CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

POLITICAL ORGANISATION

A. DECCAN AND SOUTH INDIA

1. Sources of Information

In the third century A.D. the empire of the Sātavāhanas broke up and gave place to a number of minor dynasties which ruled in different parts of the Deccan till the middle of the sixth century when the rise and progress of the Chālukyas of Bādāmi restored unity to the polity and history of that area. Epigraphical records are the major source of knowledge for this period of three centuries, besides some coins of disputed import; and in the inscriptions, the minor dynasties of Eastern Deccan, the Ikshvākus, Śālankāyanas and Vishnu-kūṇḍins, and perhaps also the Vākāṭakas of Berar, are better represented than those of the western half of the plateau—the Ābhīras, Traikūṭakas, Kalachuris and Chūtus. In the area immediately to the south of the Kṛishṇā river, the Pallavas were the chief power, but there were less important dynasties like the Kadambas, the Gaṅgas and the Bānas. All these dynasties may be considered more or less as the successors of the Sātavāhanas; they ruled over areas which had been wholly or in part included in the Sātavāhana empire, and they inherited and carried on the Sātavāhana traditions in polity and administration among other things.¹

In the extreme south lay the Tamil country divided among the three time-honoured monarchies of the Cheras, Cholas and Pāṇḍyas, besides a number of petty chieftaincies either independent or in subordinate relation to one of the monarchies according to the exigencies of time and circumstance. The political and social organisation of this area differed little in its essentials from that of the rest of India south of the Vindhyas, but it was marked by some features peculiar to the Tamil country where indigenous institutions survived in some strength and blended with those that came in with the flow of Indo-Aryan culture. Strictly speaking, there is little direct

¹ Cf. Chs. on Political History (XII-XVII).
evidence on conditions in the Tamil country, excepting the small part of it included in the Pallava dominion, for the period A.D. 300-550 or even 600. The bulk of the earliest stratum of Tamil literature, the Sangam literature as it is often called, certainly belongs to the period before A.D. 300, and the evidence of later literature and inscriptions does not commence until after A.D. 600. For the intervening period we have to fall back on conjectures based on what went before and what came after.

The second half of our period (A.D. 600-985) is much better illuminated by our sources than the first. The political history of the more important kingdoms is much better known, and the inscriptions and literature begin to tell us rather more on the state of administration and social life. Casual remarks of foreign travellers and writers sometimes give welcome clues to things not heard of otherwise.

2. Fundamental Characteristics

In any study of polity, whether in North or South India, but more specially in the latter, we should keep clearly in view certain fundamental characteristics of the Indian attitude in ancient times towards political organisation. In the first place, the Indians looked to the State for very little; the traditional view was that the ruler upheld the existing social order and afforded protection to the people from internal trouble and foreign invasion, and received as his wage a share in the produce of land. The social order itself derived its sanction and had its roots elsewhere—in Revelation (śruti), Orthodox tradition (smriti), and the Practice of the élite (āchāra). The ruler had ordinarily little control over the numerous social, economic, and religious concerns of the people, except by way of dispensing justice when justiceworthy disputes demanding justice were brought before him or his courts. The normal regulation and administration of these affairs was bound by ties of locality, caste, occupation, or religious persuasion; these groups had a high regard for custom and ancient practice, but were by no means averse to try new methods should occasion demand it. Each of these groups had its own established constitution, seldom if ever crystallised in the form of definite rules or written down in detail, but generally well understood among its members, and flexible enough to admit of variations in practice or procedure to meet unforeseen situations. There was usually a general assembly which met rarely except perhaps once a year on some definite festive or ceremonial occasion, and an executive body in charge of the daily routine; this body was often chosen by lot from among persons who possessed cer-
tain prescribed qualifications. Voting and decision by a majority of votes were by no means unknown, but the aim was usually to reach a unanimous decision by reconciling or integrating the different interests and points of view. This is no imaginary or idealised picture, but the cumulative impression left on the mind by numerous inscriptions recording transactions in which such groups and associations figured in one way and another. Some concrete instances will appear as we proceed, though a full account of the details cannot be given here. The guilds of merchants like the Nānādesīs and the Five Hundred of Ayyavole; the associations (śrenīs) of craftsmen, artisans and manufacturers like kañchakaras (braziers) and telikis (oil-mongers); and of students, ascetics, temple-servants, priests and so on, besides the territorial assemblies of the village and nādu—all functioned more or less independently of the Government. In short, Government's chief task was to protect the framework of the social fabric from disruption due to internal or external causes; the real life of the people was dominated by a network of corporative groups, local, hereditary, or voluntary as the case may be.

Secondly, the duty of protecting society belonged in theory to a special class—the Kshatriyas; by an easy transition in thought and practice, any one who, by favour of circumstances, felt equal to the task of undertaking the rule of a particular area, did not hesitate to do so, and nothing succeeded like success. Each successful adventurer became a king and sought to gain respectability by maintaining an ostentatious court, patronising learning and the arts, and having praśastis (lauds) composed in honour of himself and his family; his family often continued to survive long after its glory had spent itself, and then faded out of existence and out of the memory of people. Moreover, aggrandisement was the duty of the ruler; he had to be a vijigishu—one who wishes to conquer; and this ideal, universally cherished and acted on by all rulers, great and small, led to frequent wars and skirmishes, resulting in changes in the relative positions of the different powers involved.

Lastly, and as a consequence of the two factors mentioned above, the frequent political changes involving the rise and fall of empires, kingdoms, and principalities did not have such profound effects on the structure of society and civilization as in other countries, for instance, those of Europe. While the establishment and the continued prosperity of an empire often indeed meant an era of high achievement in literature and the arts, the absence of such an imperial power meant by no means any serious set-back in the conditions of civic life.
3. **Rural Administration**

The organisation which made for continuity of life and tradition, held society together, and carried it safe through the storms and turmoil of political revolutions, was the autonomous self-sufficient village. The village was the primary cell of the body—social and political, and its vitality is well attested for practically the whole area and all the centuries included in this survey. It usually consisted of a number of families each occupying a house of its own in the residential part of the village, owning its own share of the arable land, and enjoying the privileges of grazing cattle, gathering firewood and so on in the waste land and forest living round about the village and held in common by the villagers as a body. The specific mention of some land belonging to the king as the subject of a gift in a Pallava grant\(^2\) goes directly against the view that all land belonged to the king in the ancient Indian State. That a careful record of the boundaries of the village and of the individual estates in it was maintained, is also borne out by the grants and charters of the times. To cite only one instance, the Uruvapalli grant\(^3\) describes the boundaries of a village of 200 *nivartanas* with meticulous detail. The villagers met periodically for the consideration of matters of common concern, and perhaps also for the settlement of disputes and the administration of justice. There is no doubt that everywhere rural administration grew from timid and tentative improvisations in the beginning to the more elaborate and complicated machinery of committees and officials that we find described in the Chola inscriptions of the tenth and eleventh centuries. The lines and pace of development differed, of course, in different places, and judging from the evidence at hand, the Tamil country appears to have been much more progressive, much readier to try new forms and methods to meet fresh situations as they arose, than the rest of the area covered in this survey. The whole subject is of fascinating interest and deserves much more detailed study than it has yet received; all we can do here is to invite attention to some salient landmarks in the history of village government in South India in our period.

The village headman is referred to by the name *mutuda* (*lit.* alderman) in Śalāṅkāyana grants of the fifth century A.D.; and the *grāma-bhojaka* of the early Pallava and Kadamba charters seems to be another name for the same official. How the village headman was appointed, and whether his office was hereditary, are matters on

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\(^2\) Chendalur, *El.* VIII, p. 233 (*rājavastu dhūtvā sthitam*).

\(^3\) *IA*, V, pp. 50-53; also C. Minakshi, *Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas*, pp. 61-62.
which no clear light is furnished by our sources. But that he was the leader of the village and the intermediary between the villagers and the royal government of the kingdom is fairly clear. Thus, a number of Śālaṅkāyana grants are orders addressed to the village or villagers headed by the *mutudda*.

The villagers of Omoḍu and Pikira are specially mentioned in the Pallava grants bearing their names. The British Museum plates of Chārudevi speak of the officials of the village (gāmeyikā āyuttā) without any definite indication as to who appointed them. The Sarsavani plates of Kalachuri Buddhāraja (A.D. 610) mention the elders of the village, its *adhikārika* and others. Here we must note the mention of the elders of the village, as a class apart from the headman, *adhikārika*, and the generality of the people. They also find mention, besides the grāmabhōjika, in the Satara grant of Vishṇuvardhana, the younger brother of Pulakesin II.

In the Tamil country we have references to manram and podiyil as also to avai (from Sanskrit sabhā) in the classical literature of the Saṅgam period. This makes it clear that some form of a primitive village assembly was known to the rural parts, although the position of the assembly seems to have been better established in the larger towns, particularly the capital cities. *Podiyil* means ‘common place’ (of meeting) and *manram* is explained by a relatively late commentator, who must, however, be taken to represent an authentic tradition, as ‘the open place in the centre of the village where all people meet under the shade of a tree’. The songs of the Puranānūru (nos. 46 and 220) show that the *manram* was also a court of justice as well as the place where the sentences of the court were executed. In one of them we have an interesting situation. The Chola king doomed the sons of one of his enemies to be thrown to an elephant. A poet interceded successfully on behalf of the youngsters, and appealed to the king’s mercy by saying that a strange fear had taken possession of those tender children as they stared in bewilderment at the *manram*. The other poem is a lament of a friend of another Chola king at the sight of the *manram* of ancient Uraivūr, bereft of its king who had for some unknown reason given up his life by starvation. Here we have testimony of the king going to the *manram* of the capital to administer justice in person and do other public business. Of the

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4 Ellur plates of Devavarman, A.D. 325—Elure *mutudda pamukha gāmo bhāniya*ko. Cf. Kantheru plates of Nandiyarman II and Peḍdavegi grant of the same king having *mutudda sahitān grāmejakān*.


6 IA, XIX, pp. 309-10.
nature and working of the manram in rural parts of this early period, especially on its political side, we have no direct testimony. But popular gatherings of a social and religious nature in the manram of every locality are known to have been a regular feature of rural life, and it was undoubtedly the scene of song, dance, and other popular amusements.

After a long interval, the regular history of village institutions may be said to commence with the inscriptions of the late eighth and early ninth centuries A.D. From these inscriptions we are able to trace the presence of at least three types of assemblies which paid a regular part in local administration, namely (1) the ur (2) the sabha and (3) the nagaram. The ur was evidently the commoner type of assembly belonging to the normal run of villages where the land was held by all classes of people who were, therefore, entitled to membership in the local assembly. The sabha was apparently an exclusively Braha- mana assembly of the brahmadeya villages where at least at the start all the land belonged to the Braha-manas. The nagaram was quite another type; it was an assembly of merchants and belonged to localities where traders and merchants were in a dominant position. These types of assemblies often existed side by side in the same locality, together with many other associations of lesser importance and more restricted scope. Whenever necessary, there was mutual consultation among those different assemblies and associations, and the rule was generally observed that all the interests concerned in a matter were consulted before any decision was taken on it. An inscription from Uttaramerur,7 dated A.D. 993-94, just immediately after the close of the period covered in this survey, illustrates this clearly. It records the decision of the sabha that the responsibility for the payment of fines levied by either the king’s court (rajadvara), the court of justice (dharmasanam), the revenue department (vari), or others, must rest on the particular community or class to which the person fined belonged; and the groups specially named are Braha-manas, Siva-Braha-manas, accountants, merchants, Vellalar, and any other castes (jatigal). It is not clear if all these classes were invited to attend the meeting at which the decision was taken, or it was taken after previous consultation with all of them. The inscription also shows, what is clear in many other ways, that the sabha, generally comprising the elite of learning and character in the community, commanded the respect of all other assemblies, and took the lead on important occasions in settling difficult matters of common concern.

7 EI, XXII, pp. 205-7.
Of the constitution and working of the ār assembly, we are unfortunately not as well informed as of the sabhā. But we may presume that the role of the ār in local administration was similar to that of the sabhā. In a large township like Uttaramerūr where the ār and the sabhā existed side by side, there arose a natural tendency for the sabhā to guide and control the activities of the ār, and for the ār to submit willingly to such guidance. The ār had often an execution committee of its own which was called āluṅganattār, the ruling group. We learn nothing, however, of the method by which they were chosen or of the tenure of their office.

Of the sabhā more details are forthcoming. In the earliest extant inscriptions of Uttaramerūr, which belong to the reign of Dantivarman Pallava, the sabhā already appears as a mature and well established institution exercising almost all the powers that it ever exercised in later times. It sold land, undertook the administration of an endowment for dredging a tank, and made an important settlement (vyavasthai) in which the ār was assigned some duties with regard to lands deserted by poor tenants who could not pay the dues on them. A little later, under Nandivarman, it laid down the qualifications and the tenure for the place of the worshipping priest (archaka) in a local temple. These early records also contain notable references to vāriyar, obviously executive officers subordinate to the sabhā and taking their orders from it. A Pāṇḍya inscription from Mānūr in the neighbourhood of Tinnevelly (c. a.d. 800) is a landmark in the history of the sabhā. It is a record of rules of procedure made by the sabhā for the regulation of its future meetings. The meeting of the sabhā was summoned by beat of drum, and assembled in the hall of the local temple of Govardhana. The rules made included the following provisions among others: only those who had a full share of the village lands, including shares obtained by purchase, gift, or dowry, were proficient in one Dharma and mantrabrāhmana, and were of good conduct, should take part in the proceedings of the sabhā. For the future, no fractional shares such as quarter, half, and so on, should be created by sale, gift, or dowry. Those who wish to buy a full share must be proficient in an entire Veda, including its addenda (parāśīṣṭa). No one, who did not enjoy a full share acquired in one of these ways, shall be appointed to any kind of vāriyam, i.e., executive duty. Persons who contravene these provisions or obstruct the proceedings of the sabhā saying ‘nav’, ‘nay’, to every proposition, and those who abetted such offenders, were each to pay a fine of 5 kāsus and abide by the

8 See Studies, pp. 105-6.
provisions of this settlement for the future. The whole transaction is put through by the sabhā, and there is no mention of the king or the government except in the formal dating of the document in the 35th year of the Pāṇḍya ruler, Maraṇjādiyan. But doubtless, if obstruction was very strong and the sabhā was not equal to controlling it, it was open to it to invoke the aid of the king's officials in enforcing its lawful decisions, and that aid would be readily forthcoming.

The two oft-quoted Uttaramérūr inscriptions of the 12th and 14th years (A.D. 919 and 921) of the Chola monarch Parāntaka I may be said to constitute the next great landmark. In these inscriptions we see the completion of the transition from the appointment of individual executive officers by the sabhā (the vāriyar) to the establishment of a fairly elaborate committee system, by means of which important sections of local administration were entrusted to committees (vāriyam) of 6 or 12 members according to the importance of their functions. The first inscription laid down rules for the election of the various committees, and the second inscription, dated two years later, amended these rules with a view to removing some practical difficulties that had been experienced in their working. Without going into details, too long and complicated for reproduction here,8a we may note that the general principle followed was to lay down minimum qualifications of property, learning, and character to be satisfied by persons before being included in the panels for the committees, and then to secure by a system of lot the election of the requisite number from those qualified men, care being taken that all the wards of the township were represented on the committees.

The Tiruchendūr inscription of Pāṇḍya Varaguna Mahārāja II (c. A.D. 874),9 mentions that of a large endowment in cash made in favour of the local temple, the urār of Korkai became trustees of one part, the sabhāiyār of Varagunamaṅgalam of another, and the naga-rattār of Manavirapattanam of yet a third—a striking instance of cooperation among the different types of assemblies for a common cause.

There was a small staff of paid servants in each village, called madhyasthas, who assisted the committees of the sabhā in their work and maintained the records of the village. They also attended the meetings of the sabhā, and assisted in the conduct of the meetings and in recording their resolutions, but themselves took no part in the deliberations. In A.D. 923 the sabhā of Brahmadesam,

8a Ibhd
9 EI, XXI, p. 109.
North Arcot district, resolved that their madhyasthas, employed in writing up the accounts connected with the tank, were to be remunerated at the rate of four measures of paddy per diem, and were to receive in addition six kalanjus of ‘red gold’ per annum with a pair of clothes each; that each of them had, at the end of his year of office, to produce accounts and pass through the ordeal of red hot iron; that those who were declared pure after the ordeal should receive a bonus of a small amount of gold, while those that failed in it should pay a fine of ten kalanjus of gold, the reason for the heavy fine being that the corpus of the tank fund was not of sufficient size and that no corporal punishment was to be resorted to by the sabhā in such cases.\(^{10}\)

Similar developments were taking place elsewhere though not perhaps to the same extent. In the Deccan we come across numerous references to the mahājanas of villages who were in charge of the local administration under the leadership of sāmundas, corresponding to the mutuda, the grāmabhaisaka etc. of an earlier time. About A.D. 700 we read in an inscription that some land was given away to a temple in Benipur with the assent of the subjects who were mahājanas.\(^{11}\) Again the Lakshmīśvar inscription of yuvarāja Vikramāditya (c. A.D. 720)\(^{12}\) contains an important ācharavyavasīthe—charter of rights and duties—given by the yuvarāja to the mahājanas, the nagara and the eighteen prakritis of Porigere, the king’s officials (rājapurūshas) being required to secure the proper observance of the terms of the charter. The inscription describes rates of taxes to be given by the villagers to the deśādhīpatis every year in the month of Vaiśākha and to the senī (servile) in the month of Kārtika. It also mentions the specialised guilds of braziers and of oilmonsters, and of the payment of dues to them. It will be noticed that in these Chalukya inscriptions the relations between the village assembly and the officials of the king’s government are somewhat closer than in the more autonomous townships of the Tamil country.

Under the Rāshtrakūta the basis of rural administration continued to be the same as earlier under the Chalukyas of Rādāmi. The inscriptions give ample evidence of the presence of gāmandas and mahājanas in each important village and township, and of the diligence and regularity with which they attended to the numerous local affairs. An inscription of A.D. 902-3\(^{13}\) from Nandavanade speaks of a

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10 276 of 1915.
11 SII. IX, i, no. 48: mahājana-majā sammatade kottady.
12 EI, XIV, p. 188.
13 IA, XII, p. 221.
meeting of the local assembly at which were present all the mahājanas, young and old, headed by 'their own three', who were the equals of Kapilārishi; the three particularly mentioned were doubtless the executive officers of the mahājanas, and the esteem in which they were held is seen by their being compared to sage Kapila. Another inscription of A.D. 917 from Haṭṭimattur mentions 'the one hundred and ten' (mahājanas) of a village and the fifty families of oil-mongers in the same place co-operating in the conduct of the affairs of the local temple. It is perhaps needless to multiply instances.

The organisation of rural government in practically the whole of South India then conformed to a certain general pattern, but exhibited many variations in detail according to time and place. There was, on the whole, more variety and development in the Far South than in the Deccan, and this development was continued into the next period—the age of the Chola Empire—which witnessed the most remarkable combination of efficient central control with the utmost local freedom ever known in the history of India.

The relation between the village or township and the central government in matters other than the payment of land revenue is best understood by a study of the parihāras or exemptions that usually accompany the numerous grants of land recorded in the charters. Such a study will provide also a peep into the tax-system of the times. The Mayiḍavolu plates of Pallava Śivaskandavarman mention the following items: (1) Exemption from digging for salt. The mining and manufacture of salt was a royal monopoly even under the Sātavāhanas, and continued to be so under the later Pallavas.14 Specially favoured villages, particularly brahmādevas, were exempted from visits from royal officials for purposes of digging in the villages for salt. The Hirahadagallī plates place the manufacture of sugar on the same level as that of salt. (2) Exemption from the administrative jurisdiction of the head of the district (aratha-saṅvinayakam). In some early Kaliṅga grants15 it is expressly stated that the villagers were, from the date of the grant, to tender to the dōnce and his descendants all the payments and services which they used to give to the king and his officials. It is also stated that the villages concerned were to be exempt from the entry of soldièrs and policemen for any purpose. These brahmādevyas, then, were clearly a sort of imperia in imperio in which the dōnce held practically absolute sway in every respect.


15 Ragolu and Srungavarapukota plates (EI, XII, p. 1; XXV, p. 238; XXIII, p. 58).
A Traikūṭaka inscription of A.D. 490-91 mentions an exception to the rule that soldiers and policemen should not enter such villages, viz., that they may do so for capturing thieves and those who have done evil against the king (chora-rājāpathakārī-varjam). This condition expressly stated for once here may perhaps be taken to be an implied condition governing all such general exemptions. It proves that care was taken to see that exemptions granted to favoured subjects did not produce any serious anti-social consequences. (3) Exemption from liability to supply draught bulls to help the progress of touring officers, who seem to have expected the provision by the villagers of other amenities as well—such as cots, living rooms, and boiled rice, items to which the Hirahadagalli plates add milk, curds, grass, fuel, and green vegetables. That this system of local supplies was fairly widespread in South India is seen from the grants of other dynasties as well. Another common exemption, not specifically mentioned in Mayidavolu plates but included in the Hirahadagalli plates, was (4) freedom from kara (tax) and vetṭi (free labour). Other inscriptions contain quite a number of other items of varying importance which need not all be detailed here. But two may be noticed as they are of particular interest. (5) Manippāḍu, corresponding to the Sanskrit expression (sa) danda-dosha-daśāpararūḥa. This consisted in fines and other accruals of judicial administration, not handed over to the officials of the State but retained by the favoured donor, either the whole village or the particular person or persons in it. (6) Neyvilai, literally 'the price of ghee', which may be taken to correspond to tuppadere, literally ghee-tax, of the Karnataka inscriptions. This seems to have been the relic in the form of a cash payment in lieu of the supply of ghee to meet the daily requirements of the royal palace, a practice of which the Tamil epic Silappadikāram preserves a clear memory.

The parihāras were summed up in theory as 18 in number, but varied in practice with time and place. They give us some idea of the numerous levies and imposts to which the people were subjected at the hands of government, and so far to confirm the impression recorded by Arab writers of the ninth and tenth centuries that the people of India were heavily taxed and that their monarchs had their treasuries full.

16 Surat plates of Vyāghrasena, EI, XI, pp. 219 ff.
17 Kudigere plates of Kadamba Māndhātrivarman, EI, VI, pp. 12-16.
18 Minakshi op. cit., Ch. V. All these particulars figure in Vākāṭaka inscriptions also, Fleet CII, III, 55 and 56, and Bāsim plates, EI, XXVI.
To complete the picture of the system of taxes and levies we must note that besides the central government there were other agencies which claimed and exercised the right to levy taxes and imposts. In such cases the imposts were usually levied with the consent of the parties involved, and were thus voluntary in character. An inscription of A.D. 918 from Daṇḍapura\textsuperscript{19} records that the people of that place resolved upon the following levies in order to maintain in good repair a big irrigation tank in that place. The levies were: three drāmmas on each Brahmin marriage, two on each upanayana, one on each Śūdra marriage, and one pāṇa on every occasion of a prāyāschītta. Numerous instances of such voluntary levies by particular sections, guilds or merchants, caste organisations, and so on, for serving more or less limited purposes may be gathered from the inscriptions of almost every dynasty.

4. Central Administration

We may now turn to the machinery of royal administration from the centre. Above the grāma was the administrative division called āhāra, rāṣṭra, nāḍu, kottam or vishaya at different times and places. The rāṣṭra and vishaya are sometimes distinguished as two categories, one being a larger division than the other. Likewise, the valanāḍu and maṇḍalam appear as larger divisions comprising a number of nāḍus in Tamil inscriptions. There was no uniformity in the size of these administrative divisions. It was often determined by accidents of history. When, for instance we hear of Bāṇarāja-vishaya in a Chālukya inscription of the Bādāmi period,\textsuperscript{20} we see at once that a principality, once ruled in independence by the Bāṇas and now subject to the Chālukyan empire, was constituted into one of its vishayas.

Just as in the grāma, so in the larger division also, there was an assembly of elders, often mentioned in the inscriptions, although little information is forthcoming on its exact constitution or functions. There is mention, for instance, of the vishaya-mahattaras of Gudnadavi-dī-vishaya in a Sālankīyana grant of the second half of the fifth century A.D.\textsuperscript{21} In a Pallava inscription from the Nellore district the nāṭṭar figure together with the āvar and others as the executors of a royal order.\textsuperscript{22} As in the grāma, so in this larger division, there was a

\textsuperscript{19} IA XII, p. 223.
\textsuperscript{20} SII, IX, pt. I, no. 46.
\textsuperscript{21} Polamūru grant of Mādhavavarman I.
\textsuperscript{22} Nellore Inscriptions, p. 429.
chief executive official variously described as vāpata as in Brāhatphalāyana and early Pallava charters, deśādhipati in Śālankāyana grants, deśalhojaka in a Kadamba grant,23 and naṭṭukkon in Tamil inscriptions.24 It seems probable that the mahātalavara of the Ikshvāku inscriptions and the rāṣṭrakūṭa of later inscriptions from Western Deccan were also district officials with similar status.

The designations of several other classes of officials occur in the inscriptions, with very little indication, however, of the exact nature of their duties. In the Ikshvāku inscriptions we come across the mahāsenapati, mahādaṇḍanāyaka and koushāgarika, which may be rendered respectively as Commander-in-chief, Chief Judge, and Treasurer. These high offices were sometimes held in combination. Thus we hear of a mahātalavara who was also a mahādaṇḍanāyaka and who was entrusted with the task of preparing the draft of a grant in proper form, a task which we find entrusted in other charters to a rahasyaadhikrita, usually translated as private secretary (Polamūra grant) or to mahāsāndhindigranika as in the Eastern Ganga and Bāda-m ḍalaṇḍa grants.25 Śālankāyana grants mention ayuktakas, vattabhās, and rājapurushas; ayukta like vāpata simply means an appointed person and vattabha is equated with adhyakṣa in the lexicon of Hēmachandra. Rājapurushas recall the purushas of the Aśoka inscriptions, a class of officials who stood in close personal relation to the ruling king, interpreted his mind to officials in the provinces, and reported on those officials and their work to the king; but it is doubtful if in the smaller kingdoms of the Deccan and South India there was much scope for these officials to exercise the same class of duties. We also hear of the ājñapti or executor of a grant, but this is no separate category of official, because usually any officer near at hand is nominated executor. The Hiraḥadagali plates give an unusually long list of officials. At the head of the list are placed rājakumāras, princes of blood royal, showing that the kingdom was held in a sort of commission by the male members of the royal family, the junior members and collaterals holding responsible offices in the kingdom under the reigning monarch. The general prevalence of this system is well attested by literature and inscriptions. It was an advantage when there was unity in the royal family, but when differences arose, the arrangement made easy the lapse into civil war and disruption.

23 Illiresakuna grant of Mrīgeśavarman.
24 Tīruchendur inscription of Vāraṇa-Mahārāja, EI, XXI, p. 109, ll. 6 to 7.
25 Kondamudi Pl. EI, VI, p. 315. This was also the case with many dynasties in North India. See below § B.
Reference may be made, for example, to the condition of the Chālukya empire of Badānī in the interval between the death of Pulakesin II and the accession of Vikramāditya (above, pp. 423-27). After the rājakumāras comes the senāpati; then a group of three names rattihika, maṭabika and desadikata. Maḍambha is a territorial division according to certain Jaina works, so that these three classes of officials were the executive heads respectively of the rāṣṭra, maḍambha, and desa. Next is mentioned the gāmabhojaka, the head of the village, of whom enough has been said already. Next comes a group of three names, vallava, govvallava and amachcha, terms by no means easy to explain but probably bearing on revenue administration. Lastly are mentioned groups of officers concerned with the maintenance of peace and securing safety of life and property. They are arakkhadhitaka (officer in charge of protection), gumika, tuitika, and neyika, all obscure terms. This list does not seem to be exhaustive, as it is followed by the phrase annutichia, 'and others besides'. The same record mentions two other types of officials—sañcharantaka and bhadamanusha—very plausibly rendered into bailiff and constabulary, whose duty it was to enforce the execution of the orders of the government and the decrees of law courts. The sañcharantakas are called sasanasañcharins, i.e., promulgators or royal commands in the Sanskrit charters of the Pallavas. Later Pallava charters mention yet other officials such as koṣāḍhyksha, superintendent of the treasury, māṇikkappan-dāram-kuppan, the guard of the treasury of jewels who probably functioned under the koṣāḍhyksha. We also hear of the Nīlakkalattar and adhikārar, officers of the revenue department who had duties relating to the survey and assessment of cultivated lands. Lastly, there were the vāyilkelpar, that is hearers of royal orders, a term which becomes refined in Chola inscriptions into tiruvāyikkelvi, i.e., hearing (the utterances of) the sacred mouth—that is the king. These terms remind one naturally of their Sanskrit counterpart which occurs in Chālukya and Rāṣṭrakūṭa inscriptions, namely rājaśrāvitaṁ. The Sanskrit term, however, is double-edged. It may mean that a matter was reported to the king for his approval, a procedure implied by the terms viñapti and vinappam of other inscriptions, and it may also mean orders uttered by the king. In the Kannaḍa inscriptions the term is found used in both these meanings; and the system of the king issuing oral order usually recorded and put into shape for official action by the private secretary in attendance, rahasyādhikrīta, was ancient and universal in India. In striking contrast to this elaborate machinery is the simple formula of the early Gaṅga grants which only speak of a body of well-appointed and loyal servants—suvibhak-
ta-bhaktabhrityajanena—betokening a simple machinery of government and the personal touch of the monarch with the details of day-to-day administration.

In addition to village courts and caste and guild pañchāyats for the settlement of disputes, there was a series of law courts maintained by the central government for the administration of justice; and these were called adhikaranas or dharmāsanas. Adhikaranadaṇḍam, fine levied in a court of law, occurs among the parihāras enumerated in the Kaśākuḍi plates. These dharmāsanas were presided over by state officials who were assisted by advisers learned in the law, the dharmāsanabhaṭṭas as they were called. The rollicking farce, Mattavilāsa, of the Pallava king Mahendravarma I, contains a scene which clearly suggests that the courts were not free from corruption. In the absence of other evidence ordeals (divya) were resorted to; the Vishnukundin Mahendravarma I was reputed to be an expert in the conduct of ordeals of various kinds.

Of the existence of a regularly constituted council of minister to assist the king in the day to day administration, we have no clear proof from the inscriptions. There is mention, however, of the mantri-maṇḍala, group of ministers, taking part in the coronation of Nandivarman Pallavamalla. It is well known that all manuals of polity laid stress on the need for such a council but we cannot judge how far practice conformed to theory in our period.

5. The King

At the head of the State was the king, who was the fountain of honour, Chief Judge, and leader of the armed forces. The early Ikshvakus like Vaiśishṭhiputra Chāntamula performed Vedic sacrifices such as Agnihotra, Agniṣṭoma, Vājapeya and Aśvamedha. But later monarchs turned to Buddhism, and there was need for a reaction in favour of Vedic religion which was started by the later dynasties, the Pallavas being most prominent among them. They described themselves as ‘ever engaged in uplifting Dharma submerged in evils of the age of Kali’, and the kings of these dynasties were proud of calling themselves dharma-mahārājādhirājas. Though the kings favoured specially the particular religious creed which they professed, they never attempted to impose it on all their subjects; rather they often

26 Minakshi, op. cit., p. 58.
27 Polamīru Grant, no. 7 of ARE, 1914.
28 SII, IV, no. 135, Sec. I. 1. L.
patronised, as a matter of policy, all other creeds as occasion demanded. After a political revolution involving a change of dynasty, social and economic stability was often ensured by express proclamations that all pre-existing rights of property, charitable foundations, and so on, would be respected by the new rulers.

Succession to the throne was usually hereditary in the eldest male line, and care was taken to educate princes according to the best standards of the time in literature, law, and the martial arts, and to train them in administrative positions suited to their capacities and tastes. The princesses often attained proficiency in the fine arts, particularly painting, music and the dance. During the minority of Pulakesin II, his uncle Maṅgaleśa acted as regent; but when he planned to keep Pulakesin II permanently out of his rights and pass the throne to his own son, public sentiment strongly opposed the move and supported Pulakesin, who waged war against Maṅgaleśa, defeated and killed him in battle, and took possession of the throne that rightfully belonged to him. Pulakesin’s reign and life came to a sudden end in consequence of a Pallava invasion in A.D. 642; then all was confusion, and the sons of Pulakesin each prepared to make himself independent ruler over the territory that was under his charge; but one of them, Vikramāditya I, saw the folly of the course, and succeeded in rolling back the tide of foreign invasion, checking the disruptive designs of his brothers, maintaining the unity of the empire, and making himself emperor; and he was not the eldest among the sons of Pulakesin (above, pp. 426-27). At the beginning of the eighth century, there was no heir to the Pallava throne in the direct male line after the death of Parameśvaravarman II and there was a crisis leading to a regular search for a suitable candidate from the collateral branches of the family. The ministers, the members of the ghatikā of the capital city, and the mūlaprakṛiti are said to have gone to Hiranyavarman and secured his young son for the place, brought him to the capital, on an elephant, and crowned him king as Nandivarman II (above, pp. 330-31). One of the royal insignia which the deputation to Hiranyavarman carried with them was a diadem of the shape of an elephant’s scalp. This is a unique instance in the South of a choice of ruler on the initiative of highest officers of the State and the élite of society. The history of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and of the Eastern Chālukyas was marked by a large number of disputed successions and civil wars; in the case of the latter this feature was

29 SII. IV, no. 135, Sec. F.
29a Cf. the cases of Cōpāla and Yaśaskara (p. 547).
often accentuated, if not actually promoted, by the interference of the Kshārakūṭas in the affairs of Vēṇī with a view to their own aggrandisement. The Kshārakūṭa king Dhruva chose the ablest of his sons, Govinda III, for succession after him, and made him yuvarāja. Stambha, the eldest son of Dhruva, did not like this, and was inclined to make trouble. Dhruva then abdicated and crowned Govinda as emperor and sought thereby to avert the impending civil war. Peace was, however, maintained only till the death of Dhruva. Then the war came and Stambha had the support of many of the feudatories of the empire, but Govinda held his own, treated his defeated elder brother with consideration, and justified the choice of his father.

When there was actually no yuvarāja, the place (yuvarājappada) was sometimes bestowed on high officials as a mark of favour, as is seen from Pallava, Chaukya and Kshārakūṭa inscriptions.

Each royal family had its own banner (dhvaja) and seal (tāṇīchhāna) which were mentioned prominently in their inscriptions. The royal palace was generally maintained in great state, and a Kshārakūṭa inscription mentions the exhibition of captive elephants and horses at the palace gate. Sometimes the queens occupied a position of almost equal importance with the king; Silabhaṭṭarikā, the queen of Dhruva, bore the titles Paramesvarī and Paramabhaṭṭarikā, made grants of land at her own will, and issued her own orders to the executive officers of the government.

In monarchical states much depended on the personal qualities of the monarch, and there was no guarantee that hereditary succession would ensure a regular supply of the requisite ability. But there were several modifying factors. All the members of the royal family had generally a share in the administration and opportunities of influencing the policy of the king; then there was the influence of the high officials of State, some of whom perhaps held their offices in heredity and commanded the respect of the monarch by the distinction of their services to the State, their ability and character. The presence of numerous feudatory monarchs, scions of houses that had once ruled independent kingdoms and were now under the suzerainty of the ruling emperor, and the domination of social life by the large numbers of territorial and corporate organisations spoken of above, went far to mitigate the civil consequences of the rule of

30 Sañjan plates, EI, XVIII, p. 235.
31 EI, XXII, p. 98.
incapable or misguided sovereigns. Rāṣṭrakūṭa Govinda IV, who proved unworthy of the throne, was actually dethroned by his subjects who invited his uncle Amoghavarsha III to accept the throne and save the honour of the royal family (A.D. 935).

6. Organisation of Defence

Before concluding this survey of polity in the South, a word must be said on the organisation of defence. Inscriptions bear witness to not infrequent disturbances of peace resulting from raids for cattle-lifting and local quarrels among petty chieftains; on such occasions, every adult male in the affected area was ready to do his bit with such weapons as he had at his disposal, and there are several instances on record of men having laid down their lives in defence of the cattle of the village, the sanctity of its homes, and the honour of its women. We have little information on the way the army was recruited, trained and maintained; in reality each chieftain had his own troops and had to send contingents to the central army in times of war. Infantry was the main strength of the army, but cavalry and elephant corps are also frequently alluded to. Hiuan Tsang states that Chālukyan soldiers, who led the van of the army in battle, went into conflict intoxicated, and that their war-elephants were also made drunk before an engagement. Horses were imported from Arabia, and Arab Muslims were settled in different ports and cities in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire where they were permitted to practise their own religion and live under their own laws. The Chālukyas of Bādami maintained a naval force which conducted operations on the west coast against Revatīdvipa (Goa) and Puri (on the Elephanta island), and perhaps guarded the coast against pirates. The Pallavas had a navy too, and maintained widespread maritime contacts with the colonies in the East and with China. The Cholas also maintained a naval force which distinguished itself greatly in the century after our period. There was a body of troops who were on oath to defend the king with their lives—a bond which was initiated by the special ceremony of a common meal at the accession of the monarch. These were known as sahavāsīs (those who live together) in Kāmarattaka, and veḷaiḷkkārrar (emergency men) in the Tamil country. The institution is especially noticed by early Arab writers like Abu Zayd. The garaḍas of the Hoysala and the tennavan-āpattudavigal (helpers of the Pāṇḍya in danger) of later Pāṇḍya inscriptions were obviously its continuations in more recent times.
B. NORTH INDIA

1. The Imperial Guptas

In the third century A.D., after the downfall of the Kushāṇa empire, Northern India entered upon one of those periods of political disorganisation that have always preceded the rise of empires. From the Kushāṇa territory in the north-west and the Kshatrapa dominion in Kāthiāwār to Samataṭa and Kāmarūpa, and from the Himalayas to the Narmadā, the country was split up into a large number of states, of which those of the Bhāraśivas in the Upper Gaṇgetic basin and the Lichchhavis lower down the valley, were perhaps the most important. It was the crowning glory of the first three Emperors of the Gupta dynasty to create out of this chaos a new political system based upon the organisation of most of the conquered territory under a central government and the establishment of a protectorate over the rest.

The pattern of the Gupta imperial administration was set by the dynasties, indigenous and foreign, that had preceded it in the North as well as in the South. But the Guptas added a fuller and richer content to the whole. At the head of the government stood, as in Maurya and Sātavāhana times, the Emperor. The imperial Guptas, however, discarding the modest title of rājan which had contented the older dynasties, assumed the high-sounding style brought into vogue by the foreign (Indo-Greek, Saka, Parthian and Kushāṇa) rulers. The most characteristic of such titles was mahārajādhirāja adopted by the Guptas from Chandra-gupta I onwards alike in their inscriptions, coin-legends and seals.1 Variants of this imperial title were rājādhirāja,2 parama-rājādhirāja,3 rājādhirājarṣhi4 and rāja-rājādhirāja5. Corresponding to the above we have the title mahādevī applied to the Chief Queen of the imperial Guptas, no doubt, after the precedent set by the Ikshvāku kings of the Telegu country in the third century A.D.6

1 The title mahārajā- rājādhirāja, applied to Samudra-gupta and Chandra-gupta II. In the Mathurā Pillar ins. of G.E. 61 (EI, XXI, pp. 8 ff.) is the exact Sanskrit equivalent of the Pāraśākrit designation of the Parthian Azes I and Gondophares and the Kushāṇa Kanishka I on their cointypes as well as that of the Kushāṇa Kanishka I, Vāsishka and Kanishka II in their inscriptions.
2 See the legend on Samudra-gupta’s Aśvamedha coins (CGD, p. CXV).
3 Cf. the legend on Kumāra-Gupta I’s Archer coins (CGD, p. CXV).
4 Ins. no. 10.
5 Ins. no. 28.
6 Cf. EI, XX, no. 24.
In contrast with the simple style of *mahārāja*, the lofty title of *mahārājādhirāja* undoubtedly helped to emphasise the unique position held by the paramount ruler over and above the multitude of ordinary kings, a change of style noticeable in the genealogical lists of the Guptas from Chandra-gupta I onwards. To this the great Guptas added other epithets claiming for themselves superhuman qualities which raised them almost to the level of the gods. Of Samudra-gupta we are told by his panegyrist that ‘he was the incomprehensible spirit that was the cause of production of good and destruction of evil,’ that ‘he was equal to the gods Dhanada, Varuṇa, Indra, and Antaka,’ that ‘he had no antagonist of equal power in the world,’ that ‘he was a mortal only in celebrating the rites of the observances of mankind, but otherwise a god dwelling on the earth’ (no. 3). In later genealogical accounts some of the above epithets along with others from the stock description of Samudra-gupta, thus making the real founder of Gupta imperial greatness an almost legendary hero. Such are the phrases ‘exterminator of all kings’ ‘whose fame was tasted by the waters of the four oceans’, ‘who was the battle-axe of the god Kṛitānta.’ The later genealogists habitually describe Chandra-gupta II as having no antagonist equal to himself (*svayam-apratirathah*). In the records of North Bengal ranging from G. E. 113 to 224, the Emperors are given the trilogy of titles (*parama-daiivata paramabhāttraka mahārājādhirāja*) which, with the slight change of *parama-daiivata* into *paramaśvāra*, became the distinctive designation of paramount rulers in later times. With the object of claiming superhuman excellence for them, the coin-legends of the Emperors from Samudra-gupta down to Skanda-gupta and Budha-gupta attribute to them the acquisition of heaven by good deeds following their conquest of the earth.

The Gupta Emperors no doubt exercised the supreme executive and judicial authority traditionally belonging to ancient Indian royalty from Vedic times onwards. But on this point our records are almost completely silent. We have, on the other hand, frequent references to the Emperor’s possession of the supreme command in war.

It is characteristic of the Imperial Guptas that while taking high credit for their successful wars and conquests, they prided themselves also on their benevolence towards the needy and the afflicted, as well as their success in elevating the moral and material standards of their subjects. Of Samudra-gupta, his panegyrist says that he dedicated himself to the task of relieving the distress of the miserable, the poor, the helpless and the afflicted, and again, that ‘he was the
glorified personification of kindness to mankind' (samiddho-vigraha-vān lokānugraḥasya). More emphatic is the tribute paid to the administration of Skanda-gupta by his Governor of Surāśṭra. There we read that ‘while he, the king, is reigning, verily no man among his subjects falls away from religion (and) there is no one who is distressed, (or) in poverty, (or) in misery, (or) avaricious, (or) who, worthy of punishment, is overmuch put to torture.' That these claims were not without a substratum of truth, we shall presently have occasion to prove from independent evidences.

Next in rank to the Emperor stood, as in the age of the Tātakas and the Arthaśāstra the Crown-prince (yuvarāja). The rule of succession in the Gupta Empire was hereditary descent in the male line, such as can be traced back to Vedic times. But the Emperor frequently exercised the right of selecting his heir apparent. The legend śrī-yuvarāja-bhattāraka-balādhikaranasya occurring in an inscribed clay-seal from Basarh, as interpreted below, would show that the Crown-prince was in command of a regularly constituted force requiring a special office for its supervision. Similarly the legend śrī-yuvarāja-pādiya-kumārāmāya-ādhikaranasya occurring on other seals would suggest that the Crown-prince had his own office-staff belonging to the order of kumārāmāya.

The Imperial Guptas continued the traditional machinery of bureaucratic government. Foremost of the high officers of state appears to have been the mantri (High Minister), whose office was sometimes hereditary (ins. no. 18). We have next to mention the group of high imperial officers with the prefix mahān attached to their titles, for which the precedent was supplied to the Guptas by their predecessors. Such was the mahāhalādhikrita corresponding probably to the mahāsenāpati of the Sātavāhanas. In the inscription no. 18 Pṛthvīvishena is described as the mantri and afterwards the mahāhalādikrita of Kumāra-gupta I, thus suggesting that these officers were respectively the heads of the civil and military administration of the Imperial Guptas. The mahāhalādikrita controlled a staff of subordinate officers like the mahāśvapati (Chief Officer of Cavalry).

7 CII, III, no. 1 line 26. The reading and translations of Fleet are defective.
9 For references see below. For criticism of a different interpretation of the above phrases by R. D. Banerji. (AIG, pp. 73-4), see BIII, pp. 184 ff. The explanation here given differs slightly from that presented in the last-named work,
10 EI, VIII, pp. 67, 89 and XIV, pp. 158 ff.
mahāpilupati (Chief Officer in charge of Elephants). bhaṭāsvapati (Chief Officer of the Regular Cavalry) and aśvapati (cavalry officer), known from other sources as belonging to this period. To the same category as the mahābalādhikrīta belong the mahādandanāyaka whose office may be traced back to the Kushāna and Ikshvāku times. The mahādandanāyaka was doubtless the controlling authority over the mere dandanāyakas, also traceable to this period. Though the term may stand equally well for the office of 'Chief Judge' or 'Chief General,' it seems preferable to take mahādandanāyaka in the present context in the former sense, since the mahābalādhikrīta is mentioned side by side as a distinct office. To the category of high imperial officers belongs also the mahā-pratīhāra (v. l., manā-pratīhāra lit. 'Chief Door-keeper,' perhaps 'Chief of the Palace-Guards') who doubtless controlled the pratīhāras. Another officer, now heard of for the first time but destined to have a long career, was the sāndhivigrhaṇika, the 'Minister in charge of Peace and War,' or more generally, 'the Minister of Foreign Affairs.'

Among other officers of the Gupta administration may be mentioned the amātusas (a generic designation for officials) who are known not only to the Arthasastra and Āśātra tradition but also to the inscriptions of the pre-Gupta period. The Guptas, it seems, created a special order (or rank) out of this class, which was known by the title kṣmārāmātus. To this exalted order belonged not only high imperial officers like the mahādandanāyaka Harishena of the Allahabad Pillar inscription (no. 3) and the mantris Sikherasvāmin and Prithivishenā (no. 18), but also officers in charge of districts like Vetravarman (nos. 20-21) and Kulavridhi (no. 22) to be noticed below. The seals of the adhikaranās of the kumārāmātus that have been recovered


12 For names of individual mahādandanāyakas under the Imperial Guptas, see ins, no. 3 lines 32-33. Basarh Seal no. 17. Bhita Seal nos. 32 and 43-44. For a series of seals bearing the names of individual dandanāyakas of the Gupta period, see Bhita seals nos. 44-51.

13 For some discussion about the significance of this term. see BIH, pp. 177-79. The explanation given here differs from that suggested in the last-named work.

14 For the names of mahā-pratīhāras of the Imperial Gupta period. Cf. Basarh Seals nos. 16 and 18.

15 Ins. no. 3, line 32.

16 Bhita Seal no. 40; Basarh Seal no. 210 in Spooner’s list.

17 The significance of this term is discussed in BIH, pp. 180-87.
from Bhitā and Basarh, bear the characteristic crest of the goddess Lakshmi with or without attendants. Another generic class of officials known to the Guptas was that of āyuktas (or āyuktakas), which may be traced back to the yutas of Aśokan inscriptions and yuktas of the Arthaśāstra, the Epics and the Manu-saṁhitā. In the Allahabad Pillar inscription we find āyuktapurushas engaged in the pleasing task of restoring the wealth of various kings that had been conquered by Samudra-gupta. This would suggest that the āyuktas, like the nuktas of the Arthaśāstra and the Manu-Saṁhitā, were concerned with revenue administration. On the other hand, we find an āyuktaka in charge of the district of Koṭivarsha and several āyuktakas stationed at Pundravardhana during the reign of Budha-gupta.

We can trace to some extent the policy of the Imperial Guptas regarding the organisation of the Chief Officers of State. The Guptas, to begin with, do not seem to have favoured the creation of an exclusive official class of the type suggested in Megasthenes’ description of the caste of councillors and assessors in Chandragupta Maurva’s time. The mahādandaṇāyaka Dhruvabhūti, father of mahādandaṇāyaka Harishena of the Allahabad Pillar inscription is described as khādyatapākika which may mean, as has been suggested, ‘the superintendent of the royal kitchen.’ The mantri-kumārāmātya Sikharasvāmin of the Karamdanda inscription (no. 18) came from a Brāhmaṇa lineage. The mahārāja Mātrivishnu of the time of Budha-gupta who was probably a vishayapatī under the provincial governor Suraśmicandra, mentions three pious Brāhmaṇas as his ancestors in the male line (no. 39). While selecting their high officials from Brāhmaṇas and other classes, the Guptas did not neglect the claims of hereditary descent. Reference has been made above to the mahādandaṇāyaka Harishena (no. 3) and mantri-kumārāmātya Prithivishena (no. 18). Vīrasena, belonging to the ministry of foreign affairs, claims to have acquired his position by hereditary descent (anvaya-prāpta-sāchivyah, no. 10). The Guptas evidently felt themselves strong enough to permit the combination of high offices in the same hands. Harishena of the Allahabad Pillar inscription held the offices of sāndhivīṣṭha, kumārāmātya and danḍanāyaka. The mahārāja māha-sāmetha Vijayasena, who was a feudatory of the Emperor Vainvagupta, was also mahāpratihāra, māhanilupati, pāñchādhikaranoparika, pāñṭhuparika and purapaloparika (i.e., Chief of the Palace-guards Chief Officer in-charge of elephants, as well as the uparika in-charge of the

18 No. 3, line 26.
19 Cf. ins. nos. 37. 40. Probably the prāyuktaka of Basarh seal no. 19 in Bloch’s list belongs to the same category.
five offices, of patis(?) and of City Superintendents). The Guptas, evidently, were not averse (as the example of Prithivishena shows) to the transfer of civil officers to the military branch. Whether they had Boards of magistrates such as were known to Chandragupta Maurya's administration it is not possible to say with certainty. But we hear of two mahādaṇḍānakas, viz., Harisheṇa and Tilabhaṭṭaka functioning simultaneously in the time of Samudra-gupta (no. 3).

We may pause here to notice a striking achievement of the Imperial Guptas, viz., their organisation of permanent offices at the central and local headquarters, for which no doubt good precedents existed in the past. Confining ourselves in the first place to the former head, we find that the inscribed clay-seals from Basarh, while largely belonging to the provincial administration, refer also to some administrative offices at the Imperial Secretariat. The legend śrī-paramabhāṭṭaraka-pādiya-kumārāṇāy-ādhikaranasya points directly to the office of the kumārāṇāy attached to the personal staff of the Emperor. With this may be compared the above-quoted legend yuvarāja-pādiya kumārāṇāy-ādhikaranasya and the like, referring to the office of the kumārāṇāy on the Crown-prince's staff, which may have been sometimes fixed at the imperial capital. If the other offices signified by the legends śrī-rajabhāndāgar-ādhikarana, dandapāṣā-dhikaraṇa and dharmimśan-ādhikarana were to be located at the provincial (or district) headquarters, we might still suppose their counterparts to have existed at the imperial capitals.

In the branch of provincial government it will be convenient for us to begin with the administration of Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti, of which we have fuller knowledge than of any other province of the Gupta Empire. We know from a series of inscriptions (nos. 20–21, 38, 40) that have been discovered in North Bengal, that this province was ruled successively by Chirātadatta, Brahmadatta and Jayadatta with the title of uparika. But later (no. 48) it was probably filled by a prince of the blood royal, called by his official designation māhārāja-putra devabhāṭṭaraka. This example, to which others will be added shortly, is reminiscent of the prince-viceroyes of the Maurya administration. It is interesting to observe that both Brahmadatta and Jayadatta, as well as the māhārāja-putra, adopted the honorific designation of māhārāja, which may have been a reward for loyalty to the Emperor, or a token of semi-independence.

For administrative purposes Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti was divided into a number of districts normally called vishayas, but some times (no. 37) designated as vithi, which were subdivided into mandalas. The most frequently mentioned vishaya is Koṭivarsha which was
ruled at different times by a kumārāmātya (nos. 20-21), an āyuktaka (no. 40) and a vishayapati (no. 48). From other records we learn that the unnamed district of which Pañchanagarī was the centre, was ruled by a kumārāmātya, while the metropolitan district, of which Pundravardhana was the capital, was in charge of āyuktakas (no. 37). It is characteristic of the policy of administrative decentralisation followed by the Guptas that the district officer is habitually said to be nominated by the provincial governor, though the statement is naturally omitted where there is no mention of either of these officers (nos. 22, 37).

We have next to mention what looks like a bold experiment of the Imperial Guptas, viz., the association of popular representatives with the local government. We find in several records, mentioned above, that the district officer in charge of Koṭīvarsha, along with the Municipal Board (adhishtanādhikarana), transacted the essential business in connection with certain sales of government lands. The seal of the Municipal Board of Koṭīvarsha has been preserved in one case (no. 48). This Board consisted principally of four members, viz., the nagara-śreshṭhī, (Guild President), the sārthavāna (Chief Merchant), the prathama-kulika (Chief Artisan), and the prathama-kīṃastha (Chief Scribe).20 In the unnamed district centering around Pañchanagarī a transaction of the same type was carried out by the kumārāmātya and the vishay-ūdhikarana (no. 22), while in the metropolitan district it was effected by the āyuktakas and the Municipal Board (adhishtthanādhikarana), which had the nagara-śreshṭhī as its leading member (no. 37). We have no knowledge of the method of selection of members of the Municipal Board. We may however infer from references in the Basarh seals to the collective as well as separate guilds (nigamas) of śreshṭhī, sārthavāha and kulikas, that similar associations existed in the Koṭīvarsha and other districts of North Bengal, and that the members of the Municipal Board, other than the leading scribe, were the representatives (perhaps even the Presidents) of these associations.

In other cases of land-sale transactions belonging to this province, the district officer and the Municipal board are left out of account altogether, and the task is entrusted to village officials and residents. In the Khadapara (or Khatopara) district such a transaction was effected by the householders (kutumbins), the Brāhmanas and the ashtakul-ūdhikarana of the village (no. 15). A transaction of the same kind was carried out in the district around Palāsāvīndaka by the ashtakul-ūdhikarana headed by the village elders (mahattaras), the village

20 We give what appears to be the most probable explanation of the above terms, but other meanings have also been suggested.
headman (grāmika) and the house-holders (kuṭumbins) (no. 38). The precise significance of ashtakul-ādhikaraṇa is unknown, but it may be taken generally to stand for a rural board. We have no knowledge of the composition of this board, but the presence of village elders, the householders and so forth undoubtedly points to that association of the popular element with the local administration which we have just mentioned to be an achievement of the imperial Guptas.

The procedure of disposal of the State lands described in these records is sufficiently complex. The intending purchaser has first of all to apply more or less in a prescribed form stating the quantity and nature of land desired, the object for which it is wanted, and the applicant's willingness to pay the price at the standard rate prevailing in the locality. The district officer and the ādhikaraṇa (or equivalent authority) refer the application to one or more pustapālas (record-keepers) who submit their report after considering the correctness of the statement about the standard rate, the loss or gain to the Emperor and so forth. On their recommendation the receiving authority accepts the sale price and transfers the plot, informing the local people and demarcating the land. It will be observed that the records refer only to one class of governmental transactions, viz., that relating to the sale of State lands. It is permissible to think that the services of the district officer and the municipal board (or those of the local authorities and the resident villagers) were utilised for other branches of State business as well. Otherwise it would be difficult to account for the presence of representatives of trade and industry in connection with transactions relating exclusively to transfers of land. We may also suppose that an equally complex procedure was in vogue for the transaction of other branches of governmental work than the disposal of State lands.

The administration of Tīrā-bhukti under the Imperial Guptas, on which some light is thrown by the discovery of a number of inscribed clay-seals and sealings at Basarh (the site of ancient Vaiśāli), was of the same general type as that of Pundravarsha-bhukti. But there were some distinctive features. Not only was there an uparika (governor) in charge of the province, but he had his own office commemorated in the seal-legend Tīrā-bhukty-uparik-ādhikaraṇasya. Another officer having jurisdiction over the whole province was the vinaya-sthitisthāpaka whose office is commemorated in the legend vinayasthitī-sthāpaka-ādhikaraṇasya. If this officer's function has been correctly defined as that of Censor of Morals, he would repre-

21 For description of Basarh seals and sealings by T. Bloch and D. B. Spooner, see ASIAR, 1903-04, pp. 81 ff., and 1913-14, pp. 98 ff. respectively.
sent the Asokan Dharma-mahāmātrasya, who were charged with censorial as well as administrative and judicial duties. Among other Basarh seals those bearing the specific legends Tīra-kumārāmātya-ādhikaranāsya and Vaiśālī-ādhisīthīṇ-ādhikaranāsya may refer respectively to the District Board at Tīra in charge of the kumārāmātya and the Municipal Board at Vaiśālī. We have unfortunately no knowledge of the composition of these boards. The Basarh seals, however, speak of collective as well as separate guilds of śreshṭhī, sārthavāhas and kulikas, while mentioning also an individual chief kulika. We have, moreover, the analogy of the adhisīthīṇ-ādhikarana of Tīrabhukti as well as of these representing their common (or separate) guilds. Another seal-legend from Basarh refers to the adhikarana of the kumārāmātya. In the absence of other indications it is not possible to fix its precise character. Some traces of the provincial government prevailing in Magadha in Gupta times is obtained from the mutilated Bihar Pillar inscription (no. 42). It has preserved the names uparika and kumārāmātya. Of these the former (as is evident from the example of Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti, given above), was no doubt the provincial governor, while the latter in the present context would seem to represent the district officer. This would bring the administration of Magadha into line with that of other provinces of the Gupta Empire.

The administration of the Kausāmbī tract, so far as it can be made out from the inscribed clay-seals discovered by Marshall on the ancient site of Bhita,22 appears to have been of the same type as those described above. We have in the first place the seal-legend referring to the adhikarana of the Sāmaharsha district. Other districts of this region may have had similar adhikaranas (or Boards). Reference is made in other legends to the adhikarana of the kumārāmātya on the staff of the mahāśvapati-mahā-dandaṇāyaka Vishnurakshita and the adhikarana of the āyuktaka apparently connected with the mahārāja Śaṅkarasimha.

With politic generosity, and in accordance with the best traditions of imperial policy prescribed in the text-books, the Imperial Guptas left a number of states (individual monarchies as well as saṅghas) in the enjoyment of subordinate independence as has already been noted (pp. 43 ff). The status of the feudatories probably varied according to their relative strength in comparison with the paramount power. We may well believe that under the vigorous rule of Samudra-gupta, the pratyantaraṇipati as well as various tribes had no other choice than to pay all kinds of tribute to the Emperor, to render him general

22 For Bhita Seals, cf. ASIAR, 1911-12, pp. 51 ff.
obedience and to attend his Court for performing homage. On the other hand, it is significant that, as noted above (pp. 83 ff), some feudatories, in a later period, issued land-grants without any reference to the Gupta Emperor. We have scanty knowledge of the internal constitution of the Gupta feudatory states. There are, however, good reasons to believe that some of the tribes at any rate had early adopted a monarchical constitution, e.g., the Sanakānikas (no. 6). On the other hand, the Yaudheyas, the famous republican tribe dating from Pāṇini's time, lived in the Gupta period under a constitution which allowed concentration of civil and military authority in the hands of a single chief. Of the other feudatories, we have reason to think that their administration was modelled on that of the paramount power. In the copper-plate inscriptions of the Parivṛājaka-mahārājas, reference is made to a hereditary family of ministers holding the offices of amāṭya, bhogīka, and mahāsāndhvī- grahika. The first and the third offices may be traced back to the Imperial Guptas, while the bhogīka, now found for the first time, probably means the possessor of an estate. Another officer was the mahābalādhikṛita who is mentioned in one particular inscription of these kings. The inscriptions of the Parivṛājakas (nos. 53, 58) contain a clause now found for the first time, but probably going back to the time of the Gupta Emperors, which seems to mark a new development of village administration. This is the phrase chora-varjām (or chora-droha-varjām), which we have elsewhere shown to mean that there was a system of village police maintained at the cost of the inhabitants, and that donees of pious grants were exempted from this tax.

We have some interesting glimpses of the tendencies and characteristics of the Imperial Gupta administration from the contemporary account of Fa-hien which has been discussed above (p. 62).

In the course of his account of the Middle Kingdom, Fa-hien significantly observes: 'The king's body-guards and attendants all have regular salaries.' In the same context we are told: 'Only those who cultivate the royal land have to pay a portion of the gain from it.' This proves, according to our explanation given elsewhere, that the most important item of Gupta revenue, viz., that derived from the agricultural land, was calculated at the traditional rate of a portion of the produce.

The result of the beneficent administration of the Imperial Guptas was revealed in the happy and prosperous condition of the people.

23a HRS, pp. 191-2.
under their rule. We have Fa-hien’s invaluable testimony to the
effect that the people of the Middle Kingdom were ‘numerous and
happy.’ Certain tracts of the empire enjoyed exceptional prosperity.
Such was the case with Sāṅkāśya of which Fa-hien says: ‘This coun-
try is very productive and the people are flourishing and happy be-
yond comparison.’ Such, above all, was the territory of Magadha of
which we are told: ‘The cities and towns of this country are the grea-
test of all in the Middle Kingdom. The inhabitants are rich and pro-
sperous.’

Fa-hien refers to the humanitarian character of the penal law of the
Guptas (above, p. 62). The same spirit was at work in other bran-
ches of the imperial administration as well. Reference has been made
above (p. 76) to the ancient Sudarśana Lake, which burst its embank-
ment, but it was repaired with a great masonry by Parnadatta, the
Governor of Surashtra and his son Chakrapālita, the local magis-
trate. The munificence of the imperial Guptas in the cause of learn-
ing and religion is proved by the foundation of a series of monasteries
at Nālandā.25 The religious policy of the Guptas was also very en-
lightened, and though they were for the most part devout Vaishnā-
vas, they allowed complete toleration to the followers of other faiths.

Interesting sidelights on Gupta administration are presented in
two famous Sanskrit plays, the Mṛichchhakatika and the Abhijñāna-
Sakuntalam that are generally ascribed to this period. In the Mṛich-
chhakatika we have animated descriptions of the activities of the
city police in connection with the movements of a political suspect.
We have also a vivid picture of a great criminal trial in Act IX of the
drama. From this we learn that the court-house was a separate build-
ing (adhikaraṇa-maṇḍapā) with seats for the judiciary and the litig-
ants. It had a full staff consisting of the judge (adhikarāṇika or adhi-
karaṇa-bhojaka) and his two assistants called śrēṣṭhi (Guild-Warden)
and kāyastha (clerk), not to speak of the beadle, the guardsman (rāja-
purusha) and the executioners (chaṇḍālas).26 The proceedings open
with a formal summons by the beadle at the Judge’s instance to the
people waiting outside to present their case. When the plaintiff has

24 FTL, pp. 42, 43, 52, 79.
26 In the same scene Chārudatta, while entering the court-house, refers figu-
ratively to its constituent factors. These are mantrins (probably meaning in the present
context, the judge and his two assistants), dūtas (probably meaning ‘beadles’), the
charas (spies), kāyasthas (‘scribes’), the elephants and horses (instruments for execu-
tion), and so forth.
stated his suit, the Judge summons through the beadle the material witnesses for examination, and after hearing them he forms his own judgment.\textsuperscript{27} In keeping with the formal character of the whole procedure, the Judge causes the material portions of the depositions of plaintiff and witness to be recorded in writing. There was, however, nothing to prevent an outsider from making his appearance and deposing to the facts of the case. It may also be remarked that both the śresṭhi and the kāyastha join with the Judge in interrogating the witnesses. At the end of the trial scene, the Judge pronounces the sentence of guilt on the hero Chārudatta. But he says that the Śrīti law prescribes banishment without confiscation of property, but not the death penalty, for a guilty Brāhmaṇa. The king, however, evidently exercising his superior prerogative, overrides the injunctions of the Śrītis and orders Chārudatta to be put to death by impalement.

Another vivid picture of police administration in the capital city is presented in Act V of Kālidāsa’s Abhijñāna-Sākuntalam. A fisherman found in possession of the king’s signet-ring is closely examined by the Nāgaraka-śyāla (‘Chief of City Police’) and two policemen (rakṣiṇau). The fisherman appears on the stage with his arms bound behind his back and is roundly assailed and abused in the course of the interrogations. When the police chief finds sufficient evidence of the fisherman’s innocence, he takes the case before the king, leaving the prisoner in the safe custody of the constables. Evidently the direct trial of serious crimes is held (as in the Jātaka times) to lie within the king’s competence. In the end the king, convinced of the fisherman’s innocence, orders him to be set free and pays him a handsome reward. The poor man, however, is constrained abjectly to thank the police chief and, what is more, to share his reward with the two constables—a telling reminder of the tremendous authority exercised by the police over the common folk, and the proverbial corruption of police in all ages in India.

In the above account the police chief is called rāśṭriya or nāgaraka while other officers are called dandaḍhāraka or dandaḍapālaka and invested with military titles like senāpati and balapati. This nomenclature as well as status is unknown to the records of the Gupta period which, as we shall see presently, are acquainted with police officers called dandaḍikas, dandaḍapāśikas and so forth, without any military designation attached to their office. The adhikaraṇa of the Mrjuchchha-

\textsuperscript{27} As the judge says of the case in question, it had a two-fold aspect: the investigation of allegations depending upon the plaintiff and defendant, and that of facts, upon himself.
kaṭika reminds us of the same term in the Gupta inscriptions and clay-seals, especially in including the two members śresṭhī and kāyastha in its composition. But otherwise there is no resemblance between the two bodies. In the former case the adhikarana is the High Court of Justice deciding serious crimes subject to the king’s prerogative of declaring the sentence. In the latter it is an administrative Board sharing with the district officer in the transaction of official business relating to the sale of government lands. The adhikarana of the Gupta times in Pundravardhana-bhūkti or the North Bengal province contained, in addition to the śresṭhī and the kāyastha, two members representing trade and industry, viz., the sārthavāha and prathamakulika. We may take it then, that the administration of police and justice sketched in the dramas belonged to the traditional system, while that reflected in the records of the Imperial Guptas was largely their own creation. The Guptas, in other words, introduced a new administrative machinery marked in some cases by an original official nomenclature and in others by the reconstitution of the old official bodies. What improvement was effected by the Imperial Guptas on the spirit of the old administration with its reliance on espionage and corporal punishment in criminal trials, has been noticed above (pp. 62-63).

2. Contemporary Dynasties

Among the dynasties contemporaneous with the Imperial Guptas, none was more remarkable than the illustrious house of the Vākāṭakas of Vidarbha (pp. 128 ff). Though they were allied by marriage successively with the two great northern royal houses of the Bhārāśivas and the Imperial Guptas, their administration had the closest affinity with that of the southern kings. Like the Pallava king Sivaskandavarman of the Hirahadagalli inscription, the Vākāṭaka kings of the Vatsagulma branch assumed the striking title of dharmamahārāja. Like the early Pallava kings, again, the Vākāṭakas recognised a conventional list of immunities belonging to brahmadeyas.28 The Vākāṭakas, however, attached greater importance to State authority than the early Pallavas. In the first place, they habitually declare the immunities in favour of brahmadeyas to have been approved by former kings. In one remarkable record, the king, while granting a village and adjoining lands to a group of one thousand Brāhmaṇas, expressly reserves to himself the right (almost unique of its kind) of revoking the grant if the donees were to commit certain specified

28 CII, III, pp. 236 ff; EI, XV, pp. 41 ff; XXVI, pp. 145 ff.
offences against the State as well as religion and morality. In the same inscription the donated lands are declared to have been measured by the royal measure (rājamāna)—a striking instance of application of the official standard of measurement to agricultural lands. The administrative machinery of the Vākāṭaka kings presents some striking features. The charters of the kings were normally written by the senāpāti, and in one instance only it is said to be written by a rājadhirātī. This last is a new official title and has been translated as ‘Chief Minister.’ It seems somewhat incongruous for the head of the military administration to be habitually associated with a purely civil work, viz., that of recording the pious grants of land by the king. It is, however, a type of work with which the mahāsāndhivigrahika was habitually connected and this connection can be traced to a record of the Parivrājaka mahārāja Hastin and henceforth becomes a commonplace of ancient Indian land-grants.

A record of Yaśodharman, also called Vishṇuvardhana (p. 94), throws an interesting sidelight on his provincial administration. We hear of a certain Abhayadatta, who as rājesthāniya (‘Viceroy’ in the present context) ruled the tract bounded by the (eastern) Vindhyas, the Pāriyātra (the western Vindhyas) and the ocean. He was served by his own ministers (nija-sachivas) in the administration of his many provinces (aneka-desas). Evidently the rājesthāniya was at liberty to choose his own ministers for the administration of the districts under his charge. How much the traditional practice of hereditary selection of officials was in vogue at this time is illustrated by the fact that not only is Abhayadatta said to be born in a family of officials, but he was succeeded in his office by his nephew.

The administration of Southern Bengal under Gopachandra and other rulers (pp. 200 ff) on which some light is thrown by their copper-plate inscriptions was of the same general type as that of Pundaravardhana-bhūkti under the Imperial Guptas. But there were some slight deviations. All the kings took the imperial title of mahārājādhirāja but not with the addition of paramadāivata and paramabhūttāraka, given

29 Channa ins. of Pravarasena II. (CII, III, pp. 236 ff). The qualifying clause is thus translated by Fleet: ‘And this condition of the charter should be maintained by the Brāhmaṇas and by (future) lords, viz., (the enjoyment of this grant is to belong to the Brāhmaṇas) for the same time as the moon and the sun, provided they commit no treason against the kingdom,... that they are not slayers of Brāhmaṇas and are not thieves, adulterers, poisoners of kings etc., that they do not wage war (and) they do no wrong to other villages. But if they act otherwise or assent (to such acts), the king will commit no theft in taking the land away.’

30 EI, XXII, p. 197.
to the Gupta emperors in the North Bengal inscriptions. Probably, while asserting their independence, they did not presume to place themselves on the level of their former overlords. Nevertheless, they adopted epithets reminiscent of those of the great Guptas, such as prithiyāṁ-upratiratha ('who had no equal-antagonist in the world') and Yayāti-Ambariṣha-samadhrīti ('whose fortitude was equal to that of Yayāti and Ambarisba') which were applied both to Cōpachandra and Dharma-ditya. As in the days of the Guptas, the district officer was normally appointed by the uparika in charge of the higher administrative division. By the side of the district officer there stood the adhikaraṇa as the authority for disposal of State lands. Unfortunately we have no definite account of the composition of this body. In one inscription of Dharma-ditya and another of Cōpachandra, we are only told that it had the chief kāyastha (jñeṣṭha-kāyastha) as its leading member, while the inscription of Samācārādeva informs us still more vaguely that it had the chief adhikaraṇika at its head. It is not unlikely that the adhikaraṇa also contained the three other members known to its prototype in the northern province under the Guptas, viz., the sresṭhī, the sārthavāha and the prathama-kulika. By way of exception, the Mallasarul inscription of the time of Cōpachandra, while referring to Vardhamāṇa-bhukti, is completely silent about the name of the district and mentions instead the adhikaraṇa of the vithi. But we are left completely in the dark about the composition of this last-named body.

We have mentioned above that the adhikaraṇa is entrusted in the records under consideration with the sale of State lands. In this work it is associated with a number of specified and unspecified vishaya-mahattarasa, mahattaras, chief vyaparins (or vyavvanarsins) and so forth. The first two terms may be taken to be the elders (probably of two distinct grades) belonging to the district and the village respectively, while the next may refer to administrative agents.32 In these records, then, we mark a continuation of that association of popular representatives with the local administration, which has been noted above as a striking and original feature of the government of Pundravardhana-bhukti in Gupta times.

For the rest, the procedure adopted in these records for the sale of government lands has the same complex character as that implied in the inscriptions of North Bengal under the Imperial Guptas. We have a long string of officials of the type that becomes henceforth a characteristic feature of ancient Indian land-grants. The list com-

32 IA, XXXIX, p. 200. The contrary interpretation of these terms by N. K. Bhattasali (EI, XVIII, p. 78 and n) is not convincing.
prises, besides the familiar kumārāmātyas, vishayapatis and tadāyuk-
takas, the kārtīkritikas (perhaps equivalent to the kriyākṣītyeshu ch-
ārthānam viniyojakkālī of Mahābhārata 11. 5.38 meaning, according to
Hopkins, JAOS, XIII, 128, 'the person having general superintendence
of what ought or ought not to be done in affairs.'), the chauroddhara-
nikas (police officers), the aīparikas (perhaps identical with uparikas),
the auṇḍasthānikas (superintendents of the woollen industry or trade),
the audraṅgikas (officers charged with collection of the udraṅga tax),
āgraḥārikas (superintendents of agrahāras) and the hiranyasāmudāyi-
kas (collectors of the tax in cash).

At the opposite extremity of Northern India, in the peninsula of
Kāthiāwār, flourished the famous dynasty of Maitrakas (pp. 219-41).
Their administrative machinery comprises mostly the old Gupta of-
cicial titles, but there are some new names. Among the writers of the
Maitraka charters we find a divirapati, the head of diviras (or clerks),
an office which may be traced back to a copper-plate inscription of
the Uchchakalpa mahārāja Jayanātha. The pramātri, an officer men-
tioned for the first time, probably means the officer connected with
the department of land-survey. Among the other officers, the drāṅgika
was the officer-in-charge of the drāṅga (military outpost of custom-
house), the daṇḍapāśika was the police officer, the dhruvasthānādhi-
karanika was the office with the duty of supervision of dhruvas
(revenue-farmers), and the anupanna-ḍānasamudgrāhaka was the
officer concerned with forcible collections of the so-called voluntary
gifts by the subjects. The Maitraka administration was sufficiently
complex to include the offices of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chief
Secretary, and Chief Accountant, besides the officers in charge of
police and revenue departments. Like the Guptas, the Maitrakas fa-
voured the claims of hereditary descent in the selection of officers.
In one of their records the writer of the charter is a divirapati who
is the son of a sandhivigrāhādhikrita-divirapati. This example, also
shows that the Maitrakas, like the Guptas, were not averse to the
combination of different offices in the same person.

In local administration the Maitrakas followed the Gupta preced-
ent, though with a changed nomenclature. From the description of
their donated lands, we learn that their kingdom was divided into
administrative divisions and sub-divisions called bhukti, vishaya (or

33 CHI, III, p. 122. The meaning of divira as 'clerk' was first pointed out by
Bühler (IA, VI, p. 10) on the authority of Kshemendra’s Lokaprakāśa.
34 On dhruvādhikaranika and anupanna-dāna-samudgrāhaka, see HRS, pp. 221-22.
35 EI, I, pp. 81-83.
haranaī or prāveśya) and petha (or sthalī).\textsuperscript{36} An example of a division called āhāra occurs in some of the records.

The revenue administration of the Maitrakas has some original features. We have already referred to the offices of the dhruvakaraṇika and the anutpanna-dāna-samudgrāhaka as implying the farming of revenues and the levy of the so-called voluntary contributions respectively. A clause called pūrva-prattadeya-brahmadeya-Brāhmaṇa-vimśati-varjan occurring in some of the land grants suggested that a tithe for the support of Brāhmaṇas was imposed upon the villagers in the Kāthāwār tract in this period.

3. Harsha, his Contemporaries and Successors

Reference has been made above (pp. 266 ff) to the administrative machinery of Harsha’s kingdom. It was essentially the same as that of the Imperial Guptas. The dūṭaka of his two land-grants was a mahā-pramātara-mahāsāmanta: the edict was incised in the one case at the command of a mahākshapaṭalādhikaraṇādhiṅkīta-sāmantamahārāja and in the other case by a mahākshapaṭalika-sāmantamahārāja. The mahāpramātara here mentioned is evidently a high imperial officer of the same class as, but ranking higher than, the pramātri of the Maitraka records mentioned above. The mahākshapaṭalādhikaraṇādhiṅkīta was in charge of the accounts department. The title mahāsāmanta or sāṅjanta-mahārāja attached to these offices would seem to indicate that like the Imperial Guptas, Harsha utilised the services of his feudatories for the direct administration of his empire. In the branch of provincial administration it may be noticed that Harsha’s dominion was divided into the usual bhūktis and vishayas, of which examples are given in his land-grants.

Among the contemporaries of Harsha, none was more remarkable than Bhāskara-varman, king of Kūmarāpura (pp. 253 ff). His administrative system was based on the familiar divisions such as vishaya and the reference to the vishayapatis and aḍhikaraṇas in his record suggests the association of the district officer and the district board which, as noticed above, was a characteristic of the Imperial Gupta administration in North Bengal in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. Among officers mentioned by name in his inscription are prāpta-paṇcāḥ-mahāsabda, one who has obtained ‘the five great sounds’ (otherwise translated as ‘the five great offices of State’), a sīmā-pradātā who is also the nāyaka of the district of Chandrapuri, a nyāyakaranika, a kāyastha, a sāsayitā who is also the lekhayitā, a bhāṇḍāgārādhiṅkīta

\textsuperscript{36} EI, VIII, pp. 188 ff; XVII, pp. 105 ff; XI, 104 ff; IA, XV, pp. 188 ff. respectively.
who is also a mahāsāmanta, and an utkhetayita. The first two appear to have been executive officers entrusted respectively with carrying the king’s orders into effect and fixing the boundaries of the donated land among the large number of donees; the third was a judicial officer, the fourth was a scribe, the fifth was the officer specially entrusted with the execution of the charter, the sixth was the treasury-officer, and the seventh and last was entrusted with the collection of taxes. The bare list of these names, which also includes vyavahāri, is sufficient to indicate the complexity of the administrative machine in Kāmarūpa in Bhāskaravarman’s reign.

In the last quarter of the seventh and the first half of the eighth century Magadha rose to a position of imperial greatness under a dynasty known to history as ‘The Later Guptas of Magadha’ (pp. 190 ff) The string of officials mentioned in Jivita-gupta II’s inscription include two new names, the talavātaka and sīnā-karmakāra (maker of boundaries perhaps of the donated lands), the rest being known to us from the Gupta times. The records of the later Guptas also testify to the continuation of the old administrative divisions called bhukti and vishaya.

Some further light is thrown upon the administrative organisation of Magadha and the adjoining lands at this period by the testimony of a number of clay-seals and sealings with legends written in seventh and eighth century characters. These objects have been recovered from Nālandā, and the legends thereon acquaint us with three large administrative divisions (bhuktis), viz., those of Magadha, Srāvasti and Nagara, as well as two smaller divisions (vishayas), viz., those of Rāja-griha and Gayā. The Rāja-griha-vishaya is further sub-divided into a division (naya) called Pilipinchchhā. Still more important is the fact that not only Gayā-vishaya but also the above-named naya of Rāja-griha-vishaya and an unnamed naya belonging to Srāvasti-bhukti are recorded to have their separate adhikaranas (offices) as well as common seals. The Nālandā seals, moreover, refer to the adhikaranas of Kumārāmātyas belonging to Nagara-bhukti. It is interesting to observe that the seals of the kumārāmātyādhisthikaranas of Nālandā have the same device of the goddess Lakṣmī as those at Bhita and Basarh noticed above. The Nālandā seals, lastly, point to the institution of dharmādhisthikaranas (courts of justice) which were doubtless of the same type as the dharmāsan-ādhisthikaranas commemorated in a Basarh seal-legend mentioned above. Though we have no knowledge of the composition and functions of the adhikaranas of vishayas and nayás functioning in Magadha and the adjoining lands in the seventh-
eighth centuries A.D., we cannot but be struck with their similarity with the adhikaranas of vishayás, vīhās and so forth prevailing in Bengal in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. Probably it will not be unsafe to infer on general grounds that like the types prevailing in North Bengal under the Imperial Guptas, and in South and East Bengal under the independent kings of the sixth century, the vishayādhikaranas and nayādhikaranas of the Upper Ganges Valley involved the association of representatives of trade and industry with local government.

We may next turn to the records of some minor dynasties of Orissa in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. as furnishing some interesting examples of variety amid the general administrative uniformity. The Patiākella copper-plate inscription of the time of Sambhuvaśas (p. 216) refers to a new official called bhikādābhogika. Evidently he was superior in rank to bhogika whom we have traced back to the records of the Parivṛṣjaka and Uchchhakalpa mahārājas of Bundelkhand. Another dynasty ruling in Orissa in the same period (seventh and eighth centuries A.D.) was that of the Karas. A peculiar feature of their administrative system is the number of queens who reigned in their own right and assumed the usual imperial titles (above, p. 494). We hear, among others, of queens Tribhuvana-mahādevī, and Dandimaḥādevī, who assumed the titles naramabhāttāraka-mahārājādhirāja-parameśvarī. Of Tribhuvana-mahādevī we are told that she was induced by the feudatory chieftains to ascend the throne at a time of great crisis in the fortunes of the family. This illustrates not only the extraordinary capacity of the queen, but also the public spirit of the chieftains. The officials mentioned by name in the inscriptions of this dynasty include a new name, viz., sthināntarika.

We may trace the administrative organisation of the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal in the light of a series of inscriptions ranging from the fifth to the eighth centuries A.D. The administration of the kingdom naturally conformed to the type prevailing in the plains. But there were some remarkable features arising, no doubt, from the isolated situation of the land. Next to the king the machinery of the central government consisted of high officers of State, such as a sarvadandaṇāyaka Mahāpratihāra, sarvadandaṇāyaka. Rājaputra. a vārttā and a bhāttāraka-pādiya (a name equally unknown with the vārttā outside Nepal). Of the above, the mahāpratihāra is a well-known official title of the Imperial Gupta period meaning probably 'Chief of the Palace-Guards.' The title sarvadandaṇāyaka, which

38 EI, IX, pp. 287 ff. with corrections by N. G. Majumdar (EI, XXIII, p. 200).
39 For references to those inscriptions, see above, pp. 211 ff.
may be taken to be the Nepalese equivalent of the mahādanḍanāyaka of the Imperial Guptas, probably means the Chief Judge in criminal trials.\textsuperscript{40} The bhattāraka-pādīna was probably a high officer on the personal staff of the king.\textsuperscript{41} The vārttās, as Lévi points out,\textsuperscript{42} correspond exactly to the vṛittiyas of modern Nepal, who are a class of vassals holding revenue-free fiefs in perpetuity, but without the right of jurisdiction. Besides the high officers of State above-mentioned, there was the mahābalādhyaksha (Supreme Commander in War) who was evidently the equivalent of the mahābalādhikrita mentioned in an inscription of the Parivrājaka mahārāja Hastin. Lévi points out the interesting fact that the common ancient Indian formula of donation of lands, which is first found in the inscriptions of Hastin (nos. 83-84) and is probably derived from the Imperial Guptas, occurs for the first time in the inscription of the Lichchhavi king Vasantadeva.\textsuperscript{43}

Interesting light is thrown upon the methods of village administration in Nepal during this period by the description of concessions granted by the kings in favour of specified villages. A fragmentary inscription\textsuperscript{44} mentions a two-fold privilege (prasāda-dvauam) evidently conferred by the king upon a village. First, the entrance of regular and irregular troops was to be prohibited for all time; in the second place, the malla tax was apparently to be remitted above the rate of four copper panas according to usage. In other records we read that the adhikrita (government officer) may enter the village for collection of the ‘three taxes’ alone ‘according to usage,’ but not for grant of written records, the trial for ‘the five offences’ and so forth. Similar to the above is the order of king Śiva-deva II to the effect that all the judicial officers should be forbidden to enter the village and that the local proprietor alone will have jurisdiction over the cases as they arise.\textsuperscript{45} The above texts evidently refer to the traditional system of village government prevailing not only in Nepal, but also in the rest of India.\textsuperscript{46} Under this system the village formed a little republic managing its affairs with little or no interference by

\textsuperscript{40} Lévi translates it as ‘commandant-in-chief’ (I, p. 28), ‘general-in-chief’ (III, p. 101) and ‘general-asvins’ (III, p. 48). But as in the parallel case of the Imperial Gupta inscriptions, the simultaneous occurrence of mahābalādhyaksha in the Nepalese records (Cf. Bendall, no. II) makes this explanation improbable. Cf. Basak,\textit{HNI}, p. 246 n.

\textsuperscript{41} Cf. Lévi III, p. 60.


\textsuperscript{44} Lévi, no. XI.

\textsuperscript{45} Lévi, nos. IX, XII.

\textsuperscript{46} Cf. Lévi, I, pp. 281-82.
State officials. From the records under consideration we can infer that the chief occasions on which the villages could ordinarily be entered by the royal officers were the collection of the three taxes, the issue of written orders and the trial for 'the five offences'. The most urgent of these occasions, from which even the most favoured villagers are not exempted, was the collection of the three-fold tax.\(^{47}\) Evidently, the assessment of taxes upon cultivators by the direct agency of government officers was accepted as the general rule.\(^{48}\) Besides the visits of royal officers just mentioned, the entrance of the king's troops into the villages was regarded as great hardship. How widespread was this custom of entrance of the king's troops into villages is proved by the fact that immunity from this evil is one of the most frequently repeated clauses of ancient Indian land-grants from the time of the Sātavāhana and Early Pallava onwards.

Like other Indian States, Nepal had its body of feudatories who are called sāmantas or even nripas. In a famous inscription king Mānadeva expresses his determination to punish hostile sāmantas of the eastern quarter and place on the throne those nripas who would submit to his orders.\(^{49}\) Successfully accomplishing this task, the king subjugated the hostile sāmantas in the western quarter. In the time of king Śiva-deva I, the mahāsāmanta Aṁśuvarman made himself so powerful that all the grants of his nominal overlord were issued at his request. He is also credited in the inscriptions with the possession of pompous qualities quite unlike the simple description of the king. From his coin-legends and from references in the inscriptions of his successor we know that Aṁśuvarman afterwards adopted the imperial title of mahārājādhīrāja. Under Aṁśuvarman and his successor there was a double line of rulers, the kings of the old legitimate dynasty issuing their orders from the palace at Mānagriha, and the line of the usurper doing the same from the new palace at Kailāsa-kūṭābāhavāna (above, pp. 215, 576).

\(^{47}\) Lévi (op. cit., I, p. 283) thinks that the three taxes consisted of bhāga, bhoga and hiranyā, which he translates respectively as 'share of crops,' 'tax upon objects of luxury' and 'gold.' These terms have been explained differently by the present writer in IRRS, pp. 60, 62, 214.

\(^{48}\) The malla tax is peculiar to Nepal, but as Lévi says (op cit., II, p. 212 n., III, p. 68), it may be compared with the turushka-daṇḍa of the inscriptions of king Govindachandra of the Gāhādavāla dynasty of Kanaūj. The nature of 'the five offences' and the penalties attending them are illustrated in an inscription of Śivadeva II (Lévi, no. XX). In this record it is mentioned among the concessions granted to the favoured village that the king's officers should seize the person alone of the man committing five offences such as theft, adultery, murder and complicity. Cf. IRRS, p. 233.

\(^{49}\) Lévi, no. I.
4. The Imperial Pratihāras of Kanauj.

With the rise of the imperial Pratihāras and other contemporary dynasties opens a new era in the history of public administration in Northern India. With it begins the type of constitution called clan-monarchy by Baden-Powell, which flourished largely in Rajasthan in medieval times.\(^{50}\) In this type of government the central or at any rate the best part of the kingdom was appropriated by the king, while the outlying and inferior portions were assigned to the lesser chiefs of the clan. The king collected the land-revenue entirely from his domain, leaving the chiefs to contribute aids in times of war and fees on succession.

The central portions of the Pratihāra dominion appear to have been divided for administrative purposes into the traditional bhuktis, subdivided into mandalas and vishayas. Some records illustrate the methods of town administration that were in vogue under the direct rule of these emperors. The Gwalior inscription of 933 v.s. (A.D. 876)\(^{51}\) shows how the affairs of this great fortified town (and probably of other important towns as well) were conducted in the time of Bhoja I. A certain Alla, we are told, was the officer in charge of the fort (keṭṭapāla) while Tattaka was the commander of the army (balādhīkṛita) and a Board consisting of two persons called śrēṣṭhis and one Chief called sārthavāha was apparently in charge of the civil administration. Not only was the civil administration of the town separated from the military, but further, the command of the fort was divided (no doubt for reasons of security) from that of the forces stationed near about. The concluding lines of the record give us some further indication of the character of the civil administration. Here we read that the whole town-made a gift of land in two specified villages which were in its own possession. It would therefore appear that besides the town-executive just described, there was a town council in which the proprietary rights of these villages were vested. We have a hint of the care with which the administration of these villages was conducted in the description of the donated land according to the length and breadth as measured by royal cubits (paramesvarīna-hasta). Evidently, the official unit of measurement was applied by the town council for the management of the land in its occupation. From another inscription of the same reign, dated 932 v.s. (A.D. 875)\(^{52}\), we

\(^{50}\) See Baden-Powell, Landsystems of British India, I, pp. 250 ff, and Indian Village Community, pp. 196 ff. See HRS, pp. 236, 241, 259-60 for example of this type in ancient Indian history.

\(^{51}\) EI, I, p. 159.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., I, p. 158.
learn that Alla’s father Vāillabhaṭṭa was born in a Nāgara Brāhmaṇa family and was appointed Warden of the Marches (muryādā-dhuryā) by the emperor Rāmabhadra, and that Alla succeeded to this office and was further appointed guardian of the fort by Bhoja I. This illustrates two characteristics of the period, viz., the elasticity of the caste-system and the choice of the highest military commanders from father to son.

We have some illustrations of the working of the internal administration of the imperial Pratihāras in their demesne lands. The Barah (Kanpur district) inscription of Bhoja⁵³ states that he restored an agrahāra which had been approved by Nārāhyāta II, but had fallen into abeyance in the reign of Rāmabhadra because of the incapacity of the vyavahārin (legal or judicial officer). This would suggest an efficient system of official supervision for rectifying the mistakes of subordinates. Next we may mention an inscription⁵⁴ recording the grant of a village by Mahendrapāla II in the holding of a certain talavargika (official term of uncertain meaning) in the western pathaka (district) of Daśapura. From this we can guess that officials used to receive assignments of land which could be resumed at least in part by the Crown at its pleasure. It further appears that administrative divisions of the kind, known elsewhere, were also prevalent here at this time.

We have so long dealt with the territory presumably under the direct administration of the Pratihāra emperors. The remaining portion of the empire was governed by feudatory chiefs belonging to the various well-known Rāiput clans mentioned above. Besides referring to the territories ruled by clan-chiefs, the records of the Pratihāras refer to the unit of eighty-four villages which is the size of the typical clan-chief’s estate in the medieval history of Rāja-stan. A copper-plate inscription from Kāthiāwār⁵⁵ records the gift, by mahāśāmanta Balavarman of Chālukya lineage, of a village belonging to a group of eighty-four ‘which he had acquired by his own arms’. Another copper-plate inscription mentions the gift by a certain Avantivarman II of a village belonging to a group of eighty-four in Saurāṣṭra-māndala.

The Sivadoni inscription⁵⁶ (tenth century A.D.) acquaints us with the methods of town administration under the control of feudatories.

⁵³ Ibid., XIX, p. 17. For another instance of restoration of a lapsed land-grant by Bhoja I. see Ibid., V, p. 211.
⁵⁴ Ibid., XIV, p. 182.
⁵⁵ Ibid., IX, p. 4.
⁵⁶ Ibid., I, p. 175.
An obscure clause in the inscription seems to suggest that the *mandapikā* (custom-house?) was in charge of a *pañchakula* (committee of five) of which the leading member alone is mentioned by name. This would point to a continuation of that association of the popular element with the local administration which we have traced back to the Gupta period. Other records of the imperial Pratihāras refer to the employment of the feudatories in the direct task of administration, some of them holding the offices of the governor, *mahāpratihāra*, and *daṇḍanāyaka*.

In the number and connections of the clan-chiefs of the type just described lay undoubtedly the weakness of the imperial Pratihāra administration. That the Pratihāras were alive to this danger is proved by the precautions which they took in keeping the feudatories under control. An inscription dated 1003 v.s. (A.D. 946) gives the interesting information that a certain Śrī-śarman appointed by the *haladāhikrita* (general) of the emperor was carrying on the administration of the *mandapikā* (custom-house) at that time. This direct appointment of a high officer by the imperial administration was probably meant to be a check upon the feudatory Mādhava who was no doubt in charge of the province concerned. If the Vidagdha at the end of the inscription has been correctly identified with Mahendrapāla II, it would show how the emperor insisted on countersigning the donations of land by his feudatories. Similarly, other inscriptions referred to above show how the grant in each case required the approval of a certain Dhīka described as the *tantrapāla* of Mahendrapāla II. Nevertheless the feudatories continued to be a source of danger to the State. An interesting feature of the inscription was the title *mahārājādhirāja* assumed by the chiefs Dhūrbhāṭa and Nishkalaṅka of the Siyadoṇi inscription and that of *mahārāja paramesvara* adopted by Mathanadeva of the Rajorgarh inscription.

5. *Contemporaries and Successors of the Imperial Pratihāras*

By far the most important of the dynasties contemporaneous with the imperial Pratihāras in Northern India were their rivals for the prize of the empire, viz., the Pālas of Bengal. The Pāla monarchy was distinguished from all other monarchical governments of the plains by the circumstances of its origin, which has been referred to above (p. 650). But although the first king was elected to the throne, the Pāla government was of the usual North Indian type of a strong here-

57 Ojha (*EI*, XIV, p. 181) understands *mandapikā* to refer to Mandu, but this is belied by the reference to the grant of *mandapikā* in the Siyadoṇi inscriptions, where it must refer to an office situated within the town limits.

58 *EI. III*, p. 206.
dictatorial monarchy, and there is no question of any constitutional restraint upon the king's authority. Indeed, it would seem that the extraordinary success of the early Pālas in consolidating their internal administration and extending their foreign dominion, helped to endow the monarchy with unequalled strength. The Pāla kings from the first assumed the imperial title of paramesvara-paramabhiprakāramaṁrāja-mahārājādhīrāja of which the precedent (as we have seen) was set by the Imperial Guptas in their North Bengal inscriptions.

Next in rank to the king stood the princes of the blood who were sometimes entrusted with high military commands. As noted above, a distinguished Brāhmaṇa family supplied a succession of what can only be called Chief Ministers to the early Pālas, though they are not expressly mentioned as such. How much this family, according to its own testimony, overshadowed the monarchy has already been stated (p. 661). This influence, however, must have been derived entirely from the personal capacity of the individual ministers, and not from any constitutional right or privilege belonging to the office. The high position of a Brāhmaṇa family under a Buddhist dynasty is a further illustration of the traditional policy of enlightened tolerance pursued by the kings of ancient India.

The list of officials and others mentioned in the legal formulas of the land-grants of the early Pālas, in so far as they reflect the actual conditions of administration and not a fixed legal tradition, may be taken to illustrate the machinery of central and local government in their time. In the Khālimpur grant of Dharmapāla the list is as follows: rājarājanaka, rājaputra, rājāmātya, senāpati, vishaya-pati, bhogapati, shasṭhādhyākṣita, dandaśakta, dandaśaśika, chauroddhānaka, daussādhasadhana, ṝūta, khola, gamagamika, abhitvarāmāna, hastyaśvagomahishājāvikādhyaksha. nāvādhyaksha (for the incorrect nākādhyaksha), balādhyaksha, tarika, śaulikka, gaulmika, tādāyukta, viniyuktaka and so forth. Some names in this list are found in the later records of the Pālas. They are rājāmātya, ṝūta, vishaya-pati, gamagamika, abhitvarāmāna, hastyaśvagomahishājāvikādhyaksha, chauroddhānaka, śaulikka, gaulmika, tādāyukta, viniyukta. Other titles drop out of the list in later Pāla records. Such as senāpati, bhogapati, shasṭhādhyākṣita, dandaśakta, khola, nāvādhyaksha and balādhyaksha. In their place other names are added in the later Pāla inscriptions, such as pramātri, sarabhaṅga (or sarabhaṅga), kumārāmātṛa, rājanīga, upārika, dāśaparādhika, hastyaśvasthralāyāprītaka, dāndika, prā/nīka, kshetrapa (or kshetrapāla), prānta-

59 Cf. e.g. the careers of Vākpāla and Jaya-pāla (p. 672).
60 Cf. list of Pāla inscriptions on p. 680.
päla, koṭṭapäla, khaṇḍarakaṣha, grāmapati, tarapati and so forth. The later records mention above all a group of titles with the prefix mahān, such as mahākārtākṛiti, mahādaṇḍanāyaka, mahāpratihāra, mahādaussūḍhasādhana, mahākumārāmātya, mahāsāṁdhiṣṭiṣṭhīka, mahākṣhapaṭalika, mahāsenāpati, and perhaps mahāmantri (found only in the Bāṅgarh grant of Mahīpāla I). Leaving aside for the present the titles of feudatories and of officers of the local administration, we may take the above, notwithstanding the obscurity of most of the terms, to illustrate the main branches of the central government in the times of the early Pālas. The departments with their principal officers may be enumerated as follows: - Finance (śāhṣṭhā-dhikrita, tarika, tarapati and śaulika), Police (daṇḍaśakti, daṇḍa-pāṣika, chauroddharaṇika and perhaps, gaulmiṇa), Army and Navy (senāpati, nāvādhyaksha and balādhyaksha), besides executive officers of a more indefinite character (rajañātya, daussūḍhasādhana, dūta, khola, gamāgamika, abhīhbaramāṇa, tadāyuktaka and cintyuktaka) and Superintendents (adhyaksha) of the king’s herds and studs of animals. Later times witnessed the creation of new offices representing Finance (tarapati etc.), Police (dāndika, perhaps corresponding to the older daṇḍaśakti), Justice (dāsāparādhika, and perhaps rājaśāhīṇya and pramāṇī), Army (hastyāśveśṭrābhalacaṇṭā, prantāpāla, koṭṭapāla, and perhaps khaṇḍarakaṇa), besides the more indefinite sārabhāṅga, kṣeṣṭrapa etc. The later records, above all, testify to the creation of a whole set of high imperial offices some of which date back to the times of the Imperial Guptas or even earlier, while others are now mentioned for the first time. The departments with their principal officers are as follows: Foreign affairs (mahāsāṁdhiṣṭiṣṭhīka), Accounts (mahākṣhapaṭalika), Army (mahāsenāpati), and perhaps Criminal Justice (mahādaṇḍanāyaka), besides comprising the more indefinite offices of mahākārtākṛiti, mahādaussūḍhasādhana, and mahākumārāmātya.61

61 Rājañātya is of uncertain meaning, but it at least represents an individual amātya (or class of amātyas) superior in rank to the kumārāmātyas mentioned above. Vogel (Antiquities etc., p. 102) translates it as ‘minister or councillor attached to the rāja.’ Ditapraśaṇika (from prashaṅka or sending), gamāgamika (one who goes and comes) and abhīhbaramāṇa (‘one who hurries’) have evidently the same general meaning of messenger. Cf. Vogel, op. cit., pp. 125-26. For hastī-āśco-go-mahākṣaṇi-āvīk-dādyakṣa (meaning probably ‘Superintendent of the royal studs and herds of those animals’). Cf. Kauṭilya’s Arthasastra, II, 29-32. Chauroddharaṇika is a technical title for a class of king’s officers (Cf. Vogel, op. cit., p. 129). Jolly (Recht und Sīṭte, 124) takes it to be synonymous with chauroddharaṇī and chaurodvaraṇa of the law books. Śaulika is the superintendent of tolls. Gauṁika, according to Fleet, means ‘superintendent of woods and forests’ but it is more properly taken by Vogel (op. cit., p. 127) to mean a military for police official as gūlma is used in the sense of patrol.
In local government the Pālas adopted the system of administrative divisions into larger units called bhuktis and smaller units called maṇḍalas, vishayas, vīthis, etc.\textsuperscript{62} We may take it as a sign of the continuity of administrative organisations that some of these divisions like Punḍravardhana-bhukti, Nagara-bhukti and Tira-bhukti go back to the Gupta times, though the minor units have new names. With the administrative divisions just mentioned, we may connect some of the offices occurring in the lists quoted above. It is thus natural to consider the uparikas as being in charge of the bhuktis, while the vishayapatis would of course be in charge of the vishayas. In the formulas of the Pāla land-grants, we miss the adhikaraṇas of the Imperial Gupta times in North Bengal and those of the independent kings of South and East Bengal of the same period. The Khālimpur copper-plate inscription mentions instead, among the persons receiving information of the grant, a number of vishaya-vyavahārinis (district officials) such as the leading scribe (jyesṭhakāyastha), the village elders (mahāmahattaras and mahattaras); and the lords of ten villages (dāṣa-grāmikas).\textsuperscript{63} The village itself, as we learn from the inclusion of the grāmapati in the list of officers quoted above, was in charge of the headman.

The administrative organisation of the contemporary kings of

62 The early Pāla records mention the following bhuktis with their sub-divisions: (i) Punḍravardhana-bhukti with (a) Vyāghratati-maṇḍala and its sub-division Mahāntaprkāsa-vishaya ins. no. 1 and (b) Kuddalakha-vishaya (no. 10), (ii) Nagara-bhukti with (a) Rājagriha-vishaya and its sub-division Ajapura-naya and Achala-naya and (b) with Gayā-vishaya and its sub-division Kumudāśtra-vīthis (no. 3), (iii) Nagara-bhukti with Krīmila-vishaya (no. 2), (iv) Tira-bhukti with Kaksha-vishaya (no. 6).

63 The dāṣa-grāmika is reminiscent of the lowest grade of rural officers according to a classification common to Manu, VII, 118-19 and the Mahābhārata, XII, 68, 6-8.
Kāmarūpa (pp. 584 ff) was of the usual North Indian type consisting of a hereditary monarchy assisted by a bureaucracy of officials. But it was marked by several distinctive features. The kings assumed the imperial style of *mahārajādhirāja parameśvara paramabhaṭṭaraka* or more shortly, *mahārajādhirāja*. Not only did the kingship descend by hereditary succession, but the reigning king often nominated his successor. We learn from the copper-plate inscriptions of Balavarman that king Vanamāla abdicated in favour of his son Jayamāla, and that the latter did the same in favour of his son Balavarman. We have, however, a remarkable instance of two princes Chakra and Arathi being passed over in favour of the latter's son for the offence of disregarding the voice of their elders.65 Apparently in extreme cases, the body of elders could prevent an unworthy heir from succeeding to the throne. Of the offices of State a *mahāsainyapati* a *mahādvārādhahipatiya* (term of unknown meaning), a *mahāpratihāra* and a *mahāmātya*, as well as a *Brāhmaṇādhikāra* (meaning unknown) are mentioned by name in the copper-plate inscription of Harjaravarman. The fragmentary Rock inscription of Harjaravarman also refers to a number of *balādhyakshas*. It appears from the above that the kingdom of Kāmarūpa in the ninth century had a staff of imperial officers of the type known to the Gupta Empire. The *mahāmātya* and the *mahāsainyapati* were evidently the heads of the civil and military administration respectively, the *balādhyakshas* being subordinate to the latter. The *mahāpratihāra*, as we have suggested, was the chief of the Palace-Guards. As regards the branch of local administration, the kingdom consisted of the old familiar divisions called *vishayas*. Probably there was also a number of district officers. The copper-plate inscription of Balavarman mentions, among the persons receiving information of the king's grant, the country-people headed by the *vishaya-karanas* and the *vyavahārikas*. Another statement in the same record proves that the village, while enjoying no doubt its traditional autonomy, could be visited by persons connected with the royal family and administration, who are here branded as creator of trouble (*upadravakārīnah*) and are expressly forbidden to enter the privileged land. The list of such visitors includes the queen, the princes, the feudatories, the royal favourites, those engaged in tying up

64 The inscriptions of Assam have been conveniently collected together (with text, tr. and notes etc.) by Padmanath Bhattacharya in the Kāmarūpa-saṣanāvalī. Those falling within the limits of the present period may be serially numbered as follows: No. 1—Tezpur Rock ins. of Harjaravarman dated G. E. 510. No. 2—Hayiungthal CP ins. of Harjaravarman, No. 3—Tezpur Cp. ins. of Vanamāla and No. 4—Sütārgāon Cp. ins. of Balavarman.

65 Nos. 1 and 4 above.
elephants and mooring boats, police officers of three specified kinds, those charged with collection of various taxes and so forth.66

We may now turn to Kashmir. The kingship, as usual, was of the hereditary type, subject to breaks caused in the succession by usurpation and the like. The accession of Yaśaskara (A.D. 939) after the extinction of the Utpala dynasty, however, presents a striking exception to the general rule; for Yaśaskara was elected by an assembly of Brāhmaṇas (p. 547). But this revolution was barren of any constitutional result like the still more important revolution, quoted above, in the ancient history of Bengal, caused by Gopāla’s accession to the throne. Coming to the organisation of the bureaucracy, we find that Lalitāditya, the greatest king of Kashmir, is credited by Kalhaṇa with the creation of five new offices (karmasthānas) with the prefix mahān alongside the eighteen offices attributed to the semi-lengendary king Jalauka.67 The five offices were those of mahāpratihāra, mahāsāṅhivigraha, mahāśvasāla, mahāśivaśūra and mahāsādhanabhāga, of which the first two, known from Gupta times, seem to mean respectively Chief of Palace-Guards and Minister of Foreign Affairs, while the last three, which are peculiar to Kashmir, apparently signify the Chief Officer of Cavalry, the Chief Treasurer and the Chief Executive Officer. The complex bureaucratic structure of Kashmir is also testified to by Kalhaṇa’s incidental references to State Offices in the later reigns. Some of these offices like nagarādhipa (Prefect of the City), pratihāra, dańdanāyaka (Prefect of Police) and rājasthānīya (‘Chief Justice’, according to Stein) had their counterparts in the kingdoms of the plains. Common to both also was the office of the akshapatāla (Accounts office), although the ekāṅgas of the Rājatarangini, forming a kind of military police, are unknown elsewhere. Other offices like those of the pādāgra (revenue-collector ?), the dvārapāla (commander of the frontier passes) the mandalesa (governor), the kampanesā (commander-in-chief) and the sarvādhiṅkārin (prime minister) seem to be more or less peculiar to Kashmir.68

The offices mentioned above illustrate the working of the executive and judicial administration in the ancient kingdom of Kashmir. We

66 The words in the original are: rājīr-rājapatra-rāyaka-rājavallabha-mahālakaproudhiḥkā-hāstibandhika-naukāibandhika-chauruddharanika-dāndika dāndapāṣika-auparikarika-austhetika-chchhatravāsādyupadāravakāriniṁmapraveśa.
67 Rājatarangini, VI, 141-43; I. 118-20. According to an ancient tradition recorded by Kalhaṇa (loc. cit.), Jalauka created 18 offices ‘in accordance with traditional usage’ in place of the still more primitive group of seven offices (prakritis).
68 For references, see Stein, Rājaṭ., tr., II. Index, sv.
have, further, a number of anecdotes told by Kalhana regarding the judicial decisions of kings exceptionally renowned for their equity and wisdom.\textsuperscript{69} Evidently the kings themselves sat, in the immemorial fashion, for the decision of cases. The interest of the Kashmir government in words of public welfare is well illustrated by Kalhana's remarkable account\textsuperscript{70} of the extensive drainage and irrigation projects carried into effect by a certain Suyya in the reign of Avantivarman (A.D. 855/56-83). The beneficent results of these constructions are indicated by Kalhana's quotation of the fall in the price of rice, the staple food in the valley. Formerly, the average price of one \textit{khari} or rice was 200 \textit{dinaras} in good years and as high as 1050 \textit{dinaras} in times of famine, but it was reduced to 36 \textit{dinaras} after Suyya's constructions. The history of the financial administration, on the other hand, is on the whole a dreary record of exactions inflicted by a succession of tyrants.\textsuperscript{71}

We shall conclude this chapter with some reference to the early records of the principal dynasties that rose to power on the ruins of the Pratihara empire. The administrative organisation of these dynasties must have belonged to the same general type, but there were some interesting features. Thus we have reasons to believe that the ministers of the Kalachuris (Haihayas) of Chedi exercised a considerable influence upon the administration of this kingdom. We come across two Bráhmana Chief Ministers (\textit{mantri-pradhána}), viz., Bhāvamīśra and his son Someśvara, who successfully served king Yuvarāja I and his son Lakshmanarāja.\textsuperscript{72} Of another king Kokalla II we are told that he was raised to the throne by his principal ministers (\textit{amātya-mukhyás}).\textsuperscript{73} In the Karitalai inscription\textsuperscript{74} the donated land is said to lie in Málava-\textit{deśādaśaka} (the Málava group of twelve). This proves the existence of the typical clan-chief's estate consisting of eighty-four villages, which we have noted as a characteristic of medieval Rājput clan-monarchies. Coming to the Paramáras of Malwa we find that the donated village in an inscription of king Siyaka is described as belonging to the holding of a certain \textit{mahásādhanika} in

\textsuperscript{69} Cf. the stories of Chándrāpiḍa (\textit{Rāja}, iv. 55 ff; 85 ff) and Yaśaskara, \textit{ibid.}, vi, 14 ff.

\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Rāja}, v. 84 ff.

\textsuperscript{71} For a detailed account, see \textit{HRS}, pp. 249-52 and \textit{IHQ}, XVIII, pp. 307-9. Also Cf. Ch. XVIII above.

\textsuperscript{72} See Karitalai ins. of the time of Lakshmanarāja (\textit{EI}, II, p. 175).

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{EI}, XII, p. 210.

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{EI}, II, p. 175.
a specified group of twelve. This evidently points to the system of assignments of villages to officials, as well as of clan-chiefs’ estates of the normal size.

The oldest known inscription of the Chāhamānas of Śākambhari, viz., the Haras Stone inscription of 1030 v.s. (c. A.D. 973), points to some characteristic features of the Rājput clan-monarchy. Belonging to the time of Vigrahārāja II, this record mentions, in connection with a series of religious endowments, various estates held by the king as well as the junior princes of the clan. Among these are included, besides the villages held by the king, the bhoga of Simharāja (Vigraharāja’s father and predecessor), the vishaya acquired by himself belonging to Simharāja’s brother Vatsarāja, the vishaya similarly acquired belonging to Simharāja’s two brothers Chandrarāja and Govinda-rāja, the villages held (sva-bhujyamāna) by a duhsādhyā of Simharāja and by a certain Jayanarāja. In the same record the gift-villages of Simharāja are located in a specified group of twelve comprised within a certain vishaya. This illustrates the super-imposition of the new division into clan-estates upon the older administrative division into vishayas.

75 We have a similar description of a donated village as lying in a group of twelve in the Ujjain Cps. ins. of Vākpati II (dated 1036 V. S.), IA, XIV, p. 160.
76 IA, XLII, pp. 60 ff.