CHAPTER VI

MINOR INDEPENDENT KINGDOMS DURING

THE PĀLA PERIOD

Reference has been made in the last chapter to several independent and semi-independent powers that flourished in Bengal and Bihar during the period of the Pāla supremacy. Among these the Chandras and the Varmans require a more detailed treatment.

I. The Chandras

Lāmā Tāranātha, the Tibetan historian, gives prominence, in his History of Buddhism, to a long line of kings ruling in Bengal, whose names end in -chandra and who are specifically referred to as belonging to the Chandra dynasty. In fact, this is the only dynasty in Bengal, before the Pālas, to which he has referred in his book. His account of this dynasty has already been given above (v. supra pp. 166-7) and need not be referred to again.

The existence of a Chandra dynasty in Eastern Bengal from about the sixth to eighth century A.D., as recorded by Tāranātha, has not yet been corroborated by any reliable evidence. But it may be noted in this connection that inscriptions, coins, and Burmese chronicles testify to the rule of a long line of kings, with names ending in -chandra, in the Arakan region.

An inscription of king Ānandachandra of Arakan refers to his twenty-four predecessors (of whom the names of 21 are given) who ruled for a period of 350 years. On the basis of this account, and assuming, on palaeographic grounds, that Ānandachandra ascended the throne about A.D. 720, the rule of the Chandras of Arakan may be said to have begun about A.D. 370.¹ According to the Burmese Chronicles the Shans invaded Arakan in the 10th century A.D., and North Arakan was conquered by the Burmese king Aniruddha (1044-77 A.D.). It has been suggested that when the Chandra kings were ousted from Arakan a branch of them settled at Paṭṭikerā (Tripura District) and founded new kingdom there.² This suggestion seems to have no other basis than the very close relation between the royal families of Burma and Paṭṭikerā, to which refer-
ence will be made later, and the similarity of coins of the Chandra kings of Arakan and Bengal. But too much importance should not be given to this view until more positive evidence is forthcoming. For the present it is better to treat the history of the Chandra kings without any reference to Arakan.

Thirteen inscriptions (B. 75-87) found in East Bengal enable us to reconstruct the history of a family of kings whose names end in ‘Chandra’ and who ruled between c. 825 to 1035 A.D. For the sake of convenience we give below the genealogical list of these kings with known reign-periods and approximate dates. Each of these kings was the son of his predecessor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Maximum regnal year known</th>
<th>Approximate date (A.D.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pūrṇachandra</td>
<td></td>
<td>875—905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suvarṇachandra</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trailokyachandra</td>
<td></td>
<td>875—905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śrīchandra</td>
<td>44 (46)</td>
<td>905—955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalyāṇachandra</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>955—985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lañahachandra</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>985—1010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govindachandra</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1010—1035³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All that we know of the origin and early history of the family is contained in the following passage in a verse occurring in several Inscriptions (B. 77, 79).

"In the family of the Chandras, (who were) rulers of Rohitāgiri, and (were) possessed of enormous fortune, Pūrṇachandra, who was like full moon, became illustrious in this world."

The verse seems to imply that Pūrṇachandra was an independent king. His forefathers are said to be rulers of Rohitāgiri, and the natural presumption is that Pūrṇachandra also ruled there. This presumption is strengthened by the fact that Trailokyachandra, the grandson of Pūrṇachandra, is said to have become king of Chandra-dvīpa. It would thus appear that Pūrṇachandra and his son Suvarṇachandra were both kings of Rohitāgiri.

Rohitāgiri is generally identified with Rohtasgarh in the Shahabad district of Bihar. But this identification is by no means certain, and as Dr. N. K. Bhattachari has suggested, Rohitāgiri may be Sanskritised form of Lalālim and refer to the Lalmai Hills near Comilla. In any case, there is not sufficient reason to conclude that the Chandras came from outside Bengal, and in view of the traditions of the
long line of Chandra kings in Bhaṅgala or Eastern Bengal, it is more reasonable to hold that Rohitāgiri, the seat of the ancestral dominions of the Chandras, was somewhere in Eastern Bengal, and probably near Comilla.

According to verse 3 of the Rampal copper plate (B. 77), “Suvarṇāchandra became a follower of the Buddha”. It is probable, therefore, that until his time the family followed Brāhmanical religion. But henceforth the family was undoubtedly Buddhist, as is evidenced by the invocation to the Buddha at the beginning of all their copper-plate grants, the epithet paramasaugata before the names of kings, and the emblem of the Wheel of Law in their seal like that of the Pāla kings.

Both Suvarṇāchandra and his father were presumably petty local rulers, but Suvarṇāchandra’s son Trailokyachandra laid the foundation of the greatness of his family. In a verse occurring in two inscriptions (B. 77 and 79), he is said to have become king of Chandradvīpa, and is also described as “ādhāro Harikela-rāja-kakudachchhatra-smitānāṁ śriyāṁ”. This phrase has been differently interpreted. Dr. Basak took it to mean “the support of the royal majesty smiling in the royal umbrella of the king of Harikela” Mr. N. G. Majumdar translated it as “the support of Fortune Goddesses (of other kings) smiling at (i.e., joyful on account of) the umbrella which was the royal insignia of the king of Harikela”. According to the first interpretation, Trailokyachandra was the de facto, if not de jure, ruler of Harikela while according to the second, he was both de facto and de jure king of Harikela, with a number of other rulers subordinate to him. The latter view seems to be preferable. Thus Trailokyachandra added Chandradvīpa and Harikela to his paternal dominions, and felt justified in assuming the title Mahā-rājādhirājā.

Fifteen years later Dr. Basak edited the Madanpur Plate of Śrīchandra (B.76) dated year 44 (corrected to 46 by Dr. D.C. Sircar). It is evident that Dr. Basak now held the second view for he observes: ‘The net result of the political achievements of Trailokyachandra seems to be that he was at first a king of Chandradvīpa but later became the ruler over the whole of Harikela.’ In his comments on the article of Dr. Basak, Dr. D. C. Sircar observes: “The real import of the passage in question has escaped the notice of all the three scholars referred to above (i.e., Dr. Basak, N. G. Majumdar and myself). He interprets the passage to mean that ‘the Chandra
king Trailokyachandra of Chandravipa was feudatory or ally of the king of the Harikela country". Two years later, he further elucidated his views in the following passage: "It appears that the Chandras of Rohitāgiri were originally the feudatories of the Pāla kings of Bengal and Bihar and that one of the Chandra princes came to Bengal in connection with his services under the Pāla master. But Trailokyachandra seems to have transferred his allegiance to the king of Harikela and was rewarded by the Viceroyalty of Chandravipa." These series of suppositions are not supported by any positive evidence. But what is strange is that after the publication of the new copper plates, referred to above, Dr. Sircar sticks to this view and says that the new data supplied by them is not inconsistent with his theory that both Trailokyachandra and Śrīchandra were subordinate allies (laghumitra) or feudatories, respectively, of the king of Harikela and of the Pālas.

It would suffice to draw attention to the following data supplied by the newly discovered Grants:

1. Trailokyachandra was a great ruler and defeated the Gauḍās (B.81,84).
2. Śrīchandra’s kingdom included the region round Sylhet (B.75).
3. Śrīchandra defeated the rulers of Gauḍa and Prāggyotisa (B.83), reinstated Gopāla (on the throne) and restored the captive Pāla queen (B.81).⁸
4. Kalyāṇachandra defeated the Mlechchhas on the Lauhitya river as well as the Gauḍās (B. 83, 84, 85).

Besides, Śrīchandra and his three successors call themselves Paramēśvara, Paramabhaṭṭāraka and Mahāraṇḍhirāja in their own grants and refer to the preceding king as Mahāraṇḍhirāja. We do not possess any grant of Trailokyachandra but he is referred to as Mahāraṇḍhirāja in the grant of his son Śrīchandra. It is, therefore, certain that Śrīchandra and his three successors certainly, and Trailokyachandra probably, assumed full imperial titles. This fact, taken along with the others supplied by the newly-discovered records, seems to be conclusive on the point that the Chandras, from the time of Trailokyachandra, were independent rulers of South and East Bengal, known as Vaṅgāla.

We learn from verse 7 of the Paschimbhag CP (B. 75) that Trailokyachandra conquered Samatāta and his soldiers at Devaparvata
on the Kshirodā river heard with wonder the strange exploits of the Kāmbojas. It may be reasonably concluded that the reference is to the Kāmboja conquest of Gauḍa. Further, the reference to Devaparvata is of great interest. As we have seen above, it was the capital, first of the kings of the Rāta Dynasty and then of Bhavadeva, and probably also of Kāntideva. Most probably Trailokyachandra conquered Samatata from this dynasty during the period of chaos and confusion caused by the conquest of Gauḍa by the Kāmbojas. It is very likely that he was a prominent chief subordinate to Kāntideva or his successor, and declared his independence after the Kalachuri invasions. For we know from the Kalachuri records that Kokkalla raided the treasuries of Vaṅga and his great-grandson Lakṣmanaṇarāja conquered Vaṅgāla. The Chandras might have taken advantage of all these political troubles to consolidate their rule in Bengal.

The data furnished by the inscriptions enable us to form a rough idea of the extent of the kingdom of Śrīchandra. Chandravipā and Harikela, over which he ruled, may be regarded as covering approximately the whole of Eastern Bengal and the coastal regions of Southern Bengal. All the four copper-plate grants were issued from Vikramapura, which presumably became the capital of the family either during the reign of Trailokyachandra or that of his son Śrīchandra. In two of the inscriptions (B. 74, 77) of Śrīchandra, the lands granted were situated in the Pauṇḍra-vardhana-bhukti. This does not necessarily mean that Śrīchandra’s supremacy extended over North Bengal. For although originally that was the connotation of Pauṇḍra-vardhana-bhukti, later (e.g. during the time of the Senas), it included the whole of Southern Bengal right up to the sea, and this might have been the case even in the time of Śrīchandra. The land granted by B. 80 was situated in the Kumāratalaka-maṇḍala in the Sataṭa-Padmāvatī-vishaya. The Padmāvatī seems to refer to the well-known river Padmā, whose existence in the tenth century A.D. is thus proved. The name Kumāratalaka is perhaps connected with the river Kumāra and still preserved in Kumārakhāli, in Faridpur District, not far from the old bed of the river Padmā. Thus the details of the land confirm the view, mentioned above, about the extent of Śrīchandra’s dominions.

Reference has been made above (pp. 124 ff.) to the disintegration of the Pala empire in the tenth century due mainly to foreign
invasions, and the rise of three independent kingdoms in Bengal, namely Gauḍa, Rāṣṭhā, and Vaṅgaḷa—though sometimes the first two were united under the Kāmboja Pāla Dynasty—while the dominions of the Imperial Pālas were confined to East and South Bihar.

As mentioned above, three generations of the Chandra kings—Trailokyachandra, Śrīchandra and Kalyāṇachandra—claimed to have defeated the Gauḍas. It has been tacitly assumed by A. H. Dani and D. C. Sircar that the rulers of Gauḍa were the Pāla kings. They have ignored the well-known fact that the Pāla kings of the Kāmboja family ruling over North and West Bengal during the tenth century called themselves ‘Lords of Gauḍa’. (see p. 126) As Gauḍa was, strictly speaking and originally, the name of this region (though later it denoted the whole of Bengal), the Kāmboja claim was fully justified. That the Chandras fought with the Kāmbojas rather than with the Pālas receives some support from the fact that Śrīchandra restored Gopāla to his throne. This Gopāla was undoubtedly Gopāla II of the Pāla dynasty who ruled from c. A.D. 940 to 960 and was, therefore, a contemporary of Śrīchandra. It is a reasonable assumption that Gopāla II was deprived of his kingdom (or a part of it) by the Gauḍa lord of Kāmboja dynasty and Śrīchandra defeated him and restored the Pāla king to his kingdom. Of course it is also not unlikely that Śrīchandra himself defeated the Pāla king and then restored his kingdom to him. But in view of the fact that Gauḍa was at that time actually in possession of the Kāmboja family and the Chandras are said to have fought the Gauḍas, the first hypothesis seems to be more reasonable. In any case this possibility must be kept in view so long as there is no positive evidence of the conflict between the Chandras and the Pālas.

The grants of land by Śrīchandra in the Pravravardhana-bhukti mentioned above, may refer to a temporary occupation by him of a part of North Bengal. Most probably these territories were lost by the Pālas during the disasters that befell the Pāla kingdom during the reign of Nārāyaṇapāla towards the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth century A. D. Evidently the Pāla king Rājapāla (A. D. 908-940) and Gopāla II (A. D. 940-960), who followed Nārāyaṇapāla strove hard to maintain or recover their kingdom or portions of it. Hence there followed a prolonged struggle between the Pālas, Kāmbojas and Chandras in course of which territories probably changed hands and alliance was shifted from time to time. This satisfactorily explains the sovereignty exercised by the
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Pāla king, Rājyapāla, in North Bengal (B.27) and Gopāla II in portions of North and East Bengal (B. 29-30) during the period when the Kāmbojas were rulers of Gauḍa and the Chandras were rulers of Vaṅgāla. As rulers of both these dynasties assumed full imperial titles it would be unreasonable to assume that the two Pāla kings mentioned above exercised uninterrupted sway over any considerable portion of North or East Bengal. Such a hypothesis would also go against the mention of several kingdoms in Bengal proper in the records of the Kalachuris and the Chandelas.

As mentioned above (p. 132) Mahīpāla I recovered a part of East Bengal; probably he wrested it from Laḥahachandra, but that the latter recovered it is proved by the Bharellī Image Inscription (B. 82).

It has been suggested above (p. 203) that the invasion of Bengal by Kalachuri king Kokkalla facilitated the rise of the Chandras as an independent power. But the Kalachuris also proved a great danger. The Kalachuri king Yuvarāja who flourished in the second quarter of the tenth century A.D. invaded Gauḍa and defeated its king, who was probably Gopāla II. Lakṣmanaṇarāja, son of Yuvarāja, is said to have plundered Gauḍa and raided Vaṅgāla.10 The king of Vaṅgāla at this time was most probably Śrīchandra, who, as mentioned above (p. 204), is said to have re-instated Gopāla on the throne. Probably it was the help rendered to Gopāla by the Chandra king that brought about this invasion of Vaṅgāla by the Kalachuri king Lakṣmanaṇarāja; or it may be that both Gopāla II and Śrīchandra made a common cause against the Kalachuris and provoked this invasion. But the tangled history of the Pālas and Chandras, or of Gauḍa and Vaṅgāla, highlighted by the successive Kalachuri invasions in these regions, cannot be properly understood in the present state of our knowledge. In any case the Kalachuri success against Gauḍa and Vaṅgāla seems to be temporary and did not leave any trace behind.

We learn from the newly-discovered plates that the Chandras had hostile relations not only with the Gauḍas but also with Kāmarūpa. Śrīchandra's army entered the valley of the Lauhitya (Brahmaputra) in order to conquer Kāmarūpa and evidently reached the interior of the country. He is also said to have defeated the king of Prāgjyotisha. Kalyāṇachandra, the son of Śrīchandra, is also said to have defeated the Mlecchhas who lived on the Lauhitya river.
Kāmarūpa was ruled in the tenth century by kings of the dynasty founded by Prālambha, who probably belonged to the dynasty of the Mlechchha Sālastamba, though according to some records he belonged to the dynasty founded by Asura Naraka, the mythological founder of the early royal dynasty of Kāmarūpa, to which belonged Bhāskaravarman. The specific reference in the Chandra plates to the Mlechchha ruler of Kāmarūpa supports the view that the ruling kings belonged to the dynasty of Sālastamba. But towards the close of the tenth century A.D. there was a change of dynasty as well as of the capital of the kingdom from Tezpur or its neighbourhood to Gauhati, the original capital of Kāmarūpa. Whether these were due in any way to the invasion of the Chandras cannot be determined.

King Govindachandra, the last Chandra king of Vaṅgāla known so far, must be identified with the homonymous king who was defeated by the army of Rājendra Chola, and is said to have fled from the battlefield (p. 133). But there is no reason to suppose that this had any permanent effect upon the fortunes of the Chandras. But the death-blow to the power of the Chandras was probably dealt by their old enemy, the Kalachuris.

The great Kalachuri ruler Karna (1041-c 1070 A.D.) is credited with successful military campaign against Vaṅga, and is said to have achieved a decisive victory over the king of the Eastern country who probably lost his life in the fierce fight. In both cases, the reference seems to be to the Chandra kingdom, and the adversary of Karna was most probably Govindachandra or his successor. It is very likely that the Chandra kingdom was finally destroyed by the invasions of Karna. In any case, it does not appear in the history of Bengal after the middle of the eleventh century A.D.

II The Varmans

There is hardly any doubt that the Varman dynasty succeeded the Chandras in Eastern Bengal. Our information about this dynasty is derived chiefly from a single inscription, the Belāva copper-plate of Bhojavarman (B. 88). It begins with the Purānic genealogy of Yadu from Brahmā through Atri, Chandra, Budha, Pururavas, Āyu, Nahusha and Yayāti. Reference is then made to Hari, of the family of Yadu, who appeared as Kṛishṇa, The relatives of Hari were the Varmans who were zealous in their support of the three Vedas and dominated over Siṃhapura.
The Varman kings of Bengal thus claim to be descended from a branch of the Yādava dynasty ruling over Simhapura. Various opinions have been entertained regarding the location of Simhapura and the choice seems to lie between three known cities bearing that name: one to the north of the Salt Range in the Punjab, a second in Kaliṅga, perhaps identical with the modern Singupuram between Chicacole and Narasannapeṭa; and the third in Rāṇāhā, generally identified with Singur in the Hoogly district. The first is too far away, and there is no evidence that it existed after the seventh century A.D. The third is only known from the legendary account of Vijayasiṅha, contained in Mahāvaṁsa, which can hardly be accepted as sober history. The kingdom of Simhapura in Kaliṅga, on the other hand, is known to exist as early as the fifth century A.D., and as late as the twelfth century A.D.

The probability, therefore, lies in favour of the kingdom of Simhapura in Kaliṅga being the original home of the Varman kings of Bengal. It may be noted that kings with names ending in -varman are known to have ruled in this kingdom of Simhapura in the fifth century A.D., though they never claimed to belong to the Yādava dynasty.

How the Varmans came to occupy Eastern Bengal is not told in the Belāva copper-plate. But the way in which it refers to the conquests of Jātavarman hardly leaves any doubt that it was during his reign that the foundations were laid of the greatness of the family. As a matter of fact, he seems to have been the first independent ruler of the dynasty, as his father, Vajravarman, the first ancestor named in the Grant, is not referred to as a king, though he is eulogised as a brave warrior, a poet among poets, and a scholar among scholars.

The conquests of Jātavarman are referred to in a poetic way in the following passage in Belāva Grant:

"He spread his paramount sovereignty, by eclipsing (even) the glory of Prithu son of Veṇa, marrying Viṅgaṅī (daughter) of Karṇa, by extending his domination over the Aṅgas, by humiliating the dignity of Kāmarūpa, by bringing to disgrace the strength of the arms of Divya, by damaging the fortune of Govardhana, and by vesting wealth in Brāhmaṁṣa versed in the Vedas" (v. 8).

Karṇa, whose daughter Viṅgaṅī was married by Jātavarman, was undoubtedly the Kalachuri king of that name who ruled from A.D. 1041 to c. 1070 A.D. It may be remembered that another
daughter of the same king was married by the Pāla king Vīgraḥapāla III. This enables us to place the reign of Jātavarman, with a tolerable degree of certainty, in the second half, probably the third quarter, of the eleventh century A.D.

Of the defeated enemies mentioned in the above passage, we can easily identify Divya with the great Kaivarta leader who usurped the throne of the Pālas as the result of a successful revolt against Mahīpāla II. It is obvious that Jātavarman took full advantage of the anarchy and confusion that set in after that revolt, and carved out a kingdom for himself. As the Aṅga country, conquered by him, was almost certainly under the Pālas, it appears that he fought against both the Pālas and the rebellious chief Divya. It is presumably by his victory over both that he gained the kingdom of Eastern Bengal, though there is also the possibility that he first secured the kingdom of Eastern Bengal, and then turned his arms against them. His struggle with Kāmarūpa, evidently leading to no decisive result, must have taken place after his conquest of Eastern Bengal. Govardhana, whose fortune is said to have been damaged by him, cannot be identified with certainty. Most probably he was another adventurer like Jātavarman who tried to fish in the troubled waters of Bengal.

It is difficult to believe that Jātavarman, a petty chief coming from outside, could have undertaken all these military expeditions on his own account. It has accordingly been suggested that he accompanied the Kalachuri-king Karna in his expedition against Bengal. Perhaps it would be more reasonable to regard him as a follower of both Gāṅgeyadeva and his son Karna. Gāṅgeya claims to have defeated the rulers of both Aṅga and Utkala, and Karna is said to have exercised some sort of supremacy over Gauḍa, Vaṅga, and Kaliṅga. The Paikor Inscription proves that Karna's conquests certainly extended up to the Bhāgirathī river, and the Rewa Stone Inscription refers to his complete victory over a king of an eastern country, probably Vaṅga. It is said that the ship of the king of the eastern country sank into the sea. This may be a mere hyperbole, but may also mean the final extinction of the ruling Chandra Dynasty in Eastern Bengal which seems to be probable on other grounds also. If we assume Jātavarman to have been the ruler of Simhapura in Orissa he might have joined the great Kalachuri rulers in their eastern expeditions, and ultimately carved out an independent kingdom for himself in Eastern Bengal by
supplanting the Chandras. Jātavaranman’s claim to have conquered the Aṅgas and defeated Divya might mean no more than that he took part in the battles of Gāṅgeya and Karpa against Aṅga and Gauḍa, and the same may be the case in regard to his defeat of Govardhana. It must be remembered, however, that all this is pure conjecture, and we do not possess sufficient data to arrive at a definite conclusion about the sudden rise of this military adventurer to fame and power in Bengal.

Immediately after Jātavaranman the Belāva copper-plate mentions his son by Vṛṣṭrī, named Sāmalavarmadeva. The natural presumption, therefore, is that Jātavaranman was succeeded by Sāmalavarman. A fragment of a copper-plate of Sāmalavarman, recently discovered at Vajrayogini (B. 91), raises, however, some doubts on this point, and makes it probable that Jātavaranman was succeeded by king Harivarman.

The name of Harivarman was known long ago from colophons of two Buddhist manuscripts, copied respectively in his 19th30 and 39th31 regnal years. In the former he is given the titles Mahārājaṇadhīrāja, Paramēvara, Paramahatjāraka. He is mentioned in the Bhuvanēvara inscription of his minister Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva (B. 90) and is also known from the Sāmantasāra copper-plate Grant (B. 89) issued by him from Vikramapura.32 The plate gives him all the imperial titles, and refers to his father’s name, which was formerly read by Mr. N. Vasu as Jyotirvarman, and doubtfully restored by Dr. Bhattasali as Jātavaranman.33 If this latter reading is correct, he must be regarded as a brother of Sāmalavarman. This view is strengthened by the Vajrayogini fragmentary copper-plate, mentioned above, which contains the names of both Harivarman and Sāmalavarman. Unfortunately the portion of the record indicating the relation between the two is missing. But as the plate seems to have been issued in the reign of Sāmalavarmadeva, Harivarman presumably flourished before him. The view, based on Dr. Bhattasali’s tentative reading of Jātavaranman in the Sāmantasāra Plate, that Harivarman was the elder brother and predecessor of Sāmalavarman, may be accepted for the present, as a reasonable working hypothesis, although it cannot be regarded as an established fact.

The only definite information that we possess about Harivarman is that he ruled over Eastern Bengal with Vikramapura34 as his capital, and that he had a long reign extending over forty-six years or even more. In line 5 of the Fragmentary Vajrayogini Plate
(B. 91) Harivarman is said to have devastated his enemies. It has already been suggested above, that the chief Hari, to whom great prominence is given in the Rāmcharita, and who allied himself first with Bhīma and then with Rāmapāla, was probably the Varman ruler Harivarman, and that he is to be identified with the Varman king who, for his own safety, propitiated Rāmapāla by gift of chariot and elephants. Harivarman was succeeded by his son, but his name is not known.

A few words may be said of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, the great Brāhmaṇa minister of Harivarman, who has left a long account of himself and seven generations of his family in the stone inscription referred to above. The family was settled in the village Siddhāla in Rādhā. Ādideva, the grandfather of Bhavadeva, was a minister to his Royal Majesty, the king of Vahga. The name of the king is not mentioned, but he may be Jātavarman. Bhavadeva’s father Govardhana was a great scholar and warrior, but does not seem to have held any high office. Bhavadeva himself was the minister of peace and war to Harivarman, and also to his son. The inscription gives a detailed account of his profound learning in various branches of knowledge, and that this is no mere empty boast is proved by at least two extant Smṛiti treatises composed by him. On the whole Bhavadeva must be regarded as a remarkable personality, combining in himself the high qualities of a statesman, warrior, scholar and author.

Bhavadeva was also known as Bāla-valabhī-bhujaṅga. The first part, Bālavabhī, is usually taken to be the name of a kingdom referred to in the Rāmcharita (see p. 189), but the exact sense of the whole compound is obscure and has been a subject of protracted controversy. D. C. Bhattacharya cited an old tradition recorded in the Sudhāsāgara of Bhīmasena Dikshīta to the effect that the boy Bhavadeva, being the most intelligent among his fellow-students who took their lessons in a valabhī (the topmost part of a house) with a sharp tongue, was a veritable terror to the other boys and hence his guru (preceptor) gave him the title Bāla-valabhī-bhujaṅga. Bhattacharya pointed out that this is in a way corroborated by Bhavadeva himself, and opposed the current view on the ground that “Bhujaṅga makes no sense when joined with a place-name without a word like Vīśālinī”. D. C. Sircar, however, regards Bhīmasena’s interpretation as fantastic and supports the older view that Bāla-valabhī was the name of a city in which Bhavadeva was a student (bhujaṅga).
Dr. M. Ghosh cites a Prakrit passage in the *Karpūra-maṇjarī* in which a ruler is called a *bhujāṅga* of the eastern region (*pūrva-dīgaṅgānā-bhujāṅga*), and takes the word *bhujāṅga* to mean a victor. He, therefore, thinks the compound means that Bhavadeva, the *Sāndhi-vigrāhika* of Harivarman, led his master’s forces against Bāla-valabhi, the capital of Vikramarāja, mentioned in the *Rāma-charita*.

It is to be noted that in the expression on which he relies, the word *bhujāṅga* is joined with *aṅgānā*, and thus he does not meet with the objection of D. C. Bhattacharyya.

Hardly anything is known of the son of Harivarman or of the circumstances under which the kingdom passed to Sāmalavarman, the other son of Jātavarman. But Sāmalavarman is one of the few kings of Bengal who have survived in local traditions. The Vaidika Brāhmaṇs of Bengal claim that their ancestors first settled in Bengal during the reign of Sāmalavarman, though, according to one version of the story, the event took place during the reign of Hari- varman. According to most of the genealogical books of the Vaidika Brāhmaṇs, the first of their line came to Bengal at the invitation of Sāmalavarman in Śaka 1001 (≈1079 A.D.). This date, correct within half a century, shows that some genuine traditions about Sāmalavarman were preserved in Bengal.

We learn from the Belāva copper-plate (B. 88) that Sāmalavarman had many queens, the chief among them being Mālavayadevi. By her he had a son called Bhojavarman who issued the Belāva copper-plate Grant in the fifth year of his reign from his capital city Vikramapura. He is given the imperial titles and the epithet *parama-Vaishṇava*. This, as well as the reference to *Vishnu-chakra-mudrā* in line 48, proves that the family were Vaishṇavas. They were orthodox supporters of the Vedas, as already mentioned above, and the replacement of the Buddhist dynasty of the Chandras by the orthodox Brāhmanical dynasty of the Varmans was fully in keeping with the spirit of the times. It may not be a mere coincidence that the two Buddhist ruling dynasties in Bengal, viz., the Pālas and the Chandras, were supplanted by two foreign dynasties (Senas and Varmans) of orthodox faith within a century.

The land granted by Bhojavarman was situated in the Pauḍra-bhukti and Kauśāmbi-Ashtagachchha-khaṇḍala. Reference has already been made to a capital city called Kauśāmbi in connection with the feudatories of Rāmapāla. If Kauśāmbi of this inscription is identical with that, Bhojavarman’s kingdom might have included
a portion of Varendra, the Paunḍravardhana-bhukti par excellence. But this is by no means certain. For all we know, the kingdom of the Varmans might have been confined to Eastern Bengal with Vikramapura as its capital.

As already noted above, Jātavarman must have flourished in the second-half, and probably in the third-quarter, of the eleventh century A.D. If he was succeeded by Harivarman who had a long reign of at least forty-six years, Sāmalavarman and Bhojavarman must have ruled in the first-half of the twelfth century A.D. There is little doubt that the Varmans were ousted from East Bengal by the Senas during, or shortly after, the reign of Bhojavarman.

III. THE RĀṆAKAS OF EASTERN BIHAR

An inscription engraved on the pedestal of a Buddhist image in the village of Kāndī about 8½ miles from the Sikandarā Police Station in the Jāmuī subdivision of the Monghyr District, Bihar, refers to the gift of Rāṇaka Samudrāditya, son of Rāṇaka Nanda. The word Rāṇaka (Pali equivalent of Sanskrit Rājanaka and modern Rāṇā) denotes normally a subordinate ruler, but as there is no reference to any overlord, the donor was probably a de facto, if not de jure, independent Chief. The inscription may be referred on palaeographic grounds to the twelfth century A.D. and Dr. D. C. Sircar, who edited it, suggests a date not far removed from that of the Valgudar inscription of Madanapāla (B.64). Evidently Rāṇaka Samudrāditya and his father were feudatory chiefs of the Pālas but assumed independence during the decline of the Pāla authority in the Monghyr region.
Footnotes

1 The traditional account of the nine Chandra kings of Arakan ruling from A.D. 788 to 957, as preserved in the later chronicles, is given by Phayre (History of Burma, p. 45). For the names of these kings and an account of the coins, cf. Phayre, Coins of Arakan, of Pegu, and of Burma (Numismata Orientalia) pp. 28-29, 43. A brief account of the inscriptions found on the platform of the Shitthaung temple at Morahaung is given in ASI. 1925-6; pp. 146-7.

The latest account of the Chandra kings of Arakan is that by Dr. D. C. Sircar in Ep. Ind. XXXII, pp. 103-9.

2 This suggestion has been made by Mr. Syed Murtaza Ali in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Vol. vi (1961), pp. 267-274. He also holds the view that after coming from Arakan the Chandras “reduced Harikela first by ousting the descendants of Kāntideva. Later they transferred their capital to Paṭṭikera reducing that area. Finally they occupied Dacca District and had their seat of Government at Vikrampur which was the capital during the time of their greatest glory” (Ibid. p. 272). He has also drawn attention to the fact that Laḍahachandra issued a Grant from Śrī Paṭṭikeraka in Samata maṇḍala in Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti (ibid. p. 270).

3 Professor Dani places the reign-period of Govindachandra between 1020 and 1050. His view is based mainly on the statement of the author of the Śabdarādha that his father served Rāmapāla, Lord of Vañga (Vaṅgaśvara), and his grandfather served Govindachandra as a court physician. Dani identifies these two kings, respectively, with Rāmapāla of the Pāla dynasty and Govindachandra of the Chandra dynasty, and naturally concludes that there was probably not more than a generation’s gap between them. But from what we know of the history of Rāmapāla he could not have possibly asserted his sovereignty over Vañga till long after the Varman had occupied the country, presumably after defeating Govindachandra or his successor. There are good grounds for the belief that the Varman were in occupation of East Bengal some time before A.D. 1048. Jātavarm, the first or second king of this dynasty, was a contemporary of Rāmapala’s father, Vigrānapāla, and Bhōjarāman, Jātavarm’s grandson and second in succession after him, who used full imperial titles, had his capital at Vikramapura, the capital of the Chandras. So Rāmapāla, Lord of Vañga, could not be entitled to this epithet till more than one or two generations after Govindachandra. The date suggested above by me for Govindachandra is, therefore, more in consonance with the known facts of the rule of the Varman in the territory of the Chandras. King Rāmapāla, mentioned in the Šabdaradha, was perhaps a local ruler like Dharmapāla of Daṇḍabhukti who was defeated, like Govindachandra, by the Chola. It is interesting to note in this connection that the kings of the Kāmboja family, who also ruled over Daṇḍabhukti, bore well-known names of the imperial Pāla family.

The commencement of the reign of Govindachandra cannot be A.D. 1020, as Professor Dani suggested and Dr. D. C. Sircar accepted, for the Chōla expedition to Bengal is referred to in the Tiruvalangadu Plates dated in the 6th year of Rājendrā Chōla, i.e., A.D. 1017.
The approximate dates suggested above are based on the fact that the last
king, Govinda Chandra, was defeated by the Chola general some time before
A.D. 1017 and the Varman had ousted the Chandras before c. A.D. 1040.
The other dates are calculated on the basis of the known length of each reign.
No dates are suggested for the first two rulers, of whom practically nothing
is known and who are not likely to have wielded much power. This chrono-
logical scheme may be provisionally accepted with a margin of error of about
10 to 20 years. It gives an average of 32 years for each generation,
i.e., three generations for a century.

4 For the controversy about the correct reading of the name Rohitāgiri and its
of Rohitāgiri with Rohtasgarh is generally accepted, but there is no
definite evidence in support of it, and the correct form of the old name of
Rohtasgarh is Rohitāśvagiri. The fact that quite a large number of inscrip-
tions of this family have been found in the region of Lalmai Hills near Comilla
strongly supports the identification proposed by Bhattasali. The Lalmai
Hills are about five miles to the west of Comilla, and extended for about eleven
miles with an average height of about 30 feet, though some peaks rise to a
height of 100 feet. An account of the locality and its antiquities is given by Dr.
N.K. Bhattasali (Bhatt. Cat. pp. 9-11). It is interesting to note that two kings
of Orissa viz., Gayādattaṅga and Vinitatungha II, refer in their records to
Rohitāgiri as the home of their ancestors (JBOBS. VI, 238; JASB. 1909,
p. 347; 1916, p. 291; IHQ. II. 655).

6 Ep. Ind. XXVIII, p. 54.
7 Ibid, p. 338.
8 Ibid. XXXIII, p. 135.
9 Professor Dani takes a verse (in B. 81) to mean that śrīchandra helped Gopāla
to recover his throne by removing the obstacle created by Prithvipāla and
suggests that Gopāla and Prithvipāla were brothers who fought among them-
selves. Even assuming that Prithvipāla was a person and not used as a synonym
for the king, it would be more reasonable to take him to be a ruler of the
Kāmboja family, for, as mentioned above, the names of its kings ended in
pāla. But none of these two conjectures is supported by any evidence.

10 Supra. pp. 9-10; also supra. pp. 129-30. According to some old Bengali
texts, Chandravipa was bounded by the Padma and the Dhaleswari rivers on
the north and the west and the sea in the south (Miśrī-granthā quoted in Bāktā


12 Bheraghat Ins. v. 12 (El. II. 11,15); Rewa Stone Ins. v. 23 (El. XXIV. 105,112).

13 This point will be further discussed in connection with the history of the
Varman in the next section.

14 According to the Lakhāmanḍal Praśasti (Ep. Ind. I. 10-15), the queen of Jāland-
dhara (Punjab) was descended from a line of Yādava kings of Siṁhapura, and
this Siṁhapura has been identified by Buhler with Seng-ha-pu-lo in the Punjab
mentioned by Huen Tsang (Watters I. 248-49). R. D. Banerji points out that
there were other towns of this name, e.g., one in Malwa (JASB. N. S. X. 124).

15 Ep. Ind. IV. 143.

16 JASB. 1910, p. 604.
Two kings of Kaliṅga, Ṣaṁadvarman and Ṣaṁadvarman, ruling between 350 and 550 A.D., issued their Grants from Śīnhabhūra (DUS. II. No. ii. pp. 2, 3, 9-10). According to Śīnhalese inscriptions, the two kings Nissankamalla and Sāhasamalla, the second of whom ascended the throne in A.D. 1200, were sons of the Kaliṅga king Gopāraṇa of Śīnhabhūra. According to Mahāvamśa, Tilokasundarī, queen of Vijayabahu I (acc. c. 1059 A.D.) was a princess of Kaliṅga, and three relatives of her came to Ceylon from Śīnhabhūra (EI. XII. 4).

Dr. D. C. Ganguly maintains that Śīnhabhūra may be located in Eastern Bengal, and be even regarded as the capital of the Varmanas. He contends that there is nothing in v. 5 of the Belāva Grant to warrant the assertion that Śīnhabhūra was the original home of the Varmanas and lay outside Bengal (IHQ. XII. 608-9).

Cf. Chaṇḍavarman and Umāvarman in f.n. 16.

Both Mr. R. D. Banerji and Dr. D. C. Ganguly maintain that the Varman kingdom in Eastern Bengal was founded by Vajravarman (BI. 276; IHQ. V. 225). Mr. R. D. Banerji, however, formerly stated that there is nothing to show that Vajravarman was a king himself (JASB. N. S. X. 124).

The date of the death of Kṣṇa is not definitely known, but it must have taken place in or before 1073 A.D., the earliest known date of his successor (DHNI. II. 777, 782).

Perhaps a reminiscence of the fight between Divya and Ṣaṭṭavaran is preserved in a Nālandā Stone Ins. (EI. XXI. 97). It relates about an ascetic of Somapura (Pāharpur in Rajshahi district) that “when his house was burning, (being) set on fire by the approaching armies of Vaṅgāla, he attached (himself) to the pair of lotus feet of the Buddha (and) went to heaven.” It would then follow that Ṣaṭṭavaran invaded Northern Bengal (IC. VI. 55).

Dr. R. G. Basak’s suggestion that this Govardhana may be the father of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, the prime-minister of Harivarman (EI. XII.38), has been endorsed by Dr. H. C. Ray (DHNI. I. 335) and Mr. R. D. Banerji, but the assumption involves too many difficulties and rests on very slender foundations. Mr. Banerji has made an alternative suggestion that Govardhana may be the ruler of Kauśāmbī, who helped Rāmapāla in his fight against Bhīma, and whose name, probably through copyist’s mistake, occurs as Dvorapavardhana (JASB. N. S. X. 124).

R. D. Banerji suggested that Vajravarman accompanied one of the three foreign conquerors of Bengal, viz., Rājendra Chōla, Jayasiṁha II, or Gāṅgeya-deva (BI. 276; JASB. N. S. X. 124). Mr. P. L. Paul suggests that Ṣaṭṭavaran followed Kṣṇa into Bengal. He even proposes the identification of Ṣaṭṭavaran with the ‘illustrious Ṣaṭṭa’ who is said in the Rewa Ins. of Malayasiṁha to have helped Kṛṣṇadeva in vanquishing his foes (IHQ. XII. 473). Professor V. V. Mirashi, while editing the Rewa Stone Ins. of Kṛṣṇa (EI. XXIV.105) remarks in connection with v. 23; “Stripped of its metaphor” the verse means that Kṛṣṇa achieved a decisive victory over the king of the Eastern country, who lost his life in the fierce fight.” From this he infers “that Kṛṣṇa killed the last king of the Chandra dynasty, who was either Govindachandra or his successor, placed Vajravarman in charge of the newly acquired territory, and married his daughter to Ṣaṭṭavaran to cement the
political alliance." If this view is accepted, the Chandras must have been supplanted by the Varmans before 1048-49 A.D., the date of the Rewa Ins.

DHNI. II. 772.

Ibid. 778.

ASI. 1921-22, pp. 78-80.

See f. n. 23.

See p. 206.

Only a fourth part of the plate—the right lower half—has been recovered, containing last parts of fifteen lines on the obverse, and first parts of fifteen lines on the reverse.

PB. 97 ; IB. 28.

This ms. is described in Sāstrī-Cat. i. 79. The date is given in the postcolophon as "Mahārājādhirāja Śrīmat-Harivarmma-deva-pādiya samvat 39." (Dr. N. K. Bhattasali reads the figure as 32.). This is followed by three verses, written in a different hand, according to which 'when forty-six years of Harivarman had elapsed,' the ms was five times recited (?) in seven years on the bank of the Veng river. Although the meaning of the latter part is not certain, the reference to 46 years is important. The first expression denoting date may mean 39th regnal year or year 39 of an era founded by Harivarman. No such era is known, but the absence of any reference to Vijaya-rājya etc., is striking. If 39 is taken as regnal year, 46 should also be taken as regnal year, and it would show that Harivarman ruled at least for 46 years. Besides, the astronomical data given in this manuscript make this date correspond with 1119 A.D., and in that case the accession of Harivarman falls in A.D. 1073-4 (IHQ. XXII. 135).

The river Veng is placed by M.M. H. P. Sāstrī in Jessore. If true, it probably indicates that Central Bengal was included in the kingdom of Harivarman.

The Grant (B. 89) was originally edited by late Mr. N. N. Vasu (VII. II. 215). Mr. Vasu gave a very indistinct photograph and a tentative reading of the inscription, according to which the Grant was issued from Vikramapur in the year 42 of Parama-Vaśkhyva, Paramavāra, Parama-bhāṣāraka, Mahārājādhirāja Harivarman, son and successor of Mahārājādhirāja Jyotirvarman. The plate was lost sight of for a long time, but was later traced in Sāmantasāra, a village in the Faridpur district, and purchased for the Dacca Museum. The plate was evidently burnt, and has become almost illegible. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali has edited it Ep. Ind. XXX, pp. 255 ff. The name Harivarman is quite clear, and he is said to have meditated on the feet of Jātavaran, but there is no date.

Dr. Bhattasali remarked that the only letter in the name that can be distinctly read is -rmma, and all the other letters are hopelessly indistinct. He added that the proposed restoration of the name as 'Jātavaran' should not be regarded as a definite conclusion (Bhāratavarsha, Māgha, 1344, p. 171.). But while editing the Grant in Ep. Ind. (XXX. 257) he reads the name definitely as Jātavaran.

This follows from the reading "iha khalu Vikramapura-samāvāsita" in the Sāmantasāra copper-plate.
See supra p. 150.

The son of Harivarman is referred to in v. 16 of the Bhuvanesvara praśasti, and perhaps also in the fragmentary Vajrayogini copper-plate (B. 91). Mr. N. G. Majumdar concluded from verse 15 of the Bhuvanesvara Ins. of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva that either Harivarman or his son 'made himself master of Utkala by overthrowing the Nāgavaṃśi dynasty which ruled over Bastar in Central Provinces in the eleventh century A. D.' (IB. 29-30). This point has already been discussed above (supra p. 191, f.n. 230). He further maintained, on the strength of certain verses (III. 42-44) of Rāmācharīta, that 'Rāmapāla encountered somewhere in Orissa Harivarman of Bengal or his son' (IB. 30). The view that Harivarman or his son ruled in Orissa is primarily based on the stone inscription of his minister Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva. There is nothing in the record itself to connect Harivarman or Bhavadeva with Orissa, but the generally accepted view that the inscription was 'originally fixed on the temple of Ananta-Vāsudeva at Bhuvanesvara in the Puri district, Orissa', led scholars to suppose that the pious constructions referred to in the inscription were situated in the same locality, and Harivarman's political supremacy extended over this region. To Mr. P. Acharyya belongs the credit of removing the century-old misapprehension about the original situation of the stone inscription. He has shown by cogent arguments the erroneous character of the belief that the stone slab containing the inscription was ever fixed on any temple at Bhuvanesvara. He has also shown the unreliable character of the literary evidence cited by Mr. N. Vasu in favour of the supposition that Bhavadeva erected temples and did other pious works in Orissa (Proc. Ind. Hist. Congress, 3rd Session, pp. 287 ff). In view of Mr. Acharyya's explanation, we cannot regard either Harivarman or his son as ruler of Orissa, until more positive evidence is forthcoming than the very doubtful interpretation of verse 15 of Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva's inscription. For even if we endorse the view of Mr. N. G. Majumdar that the verse in question refers to the defeat of the Nāgas by Bhavadeva, we should look for their territory near Eastern Bengal, and it is more reasonable to identify them with the Nāgas of Assam hills. More light has been thrown on this question by D. C. Bhattacharya. He has shown that the inscription was brought to Dacca by Mr. D. Paterson who was the judge and magistrate of Dacca during the period 1791-95. It was exhibited in a learned assembly at Dacca and was deciphered by one Pandit Rājchandra. Śrī Bhattacharya has argued that verses 26-27 of the inscription show that the temple of Bhavadeva on which it was fixed could not be in Rāṣṭhā and suggests that it was possibly at Vikramapura (IHQ. XXII, 134-5).

Cf. IB. 30-31 ; also Ch. xi.

IHQ. XXII, 136.

IHQ. XXVII, 81.

IHQ. XXVII, 339.

Cf. IHQ. XXII, p. 133.

The verses 9-11 of the Belāva copper-plate (B. 88) are rather difficult to understand. According to the interpretation of MM. H. P. Śastry and R. D. Banerji (JASB. N. S. X. 125), Mālavadevi was the daughter of Jagadāvijayamalla, son of Udayin. According to Dr. R. G. Basak, Mālavadevi was the daughter of Udayin (EI. XII. 42). According to Mr. N. G. Majumdar and Dr. D. R.
Bhandarkar, Mālavyadevi was the daughter of Jagadvijayamalla, and Udayin was the son of Sāmalavarman by another queen (IB. 191).

MM. Śāstry further identifies Udayin and Jagadvijayamalla, respectively, with the Paramāra king Udayāditya and his son Jagaddeva or Jagdeo, and Mr. Banerji is also inclined to take the same view. This view is also endorsed by Dr. D. C. Ganguly in his History of the Paramāras (p. 141). As Udayāditya ruled during the last quarter of the eleventh century A.D., there is no chronological difficulty in the proposed identification, but the difference between the names Jagaddeva and Jagadvijayamalla cannot be ignored. Besides, the interpretation of MM. Śāstry and Mr. Banerji involves the emendation of the word ‘tasya’ in v. 10 of the Belāva copper-plate as ‘tathā’. On the whole, it would be safe not to accept definitely the proposed identification until further evidence is available.

Attention may also be drawn in this connection to the expression ‘Trailokyasundarī’ in v. 11. In all the interpretations referred to above, the word has been taken as an adjective to Mālavyadevi meaning “the most beautiful in the three worlds.” It is, however, possible to interpret the verse so as to make Trailokyasundarī the name of the daughter of Sāmalavarman and Mālavyadevi. Indeed this was the interpretation originally proposed by Mr. N. G. Majumdar (IB. 23). In this connection he remarked: “The name Trailokyasundari is by no means uncommon. One of the queens of Vijayabahu I of Ceylon was a princess of Kaliṅga named Tilokasundarī” (IB. 18). Now, according to the Mahāvaṇsa, Vijayabahu married Tilokasundarī of the Kaliṅga royal race. If we identify Siṅhāpura, the homeland of the Varmans of Bengal, with the royal city of that name in Kaliṅga, it would not be unreasonable to identify Trailokyasundari, daughter of Sāmalavarman, with the queen of Vijayabahu. Apart from agreement in dates, it would explain the very queer reference to the calamity befalling the king of Laṅkā, and a prayer for his welfare in v. 14 of the Belāva copper-plate of Bhoja varman. It is difficult to explain this reference to the king of Laṅkā unless there was some association between that kingdom and the Varmans.

See above, p. 190 f. n. 220.


Ibid. p. 9.
CHAPTER VII

THE SENAS

I. The Origin of the Sena Kings

The Sena family, that ruled in Bengal after the Pālas, appears from the official records to have originally belonged to Karṇāṭa in South India. According to the Deopāra Inscription (C. 2), Virasena and others, born in the family of the Moon, were rulers of the Southern region¹ whose achievements were sung by Vyāsa, and in that Sena family was born Sāmantasena, the head-garland of the Brahma-Kshatriyas. The same account is repeated in the Mādhaṅnagar Grant (C. 13) in a slightly modified form:

“In the family of Virasena, which has become illustrious through the legends recorded in the Purāṇas, was born Sāmantasena, the head-garland of the clan of the Karṇāṭa-Kshatriyas.”

The Karṇāṭa origin is further supported by the statement in the Deopāra Inscription (v. 8) that Sāmantasena ‘slaughtered the wicked despoilers of the Lakshmī (i.e. wealth) of Karṇāṭa’ in battles waged in Southern India.²

These statements leave no doubt that the original home of the family was in Karṇāṭa, i.e., the region in modern Mysore and neighbouring States where Kanarese is the spoken language, and that it belonged to the well-known ‘Brahma-Kshatri’ caste.

After referring to the martial exploits of Sāmantasena in South India, the Deopāra Inscription adds that “in his last days he frequented the sacred hermitages situated in forests on the banks of the Ganges” (v. 9). As Sāmantasena’s descendants ruled in Bengal, it is natural to conclude from the above that he was the first of the Karṇṇaṭa-Sena family to migrate from the south and settle in Bengal. But this view is opposed to the following statement in vv. 3-4 of the Naihati copper-plate (C 5):

“In his (i.e., Moon’s) prosperous family were born princes, who adorned Rādhā (i.e., Western Bengal) ....................and in their family was born the mighty Sāmantasena.”
This certainly implies that the Sena family had settled in Western Bengal before Sāmantasena was born.

The only way to reconcile these contradictory statements is to suppose that a Sena family from Karṇāṭa had settled in Western Bengal but kept itself in touch with its motherland; that one of its members, Sāmantasena, spent his early life in Karṇāṭa, distinguishing himself in various warfares in South India, and betook himself in old age to the family seat in Bengal. Evidently his exploits made the family so powerful that his son was able to carve out a kingdom in Bengal; for Hemantasena, the son of Sāmantasena, is the first of the family to whom royal epithets are given in the family records. It is true that Sāmantasena’s predecessors are referred to as princes who ruled over the surface of the earth but beyond these vague general phrases there is nothing to indicate that they really held the rank of independent kings.

The records of the Senas call them Brahma-Kshatriya, Karṇāṭa-Kshatriya, and sometimes simply Kshatriya. The term Brahma-Kshatriya, applied to the Senas, was first correctly explained by Dr. D. R Bhandarkar as denoting the well-known caste Brahma-Kshatri. He has shown that no less than five royal families were designated Brahma-Kshatri. The nomenclature was given to ‘those who were Brāhmanaś first and became Kshatriyas afterwards’ i.e., ‘those who exchanged their priestly for martial pursuits.’ There are broad hints in the Sena records that this was true of the Sena family. Sāmantasena is called Brahma-vāḍī, a term usually applied to one who teaches or expounds the Vedas, but the poet uses it to signify his skill in the extermination of opposing soldiers. In the Mādhāinagar Grant (C. 13), the Sena princes are said to have ‘made preparations for sacrifices (kratu) befitting a conquest of the three worlds and thereby checked the priests serving in the Sessional Soma sacrifices of the gods.’ Here, again, technical Brāhmanical terms are used to denote the martial exploits. Mr. N. G. Majumdar very rightly remarked with reference to the word ‘Brahma-vāḍī,’ that ‘here probably it is indicated that Sāmantasena was as much Brāhmaṇa as Kshatriya, thus bringing out the etymological meaning of Brahma-Kshatriya i.e., Brāhmaṇa as well as Kshatriya. The same remark might apply to the other expression in the Mādhāinagar Grant.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that a number of epigraphic records refer to one or more lines of Jaina teachers
belonging to ‘Sena family,’ settled in the Dharwar district in the heart of the Karnāṭa country. The names of these teachers all end in -sena, and the family is specifically named Senānvaya, and in one case also Chandra-kavāṭanvaya. About eleven members of this family are known to us who flourished between c. 850 and c. 1050 A.D. One of the earliest of them is Vīrasena, a name which is recorded as that of a remote ancestor of the Senas in the Deopārā Inscription. All these make it highly probable that the Senas of Bengal belonged to this Karnāṭaka family of Jaina teachers, but, in the absence of any positive evidence, it cannot be regarded as anything more than a mere hypothesis.\(^{11}\)

The brief account of the early history of the Senas recorded above raises one important question. How could the Karnāṭa family of the Senas come to settle and wield royal power in Bengal? While it is impossible to give a definite answer to this question, we may refer to several circumstances which would render such a thing quite feasible.

It appears from the Pāla records that they employed foreigners who were numerous enough to be specifically mentioned in the inscriptions. Thus the phrase ‘Gauḍa-Mālava-Khaṭa-Hūṇa-Kulika-Karnāṭa-Lāṭa-chāṭa-bhāṭa’ occurs regularly in the Pāla inscriptions in the list of royal officials from the time of Devapāla down to the time of Madanapāla.\(^{12}\) It is not unlikely that some Karnāṭa official gradually acquired sufficient power to set up as an independent king when the central authority became weak. As already noted above, the Kamboja rule in Bengal in the tenth century A.D. may be explained in a similar way. The Abyssinian rule in Bengal in the fifteenth century A.D. is a well-known instance of the same type. This hypothesis is supported by the statement in the Naihati copper-plate (C.5) that the Senas were settled in Rāḍhā for a long time before Sāmantasena.

The Senas might also have come in the wake of some foreign invasions, and established independent principalities in conquered territories in very much the same way as the Marāṭha chiefs like Holkar and Sindhia did in Northern India during the eighteenth century A.D. As noted above,\(^{13}\) the Karnāṭa prince Vikramādiya led a victorious expedition against Bengal and Assam some time about 1068 A.D., and this was preceded and succeeded by others. Similar expeditions were sent to other parts of Northern India during his reign. ‘A record of A.D. 1088-89 speaks of Vikram-
ādīṭya VI crossing the Narmadā and conquering kings on the other side of the river.\textsuperscript{14} His feudatory chief Ācha is represented to have made ‘‘the kings of Kaliṅga, Vaṅga, Maru, Gūrjara, Mālava, Chera, and Choḷa subject to his sovereign.’’\textsuperscript{15} As this Ācha was the Governor of a province in A.D. 1122-23,\textsuperscript{16} his expedition against Vaṅga can hardly refer to that undertaken by his master in c. 1068 A.D., but probably took place much later, in the last decade of the eleventh or the first quarter of the twelfth century A.D. Inscriptions dated 1121 and 1124 A.D. also refer to the conquest of Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kaliṅga, Gauḍa, Magadha, and Nepāla by Vikram-āditya.\textsuperscript{17}

Reference may be made in this connection to the boast of Someśvara III (1127-38 A.D.) that he placed his feet on the heads of the kings of Andhra, Dravīḍa, Magadha, and Nepāla.\textsuperscript{18} Vijjala (c.1145-1167) also claims to have conquered Vaṅga, Kaliṅga, Magadha, and Nepāla.\textsuperscript{19} Even his son Soma is said to have conquered Nepāla and Kaliṅga, and received homage of the Gauḍaśas.\textsuperscript{20} From what we know of these rulers it is hardly likely that they could send directly any expedition to Vaṅga, Magadha or Nepāla. Probably they took the credit of what was done by the Karnāṭa chiefs who still paid a nominal homage to their distant overlord.

It is interesting to note that about the same time when the Senas were establishing their supremacy in Bengal, another Karnāṭa chief, Nānyadeva, was doing the same in Bihar and Nepal. It is also probable that the Gāhaḷavālas, who founded about the same time a powerful kingdom with Kanauj as capital were of Karnāṭa origin.\textsuperscript{21}

The fact seems to be that by storming the capital of the Paramāra king Bhoja I, and utterly destroying the Kalachuri king Karṇa, the Chālukya king Someśvara I paved the way for the Karnāṭa domination in North Indian politics, and, as a result, powerful Karnāṭa principalities were established in Northern India. It is most probable, therefore, that the Sena chief Sāmantasena or his successor, as well as Nānyadeva, came to establish powerful kingdoms in Northern India in the sweeping tide of the military successes of the Karnāṭa kings of the Chālukya dynasty.

It has been suggested on the other hand that the Karnāṭas in Bengal and Bihar were the remnants, either of Rājendra Chola’s army\textsuperscript{22} or of the Karnāṭa allies of Karṇa,\textsuperscript{23} the Kalachuri king. The first view is highly improbable as there is nothing to show that the
Karṇāṭas formed part of Rājendra Chola’s army. Even assuming that they did, it is very unlikely that the Karṇāṭa chiefs would be preferred to Chola in the selection of generals or governors who were left behind by the victorious Chola army to rule over conquered countries. As regards the latter view, Karṇa’s alliance with the Karṇāṭas was of a temporary character.²⁴ Besides, the second part of the objection applies in his case also. On the whole, the most reasonable view seems to be to connect the rise of the Senas in Bengal and of Nāyadeva in Bihar with the Chālukya invasions of Northern India during the rule of Somesvara I and Vikramāditya VI, in the second-half of the eleventh century A.D., and the early years of the next century.

II. The Sena Kings

The history of the Sena family begins with Sāmantasena. As noted above, he proved his valour in various wars in Karṇāṭa and settled in old age on the banks of the Ganges, evidently in some part of Rāḍhā, or the modern Burdwan Division. No royal title is given to him, and there is nothing to show that he founded a kingdom.

Hemantasena, the son of Sāmantasena, seems to have been a ruling chief. He lived in the last quarter of the eleventh century A.D. and the disruption of the Pāla kingdom after the revolt of Divvoka probably enabled him to carve out an independent principality in Rāḍhā. No record of Hemantasena has come to light, but he is given the title Mahārājādhirāja in the Barrackpur copper-plate (C.1) of his son Vijayasena, and reference is made to his great queen Yaśodevi in the Deopārā Inscription (C. 2) of the same monarch. But while these references indicate that he probably founded an independent principality, there is nothing to show that he was either very powerful or ruled over an extensive kingdom. His position was probably like that of the many other ruling chiefs of Rāḍhā who rallied round Rāmapāla in his expedition against Varendra.

Vijayasena (C. 1095-1158)

Hemantasena was succeeded by his son Vijayasena of whom we possess only two records mentioned above. He had probably a long reign of more than sixty years²⁵ (c. 1095-1158 A.D.), and he
married Vilāsadevi, a princess of the Śūra family, probably the one which was ruling in southern Rādhā at the time of the invasion of Rājendra Chola and also during the reign of Rāmapāla. Vijayasena, too, must have begun his career as a chief. But he laid the foundation of the greatness of his family by conquering nearly the whole of Bengal. The circumstances which enabled him to defeat the other chiefs of Rādhā, and ultimately conquer East Bengal from the Varmans and at least a part of North Bengal from the Pālas, are not definitely known to us. But his success in Bengal, like that of the other Karnāṭaka chief Nānyadeva (c. 1097-c. 1147 A.D.) in Bihar, may not unreasonably be connected with the Karnāṭaka domination in Northern India referred to above.

Vijayasena was a contemporary of Nānyadeva, but does not appear to have scored any great success till the second quarter of the twelfth century A.D. Assuming that he had ascended the throne about A.D. 1095, the part played by him in contemporary politics during the early years of his reign is extremely obscure. He was probably on the throne when Rāmapāla purchased the help of independent chiefs of Rādhā; in his campaign against Bhīma, by a lavish gift of money and territories. It has been suggested that Vijayarāja of Nidrāvali, one of the allied feudatory chiefs mentioned in Rāmcharita, refers to Vijayasena. This is, however, not certain. It is probable that his marriage with a daughter of the Śūra royal family which ruled over Apara-Mandara enabled him to attain political greatness. That he was helped by the invasion of the Karnāṭas under Ācha in establishing his supremacy over Vaṅga may be guessed on general grounds but, cannot be established by any positive evidence. He might have entered into an alliance with Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga and profited by it in establishing his supremacy in Rādhā. Such an inference may be drawn from the expression ‘Choḍagaṅga-sakhaḥ,’ ‘friend of Choḍagaṅga,’ used in respect of him in Ānandabhaṭṭa’s Vallāla-charita (Life of his son Vallālasena), but the genuineness of the book has been doubted on good grounds. All that we can, therefore, say is that he fished in the troubled waters of Bengal politics and came out successful.

That he had to fight with several independent chiefs is expressly referred to in the Deopārā Inscription. Among them specific mention is made of his victory over Nānya, Vīra, Rāghava, Vardhana, and the kings of Gauḍa, Kāmarūpa, and Kaliṅga. Of these Vardhana may be identified with Dvora Pavardhana, ruler of Kauśāmbī, and
Vira with Viraguṇa of Koṭāṭavī, two of the allied chiefs who had joined Rāmapāla. Rāghava and the king of Kaliṅga, mentioned in different verses, probably refer to the same person. In that case, we can identify him with the second son of Anantavarman Chōḍa-gaṅga who ruled from 1156 to 1170 A.D. This expedition must then have been undertaken towards the close of his reign.

The most notable of his adversaries were Nā nya and the lord of Gauḍa. Nā nya is undoubtedly the Karṇāta chief who had conquered Mithilā about 1097 A.D. It is mentioned in the colophon of a commentary on Bharata's Nāḷyasūtra, composed by Nā nya, that he had broken the powers of Vaṅga and Gauḍa. It is reasonable to hold therefore that Nā nyadeva, after he had consolidated his dominion in North Bihar, turned his attention towards Bengal, which was then in a process of political disintegration. He might have obtained some successes at first both against the Pāla king of Gauḍa and the Sena king Vijayasena of Vaṅga, but was ultimately defeated by the latter and fell on his own dominions in Mithilā. It is, of course, an equally plausible assumption that the two Karṇāta chiefs Vijayāsena and Nā nya at first combined their forces to break the powers of Vaṅga and Gauḍa, but ultimately fell out and fought over the prize which went to the victor Vijayasena. The way in which the memory of the Sena king has been kept up in Mithilā and the traditions current at a later date make it highly probable that Vijayasena pursued an aggressive campaign against Nā nya in the latter’s dominions and brought Mithilā under his own rule.

The lord of Gauḍa who, according to Deopārā Inscription, fled before Vijayasena, was almost certainly Madanapāla whose dominions in Bengal were at that time confined to North Bengal. That inscription records the erection by Vijayasena of the magnificent temple of Pradyumneśvara whose ruins now lie on the bank of an enormous tank, known as Padumshahr, at Deopārā, about seven miles to the west of the town of Rajshahi. This proves the effective conquest, by Vijayasena, of at least a part of North Bengal. It was perhaps in connection with this expedition to North Bengal that Vijayasena came into conflict with Vardhana, king of Kauśāmbī, and defeated him. It is very probable that Vijayasena’s young grandson, Lakshmanasena, took part in this expedition to North Bengal.

In spite of his eminent success, it does not appear that the final conquest of Gauḍa was achieved by Vijayasena. His son and
grandson had to continue the struggle, and the latter was perhaps the first to assume formally the proud title of Gauḍeśvara. For although this title is applied to both Vijayasena and Vallālasena in the records of the latter’s grandsons, and to Vallālasena in the existing manuscripts of his literary works, it is not associated with these two kings in their own official records or those of Lakshmanašena. The title is not also applied to Lakshmānasena in his earlier records, and appears for the first time in the Bhowal and Mādhāinagar Grants (C. 12-13) which belong to the latter part of his reign. It is, therefore, very likely that the long-drawn struggle with the Pāla kings was not finally concluded, and their pretensions to the sovereignty of Gauḍa definitely abandoned, till the reign of Lakshmānasena. But this does not necessarily mean that Vijayasena or Vallālasena had not virtually conquered the greater part, if not the whole of Gauḍa, for, as the example of Govindaśala shows, the last Pāla kings, who called themselves Gauḍeśvaras, could carry on the fight from their base in Southern Bihar.

The original seat of the Sena power, and the base from which they proceeded to the conquest of the whole province, was Rājhā, but soon they consolidated their power in Vaṅga. Their early land-grants are all issued from Vikramapura, the capital city of Vaṅga, and it was there that the queen of Vijayasena performed the elaborate sacrifice known as Tulāpurusha Mahādāna. This shows that the Varmans who ruled in Vaṅga with Vikramapura as capital must have ceased to reign in that region. Whether the Varmans were ousted by Vijayasena, or lost their kingdom before, there is no means to determine, but the former view appears more probable.

The statement in the Deopāra inscription that Vijayasena drove away the king of Kāmarūpa does not necessarily mean that he invaded the province, although that is not improbable. The king of Assam, perhaps Vaidyadeva³⁶ (who was appointed as such by Kumārapāla) or his successor, might have invaded the newly founded dominions of the Senas and was driven away. According to the Mādhāinagar Grant, this kingdom was subdued by strength by Lakshmānasena. Here, again, it may be a reference to the expedition undertaken by him during the reign of Vijayasena or a subsequent and separate one. In the latter case, Vijayasena’s defeat of the king of Kāmarūpa was neither final nor decisive.

Similar uncertainty hangs over another episode of the reign of Vijayasena viz., the conquest of Kālīṅga and the victory over its
king Rāghava. For Lakṣmanaśena is said to have planted pillars of victory in Puri. If he had done so during the reign of his grandfather, the claims of Vijayasena that he conquered Kaliṅga and defeated its king cannot be regarded as an empty boast. It was Bengal’s retaliation for Anantavarman Chodgaṅga’s conquests in Southern Rādhā. But if Lakṣmanaśena’s Kaliṅga expedition is to be regarded as a separate event, we cannot define the nature and extent of Vijayasena’s success in this southern expedition. The defeat of Vīra of Koṭāṭavi, assuming that the kingdom formed a part of Orissa, may be an episode in the great Kaliṅga expedition of Vijayasena.

While the Deopāra inscription mentions the victorious expeditions of Vijayasena to the north (Gauḍa and Mithilā), east (Kāmarūpa), and south (Kaliṅga), it contains merely a vague allusion to his victory in the west. We are told in verse 22, that ‘his fleet in its play of conquest of the dominions in the west advanced along the course of the Ganges.’ The course of the Ganges flows north to south from a point to the north of Rājmahal, and east to west beyond that, and we may infer from the above passage that Vijayasena’s victorious fleet sailed westwards beyond Rājmahal. But we are not told anything about the object of the naval expedition and the extent of its success. The inscription is silent on both these points. The naval expedition, probably as an auxiliary to a land force, must have been despatched against a ruling power in Bihar, though it is uncertain whether the enemy was Nāṇyadeva, the Gāhālavāla king Govindachandra, or the Pāla king (Madanapāla or Govindapāla) still ruling in a part of Southern Bihar. The fact that even Umāpatidhara, the author of the inscription, who is noted for his fulsome praise of everything connected with Vijayasena, has not a word to say about the victorious achievements of Vijayasena’s fleet in the west, would naturally lead to the inference that the western expedition was not crowned with any conspicuous success.

The long and prosperous reign of Vijayasena was a momentous episode in the history of Bengal. The Pāla rule came to an end after four centuries of eventful history, and the troubles and miseries caused by internal disruption and foreign invasions towards the close of this period were terminated by the establishment of a strong monarchy. The achievements of Vijayasena in this respect are comparable to those of Gopāla, though there is one significant
difference. For while the Pāla dynasty was founded on the sacrifices of the chiefs and the common consent of the people, the Senas imposed their rule by ruthless wars and conquests. This does not necessarily cast a slur on Vijayasena’s career, or take away from the credit that is justly due to him. For the times were changed and perhaps nothing but a policy of blood and iron could keep up the political fabric which was crumbling to dust. The self-seeking chiefs of Bengal had lost all political wisdom, and, guided by motives of petty self-interest, lost the noble ideal of a strong united motherland which had inspired their ancestors four hundred years ago. The policy, imposed by necessity on Rāmapāla, of securing their alliance by lavish gifts merely increased their self-importance and whetted their appetite. They required a strong master to keep them down, and fortunately for Bengal a sturdy Karnāta chief proved equal to the task. Vijayasena, possessed of uncommon courage and military genius, put down these petty chiefs and was fully justified in assuming the imperial titles Paramesvara, Paramabhaṭṭaraka, Mahārājā-dhirāja and the proud epithet ‘Aīrāja-vṛishabha-śaṅkara.’

The long and memorable reign of Vijayasena which restored peace and prosperity in Bengal made a deep impression upon its people. This feeling is echoed in the remarkable poetic composition of Umāpatidhanaprasaṇa preserved on a slab of stone found at Deopārā (C. 2). In spite of its rhetoric excesses, it is a fine poetic expression of high tribute willingly paid to a remarkable career. It has also been suggested on good grounds that the Gauḍ-orvīśa-kula-praṣasti, (eulogy of the royal family of Gauḍa) and the Vijaya-praṣasti (eulogy of Vijaya) of the famous poet Śrīharsha were inspired by the career of Vijayasena. 39

Vallālasena (C. 1158—1179)

Vijayasena died about 1158 A.D., and was succeeded by his son Vallālasena. We possess only two inscriptions of his reign (C.4-5) but they do not contain any record of victory. There are, however, good grounds for the belief that Vallālasena had some positive military successes to his credit. It has been pointed out above that Govindapāla, the last Pāla ruler of Magadha, lost his kingdom in 1162 A.D. As this date falls in the reign of Vallālasena, the final defeat of the Pālas in Magadha may be ascribed to him. The reference in Adbhutasaṅgara that the arms of Vallālasena were pillars for chaining the...
elephant. *viz.*, the lord of Gauḍā,\(^{40}\) refers to his successful conflict with the Gauḍā king, and this may be no other than Govindapāla himself, who assumed the title of *Gauḍēśvara*, though his records are found only in Magadha.

According to traditions current in Bengal\(^{41}\) Vallālasena conquered Magadha and Mithilā (See Appendix III). The possession of Magadha or at least a part of it is proved by an inscription (C. 4) on the metal cover of an image dated in the 9th regnal year of Vallālasena, recovered from the bed of an old tank at Sanokhar about 10 miles from Colgong in the district of Bhagalpur. The Sena rule in Mithilā during the reigns of Vallālasena and his successor is indirectly supported, among other things,\(^{42}\) by the obscurity in the history of Mithilā after Nānyadeva\(^{43}\) and the tenacity with which Mithilā of all provinces used an era associated with the name of Laskshmaṇasena.

The epigraphic evidence and tradition, however, leave the impression that Vallālasena’s reign was chiefly marked by peaceful pursuits. Traditions in Bengal associate his name with important social reforms and revival of orthodox Hindu rites to which detailed references will be made in subsequent chapters. He was also a great scholar and an author of repute, and two of his works *Dānāśāgara* and *Adbhutasāgara* have come down to us.\(^{44}\) He married Rāmadevī the daughter of a Chālukya king,\(^{46}\) most probably Jagadekamalla II. This fact is interesting in more ways than one. It proves the growing strength and prestige of the Senas as a political power and also shows that they had still kept contact with their ancestral land Karnāṭa. In imitation of his father, Vallālasena assumed the epithet *Ariṅāja-nihṣaṅka-baṅkara* along with the other imperial titles. Whether Vallālasena carried on any aggressive military campaign or not, there is hardly any doubt that he maintained intact the dominions inherited from his father. This roughly comprised the whole of West Bengal and East Pakistan probably with Bihar. According to a tradition current in Bengal, the dominions of Vallālasena comprised five provinces, *viz.*, Vaṅga, Varendra, Rāḍhā, Bāgḍī and Mithilā.\(^{46}\) The first three comprise Bengal proper, while the last corresponds to North Bihar. As regards Bāgḍī, it is generally identified with a portion of the modern Presidency Division in W. Bengal\(^{47}\) including the Sundarbans, but no satisfactory evidence has been produced is support of it. It is probably to be identified with the *Māhāl Bāgḍī* in north Midnapur\(^{48}\) mentioned in *Aini-i-Akbar*,
and also shown in Rennell’s Atlas, and was the borderland between Rājāhā and Utkala. As it lay outside the well-known divisions of Bengal, viz., Rājāhā, Varendra and Vaṅga, a new name was probably given to it.

There is no direct epigraphic evidence in support of the boundaries of the Sena kingdom depicted above. But the campaigns against Kālinga and Kāmarūpa attributed to both Vijayasena and Lakshmanaśena, the successful wars of the former against Nānya of Mithilā, the advance of the latter up to Benares and Allahabad and the Ins. No. C 4 support the limits of the kingdom of Vallālasena described above.

A passage in Adbhutasāgara contains a reference to the end of the life or reign of Vallālasena, but unfortunately its interpretation is not free from difficulty. It says that Vallālasena commenced the composition of Adbhutasāgara in Śaka 1090 (or 1089); but before it was completed he, accompanied by his queen, went to ‘Nirjarapura at the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamunā, leaving to his son Lakshmanaśena the great tasks of maintaining his empire and completing his literary work. Now, Nirjarapura means the city of Gods i.e., heaven, but may also be the name of a locality. If we take the first meaning, we must conclude that the old king and queen voluntarily ended their lives at Trivenī by drowning themselves in the holy water of the Ganges, as Rānapāla did a little more than half a century before. If we take the latter meaning, we must conclude that the aged king left the cares of government to his son, and with his queen spent his last days in retirement on the bank of the Ganges at a locality near Trivenī. Whether he formally abdicated the throne and performed the coronation ceremony of his son, as has been suggested by some, it is difficult to decide, though the expression ‘sāmrājya-rakṣā-mahā-dikṣā-parva’ lends colour to this view. There is, however, no warrant for the assumption that the abdication took place in Śaka 1090. The mere fact that a book, begun in that year, was left unfinished when Vallālasena died or abdicated, does not prove that such an incident took place immediately, or even shortly after that date, for a royal author might take many years to finish an abstruse astronomical work. Vallālasena was certainly ruling in 1091 Śaka when he composed Dānasāgara, and the assumption that he died or ceased to rule in 1179 A.D., is not incompatible with the fact that he could not complete Adbhutasāgara in his lifetime.
Lakshmanasena (C. 1179—1207)

Lakshmanasena, son of Vallalasena and Ramadevi, succeeded his father about 1179 A.D. He must have been fairly old at this time, being about sixty according to Tabagat-i-Nasiri (See App. III). Eight of his records have come down to us (C. 6-13). He assumed the epithet Ariraja-madana-sankara, and added Gaujesvara to the imperial titles. There was another significant change. For whereas the title Parama-Mahesvara is applied to both Vijayasena and Vallalasena in their own official records, the word ‘Parama-Vaishnava’ or ‘Parama-Narasimha’ is substituted for it in the official records of Lakshmanasena. What is stranger still, the title Parama-Vaishnava is also applied to Vallalasena in the records of his son (C. 6, 12). This incidentally proves how titles assumed by later kings are occasionally applied to their predecessors, though the latter probably never used them themselves. The title Gaujesvara applied to Vijayasena and Vallalasena in the records of Kesavasena and Visvarupasena (C. 14-16) is perhaps another instance in point.

The sudden change in the imperial title and the commencement of official records by an invocation to Narayana, instead of to Siva as before, show that Lakshmanasena became a devout Vaishnava although his predecessors were Saivas. This is supported by the fact that Jayadeva, the most famous Vaishnava poet of Bengal, lived in his court. Lakshmanasena’s court was also graced by other eminent poets such as Dhoyi, Sarana, Umapatidhara and Govardhana. The great scholar Halayudha, who served as Chief Minister and Chief Judge, was another distinguished member of the entourage of the king. The king himself and other members of the royal family were literary men, and some of their verses are still preserved in the anthology of Sanskrit verses, called Saduktii-karmrita, compiled by Sridharadasa. As noted above, Lakshmanasena also completed the astronomical work Adhutasagara begun by his father.

But Lakshmanasena was no less distinguished in military than in peaceful pursuits. His own copper-plates (C. 12, 13) and those of his sons (C. 14-16) refer to his victories over the neighbouring kings in all directions. He may also be regarded as the unclassed hero whose great military triumphs are praised in isolated verses composed by his court-poets Sarana and Umapatidhara.

Particular references are made in his own records to his victories over the kings of Gauja, Kamarupa, Kalinga, and Kashi. His success
against the last two is emphasised in the records of his sons. For we are told that he planted pillars commemorating military victory at Puri, Benares and Allahabad.

As already noted above, Lakshmanaśena’s campaign against Gauḍā, Kāmarūpa, and Kaliṅga might refer to expeditions which he led or accompanied during the reign of his grandfather. Otherwise we have to assume that these provinces, although conquered by Vijayasena, were not fully subdued or had rebelled; and Lakshmanaśena had to conquer them afresh. At all events we may regard the Sena suzerainty as well established over these three regions in the North, East and South.

It was in the fourth region, on the West, that Lakshmanaśena achieved conspicuous success during his reign. From what has been said above in connection with the reign of Madanpāla, it may be assumed that at the time the Senas consolidated their power in Bengal, the Pālas were ruling in Central and Eastern Magadha, while the northern part of that kingdom had passed into the hands of the Gāhaḷavāla. Vijayasena’s efforts to extend the Sena power to Magadha were not attended with much success. The extent of Vallālasena’s success in this direction cannot be exactly determined, though, as noted above (p. 160), he ruled in South, and probably also North Bihar after defeating Govindapāla. But the success of Vallālasena was shortlived and probably indirectly helped the Gāhaḷavāla by destroying the Pāla power in Bihar. For it appears that shortly afterwards nearly the whole of Magadha passed into the hands of the Gāhaḷavālas. An inscription found in the neighbourhood of Sasaram\(^55\) shows that the region was included in 1169 A.D. in the dominions of king Vijayachandra. The Sihvar Plate,\(^56\) dated 1175 A.D., refers to a grant of king Jayachandra, probably in the Patna district, while another record of the same king, found at Bodh-Gaya,\(^57\) incised some time between 1183 and 1192 A.D.\(^57\) shows the extension of the Gāhaḷavāla power in Central Magadha.

The progress of the Gāhaḷavāla power in Magadha was a direct menace to the Senas. So the struggle begun in the time of Vijayasena must have been continued by his successors. Although the details of this struggle are lacking, and the part played by Vallālasena is not fully known, there is hardly any doubt that Lakshmapasena succeeded in driving away the Gāhaḷavālas from Magadha, and even carried his victorious arms right into the heart of the Gāhaḷavāla dominions.
The king of Kāśī mentioned in Lakshmanaśena’s records undoubtedly refers to the Gāhaḍavāla king, and by defeating him Lakshmanaśena ousted him from Magadha. The Sena conquest of the Gayā district is indubitably proved by the two records of Aśokachalla found in Gayā. These are dated in the years 51 and 74 of the ‘atīta-rājya’ of Lakshmanaśena. Although the correct interpretation of the dates is open to doubt, there is a general consensus of opinion that the expression used in these two records undoubtedly proves that Gayā was included within the dominions of Lakshmanaśena. It may be mentioned here, that the laudatory verse of Umāpatidhara, referred to above, includes Magadha among the conquests of his hero, who is probably no other than Lakshmanaśena.

The conquest of the Gayā region, if not the whole of Magadha, was evidently only the first stage in the successful campaign of Lakshmanaśena against Kāśirāja, i.e., the Gāhaḍavāla king Jayachandra. The planting of the pillars of victory in Benares and Allahabad, referred to in the records of Lakshmanaśena’s sons, represents the succeeding stages in the same campaign, which led him into the heart of his adversary’s dominions.

The permanent result of this campaign of Lakshmanaśena against the Gāhaḍavāla king cannot be determined. According to the interpretation of Aśokachalla’s records suggested later, the Gayā district remained in possession of Lakshmanaśena till it was conquered by the Muslims. His advance up to Benares and Allahabad was probably more in the nature of a daring raid than a regular conquest. But it might have resulted in weakening the power and prestige of the Gāhaḍavāla ruler, and keeping him busy at a time when he required peace and his full strength to join the confederacy against the Muslim invaders.

The victories mentioned by Śaraṇa (f.n. 54) include one against the Chedi king. Now Vallabharāja, a feudatory of the Kalachuri kings of Ratnapur, claims to have reduced the king of Gauḍa. As Vallabharāja flourished in the middle of the twelfth century A.D., it is probable that Śaraṇa also refers to the same contest. In any case, Vallabharāja’s reference to a fight with Gauḍa gives an historical character to Śaraṇa’s statement which might otherwise have been regarded as purely imaginary. The genesis of the hostility between Gauḍa and the Kalachuri kingdom and the scene of conflict are alike unknown to us. Further, since both the parties claim victory, the result of the struggle may be regarded as indecisive.
It would thus appear that Lakshmanaśena carried on military expeditions far away from the frontiers of Bengal in all directions. Since the days of Dharmapāla and Devapāla no other ruler in Bengal had carried on such wide and extensive military campaigns, and so far as we can judge from extant evidence, his efforts were crowned with a fair degree of success. Under him Bengal played an important part in North Indian politics, and nearly six hundred years were to elapse before she was destined again to play a similar role under a strange combination of circumstances.

But although Lakshmanaśena began with a brilliant career of conquest, his reign ended in a sea of troubles that overwhelmed him and his kingdom. Unfortunately, sufficient details are not known to enable us to explain the sudden collapse of his power or give an intelligent account of it. An inscription (C. 24), found in Western Sundarbans, shows that Ḍommaṇapāla had set up as an independent chief in the eastern part of Khālī (in Sundarbans) in 1196 A.D. Khālī district is mentioned as an integral part of the Sena dominions in the records of both Vijayasena and Lakshmanaśena, and the revolution of Ḍommaṇapāla is an important indication of the weakness of the authority of Lakshmanaśena and the disruption of his kingdom in his old age. Perhaps the Deva family also set up an independent kingdom to the east of the Meghnā river about the same time. During this period of turmoil, some time about 1202 A.D., when Lakshmanaśena was probably very old, Bengal was invaded by the Muslims who had by that time conquered nearly the whole of Northern India. The detailed account of this invasion led by Muhammad Bakhtyār Khalji, is given in Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī. The date and nature of this raid and the reliability of the account in the Tabaqāt are subjects of keen controversy, and the whole question has been dealt with in detail in Appendix III to this chapter. It will suffice here to give a short account of the episode as described in Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī.

Muhammad Bakhtyār Khalji, a Turkish soldier of fortune, took advantage of the general collapse of Hindu kingdoms of Northern India to make plundering raids in Eastern India on his own account. In the course of one of these he seized the great Buddhist monastery at Bihār (Patna district), and later he reduced the whole of Magadha. We do not know what arrangement Lakshmanaśena had made to protect Magadha which belonged to him, or to defend Bengal which was obviously open to a similar attack and justly apprehended to
be the next objective of Muhammad. It is probable that forces were posted on the military route that led from Bihar to Bengal along the Ganges, through the passes of the Rājmahal Hills. Muhammad Bakhtyār, however, led a cavalry force through unfrequented hills and jungles of Jharkhand, and by forced marches suddenly appeared before Nadiyā where Lakshmanasena was staying at the time. So swift were his movements that when he reached the city-gate, he was accompanied by only eighteen of his followers. They were regarded as horse-dealers, and Muhammad kept up the pretension by moving slowly through the city. By the time he reached the gate of the palace, more of his soldiers had entered the city, and then a simultaneous attack was made on the palace and the city. Lakshmanasena was taking his midday meal when a loud cry arose from the gate of the palace and the interior of the city. When he realised the critical situation, he left the palace and retired to Eastern Bengal. Muhammad Bakhtyār met with no opposition, and as soon as his whole army arrived he took possession of the city and fixed up his quarters there. Later, he left Nadiyā in desolation and removed his capital to Lakhnowati. No mention is made of any further struggle with the Senas, nor is there any definite statement about the region that formed the dominions of Muhammad Bakhtyār. The disastrous Tibetan expedition of Muhammad, followed shortly by his death, must have considerably weakened the hold of Muslim rule in Bengal. In any case it does not appear to have taken root anywhere outside North Bengal. The career of Mughisuddin Yuzbek shows that even Rāilhā, including Nadiyā, could not be conquered by the Muslims before 1255 A.D., i.e., during half a century that followed their first raid.\textsuperscript{62a}

Lakshmanasena certainly continued to rule in Eastern Bengal, at least for three or four years after the raid on Nadiyā. Although to-day we rightly regard this incident as an epoch-making event marking the end of independent Hindu rule in Bengal, it does not appear to have been taken in that light by the contemporaries. One, if not two, of the land-grants of Lakshmanasena (C. 12) was issued some years after the conquest of Muhammad Bakhtyār. It gives the usual high-sounding royal titles to Lakshmanasena and eulogises his great military achievements. The laudatory verse of Śarana (f.n. 54) even refers to Lakshmanasena’s victory against a Mlecchha king, who may be regarded as a Muslim ruler in Bengal. The sons of Lakshmanasena also claim victory over the Yavanas,
and their records (C. 14-16) are drawn up in the right old style with all the high-sounding royal titles. It is difficult to say whether all these are to be explained by the false court etiquette that clings to a royal dynasty even after its downfall, or should be taken to indicate that the Muslim chroniclers have given an exaggerated account of the extent and importance of Muhammad's conquests in Bengal.

Whatever view we might take of the nature and consequences of the Muslim raid on Nadīyā and Lakshmaṇasena's responsibility for the same, his name should go down in history as that of a great and noble, though unfortunate, ruler. In spite of popular views to the contrary, based on a superficial knowledge of the account given in *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī*, he must be regarded as the last great Hindu hero in Bengal of whom his country might well feel proud. Even a perusal of *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* leaves the impression that the aged king showed far greater courage and patriotism than his counsellors and chieftains. It is not perhaps without significance that while the author of *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* passed over in silence even such a famous king as Prithvirāja, he went out of his way to bestow very high praises upon Lakshmaṇasena, 'the great Rāe of Bengal' and even compared him with Sultan Qutbuddin. There must also be some good reason why the people of Gayā region clung fondly to his name for nearly a century after his death, and his memory was perpetuated in Mithilā (North Bihar) by the naming of an era after him.

III. The successors of Lakshmaṇasena

Lakshmaṇasena ruled for at least 27 years and died some time after 1205 A.D. His two sons Viśvarūpasena and Keśavasena ruled in succession after him. The latter is known from a single record (C. 14) dated in his third regnal year, while we possess two records of the former, one dated in the 14th regnal year (C. 15) and the other (C. 16) somewhat later. Probably Viśvarūpasena was the elder of the two brothers and succeeded his father. Although no details of their reigns are known to us, it is clear from their records that they ruled at least over Eastern and Southern Bengal. For the first two inscriptions referred to above record grants of land in Vikramapura, and the third in marshy lands of Southern Bengal on the sea-coast.
Both the kings are given the usual imperial titles while, in
addition, Viśvarūpasena is called ‘Arirāja-vrishabhānka-śaṅkara-
The epithet ‘Saura,’ applied to these kings seems to indicate that
they were sun-worshippers. Thus the Sena royal family transferred
their allegiance in turn to the three important religious sects, Śaiva,
Vaishnava and Saura.

The records describe the military prowess of both the kings in
vague general terms, but offer no details except a reference to their
victory over the Muslims. In a verse, contained in all the three
records, the two kings are eulogised as ‘the day of destruction
to the Yavanas,” i.e., Muslims. The qualifying epithet applied to
the Yavanas reads ‘sagarga’ in the record of Viśvarūpasena and
‘sagandha’ in that of Keśāvasena. The meaning of these terms is
not quite clear, but, there is hardly any doubt that the verse refers
to the struggle between the two Sena kings and the Muslim chiefs
who were ruling over Northern Bengal.

The inference from these records about the political condition of
Bengal is supported by Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī. It states that the Muslim
chiefs ruled over “the territory of Lakhnawati” which had “two
wings on either side of the river Gang,” viz., ‘Ral’ (Rāqhā) on
the western side, and ‘Barind” (Varendra) on the the eastern (p. 584),
while ‘Bang,” i.e., (Vaṅga or Eastern and Southern Bengal) was
ruled by the descendants of Lakshmanaśena even when that work
was composed. Regarding the relations of the Muslim kingdom
with Vaṅga, we have two different statements in the book. With
reference to the Sultan Ghiyāsuddin ‘Iwaz, we are told that “the
parts round about the State of Lakhnawati such as Jajnagar, the
countries of Bang, Kāmrud (Kāmarūpa), and Tirhut, all sent tribute
to him; and the whole of that territory named Gaur passed under
his control” (pp. 587-88). A few pages later we are informed that
when in 624 A.H. (=1226-27 A.D.) Nāṣiruddin Mahmud, son
of Iltutmish, the Sultan of Delhi, invaded Lakhnawati, this city
was left unprotected as ‘Sultan Ghiyāsuddin had led an army
towards the territory of Kāmrud and Bang.’ Nāṣiruddin easily
captured Lakhnawati, and Ghiyāsuddin had to return from his
expedition to Kāmrud and Bang (pp. 594-95). Thus we may
safely infer from the Hindu and Muslim evidences, that for nearly
half a century Bang could not be subdued by the Muslim rulers of
Lakhnawati, and though they might have occasionally gained some-