rich people to grow from more to more. They controlled the economic life-line of the country. The high artistic construction, though rare specimens of art in history, bespeak of the use of forced labour. A critical estimate of the exploitation of the surplus labour, though yet a desideratum, is not within the scope of this paper.

Though the Cambodians were not so much scrupulous with regard to 'purity', the duties of the four *varṇas*, which often changed with the economic status of a man, were observed. The caste system, though apparently in vogue, underwent change in this region. There was an officer known as the Chief of the Castes who had to look to the maintenance of the *varṇa* Law. The Brāhmaṇas were divided into two broad classes—worshippers of *Śiva* or those of the Buddha. They were subdivided into five groups, originating mainly from marriages with lower castes. The Brāhmaṇas sometimes did the same type of work as assigned to the slaves (RCM—No. 155). The kṣatriyas also were divided into five classes. The Śūdras were not despised as impure or untouchable. Men of all castes took to agriculture. In Bali, the higher castes enjoyed the same privileges in the law court as their counterparts in India.

Slaves formed a distinct class in society. As an institution slavery arose out of the following circumstances:—

- ( i ) birth or being born of slave ( *Gṛhaja* )
- ( ii ) non-payment of debt or fine ( *Daṇḍadāsa* )
- ( iii ) imprisonment in war ( *Dhvajahṛta* )
- ( iv ) poverty ( *Daridradāsa* )
- ( v ) willing acceptance of the status of a slave ( *Bhaktadāsa* ).

The civil law of Java throws light on the conditions of the slaves and women. The Javanese civil law permitted a husband to sell his wife. A slave might change his master by purchase, sale, gift, or inheritance. Slaves were regarded as the absolute property of their masters and a master was entitled to the property and issues of slaves. A slave could be given as a pledge. The aristocracy in Cambodia included kings, nobles and officials enjoying all privileges. The lower orders including the peasants were subjected to inhuman exploitation. The insatiable demand for forced

labour and military service on the part of the ruler left the country in a state of impoverishment. The porters, slaves, bhṛtyas, garland-makers, water-carriers, and workers of almost all descriptions constituted the gang of galley slaves. The artistic creations of Jayavarmana VII bear testimony to the painful existence of the 'have-nots'. Feudal levies and obligations were not unknown. There were officers in charge of *corvée* and slaves. As a result of the nefarious activities of the Chams (Champa), there was influx of slaves among them. Regular slave trade was carried on by the Cham merchants and the slaves formed a prominent element of the population in addition to the aristocracy and commonalty.

We frequently come across with the details of the slaves and serfs in the Kambuja inscriptions, as they were also donated like other articles of gifts. It is thus evident that they were treated as chattels and helots and had practically no social standing. In most cases we have the details of slaves, servants, serfs, their children etc., and their transfer from one master to another. In the feudal economy of Cambodia, this appears to have been a regular feature and these unfortunate persons were employed in all sorts of productive and unproductive humiliating jobs. With no possibility of escape from this drudgery, they had to compromise with the situation though instances of revolts are not few and far between. It is difficult to ascertain whether the State was the vast labour employing machinery or not but it is certain that there was no security for the lower orders against the frequent oppression by their master, who, practically, controlled the economic life of the land. There was a regular sale and purchase of slaves in Cambodia.

The earliest Khmer inscription (609-611) records the dedication of slaves to the temple of *Gambhīreśvara*.<sup>1</sup> Another Khmer inscription gives us an example of two princes and a personage in their service who had received from them the same marks of honour.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that very often minor officials also made grants and in one case we find a chief holding the authority of a troop of thousand inhabitants. Slaves were also dedicated to the *Bodhisattvas*.<sup>3</sup> Whenever there was any new assignment, serfs were also donated.<sup>4</sup> The famous Paṇḍita Śivakaivalya is believed to have founded a *Śivaliṅga* and assigned it to some serfs. By their conduct and loyalty, the servants sometimes won the appreciation of and rewards from their masters. In one of the Khmer inscriptions

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1 Inscriptions of Ak Yom (609) and Angor Borei (611).

2 Ponhear Hor Inscription.

3 Cf.—Inscription of Vat Prasat.

4 Inscription of Sdok Ka Thom.

we come across a servant named Nasa who inspired confidence by his good conduct; another servant named Nadha became the chief of the army.<sup>1</sup> Parallel examples of this type may be given from the histories of other countries. Chivalry and loyalty paid due dividends in feudal society and Cambodia was no exception to this rule. Nadha received high-sounding titles like Nṛpendravaya and Pṛthvinarendra. Those who assisted the king were amply rewarded by the grant of land and other allied privileges. Slaves formed an important part of the royal or feudal donations, both secular and ritualistic. At times a servant was charged by the king to build a rock and other edifices.<sup>2</sup> The inscription of Prasat Kharvan (921) speaks of a prince named Mahidharavarmana as offering serfs from Bhimapura. He was a partisan of Jayavarmana IV. A confidant is said to have celebrated the foundation by paying homage to the king.<sup>3</sup> Sangrama was rewarded for his prodigies of valour in combat during the time of Jayavarmana V.

The inscriptions of Jayavarmana V bring to light various aspects of the question of feudalism and some of them have been discussed by L. A. Sedov. The donation of land needed scrutiny at several hands. Donations of ornament's were also known. Jayavarmana V also created various new castes.<sup>4</sup> A bilingual inscription records the donation of slaves.<sup>5</sup> Another Khmer inscription of 974 speaks of the donation of land and slaves.<sup>6</sup> The reign of Jayaviravarmana forms a landmark in the history of Cambodian feudalism as most of the inscriptions of his reign are related to the transfer or confirmation of the titles of land. It appears that the germs of feudalism were fully entrenched in the life of the Cambodian people. One Sahadeva, the guardian of sacred property, was holding the hereditary right over a portion of land. His maternal grandfather was a military general and the title to the land in question was acquired by his maternal great grandfather and it had remained in the family ever since. Various fraudulent attempts were made to seize the land but both Jayavarmana V and Jayaviravarmana intervened and the title was confirmed in favour of Sahadeva as is evident from a stele inscription of Tuol-Prasat (1003). From a study of this document it appears that it was the king who confirmed the grant finally in favour

1 Inscription of Preah Vior ( 1 ).

2 Briggs—*Ancient Khmer Empire*, p. 126.

3 *Ibid.*, 131.

4 Stele Inscription of Kompong-Thom ( dated 974 ).

5 Briggs, 142.

6 Inscription on the brick temple of Prasant Neak Buos of 974.

of Sahadeva and various officials appear to have participated in the presentation of the request. In one case we see that the chief officials of the assembly were called upon to pass on the transfer of land ( *BE-37; 379-413* ). The stele inscription of Prasat Trapang Run ( II ) describes in detail the procedure for the transfer of a piece of land. There were hereditary functionaries and heirarchical officials who continued to work even when there were political convulsions at the top. The sacerdotal class went hand in glove with the royalty. An undated stele inscription of Tuol Ta Pac relates the history of a family of dignitaries in the service of king since Jayavarmana II.

Even the Khmer inscriptions on the pillar of Gopura of the palace contain an oath of fidelity. The text leads us to infer that it was a sort of commendation to the reigning monarch. Tamvrac ( Lictors, i.e., officials bearing axe and rod ) of all categories swore grateful devotion to Suryavarmadeva in presence of the sacred fire, the holy jewel, the Brāhmaṇas and the ācāryas and promised not to revere another king. They further pledged ( i ) to fight and risk life ( in case of war ), ( ii ) and to be devoted to the king until death. In return the king was to look the maintenance and sustenance of their families. Sūryavarmana I seems to have stabilised his power. A Khmer stele inscription at Phnom Chisor tells us of the founding of a monastery in 1015 with gifts of slaves and revenue.

The transfer of land and revenue of slaves is further confirmed by another inscription of the same king ( 1019 ). The land granted by Sūryavarmana to the family of Jayendrapaṇḍita was confirmed by Udayādityavarmana II. Four hundred male and female slaves were also donated. When the foundation was completed, the king was informed and requested to see that the establishment and slaves be constituted as gracious liberality in favour of *Sivalinga* Bhadrāniketan and the request was complied with ( *Sdok Kak Thom—1052* ).

Revolts in the feudal set-up were not unknown. A favourite general named, Kamvau, revolted against Udayādityavarmana II. Barth attributes the revolt to the religious reaction. Kamvau as well as another rebel ultimately came to be subdued by Saṅgrāma who offered the captives and the spoils to the king, Udayādityavarmana II. Moved by the loyalty and fidelity of Saṅgrāma the king said—“All these things which you have conquered, deign to keep them : while they are my treasures, they are certainly yours. What makes me forever happy are the striking proofs of your fidelity and not such riches”. Saṅgrāma prevailed upon the king to accept these spoils as a gift to the golden image of Devarāja under the vocable of Udayādityeśvara. The feudal lords in a number of cases

took advantage of the weakness of the central authority. A son of a vassal king, Jayavarmana, is said to have taken advantage of the weakness of Harṣavarmana III ( 1080 ).

A bilingual stele Khmer inscription at Phnom Chisor ( 1116 ) commemorates a gift of land, slaves and property to the god of the temple of Sūryapavata. A Khmer pillar inscription of Vat Phu ( 1136 ) records a donation to the god of Lingapur by a man and his son of the country of Bhadreśvarapāda, and of the corporation of the workers of the *viṣaya* of Śreṣṭhapur.<sup>1</sup> The Angor Vat sculptures also represent feudal elements and if Bosch is to be relied upon, the central tower contained the statute-portrait of the king and nineteen seigneurs. It was under Jayavarmana VII that the Khmer empire reached its zenith and half of the great monuments are credited to him. According to Coedes, the religious zeal surpassed the bounds of all reason and his vanity amounted to megalomania. He impoverished and embittered the people with his tithes and forced labour in building useless monuments to satisfy his personal ambition and that of the feudal seigneurs, as is evident from the towers and pavilions of the Angor sculptures. These were meant to perpetuate their memory. He attempted to grind the people into lowest servility to build up monuments to his relatives and friends. The Angor monument was begun by Sūryavarmana II and we learn from the inscription of Preah Vihar ( IV ) that in 1119 he gave order to raise the "corveable workmen of the second, third and probably of the fourth categories" ( cf. Briggs, 196 ). The Angor monuments were built by forced labour and the vast mass of slave-labour. The TAI States supplied a large part of the slave labour. They contributed a lot towards the prosperity of Angor, the rulers of which satisfied their vanity at the cost of people's happiness and pleasure. Here in these admirable structures are depicted the warriors with their raised spears, superb gang of galley slaves, the porter carrying load, horses and elephants and many other aspects of daily life and manners of the people. As a result of the waning influence of theology and the loss of revenue, the popularity of the upper strata diminished. Even after the decline of the classical Khmer civilisation ( 13th century A. D. ), villages and slaves continued to be assigned. With the disappearance of the upper strata of the population and the removal of the capital from Angor, the structures were soon abandoned. Louis Finot has attributed the fall of the Khmer civilisation to the following reasons—"The suddenness of this

1 BE--II ( 3 )-247-45-Vat Phou.

catastrophe, at first surprising, is explained by the heterogeneous composition of the Cambodian state...nothing proves that the people reacted strongly against the aggression; perhaps even they saluted it as a deliverance...the conqueror offered to the conquered...economic religion, whose ministers, devoted to poverty, contented themselves with a thatch of straw and a handful of rice."<sup>1</sup> This clearly explains that the highhandedness of the ruling class was responsible for the decline of the Khmer civilisation at a given period when the productive forces were disturbed on account of the lack of people's co-operation. In the middle ages all the Cambodian peasantry was in the service of gods and the slaves and villages were granted to the monuments for maintenance. The poor people had lost all genuine interest in the State and the result was disastrous for the country as a whole. The peasantry had so long laboured for the well-being of the upper strata without any considerable return. Hinduism was the cult of the upper classes while the people in general were attached to their animistic cults. At times Manu's law was considerably modified by Buddhism to assuage people's feeling. Religion in Cambodia was one of the main media of economic and political exploitation.

The Cham inscriptions show that the Burmese as well as Tai slaves were granted to Cham temples. Chou-Ta-Kuan<sup>2</sup> refers to slaves and concubines. He further states that the official rank determined the kind of dwelling. Slaves were purchased for being employed as domestic servants and well-to-do persons had more than one hundred slaves. Kuan says—"Only the very poor have none at all....They call their master and mistress, father and mother....If a female slave has child by unknown person, the master does not trouble about the father but treats the child as a slave. If a slave tries to escape and is re-taken, he is marked in blue on the face.....the savages coming from the mountains are sold as slaves in the market". He refers to the sale of women and also to the ninety vassal governments. According to this Chinese authority, all the people were obliged to fight.

The whole range of Sanskrit inscriptions is replete with the account of the dedication of slaves and serfs in Cambodia. Their specific duties are not invariably mentioned.<sup>3</sup> The Sanskrit portion of the inscription of Išānavarmana records the gift of slaves and land by an ascetic Išānadatta to the Bhāgavat. Names of

1 *Ibid.*, VIII. 121-233.

2 *Ibid.*, II. 123-27 ( Pelliot's translation ).

3 *ISC.*, 47; Aymonier. I. 167 ff.

eleven male and twenty female servants are preserved in the Khmer portion.<sup>1</sup> An official named Sucidatta also donated three slaves.<sup>2</sup> A lady devotee gave twenty servants.<sup>3</sup> In one case the Bhikṣus are seen donating a slave to their grand nephew by the order of the king. What is important here is not the donation of slaves but the principle involved—that is, the King had absolute right over the slaves and any donation of slaves would be considered valid after its approval by the king.<sup>4</sup> A servant of King Jayavarmana I ( Śaka—595 ),<sup>5</sup> by the favour of his master ( Saswāminaprasādāt ), became the President of the royal assembly and was honoured with everything including slaves. In Cambodia the title “dust of the feet”, was usually applied to a feudal dignitary.<sup>6</sup> The Louvek Pillar inscription ( 7th century A. D. ) records a royal order to bring four hundred slaves out of whom 212 are named. These included five dancers and five musicians. The slaves are described as Vrau, the name of an aboriginal people of Cambodia. The slaves are usually mentioned along with oxen, buffaloes, rice fields, kitchen gardens and utensils and are treated as property ( IC-II. 115; 121; 135; 196 ). An inscription of Jayavarmana IV ( in Khmer ) refers to a donation to “*Kamratenān Jagata rājya*” ( royal divinity ) by two dignitaries<sup>7</sup> which included male and female slaves. Another Khmer inscription records an order by Jaya-varmana IV to a dignitary.<sup>8</sup> Yet another record ( in Khmer ) refers to slaves.<sup>9</sup> An inscription of Harṣavarmana ( Śaka—844 ) records his order addressed to a dignitary relating to the delivery of goods, slaves etc.,. A Khmer inscription of Rājendravarmana ( Śaka—866 )<sup>10</sup> records that an humble petition was presented to him by some Brāhmaṇas recalling that the pious foundations included, among other things, slaves, cows, buffaloes etc. A royal order was issued asking the ministers to maintain the integrity of religious property and forbidding their sale or alienation by judicial decree. In one of the inscriptions, the royal donation was made out of the confiscated property.<sup>11</sup>

1 RCM., 124.

2 BEFEO, XXXVI. 5; Aymonier, I. 139.

3 RCM., 27-28; 50; 52; 54; 56, 57; 73; 139; 221; 222; 223; 285; 309; 311; 343; etc.

4 *Ibid.*, 36; BEFEO, XXIV. 353.

5 *Ibid.*, 43-44; IC., 12.

6 Aymonier—II. 444; IC. 28

7 RCM. 165; 175.

8 *Ibid.*, 166; BEFEO—XXXIII. 16; Aymonier—1. 292.

9 *Ibid.*, 167-BEFEO—XXXIII. 17.

10 *Ibid.*, 178-79.

11 *Ibid.*, 268; Aymonier—1. 384.

We have an interesting record ( in Khmer ) of the tenth-eleventh century A. D. ( IC-III. 72 ). It records an order ( Alaksana ) in respect of a slave named Śrī ( SI ) Varuna, who, with his mother and other relations, was born in the domain of Rajaguha. This slave fled but was arrested and the officials cut off his nose and ears. It was stated in the royal order that the slave Si Varuna and his mother and other relations were to be treated as exclusive property of Rajaguha so that there might be no fraud in the endowments made by the King Rājendra-varmana. Another record gives a similar royal order asking to present in person the slaves ( who are named ) given by the King to a sanctuary so that there might be no fraud. All deals were confirmed by the royal order and the judgments, given by the rulers, were preserved.<sup>1</sup> All grants were confirmed by royal acts. The Kok Rosec Inscription of Jayavarmana V<sup>2</sup> throws light on the following :--

( i ) the families which gave their daughters to those holding the supreme power; ( ii ) the devoted and faithful servant called Sanjjaka ( Sanjaka ) who guarded the person of the King in the battle; ( Sanjaka means a chief bound by a special oath to defend the person of a King or the Prince ). When the Sanjaka was killed, the King showed appreciation of his services in a befitting manner. Not only were the Sanjakas posthumously awarded but their slaves also installed in the shrines; ( iii ) the oaths and inalienable property; ( iv ) the education of the sons of the families which supplied royal officials; ( v ) various grades and classes of officials.

Donation of land, serfs and slaves was a common feature of the Camdodian society. A Khmer inscription<sup>3</sup> of the reign of Udayādityavarmana refers to a royal ordinance exempting the slaves of the temples of Chock Gargyor from the duty of the corvee so that they might exclusively serve gods. An inscription of the eleventh century A. D. ( IC-III. 54 ) enumerates the slaves offered to the *Śivalinga* by Narapatindravarmana. Slaves were donated along with their children and grandchildren. From the point of view of the study of feudalism, the Sambour inscription ( Śaka-923 ) is very important.<sup>4</sup> Jayavarmana IV had ordered the payment for the ransom of slaves and Dirgha Hor, the guardian of God at Sambhu-

1 *Ibid.*, 269.

2 Aymonier--I. 420-423; *BEFEO*-XXVIII. 113.

3 IC-50; *RCM*. 303.

4 Aymonier, I. 30.; *RCM*, 309.

pur, had received the royal order for their maintenance. It appears that the royal order of manumission was given effect to only in 1001 A. D.<sup>1</sup>

The Prasat Kok Po inscription ( Śaka-926 ) gives some interesting details of the procedure of the sale of lands.<sup>2</sup> A Brāhmaṇa purchased land from two officials who sold land in order to acquire the precious objects for the royal service. The Brāhmaṇa then made a request on the subject of the proprietary right in the land. Notice was then issued to the Inspector of Qualities and Defects ( *Gumadoṣadarsi* ) and to the assembly to summon the sellers. Full powers were given to Pṛthvindra Paṇḍita who entrusted the execution of royal order to the Inspector of Wages, Chief Judicial Officer, Superintendent of the Court of Justice, Inspector of the Property of Gods, Inspector of the Bailiffs of the Third Class and ordered them to delimit the land and to call the nobles, the elders and dignitaries for assistance in fixing the boundaries and putting the land in possession of the Brāhmaṇa. After all the formalities were gone through, the royal order giving this land to the Brāhmaṇa was notified. Another Khmer document of the time of Jayavīravarmāna ( Śaka-928 ) gives an account of the procedure for the transference of land by the royal order.<sup>3</sup> Kavindrapaṇḍita, in charge of a religious establishment, asked for the gift of a piece of unclaimed land which he proposed to dedicate to god Nārāyaṇa and the donation was graciously made. The Sanjakas were present as witnesses when the King made this grant. Besides the Sanjakas the following officers are also mentioned :—

- ( a ) Inspector of Qualities and Defects
- ( b ) Chief Ācārya, member of the Tribunal
- ( c ) Reciter of the Dharmaśāstras
- ( d ) Chief of the Store House ( First, Second and Third Class )
- ( e ) Keeper of the Archives.

A royal official was asked by the king to transfer the land. He explained to Kavindra Paṇḍita the terms and condition of the gift. The boundaries were fixed in the presence of the elders and notable persons including ( a ) Chief of the ten villages ( *Daśagrāma* ), ( b ) *Pradhāna*, ( c ) two slaves named Nārāyaṇa and Hṛdayabindu and ( d ) the village elder.<sup>4</sup> The land was given as perpetual gift. Jayavarmāna VI commanded a number of high officials to keep watch on the proper

1 RCM. 310ff.

2 BEFEO, XXXVII. 39 ; RMC. 313.

3 Ibid., XXVIII. 58.

4 RCM., 424 ff; Aymonier-II, 111; BEFEO-XXIX. 299.

upkeep of the monasteries and to see to the regular payment of the daily dues assigned to the officials of the temple. The guardian slaves of the temple, numbering twenty-four, must obey the Chaplains of the first fortnight, the chiefs of the royal *corvee*, and the officers of the army charged with the supervision of the foundation. These slaves belonged exclusively to the foundation established by Lakṣmīndravarmana and were forbidden to work in *corvee* for other gods. Even the ascetics<sup>1</sup> purchased and donated slaves. Slaves continued to be donated till 1327 A.D.

The above details enable us to arrive at the conclusion that slavery was an important aspect of the socio-economic life of Cambodia. It appears that slaves participated in all types of productive measures. The fact that there was a Chief of the Slaves in the bureaucratic hierarchy is indicative of the importance of this institution. Similarly there was an officer in charge of the royal *corvee*. The system had its effect on the political history of the country; we have seen above that when it was invaded, the people welcomed the invaders. The reasons are not very far to seek. Any social system based on the unscrupulous exploitation of the vast mass of population is bound to collapse. The slaves and serfs, though main props of the State, were subjected to the worst form of exploitation and were equated with animals. They could be disposed of as their masters wished. In this respect they were no better than the serfs in the pre-revolutionary Russia. They formed the lowest strata in the social set up. A critical study of the epigraphic records of Cambodia reveals to us that all types of feudal obligations, in one form or other, were known and *corvee* was a regular feature. The king was at the top and the serfs were at the bottom. The wars, won at the cost of these slaves and serfs, added luxury to the royal palace but nothing for them. There was no remedy against these atrocities except the revolts which occasionally took place. One such revolt is known as peasants' revolt. From the available records it appears that the slaves did not enjoy any social status or standing. Self sacrifice for the sake of monarch was considered sacrosanct. The Bantay-Chmar inscription gives a very interesting account of the heroic self-sacrifice of the four soldiers of the Sanjaka class who were later defied ( *RCM*-pp. 528-530 ). This deduction was meant to inspire the slaves and other members of the lower orders to do their work in spirit of dedication.

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1 *Ibid.*, 351; *IC*. III. 137; *Aymonier*-I. 192.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1 Aymonier—*Le Cambodge*—Three Volumes ( Paris, 1900–1903 ).
  - 2 BE—*Bulletin de l' Ecole Francaise d' Extreme Orient* ( Hanoi ).
  - 3 B.R.C.—*Indian Influence in Cambodia* ( by B. R. Chatterji ).
  - 4 Briggs—*The Ancient Khmer Empire* ( L. P. Briggs ).
  - 5 S. Coedes—*Inscriptions du Cambodge*—Four Volumes OIC ).
  - 6 M. Barth and A Bergaigne, *Inscriptions Sanscrites du Cambodge* ( ISC ).
  - 7 RCM—*Inscriptions of Kambuja* ( by R. C. Majumdar ).
  - 8 -do—*Kambujadesa*.
  - 9 -do—*Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East* ( vol. I. *Champa*; Vol. II—*Suvarnadvip* ).
  - 10 Maspero—*Khmer Empire*.
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  - 21 R. K. Choudhary—*Some Aspects of Feudalism in Cambodia* ( in the *JBRS* ).
  - 22 *JASB*—*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.
  - 23 *Journal of the Burma Research Society*.
  - 24 *JBRS*—*Journal of the Bihar Research Society*.
  - 25 *IHQ*—*Indian Historical Quarterly*.
  - 26 *JGIS*—*Journal of the Greater India Society*.
  - 27 *Narodi Asia* ( and ) *I Africi* ( Moscow ) for the articles of L. A. Sedov.
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## CHAPTER 22

### Cambodian Feudal Polity

The socio-economic and administrative structure of ancient Cambodia was based largely on the pattern of ancient Indian institutions. The early Indian colonisers had carried with them their natural traits and in course of time they were adapted to suit the local needs. In the whole of South-east Asian history, Funan was the most important place and even after its fall, its prestige remained high. The traditions were later on adopted by the Khmer Kings of Cambodia. We have already discussed aspects of feudalism and position of slaves and serfs in Cambodia and here we propose to examine such salient features as have some bearings on the polity of Kambujadeśa. The early administrative pattern of Cambodia was based on feudal polity.

We get a glimpse of the material civilisation, customs and beliefs of the people from the vast mass of Sanskrit and Khmer inscription. The king was committed to a life involving so much religious ceremonies and ostentations that he could have little contact with the people. Though formally king was the guardian of law and order, the actual administrative powers lay in the hands of a narrow oligarchy who also wielded sufficient economic power. The chief administrative offices were held by members of the royal and sacerdotal families. Temples and priests had a powerful say in the administrative matters. The magnates were so powerful that they erected shrines to their own personal cults. Literary culture based on Sanskrit classics was the culture of the court but we are not told as to how far it affected the outlook of the ordinary people.

We learn from the Chinese sources that agriculture was the only industry and we further learn from Ma-Tuan-Lin (13th century A. D.) that no great social and economic changes had taken place. The provision of an adequate water supply to sustain the agricultural economy was one of the greatest achievements of the ancient Cambodians. It was upon the basis of the economy of small peasant agriculturists that the artistic and architectural wonders of Angkor were achieved. From the artistic point of view, the tenth century A. D. is a remarkable period in the history of Cambodia as it witnessed the construction of massive buildings. All these presuppose the existence of an organised administrative machinery which

must have been there to regulate and co-ordinate such a huge building activities. Though feudal in character, the administrative system of Cambodia differed from its contemporary feudal structure of Europe.

The capital of Cambodia was transferred to Angkor in the tenth century A. D. and it continued as such till 1432 A.D. The building activities in Cambodia began with Jayavarman VII and Sūryavarman II and such extravagant activities on the part of the rulers proved too heavy for the people. Temples were the great centres not only of learning and culture but also of wealth and power. The great artistic creation presuppose the existence of a vast mass of slave labour controlled and regulated by the state based on social surplus. For the upkeep of the temples, thousand of villages were donated. It resulted in the impoverishment of the people as it led to heavy and harsh taxation and insatiable demands for forced labour and military service. The oppressed masses had to put in extra labour for the greedy gods. The untold miseries of the people had forced them to rise in revolt only to be ruthlessly suppressed by the ruling oligarchy. It is said that more than sixty thousand persons were employed in the service of deities and thirty four hundred villages were assigned for the purpose. There were four hundred thirty-nine professors and nine hundred and seventy scholars whose necessaries of life were supplied by the state. Lacks of maunds of grain were supplied annually for the maintenance of these huge establishments.

When the ambassador of Kublai Khan visited the Khmer capital, he found a strong government ruling a nation that had drawn wealth out of its rice paddies and its sweat. The king, besides having five regular wives, had four thousand concubines. Gold and jewellery abounded. Hospitals were attached to temples. Inscriptions reveal to us the enormous quantity of rice, butter, rare oils contributed daily by the people to the ministrants of the gods. They had the famous fabulous Śaiva Shrine at the 9th century A. D. and three centuries later, the slaves and captives built the Angkor temple. In the words of Will Durant, "One sees in imagination the crowded population of the capital, the regimented slaves cutting, pulling and raising the heavy stones, the artisans carving relief and statuary as if time would never fail them, the priests deceiving and consoling the people, the *Devadāsīs* deceiving the people and consoling the priests, and lordly aristocracy building palaces.....raised above all by the labour of all the powerful and ruthless kings". ( *Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 605. )

What is more important is that the expenses on the maintenance of temples and gods exhausted the state resources. The priests played a dominant role in the

feudal administrative set-up. They controlled the royalty through back door, that is, through the institution of the cult of *Devarāja*; they not only deified the monarch but also strengthened their status in the political set-up of the country. It was in their interest to keep the sacerdotal influence uppermost and to wield power and enjoy the benefits of exploitative society through direct and indirect methods. Through the faith of the individual in divine compassion, these priests came to offer men another worldly state which is best understood as compensation for the distresses of the worldly life. In Cambodia Buddhism conspired with Hinduism to provide the religious framework for one of the richest ages in the history of oriental art.

The conditions created by the economic inequality were responsible for the ultimate decline of the Cambodian state. The moment the social surplus declined, the whole sociopolitical structure was affected. Over and above the demand of temple organisation and priestly aristocracy, the state had to meet the heavy expenses in combating frequent raids and foreign invasions. The common people were the worst victims of the social system based on exploitation. In addition to aristocracy and commonality, the slaves formed an important element of population. The daily life and manners of the people are admirably drawn in stones in Angkor buildings. There we have a nice depiction of the processions of warriors, elephants and horses with the magnificent drum major in the centre wielding his baton forcefully. In one of the figures we have warriors with raised spears. The architectural remains throw a flood of light on the contemporary social system in which slavery had been a recognised institution. The porters are depicted with cakes and loaves, whose baking is also depicted. The kings and nobles and high officials formed an aristocracy which was sharply distinguished from the mass of the people. Even the size and structure of a house was determined by the official rank of its owner. Cheu-Ta-Kuan tells us about the wealth and luxury of the upper classes. There are many unidentified scenes and figures portraying contemporary socio-political objects.

Though *Varnāśrama*, on Indian lines, was the basis of social polity, the people of Cambodia did not strictly adhere to the rules and hence the whole question had a different setting. The social status of the lower orders can also be gleaned through the architectural remains of Angkorvat--where we have scenes of porters carrying the load, little fellow kneeling down and trying to keep oven burning, the women tending her children to the left and having her hair washed etc. The

social structure was changed to suit the local need of the Cambodian people. It was inevitable on account of the local need and circumstances. The economic aspect of it was that the whole social system was based on social surplus produced by a host of peasants with primitive means of production. We are not in a position to assess whether irrigation was a state or local responsibility.

The administrative pattern was also the reflection of the prevailing socio-economic structure. King was the embodiment of God and he had unlimited powers. The cult of *Devarāja* further strengthened his position as it meant the acceptance of divine element in king. Their statues were installed and even the brāhmaṇas were expected to pay obeisance. He needed many slaves and waged many wars. He presided over the council (*Sabhādhipati*) and he had a band of devoted supporters.

All the unimportant officials of the administrative hierarchy were appointed by king. The *mantrins* (ministers) were appointed specially from the royal household. According to the Chinese sources, there were five classes of officials who knelt down before taking their seats in the royal court. One of the court scenes is referred to in the Angkor Vat architectural bas relief. The feudal composition of the army is evident from the terms like *Sāmantānubhāka* and *Sahasra-vargādhipati* (incharge of a force of one thousand man). The Angkor bas relief shows the march past of generals along with their escorts or *Sañjakas*. All of them had to take oath of allegiance. There are references to Heads of ten villages. The feudal aspect of the polity is evident from the oath of loyalty or allegiance solemnly affirming dedication of their lives and devotion to their sovereign—such oath was taken before the sacred fire, the brāhmaṇs and the āchāryas. The fact that the king had separate homeguards shows that complete reliance on the army was not considered viable. Devoted bands of officials served the state and the sacerdotal support gave it spiritual strength. The nature of the feudal polity of Cambodia is yet to be assessed correctly as the available sources for study do not enable us to draw any final conclusion.

## APPENDIX

### Some Typical Administrative Technical Terms as gleaned through the Palm-Leaf Pañjis of the Karaṇa-Kāyastha of Mithila

Śrī Binod Biharī Varmā has rendered a valuable service to the cause of social history of Mithilā by publishing his monumental work “*Maithila Karaṇa Kāyastha ka Pañjikā Sarvekṣaṇa*”<sup>1</sup>; on the basis of the six volumes of the Palm-leaf *Pañjis* discovered from the districts of Saharsa and Madhubani (old Darbhanga). This is the first recorded analysis of the Pañji literature on scientific lines. Attempts in this regard were made earlier by Rāsabehārī Das, Gharānand Jha and Professor Ramanath Jha. As a result of Varmā’s study new facts have come to light which deserve further study and a critical scrutiny at the hands of historians and sociologists. It gives us a long list of officers which ultimately became the titles of a number of castes and groups in Mithilā and we propose a critical analysis of the same here in alphabetical order.

#### (1) *Akṣapaṭalika*

The word occurs in the *Arthaśāstra* (II.7) of Kauṭilya and it stood for an officer incharge of records. Butler describes *Akṣapaṭala* as records’ office while Stein describes it as Accountants’ office and explains *Grāma-akṣapaṭalika* as *Paṭahwārī*<sup>2</sup>. It is said that the word ‘*Akhauri*’ is described from *Akṣapaṭalika*<sup>3</sup>. *Akṣapaṭlika* was an administrative department under the Pālas and is also mentioned in the *Panichobh Copperplate* of Saṅgrāmagupta<sup>4</sup>. *Mahākṣapaṭalika* is also known as Karaṇa kāyastha<sup>5</sup>. The *Panichobh Copperplate* mentions *Mahattama*, *Mahākṣapaṭalika* and *Mahākaraṇādhyakṣa*, the latter being the head of the secretariat. *Mahākāyastha*, *Mahākaraṇādhyakṣa*,

1 Major B. B. Varma—*Maithila Karana Kayastha ka Panji ka Sarveksana*...Madhepur (Madhubani) 1973 pp. 1-217—It throws an interesting sidelight on the various aspects of socio-economic cum administrative and geographical factors of Mithila’s history.

2 *Harṣacharita*—VII-2 (ग्राम अक्षपटलिक); *Et-XX*. 128; IX 305; XXX; CII-IV; *VR*-22ख; *HDS-I*. 316-18.

3 *Ramanath Jha Abhinandan Granth*, p. 205.

4 R. K. Chandhary—*Select Inscriptions of Bihar*; Varma, p. 27 for different interpretation in the Ramganj Copperplate Inscription.

5 *Bhandarkar’s List* Nos. 34 and 84.

and *Mahākṣapaṭalika* are almost identical and are used in the same sense in a number of inscriptions. According to the *Lekhapaddhati*, *Mahākṣapaṭalakāraṇa* was the depository of the legal documents. We learn from the *Bhagalpur Copperplate* of Nārāyaṇapāla that *Mahākṣapaṭalika* was responsible for the upkeep of royal documents. *Mahākṣapaṭalādhikaraṇādhikṛta* stood for the office of the Superintendent<sup>1</sup> of *Akṣapaṭala*. We have the list of the following *Akṣapaṭalikas* from the Palm-leaf *Pañjīs*—

—Akṣapaṭalika Kanhai

— „ Gyānapati

— „ Nidhi

— „ Keśava

— „ Mādhava

### ( 2 ) *Adhikārī*<sup>2</sup>

*Adhikārī* was an official title. It was derived from *Ādhikāṅka*. He was official recorder or scribe who drew up documents and prepared<sup>3</sup> sale-deeds etc. He has also been identified with *Adhikaraṇa-Lekhaka*. There is no doubt that the holder of this title was some sort of administrator or officer of the rank of a minister, magistrate, superintendent, governor or director.<sup>4</sup> These terms are often used loosely in different records for a number of officers in different parts of the country. It came to be used as a title and is used as such in the *Pañjī* of the fourteenth century A. D. The title was not so very popular in Mithilā as we have got only two names<sup>5</sup> with this title in the *Pañjī*. It was connected with some administrative office in the fourteenth century A. D. but had lost importance.

### ( 3 ) *Karaṇa Kāyastha*

The word 'Karaṇa' is very ancient and is connected with officer. According to *Uśanḥasamhitā*, Karaṇa was extracted with the task of '*rājasevā* and *durgāntaḥ-purarakṣā*. It is also identified with *Cāraṇa* and connected with the study of the science of erotics. Karaṇa and *Pañjīkāraka* are sometimes synonymous. Karaṇa as a caste finds mention in the *Ādīparva* of the MBH, *Gautamāsmṛti* ( IV. 72 ),

1 Cf—Bhandarkar's *List*-17, 34, 369, 67, 1529, 433, 451, 2044, 2076, 1385, 153, 368, 1821, 1910, 2056-75; *EI*-I. p. 73; *Aś*-I. I.

2 *EI*-XXIV-pp. 176, 184; VII-p. 26; II; XXVIII; XXVIII; *CII*-IV.

3 *RT*-VI, 38; *Viṣṇu*-VII. 3.—official recorder.

4 *Glossary*-7; *IE*-8-3.

5 *Devīdāsa Adhikārī* and his son *Śaṅkara Adhikārī*.

*Yājñavalkyasmṛti* ( I. 92 ) and *Manusmṛti* ( X.20-22 ). It is believed that the tribal people called 'Karaṇa' adopted the profession of scribe.

The word 'Karaṇa' indicated a department, a court of law, a department of account and revenue, of war and peace and so on. The *Lekhapaddhati*<sup>1</sup> mentions thirty-two departments or *Karaṇas*. *Karaṇadaṇḍa* was a fine imposed by karaṇa court. *Akṣapaṭala* also signified the court of law and also as notary-in-chief<sup>2</sup>. The *Midnapur plate* of the time of Śaśānka not only uses the word 'Karaṇa' in the sense of 'Adhikaraṇa, but also for 'Adhikaraṇika.'<sup>3</sup> Besides that we have *Balādhikaraṇa* ( head of the army ), *Raṇabhaṇḍādhikaraṇa* ( the military exchequer ), *Kumārāmāty-adhikaraṇa*, *Daṇḍapāśādhikaraṇa*, *Dhrubādhikaraṇa* ( officers connected with the collection of revenue ), *Pañchādhikaraṇoṣarika* ( office of the presiding *Uparika*—office dealing with law consisting of five members, EI—XII.43 ). In Mithilā, *Mahākaraṇādhyaḥsa* was the head of the department of all the *Karaṇas* (offices) and Jyotirīśwara mentions the office of the *Karaṇādhyaḥsa*. *Karaṇika* was an officer of the state department and some of them enjoyed the status of a *ṭhakkura* or feudal lord<sup>4</sup>. *Karaṇin* indicates office of administration. Kielhorn explains *Karaṇika* as a writer of a *Karaṇa* ( a legal document ) and is the same as *Karaṇattān* of the Tamil inscription<sup>5</sup> mentioned alongwith *Kaṇakku* or *Gaṇaka*, or present day *Karaṇams* ( Curnums ) of South India. We have also the mention of a *Karaṇika Brāhmaṇa*<sup>6</sup>.

The Kāyasthas were originally a professional class of accountants or scribes and the whole group of writers were later crystallised into a sort of caste called *Karaṇa* or *Kāyastha*. Kṣīraśwāmī holds the view that Karaṇas were Kāyasthas.<sup>7</sup> Vaijyanti's view that *Karaṇas* and *Kāyasthas*<sup>8</sup> are synonymous is supported by the inscription of a scribe or the writer of legal documents.<sup>9</sup> Karaṇakāyasthas from the Punjab are known to us from inscriptions. *Karṇika* is the official designation of

1 *Lekhapaddhati* (GOS) pp. 97-128; cf. T.N. Subramaniam—*South Indian Temple Inscriptions*, vol. II-pt II-nos. i-civ ( Glossary )

2 Thomas and Cowell-HC-pp. 177, 278. The Village Notary was known as *Grāmakṣapaṭalādhikṛta*.

3 IC-IX-p. 121, note.

4 Cf. R. K. Chaudhary—'Mithilā in the Age of Vidyāpati', ( VARANASI-1976 ).

5 I. A. XVII. p.13; cf-Bendall-Catalogue of Sanskrit Buddhist MSS, p. 70, no. 1364.

6 Bhandarkar's List No. 350; for *Karaṇa*-cf EI-XXIV, p. 175; XXV. 132, VII. 197, I. 81, 129, 166 etc.

7 *Bhārtiya Vidyā*-X. 61; 284.

8 Vaijyanti-p. 78; 137; EI-IV. 104.

9 Vogel, *Antiquities of Chamba State*, p. 133; cf Bhandarkar's List Nos. 1828-29

a scribe or an officer incharge of a state department and is also known as *Karṇika-ṭhakkura* ( EI-XX. 44; VIII, p. 158; XXXIII ). Bāṇa mentions one *Karṇaparikara*, HC-VII, para 2 ). Karṇas are also known as *Śrīkarṇa* and Hemādri describes himself as *Sarvaśrīkarṇa-prabhu*<sup>1</sup>. *Karṇamaṇḍapa* indicated a hall of justice<sup>2</sup>. Hemādri calls himself *Samastakarṇādhiśwara* or *Samastakarṇādhipati*.

Kāyastha as a whole appears to have been associated with the administrations since the beginning of organised life and society and consisted of members from all the Varṇas. The word 'Kāyastha' first occurs in the inscriptions on the Gupta<sup>3</sup> period though the word 'Karṇa' is the oldest. *Vijñāneśwara* explains the word occurring in Yājñavalkya ( I. 336 ) as *Gaṇakolekhakaścha*. Kāyastha<sup>4</sup> was regarded as an officer who sat beside his master in discharging his duties and was generally the chief intermediary between his master and the client. Kāyastha is the same as the Persian *Davir* ( writer ) or *Divira* or *Dibira* of the inscription.<sup>5</sup> The word occurs in Gupta inscription of GE 177. *Divirapati* was the superintendent of offices and clerks. *Karṇika* and *Divira* were almost identical.<sup>6</sup> A *sandhivigrahika* and a *Mahāpratihāra*, Mamaka, is also called *Divirapati* in the Jesa plate of Śilāditya ( EI-XXII. 114-120 ).

It is Śrīharaṣa<sup>7</sup> who traces the origin of the Kāyasthas to Chitragupta, scribe of God Yama. The word 'Kāyastha' does not occur in Gautama, Āpastamba, Baudhāyana and Vaṣiṣṭha *smṛtis* and not even in Manu. It is only in the *Viṣṇu-dharmasūtra* that we first come across the word 'Kāyastha' as a writer of public documents<sup>8</sup> and also in Kṣīraswāmī. Yājñavalkya calls upon the king to protect his subjects from the harassment of the Kāyasthas ( I. 322; IA-XIX. 56-59 ). Mītākṣarā explains Kāyasthas as favourites of the king and cunning by nature. Uśanas describes them as noted for greed, cruelty and spoliation. Śūdraka associated them

1 HDS, I. p. 356, note 849; EI-II. 21; 31 XXIII; XXIX; XXX; XII-177 mentions Śrīkarṇanāyaka.

2 S. R. Roy, *Suvarṇavarṇāvadānā* ( Introduction ).

3 D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, p. 284 ff.

4 *Bhārtiya Vidyā*, X. 280 ff.

5 Sircar, op. cit., 228; 483; CII-III. 122; IA-VI 110; RT-VIII. 131, V. 172 for Grāmakāyasthas, VII-142, also Stein's *Introduction*, pp. 37-38.

6 G. P. Sinha, *Post-Gupta Polity* ( Cal. 1972 ) p. 207; cf. EI. XXII. 114-20; XI. p. 174; 180

7 Cf Handiqui's edition of *Naiṣadhacharitam*, XIV-66.

8 राजाधिकरणे तन्त्रियुक्तकायस्थकृतं तदध्यक्षकरचिह्नितं राजसमक्षिकम् ।

with justice ( *Mychakaṭikā*-IX ). Kāyasthas are also described as Śāsanika and *Sarvaśāstravit*.<sup>1</sup> Kane treats Kāyastha as an officer and not as a caste.<sup>2</sup>

A large number of writers and record-keepers had to be employed to draft documents of assignments of lands and to maintain records of lands and villages. The whole work was done by a class of officers known as *Kāyasthas*, *Karaṇas*, *Karaṇikas*, *Adhikṛtas*, *Pustapālas*, *Chitragupta*, *Lekhaka*, *Divira*, *Dharmalekhina*, *Akṣaracana*, *Akṣapaṭalika* etc. Kāyasthas formed only one class of about a dozen kinds of writers and recordkeepers and in course of time all such persons came to be known as Kāyasthas. According to Kalhaṇa, a Brāhmaṇa was appointed as a Kāyastha official ( Kane, II. 77 ). Gradually scribes recruited from different *Varṇas* were confined to one social spectrum known by the name of Karaṇa/Kāyastha. They practised class endogamy and family exogamy and ceased to form part of any *Varṇa*. The rise of the Kāyasthas undermined the monopoly of the brahmanical condemnation of Kāyasthas culminated in Kalhaṇa ( *RT-IV*.620ff; VIII. 560 ff ). He mentions *Aśvagḥṣa Kāyastha*—a petty officer-in-charge of fodder for horses. In the medieval period Kāyasthas came to be subdivided into territorial subcastes and the Karaṇas of Mithilā came to be known as Maithila Karaṇa Kāyasthas whose palm-leaf *Pañjis* are still preserved. They maintain their list of *mūlas* and *Grāmas* and with them the concept of *Grāmadharma* became popular. The theory enunciated in the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* ( *Brahmakhaṇḍa*-X. 14; 168 ) that difference in the country leads to difference in caste seems to have influenced the thinking of Maithila rulers and advisers responsible for the creation of the *Pañjis* and gradation of *Mūlas* and *Grāmas*.

In Mithilā, Karaṇa Kāyastha is the most important caste after the Brāhmaṇas. In the Ajayagaḍh Rock Inscription of Bhojavarman, *Karaṇas* and Kāyasthas

1 *EI*-XI, p. 149; 20-25; X. 79; XIX. 219-13 ( for Vāstavya Kāyastha ); XII, p. 46 ( for Māthura Kāyastha ); XX, Appendix No. 442, p. 64 ( for Gauḍa Kāyastha ); cf *Viṣṇu* VIII. 3; *Bṛhspati*-86-12. *Sūtrālaṃkāra* speaks of three subcastes of Kāyasthas like *Kārāvāra*, *Kāruṣa* and *Kirāta*.

2 *HDS*-II-76-He mentions the following works on Kāyastha : ( i ) *Kāyasthatattva*, ( ii ) *Kāyastha-dharmapradīpa*, ( iii ) *Kāyasthanirṇaya*, ( iv ) *Kāyastha Paddhati*, ( v ) *Kāyastha-kṣatriyatvadrūmadalanakūthāra* by Lakṣmi Narayana Pandita. *Kāyasthotpati* by Gangādhara; cf *HDS* I-427; IV-271; *JUPHS*-XIX. 81-82; *EI*-I-270, 318; III. 344 ff; IV. 250 ff; II. 309; XI. 95; 25-26; XX. 198; XXI. 171; XIX. 50; XXII. 155; XIII. 220; XXIII. 6; XV. 301 ff; XXIV 101 ff, XXVIII 100 ff, 282, XXV. 276, X. 46, 48, 78, 79, IV, 25, 26, 115, 127, VIII. 100, 153, 190; *DHNI* II. 849, 865, *IHQ*-VI. 55.58. Maratha Kulkarṇis are also Kāyasthas.

are inter-changeable terms ( Ell. 330 ), and one of the Chaṇḍella inscriptions states that the Vāstavya Kāyastha followed the profession of a Karaṇa ( Ibid. 332 ). Verse 20 of the Grant of Bhulla ( Dated VS. 1382-83 = A. D. 1325 ) refers to the approval of a Grant by Jauna ( chief scribe ) who is described as *Karaṇapṛavira* ( EI, XXXV, p.142 ).

We learn from the *Khalimpur CP* of Dharmapāla that an *Adhikaraṇa* was headed by a Jyeṣṭhakāyastha. Sandhyakar Nandi, the author of *Rāmacharita*, was a Karaṇa, and a Minister of war and peace under Rāmpāla. In the *Gurhna CP* of A. D. 870, Karaṇika and Kāyasthas are distinguished, for example, Mahāmantrin is called a *Karaṇika* and *Mahākṣapaṭalika*, a Kāyastha-Karaṇa merged with the Kāyastha and vice-versa<sup>1</sup>. The identity of the two is proved by inscriptions ( EI, V, 104; VIII. 153 ). Jalhaṇa describes himself both as a Kāyastha and Karaṇika ( EI, XV. 130 ). *Prathama Kāyastha* is the same as *Jyeṣṭha-Kāyastha* of the Faridpur and Khalimpur CPs<sup>2</sup>. *Karaṇa* and *Vyavahārika* are found together in the Gauhati Plate<sup>3</sup>. A grant made in the Darada-Gaṇḍakī-Deśa (Champaran-Gorakhpur region) mentions a Karaṇa-Kāyastha Śrī Vanapāla ( EI, VII. 97 ). Karaṇas<sup>4</sup> are also identified with Mahākṣapaṭalaka. Lakṣmaṇa-Sena's premier was Karaṇa<sup>5</sup> Umāpati. Karaṇas are found in Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa; Madras, Karṇāṭak. Uttara Rāḍhis of Bengal are also designated as Karaṇas. We have evidences of Karaṇas as leaders of society in place of Brāhmaṇas in Orrisan Inscriptions ( EI, XXVI. 175 ).

We have a list of Karaṇa Kāyasthas as governors in succession from the Bengal inscriptions and they are popularly known as Datta-Karaṇas. The Damodarpur CPs of GE 124 ( = A.D. 440 ), of 163 ( = A.D. 482 ) and of A.D. 543 mention Uparika Chiratadatta, a Provincial Viceroy<sup>6</sup>. He was helped by a Board of four members, viz. the chief guild president, the head of the artisan class and chief of the Kāyasthas who acted as Secretary to the Board. Chiratadatta, Brahmadata, Jayadatta, Sthanudatta, Jivadatta, Kulika Varadatta and Matidatta, and Kāyastha

1 HB, I. 516. For Karaṇika-See. EI, XX. 37, 44; XII. 10, 17—*Karaṇika-Thakkura*.

2 B. N. Puri—*History of Hindu Administration*, p. 153, 149; EI, XV. 130.

3 JASB, VI. p. 669.

4 Bhandarkar's List 34, 84.

5 N. R. Roy—*Bāngalir Itihās*—p. 319; *Puruṣaparikṣā*—Tales 13, 19, 30; *Likhanāvali*, letter Nos. 55, 51; PIHC-1944.

6 Sircar, Op-Cit., pp. 283-87; 324, 328.

Sāmbapāla and Skandapāla are mentioned in various inscriptions. The Dattas were prominent Karaṇakāyastha of the Purnea-North Bengal region and occupied high administrative posts. Nāgadatta was a predecessor of the Dattas of Pundravardhanabhukti. A tendency towards feudalisation of administration<sup>1</sup> is revealed to us by the growing hereditary character of the divisional and district officers. The Dattas<sup>2</sup> held Viceregal posts under the Imperial Guptas up to 483 A. D. Datta is even now a title of the Karaṇas of Mithilā and Bengal. We have information about the Śāsanika, Jayaram Datta, of Arrah in the sixteenth century A. D. whose paintings are prescribed in the Cambridge University Library. Vidyāpati also mentions a *Datta* in his *Likhanāvalī* (Nos. 55, 79). Karaṇas of Vaiśālī were also equally prominent. They created a name for themselves in the Buddhist world. Karaṇa Kāyastha Gayādhara was invited to Tibet for translating Sanskrit works. An inscription on the Buddha image at Vaiśālī informs about Karaṇika, Uccaṭa, son of Māṇikya,

We have a long list of Karaṇas<sup>4</sup> from the palm-leaf Pañjis. Kāyastha ranked high in the administrative set up since the days of the Guptas. By the ninth century A. D. they had evolved into castes and by the eleventh century A. D. they took local descriptive-names, held feudatory status under the then ruling dynasties and were feared by the Brāhmaṇas since they had access to wealth and political power. The enterprising Kāyasthas entrenched themselves in bureaucracy by working primarily in the sphere of revenue collection. Jyotirīśwara<sup>5</sup> also mentions Kāyastha. *Likhanāvalī*<sup>6</sup> describes Kāyastha as the base of the village administration. They were entrusted with the task of maintaining village records and account books. From eleventh century onwards they rose<sup>7</sup> high in the administrative set up. Kāyasthas

1 G. P Sinha, Op. Cit., p 96; cf. B. C. Sen—Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal, p, 495 ff.; HB I. 575, IAQ-VII,55, 58

2 Sen, Op. Cit., 247-48; Sinha's attempt to identify Dattas with the Gupta Royal family is wrong and baseless.

3 Rahul Sāṅkṛtyāyana—*Jīvānayātrā*—IV. pp, 133-34

4 Varma—Op. Cit., pp. 26.27; 106-7

5 VR-24 ऋ

6 Letter Nos. 77, 37. Vidyāpati also mentions a number of *Mūlagrāmas* and *Derās* of Karaṇakāyasthas—Viz. Gopālpur (No. 52), Bhigo (No. 55), Ratanpur (No. 55); Simā (No.55) etc.

7 Aziz Ahmad—*Studies in Islamic culture in Indian Environment* (Oxford, 1964), p. 106 ff, 234.

were the first among the Hindus to take up the study of Persian under Sikandar Lody and the Suris. On account of their being secular in outlook, they came into the closest contacts with the Muslims. They enriched Persian with Hindu sensibility embedded in Muslim tradition. They specialised in the field of diplomacy and official writing ( INSHA ). According to Grierson, they were the originators of Urdu<sup>1</sup>. The Karaṇa Kāyastha of Mithilā, like the Brāhmaṇas, remained cut off from the main stream of national politics for a pretty long time and developed a conservative attitude. Maithila Karaṇas were not recognised, till recently, as a Kāyastha because of their conservatism and customs based largely on Brahmanical lines in Mithilā.

#### 4. Kanungoe

This word must have come into use after Shershah. According to *Tarikh-shershahi*, Kanungoe or *Kanungei* was the custodian of revenue practices and regulations of the locality. Both Abbas Khan Sherwani and Abul Fazl confirm that there was a Kanungoe in every Pargana<sup>2</sup> who knew the past, present and future of his assignment. His knowledge was necessary in the assessment of revenue. He also maintained land assessment records and land statistics.<sup>3</sup> Kanungoe and Chaudhary together authenticated rent roll assessments with their signatures. He also collected statistics of manufactured articles.

Kanungoe was an important part of the revenue administration and he worked in conjunction with Chaudhary and Muqddams. He was the guardian of the ryots. On the occasion of natural calamities, *Taqavi* loan was advanced to the cultivators and the bond ( *Tamassuka* ) was to be endorsed by Chaudhary and attested by the Kanungoe. Kanungoe's pay was fixed during the time of Akbar. The palm-leaf *Pañji* gives the names of the following Kanungoes—( i ) Bhaur, ( ii ) Nanudas Kanungoe ( *Belhi*—the family still bears the title ), ( iii ) Kālidāsa and ( iv ) Ugrasena ( Varma, Op. Cit., 107-108 ).

#### 5. Kāryī

Besides Kanungoe, there was another title known as *Kāryī* and we have a reference to it in the writings of Vidyāpati<sup>4</sup>. Varma<sup>5</sup> holds the view that *Kāryī* was

1 LSI—IX. 45; cf. 5. Abdullah—अद्वियात-इ-फारसी में हिन्दुओं का हिस्सा, p-233 ( दिल्ली-1942 )

2 Jarratt. II. p. 72, Glossary—150

3 Jadunath Sarkar—*Mughal Administration*, pp, 75, 91; cf *Baharistan*, p. 157

4 *Likhanāvali*, 23, 30, 31, 33.

5 Op. Cit., p. 33.

responsible for enacting the gifts made by the king and was at the sametime incharge of village administration. Vidyāpati believes that *Cāturddharika* and *Kāryī* are identical ( Letter No. 31 ). Vidyāpati describes the royal headquarter as *Śrīkaraṇa*. It was from the royal headquarters that the Mahāmattaka ( Premier ) used to issue orders to Chaudharīs and Kāryīs. They had to carry out premier's order at their own level. Kāryī formed an important adjunct of the local administration in Mithila and we have the names of the following : ( i ) Rati, ( ii ) Hareśwara, ( iii ) Udayana, ( iv ) Sivai, ( v ) Ruda and ( vi ) Guṇeśvara.<sup>1</sup>

6. *Khāna*<sup>2</sup>—( *Varmā*—pp 29 and 113-14 )

*Varmā* has made a distinction between *Khāna* and *Khāṇa*, the first being the title of a Fauzadāra and second indicating the holder of *Khāḍga*. The word also finds mention in the *Kīrtilatā* of Vidyāpati. The beginning of the use of this word is, therefore, at least as old as Vidyāpati. He has mentioned one Ānand Khān as *Mantri*. The title Khān is used both in the case of Brāhmaṇas and karaṇa kāyasthas of Mithilā. It indicated an administrative designation, the nature of which is not very clear at this stage and the title is still current among the Brāhmaṇas of village Bangaon in the district of Saharsa. From the palm-leaf pañjis we have the names of the following *Khāns* among the karaṇa kāyasthas of Mithila :—( i ) Ratan khān, ( ii ) Raja khān, ( iii ) Gunrāja khān, he is also known as Mālādhār Basu in Bengali and *Srikrishna Vijay* is attributed to Gunarāja khān ( 1473-81 ), ( iv ) Śubharāja khān, ( v ) Gorarāja khān ( Is he the same as Goran khan of *Kīrtipatākā* ? ), ( vi ) Duśokhan khān, ( vii ) Anant khān ( is he the same as Anand khān of *Kīrtilatā* ? ), ( viii ) Sarup khān.

7. *Chaudhary* ( *Chāturddharika* )

The word originally appears to have been derived from *Chaurodharika* ( a holder of four ) or exterminator of thieves or *Chaurodhatri*<sup>3</sup> or sometimes equated with *Chakradharina* ( bearer of the discus as a symbol of authority ). According to Agarwal, Chaudhary is connected with *Caturaśika* in the sense of eightyfour.<sup>4</sup> He relies on *Aparājītapṛchhā* ( 78. 33-34. ) which has *Caturamaśila* Sāmantas or small feudal chiefs enjoying fourth part of the revenue<sup>5</sup>. Sircar tries to connect it with

1 *Ibid*, pp. 108-9.

2 Vidyāpati, *Kīrtilatā*; Glossary-156.

3 Yaj-II. 271; IA, XV, 187; JBBRAS, XVI, pp. 105, 108; EI, XI, pp. 6, 80, also Kātyāyana quoted by Aparāraka.

4 V. S. Agrawal, *Harṣacharita*, p. 173.

5 Glossary, p. 69 ff, *Aparājītapṛchhā*, 81, 89,

Kannaḍa, *Saudore*, *Saudare Caudare*, *Cavudari* and describes it as an officer of the royal guard.<sup>1</sup> *Chaurodharṇika*, occurs to the Gupta and Vallabhi records in the sense of the exterminator of thieves. Chaudhary was a kind of Police Officer meant for suppressing theft and other allied offences or chief of the royal guards. It was an important adjunct in the provincial administrative hierarchy.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Batuta mentions the office of Chaudhary. A group of hundred villages was known as *Ṣādi* and according to Batuta there were in each *Ṣādi* a *Chaudhary*, a headman of the Hindus and a *Mutashariff* who collected the revenue.<sup>3</sup>

First mention of the word *Chaudhary* is found in the reign of Alauddin Khilji. Barni mentions *Chaudhary* with *Muqaddams*, *Patavaris* and other revenue officials<sup>4</sup>. He also mentions *Karkunas* and *Kanungoes*. From Barni's reference it appears that the post of *Chandhary* existed since the beginning of the Sultanate period. In Mithilā the post of *Chaudhary* came into existence in the reign of Gangadeva<sup>5</sup>. He instituted this post for revenue purposes. Barni holds that a *Chaudhary* collected revenue. He was chosen by the *Muqaddam* of the village and according to Qureshi the post of a *Chaudhary* was both hereditary and elective. He was also connected with the measurement of land and assessment of revenue. From the writings of Vidyāpati, it appears that a *Chaudhary* represented to the *Pargana* administration the interests and needs of the ryots. They were associated with various types of revenue duties.<sup>6</sup> Under the Mughals, *Chaudhary* was a royal official connected with the local administration.

### 8. *Dīwānas*

Tulārāma Kanhūrāma as *Dīwānas* are mentioned in the palm-leaf along with one Mangalasimhadāsa of Nepāla.

1 Ibid., 70 ff; Hyderabad *Archaeological Series*, No. 18, p. 34

2 Puri—op, cit. 144, 180; R. K. Chaudhary—*Select Inscriptions of Bihar* is the worded mention, in the Prakrit Jain Inscriptions.

3 also finds I. H. Qureshi, *Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, pp. 203-8

4 *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*—287-88.

5 R.K. Chaudhary—*Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati*, chapter II. There is a reference to one Balbhadra Chaudhary who attained a great status in the district of Darbhanga and in the 19th century, Shyam Lal Chaudhary, (Diwan) is the reputed author of '*Gitaratnākara* (unpublished) and *Vaṃśakuladipaka*, a MSS, now deposited in the National Library.

6 *Likhanāwali*, 22, 26, 64, 65, 28 etc.

9. *Nāyaka*<sup>1</sup>

It is a feudal title. The word occurs in Kauṭilya's AŚ ( I.12 ) and also in Śukranītisāra ( 1.192 ). He was the head of the villages. In medieval times, a *Nāyaka* enjoyed royal land on condition of offering military help under the Vijayanagar empire. One Vainsadhar *Nāyaka* is mentioned in the Palm-leaf Pañji.

10. *Negī*<sup>2</sup>

It is a title of the *kāyasthas* yet in vogue in the areas of Uttar Pradesh. It is strange that this title is found in vogue in the Palm-leaf Pañjis of Mithilā. We have the name of one Nityanand Negi. The details are not known.

11. *Ṭhakkura*

It is a feudal title known to us from a number of inscriptions. It is frequently used in the Gahaḍawāla inscriptions<sup>3</sup>. The word is derived from the Turkish word 'Tegin' and Kalhaṇa has used the word both as a title and a fief-holder.<sup>4</sup> In some of the inscriptions *Kāyasthas* and *Karaṇikas* are styled as *ṭhakkuras*<sup>5</sup>. The word is mentioned in the list of subordinates in inscription. It is also indicated as a rank or office. Its significance varied from locality to locality and through the ages. In feudal sense *ṭhakkura* had the status of a lord in waiting. Kane holds that it did not indicate any office but was merely a title.<sup>6</sup> In Mithilā, Mahāmāṇḍalika Śrīdharadāsa was known as a *ṭhakkura* or feudal lord under the Karṇāṭas. Vidyāpati has also used *ṭhakkura* in the sense of a feudal noble. Few important *ṭhakkuras* as gleaned through the palm-leaf are Dalan Thakur, Dubai Thakur, Govinda Thakur, Thakkur Jagannatha, Hirmani Thakur—a large number of folklores are associated with his name, Thakkura Viṣṇudāsa, Bandh Thakkura and Rāma Thakkura etc.

12. *Mahattaka*<sup>7</sup>

The word '*Mahattaka*' signified an officer whose rank cannot be precisely fixed. *Mahattaka*, *Mahattara*, *Mahāmahattara*, *Mahto*, *Mahattama* etc. are used in a number

1 *JIH*, April, 1975, Some Aspects of feudalism in South India; also Varma-126

2 *Varma*-126.

3 *EI*, XIII. 295, 297; XI 304, 309-10

4 *RT*, VII, 290, 706, 738; *EI*, XIII. 297; XIX. 243; XI. 304.

5 Bhandarkar's list No. 207, 214, 222, 271.

6 *HDS*, III, 984; Varma, 122-24.

7 Varma, 30 and 13?, *Glossary*-p.190; *IE*-VIII. 3; CII. IV, 659, *EI*, III. 266, *RT*-VII.438; 669; *IA*-VI. 114; *XU* 309ff. *EI*, XII. 27-30 and *EJ*, XXII. 30.

of inscriptions in the sense of a village Panchāyat Board. Even the head of a family or a community is known as a *Mahattara* or *Mahattama*. It represented the office of the Administrative Board of *Aṣṭakula* headed by Mahattara.<sup>1</sup> There is the mention of a *Jonapada-Mahattara* in the *Daśakumāracharita* ( III ).

From the writings of Jyotirīśwara and Vidyāpati<sup>2</sup> it is evident that *Mahattaka* was an important feudal officer signifying a definite rank. It is believed that the title *Mahatha* is derived from *Mahattaka* of Jyotirīśwara. The word *Mahattara* in the sense of elite, is in frequent use since the days of the Guptas. In Mithila polity, *Mahāmattaka* and *Mahattaka* stood for ministers of all castes holding a high feudal rank. The post was invariably held by a section of the Karaṇa Kāyasthas is evident from the fact that a complete Karaṇa Kāyastha *Mūlagrāma* ( known to us from the Palm-leaf Pañjī ) is known as *Mahathāpāla*.<sup>3</sup> A *Mahattaka* was well-adept in polity and diplomacy, in matters of statecraft and social courtesy and was usually adorned with title of *Mahāsāmantādhipati*. He was also at times entrusted with the task of revenue collection. His main duty was to advise kings on all important administrative matters. *The Mahattaka* was also entrusted with task of Jail administration. In order of administrative gradation, under the *Mahattaka* came *Lekhī* and under *Lekhī* came *Chāturadharika* and *Pañjikāra*, and then came *Kāryī*. The *Pañjikāra* was also associated with the village administration in one way or the other.†

### 13. *Majumdāra*<sup>5</sup>

This word is connected with the revenue administration under the Muslim rulers. The word is derived from *Maj-Mu-al-dār* indicating muster-roll accountant. A *Maj-mu-al-dār* was entrusted with the maintenance of muster-roll account and was associated with the Pargana administration. We have a long list of *Majumdārs* from the Palm-leaf Pañjī viz. ( i ) *Majumdār Lakhan*, ( ii ) *Priyaṅkara*

1 EI, XXXI, refers to *Aṣṭakulādihikaraṇa*, EI, XXII; XII; The word *Mahattama* is found in the Bhagalpur Cp of Nārāyaṇapāla. It has been identified with official guide, cf, Beal, *Life of Hiuentang*, p. 190.

2 VR—22३; *Likhanāvali*, Nos. 16, 23, 29, 30; the word 'Mahattaka' occurs in the Bodhgaya Inscription of the 12th century A. D.

3 Varma, 30.

4 We have the name of one *Mahattaka* Bibhākara in the Palm-Leaf Pañjī. The Karaṇa-kāyasthas of Mithila were also adorned with the title of *Maḍara* and we have one such name as Chhakaurī Maḍara in the Pañjī, *Maḍara* signified a responsible position in village society and was sometimes equated with village headman.

5 R. K. Chaudhary, *History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut*, for Keshava Majumdar and others, Varma, 131-32.

Majumdār ( son of Gunrāj Khan ), ( iii ) Hari Majumdār and his son Vanamāli Majumdār, ( iv ) Durlabh Majumdār, ( v ) Basudeva Majumdār, son of Gunrāj Khān, ( vi ) Mādhava Majumdār, son of Gunrāj Khān, ( vii ) Megha Majumdār, Lakshminath Majumdār, ( viii ) Thega Majumdār, ( ix ) Ratan Majumdār and ( x ) Keshava Majumdār, who ruled over Mithila for a few years after the decline of the Oinvāras and his power was circumscribed after coming of the *Khaṇḍawalās* who had the authority from the Mughals.

#### 14. *Malik*

In the V. R.<sup>1</sup> of Jyotirīswara, *Malik* is mentioned in connection with the cremation ground. It appears to have been a borrowed word from the Muslim where it was connected with some sort of administrative set up. The Governor of a Province or the Chief of a horde of slaves enjoying political status or wielding military power or authority was also known as 'Malik'. From the Palm-leaf Pañji we have the name of one Malik Madhukara. It is now the title of some responsible Karaṇakāyastha families in Mithilā and also in the Punjab.

#### 15. *Rāuta*<sup>2</sup>

Rāuta is a well-known feudal title, current in Mithilā in the middle ages, among all sections of the people and it appears from the Palm-leaf Pañji that the Karaṇa-kāyasthas also held this title. It signified a noble man or a subordinate ruler. The word is derived from *Rājapūta*, *Rāvata* or *Rāuta*. Even the Ganga Kings of Orissa described themselves as Rāuta. Both Jyotirīswara and Vidyāpati mention *Rāuta*, Rāutapati.<sup>3</sup> It appears from the writings of Vidyāpati that a Rāuta was entrusted with important administrative and judicial functions like punishing thieves, settling wasteland with willing cultivators and controlling village administration. He was also entrusted with the task of supplying infantry. In times of peace he also acted as a mediator between two rulers or kings. We have a list of the following Rāutas among the Karaṇa kāyasthas from the Palm-leaf Pañji : ( i ) Dhodhi Rāut ( or Bodhi Dāsa )<sup>4</sup>; ( ii ) Rāuta Rājadeva<sup>5</sup>, ( iii ) Rāuta Toṭe, ( iv ) Bhānu Rāut, ( v ) Karaṇa Rāuta ( vi ) Saṅkara Rāuta, ( vii ) Horai Rāuta and there is a mention of one Rāutapati Chhatrapati. Rāuta is undoubtedly a

1 V. R., 63३

2 *Glossary*, 279; IE, 82; EI, XXX, XXXII, V.

3 V. R., 21३, 22३; *Likhanāvali*—Nos. 10, 21, 28, 44, 56, 57, 58, 76 80, 83 etc.

Also cf. *Kirtipatakā* ( edited by Umesha Mishra ), p. 18.

4 PP, Tale 28

5 Mentioned by Vidyāpati.

feudal word which gained currency in the middle ages and was used by all section of the feudal lord irrespective of caste and creed.

#### 16. *Laškara*<sup>1</sup>

*Laškara* is said to have been an Officer Incharge of possibly ten troops. He was the lowest officer in the military hierarchy based on decimal system. According to Moreland<sup>2</sup> a *Laškara* was divided into some main groups called 'Fauza' and the latter was again divided into smaller groups named 'Shiqq.' In the Palm-leaf Pañji we get a mention of one Haradāsa *Laškara* among the Karaṇa Kāyasthas of Mithilā.

#### 17. *Lekhī*<sup>3</sup>

Vidyāpati describes *Lekhī* as a city administrator. He was responsible to *Mahattaka*. Chāturadharika and Pañjikāras were under him. *Lekhī* is possibly derived from the word '*Lekhaka*' or one who is possessed of ministerial qualification or is acquainted with all kinds of customs, or alert in composition, competent in legible writing and quick in reading. Persons, having the above mentioned qualifications should be appointed *Lekhaka*.<sup>4</sup> The following *Lekhis* are known to us from the Palm-leaf Pañji—Jagai, Gaṅgādhara, Bhaskara, Viṣṇudāsa, Prabhākara, Dubai, Bhava, Chhittara, Madhukara, Harikara etc. and Vijjhakara of the *Kīrtipātākā*.<sup>5</sup> The title '*Lekhi*, was also connected with the administrative duties and jobs.

#### 18. *Vaidya*

Manu prescribes the profession of a physician for the Ambaṣṭhas—a large section of the people who led the life of medicine men were known as Ambaṣṭhas in the fourth century B.C. and the Greek writers testify to it. *Vaidyas*<sup>6</sup> of Bengal associate themselves with Ambaṣṭhas. In the Tamil region they are associated with the profession of barber and surgeons. An Ambaṣṭha is otherwise called *Vaidyam*. Ambaṣṭhas are mentioned in the *Uśanaḥasamhitā* and also in the *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa* (modified in Eastern India after 13th century A.D.). Bengali

1 Cf. PAICC, 1924; Prof. Habib's article, cf. Q. Ahmad, *Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bihar*, p. 103; cf. Glossary-171.

2 *Agrarian System of Muslim India*, p. 277.

3 Varma, 30; *Likhanāvālī*, Nos. 23 and 37

4 *Lader's List*—Nos. 209, 1037, 1045 1138, 1148 etc.; *Glossary-177*

5 Varmā, 139-40.

6 HB-I, 589 ff.

Vaidya is mentioned as Gauḍa Ambaṣṭha in *Surjanacharita*.<sup>1</sup> In ancient times there was no objection to inter-marriage between the Kāyasthas and Vaidyas in Bengal. The members of Karaṇa Kāyastha family served under the Chandras and the Pāla-Senas of Bengal and they contributed a lot towards the development of literary and scientific creations. *Śabdapradīpa*, a medical treatise was written by a Karaṇa Kāyastha. Chakrapāṇidatta, a Kulina of the Lodhravath branch of the Dattas among the Vaidyas, compiled *Chikitsāsamgraha* and his brother Bhanu was *Antaraṅga* ( Private Secretary ) of King *Nayapāla*.<sup>2</sup>

*Vaidyas*<sup>3</sup> as Kāyasthas or vice-versa are known to us from the palm-leaf pañji. Vaidya stood for scholarship in a particular branch of knowledge and both the Karaṇas and the Ambaṣṭhas were associated with the profession. From the pañjis we have a list of the following Karaṇas known as Vaidyas—( i ) Vaidyarāma, ( ii ) Vaidya Baṁsadhara, ( iii ) Vaidya Pāru, ( iv ) Vaidyarāma, ( v ) Mādhava Vaidya and ( vi ) Vaidya Dasaratha.

#### 19. *Viśwāsa*<sup>4</sup>

It is an official designation derived from *Vaiśvāsika*, a privy councillor or a private secretary. It is possibly the same as *Rahasyādhiḥkṛta* or *Antaraṅga*.<sup>5</sup> The Muslim rulers brought this title in the use and we have a long list of *Viśwāsas* in the *Pañji*—Rāmakara, Lakṣmī, Harihara, Sundara Babu, Matikara, Budhikara, Suryakara, Govinda, Mathura, Khaḍga, Raṅga, Dubal, Ajit, Bhubana, Devi, Durwani etc.

#### 20. *Shiqdāra*<sup>6</sup>

Shiqdāra was a pargana officer and we find its first mention in the time of Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq. A *Shiqdāra* was officer of Shiqq—a territory bigger than pargana. Shiqq was later on replaced by Sarkar<sup>7</sup>. Shiqq has also been described as a fiscal or administrative unit or at times even a military unit ( as described by Moreland ). Shiqdāra had administrative and military functions and he was mainly associated with the pargana administration under the Lodis. According

1 cf. D. C. Sircar—*Studies in the Society and Administration of Ancient and Mediaeval Bengal-I*-( Calcutta-1967 ) for details.

2 *HB-I*. 316

3 *VR*—23ख, 75ख, 76ख; *MD*—191.

4 *Glossary*—379; *EI-IX*, *XXIN*, *XXVIII*, *XXIX*; *IE* 8, 3.

5 *Varmā*—141, *VR*. 22ख, 23ख, *EI-III*.

6 *Varmā*—pp 28, 147.

7 *Qanungo*—*Sher Shah*—p. 353.

to *Quroshi*<sup>1</sup>, he was the administrative and military head of the pargana. He was pargana officer in the 15th century and as an agent of Jāgirdāra he also administered his fief. From an inscription<sup>2</sup> it appears that he was an administrator of more than two parganas.

Sher Shah appointed Shiqdāra in every pargana. He, with his armed retinue also performed police duties, executed royal firmāns, and preserved peace within his jurisdiction. A *Shiqdāra* is sometimes synonymous with *Āmil*—it is rather too different names for two posts. To Moreland *Shiqdāra* is a military term but to Abbas Khan Sherwani *Shiqdāra*'s main function is to maintain law and order and arrest *Muqaddams* of surrounding villages if thieves could not be detected. Besides being a revenue collector, he also exercised magisterial functions. Under the Mughals, he also acted as chief treasury officer—a post held by the *Āmils* also. These two were possibly identical posts.<sup>3</sup> He is found at the head of a force trying to realise revenue from the refractory zemindars of Bengal. The office declined after the rise of the Fauzdārs.

In the palm-leaf pañji,<sup>4</sup> the word *Shiqdārā*, *Sar-Laškara*, *Diwana* etc. are commonly used in the text indicating surnames. The word *Shiqdāra* ultimately turned into a title and is still current in Bengal though it has gone out of use in Mithilā. From the Pañji, the persons, named here bore the title of *Shiqdāra*—Sādhu, Rāma, Devai, Banai and Narai.

## 21. *Sarkār*—an administrative unit under Sher Shah

The word *Sarkār* became a name-ending title and we have the names of Mahādeva *Sarkār* and Parmanand *Sarkār* in the palm-leaf-pañji. The title is yet in vogue in Bengal.

## 22. *Sahnā*

It is an administrative title and came into use during the time of the Tughlaqs. The *Rajgir Jain Inscription of the*<sup>5</sup> 14th century A. D. of the time of Firuz Shah Tughlaq mentions one '*Sahnā*' Sadruddin. The word appears to have been derived from '*Sādhanika*'. In the pañji we have the name of one Ganapati *Sahnā*.

1 Op. cit., p. 202.

2 *Inscriptions of Bengal*—Vol. IV ( VRS-1960 ) p. 45.

3 M. I. Borah ( Translated ) *Baharastan-i-Gyabi* ( Gauhati-1963 ) p. 123.

4 Varmā, 28, 147.

cf. H. Blochman *Contribution to the Geography of Bengal.*, p. 6.

5 R. K. Chaudhary—*Select Inscriptions of Bihar*, p. 118; cf. IE, p. 355.

23. *Sāhī*

It indicates royal title used by some Indian rulers of foreign origin and is also mentioned by Jyotirīśwara<sup>1</sup>. I wonder if the word is in any way connected with *Sangahi* which also stood for the Kāyasthas in Mithilā. *Sangahi* is believed to have been derived from *Sāndhivigrahika*. The word is found in the *Kīrtilatā* of Vidyāpati<sup>2</sup>. *Sāhī* as a name-ending title is still used by the Bhūmihāras in the district of Muzaffarpur and Rājapūtas of Bhagalpur. In the Pañjī, we get the names of Rai Sāhi, Māna Sāhi and Lāla Sāhi.

24. *Sena*—( *Varmā*—149; *V.R.* pp. 34, 53, 61 )

Vikramasena, Jayasena, Gaṅgāsena, Saṅgrāmasena & others are known to us from the pañjīs. The title is yet in vogue in Bengal.

25. *Hazrā* ( *Varmā*—pp.150-51 )

This title is yet in vogue in Bengal but not in Mithilā. The pañjī supplies us with names of Sundara Hazra, Bharat Hazra, Brahma Hazra and Kalyān Hazra.

There are many more titles and names and other aspects which can be scientifically studied with the help of the palm-leaf pañjī of Karaṇakāyasthas of Mithilā and it is hoped that young sociologists and historians of Mithila will turn their attention to these studies without which the social history of Mithila will remain incomplete.

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1 *V. R.*, p. 63; *El. XXX*; *Glossary* 282; *IE*, 8. 2.

2 Ramanath Jha, *Kīrtilatā*, p. 24. It also mentions one Keshava Kāyastha.