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POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTION OF ANCIENT KAMRUPA: A STUDY

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Abstract: The study of administrative structures must be approached with great caution, for political system having the same kind of legal arrangements and using the same type of governmental machinery often function very differently.¹ A parliament, for example, may be an important and effective part of a political system; or it may be no more than an institutional facade of little practical significance. A constitution may provide the framework within which the political life of a state is conducted; or it may be no more than a piece of paper, its provisions bearing almost no relationship to the facts of political life. Political system must never be classified in terms of their legal structures alone: the fact that two states have similar constitutions with similar institutional provision and legal requirements should never, by itself, lead to the conclusion that they represent the same type of political system.²

Keywords: Administration, Kamrupa, Government, Ancient, Pragjyotishpur.

Introduction

In this paper an attempt has been made to describe the political structure prevailed in ancient period of Kamrupa. It is to be noted in particularly beginning that such a description must necessarily be very imperfect, as it based upon scanty data scattered over the entire period. The available materials mainly consist of land grant copper-plates, which is not clearly provide the information as to the system of government, and policy of the kings concerned, or as to innovations made by any one individual king. The impression which the records give is that government was traditional and that changes were few and of minor importance.³ To a certain degree, however, they do supplement one another as regards the information they provide. At any rate, one must make the best use of these materials until more satisfactory sources of information are available. The section, on raja-niti in the Kalikapurana is also equally enlightening. It chiefly refers to the duties of kings and ministers.

Research Objective

1. To find out the Administration in Ancient Kamrupa.
2. To understand the division of Administration of Ancient Kamrupa.
3. Discuss the history of Administration.

Methodology

The research methodology followed in this study is historical and descriptive. Exploratory and observation method is also applied to make it more comprehensive and precise.

The data of the present research work are both primary and secondary. The data collected from the mythological epics and puranas are considered as primary data. And also, the data published works of different scholars, journals, periodicals, books, pamphlets, reports of archeology are secondary. All the data collected with the help of library work visiting different libraries of different Universities.

Administration of Ancient Kamarupa

Discussion about General Administration

The division between political and administration is not clearly defined in ancient Kamrupa. The general administration includes all the major civil administrative system of Ancient Kamrupa. It was very important branch of administration of Kamrupa, because it maintained all the structure of the government of ancient administration. The major sub-branches of general administration of Kamrupa were as discussed below.

1. The King and Council of Ministers

¹ Johari, J.C., Comparative Politics, p.52-55

² Ibid

³ B.K.Barua: The Administrative System of Kamrupa, J.A.R.S .II, pp.23-32.



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The king was the head of administration and thus occupied the commanding position in the state.⁴ On the traditional accounts, the epigraphic record and the writings of the foreign scholars it was confirmed that Monarchy was the main base of the political structure of Kamrupa. Kingship was hereditary, and generally that law of primogeniture prevailed.⁵ But sometime the king was elected in the absence of legitimate male issues as was done in the case of Brahmapala. He belonged to the Bhauma family and had the requisite qualifications for election to Kingship.⁶ This compares favourably with the election of Gopala and Gauda Pala family. The reigning king sometimes nominated his successor in the presence of the people as was done by Ganapativarman for his son Mahendra and Chandramukhavarman for his son Sthitavarman when the latter had completed his education.⁷ It is equally interesting to notice some legitimate claimants being overlooked; as for instance, Chakra and Arathi of the Salastambha line were ignored for their insolence, and the latter's son ascended the throne.⁸ The ruling monarch could also pave the way for his successor through voluntary abdication. Thus, Vanamala, finding his son fully accomplished after completing his education and attaining maturity, handed over the reins of the government to him. Jayamala or Virabahu afflicted with disease considered it fit to pass on his crown to Balavarman, his successor.⁹ The other instance of abdication is that of Brahmapala renouncing in favour of his son Ratnapala.¹⁰ These examples suggest that the rulers were conscious of their physical limitations and when they failed to look after the interests of their subject, they preferred to step down in favour of an energetic and young successor. Kamrupa inscriptions also refer to rulers especially looking after the welfare of their subject. According to the Doobi grant, Kalyanvarman was noted for this while Narayanvarman was interested in elevating their moral statue by trying to remove their six-fold demerits in this unstable world.¹¹ Similar was the attitude of Susthitavarman who was born to uplift the mass.¹² Among others noted for their welfare activities were Bhaskaravarman and Harjaravarman.¹³

It was a fact that the crown prince is supposed to be well versed in the Sastras, the Vedas and the Angas, such as the science of politics and fine arts, besides proficiency in physical training and valour, and the use of weapons and the training and breeding of elephants and horses.¹⁴

The king was expected to strive for people's welfare. The traditional policy pursued by the kings of ancient India was to maintain and protect the Varnasarmadharma.¹⁵ The responsibility of the rulers of Kamrupa in upholding this principle is indicated in the Nidhanpur grant where it is stated that Bhaskaravarman "Properly organised the duties of the various classes and stages of life that had become confused."¹⁶ The symbol of royalty of the Kamrupa kings appears to be "the royal umbrella of moon like whiteness together with the cowries."¹⁷ It was known as Varuna-chattras said to have been first handed over to Bhagadatta by Krishna.¹⁸

The inscriptions lay down certain ideal standards for royal administration, although it is difficult to state whether or not they were actually observed in practice. The grant of Vanamala states that the first and foremost duty of the king was to afford protection to all his subjects and to look to their general wellbeing.¹⁹ The king was accustomed to gratify the desire of all the classes of his people. According to Nidhanpur grant, the king devised many ways of increasing the enjoyment of his hereditary subjects. He was the repository of the principles of the state-craft²⁰ and knew well the six-fold measures of royal policy.²¹ The Kamrupa kings evidently realised that material wealth was indispensable for the wellbeing of the people. In the Subhankarapataka grant the king Dharmapala

⁴ Barpujari, H.K., The comprehensive History of Assam, Vol-I, p.175-78.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ According to K.L Baruah, Brahmapala was an upstart who proclaimed himself king and the people had no other alternative but to accept him as such. He was proclaimed as a scion of the Bhumadynasty, Early History of Kamrupa, p.135; see supra pp.141-43.

⁷ Doobi grant of Bhaskaravarman. JARS, xi, vv.17 and 29-31

⁸ The Hayunthal grant of Harjaravarman, v.8, JARS, i, p.109.

⁹ The Nagaon grant of Balavarman I. vv.21-3, JASB, lxvi, p.285; Bhandarkar, No.1678

¹⁰ Bargaon grant, v.15. JARS, p.23

¹¹ Nidhanpur grant of Bhaskaravarman, EI, xii, p.65; Bhandakar, No.1666.

¹² Doobi grant, op.cit. v.39.

¹³ Nidhanpur and Hayunthal grants, op.cit.

¹⁴ H.K. Barpujari: The comprehensive History of Assam, Vol-I, p.175-78.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Nidhanpur grant, op.cit.

¹⁷ Bargaon grant, V.5

¹⁸ Kamrupa Sasanavali, Intro.p.6-15.

¹⁹ Vanamala grant

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Kamrupa Sasanavali, p.32, f.n.2.



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though specified as “Defender of the Faith”, nevertheless protected the wealth of his subject.²² It is thus clear that the general good was set before personal enrichments or enjoyment.

The kings were assisted by his council of ministers commonly known as the “Mantri Parisad”. Bhaskarvarman in his meeting with Harsa was accompanied by Ministers.²³ Vaidyadeva is mentioned in the Kamauli grant as shining in the assembly of his Sacivas; Amatya and Mantri are the two other terms for the ministers. The post of Mahamatyas, Visayamatyas is different high functionaries.²⁴ The actual strength of the minister is not known and the appointment is from Brahmana families and is hereditary.²⁵ The Kamauli Grant shows that these posts were held by the Brahmins only and were hereditary.²⁶ The clear definition of Mantris, Sacivas and Amatyas are not found.

2. The Central Administration

In the central administrative system of ancient Kamrupa there were a number of officials. The central administration was in autocratic set up.²⁷ There was found similar to the machinery under Purohitas and their successors in the north.²⁸ The court official in the centre with the prefix ‘Mahamatra’ has access to the king. Mahallakapraudhika controlled entrance to the female apartments. The other officers with the same prefix mentioned in the same record are Mahasainyapati and Mahamatya.²⁹ Mahasamanta also figures in the set up. Official functionaries, known as Pancamahasabda also occurs in Kamrupa records of the Salastambha rulers.

Kamrupa rulers appointed the officials from the royal princes and others who are connected with the ruling families. These included Rajaputra, Ranaka, Rajanyaka and Rajaballabha.³⁰ Rajaputra was certainly the crown prince while the Ranaka and Rajanyaka were probably minor feudatory’s inferior to Raja.³¹ Ranaka is noticed in many records from different places and it is sometimes associated with the Mahasandivirahika and also with the Mahaksapatalika thereby symbolising his association with the political system. It is very likely that all those who were associated with central political system might have been given some territory for their up keeps.³² Rajanyakas along with the Samantas are supposed to represent land-holding aristocracy who supplied men and materials to king.³³ Rajavallabhas are taken to be king’s Favourites, of the followers.

3. Local Administration

The detailed working of the local administration in Kamrupa is not definitely known. The local units did not enjoy much autonomy as the rulers tried their utmost to exert their influence upon them by issuing sasanas or the infringement of which was properly dealt with.³⁴ The Administrative divisions in Kamrupa were somewhat in line with the Guptas.³⁵

The ‘bhukti’ was perhaps the largest division and the term, as with the Guptas, was used in the sense of a province. It might be a later creation as the term occurs in the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva only, wherein Pragjyotisa is called a ‘bhukti’ and Kamrupa a ‘mandala’ which terms earlier stood for the kingdom.³⁶ From this; it appears likely that during Vaidyadeva time the ‘bhukti’ Pragjyotisa, which included the ‘mandala’ Kamrupa, stood for the central unit of home province.³⁷ The grant of Vallabhadeva also mentions the mandala Hapyaca as lying to the east of Kirtipur. Mandala was probably a collection of many ‘Visayas’, the next administrative division.³⁸ The Visaya was placed under the control of an officer called ‘Visayapati’. Nidhanpur grant of

²² Ibid.

²³ H.K.Borpujari: The Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol-I, p.177-80.

²⁴ B.K.Barua; A Cultural History of Assam, p.50-53

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Epigraphia India, II, pp.347 f.

²⁷ B.K.Barua; A Cultural History of Assam, p.54-55

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ op.cit. p.56.

³¹ H.K.Borpujari: The Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol-I, p.180.

³² B.K.Barua; A Cultural History of Assam, p.57

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ P.C.Chodhury: History of Civilization of the people of Assam to the 12th century A.D. p.297.

³⁵ op.cit.

³⁶ B.K.Barua; A Cultural History of Assam, p.60

³⁷ Ibid. p.298.

³⁸ Ibid.



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Bhaskarvarman informs us that the Visayapati had his adhikarana (office) at his adhisthana (headquarters) and that he was helped by several officers like Nyaya-Karanika, Vyavaharika and Kayastha.³⁹

The smallest division of administration was the 'grama' or 'village'.⁴⁰ We have very little information about the village political system in Kamrupa. However, it can be conjectured that each village headman who was perhaps helped in the administration of the village by an advisory body of council of other duties and were responsible for the internal safety of the village under their jurisdiction.⁴¹

4. Justice Administration

When and how the judiciary was created in Kamrupa is not clearly mentioned. Inscriptions of the period indicate that Justice was administered according to the Vedas, Angas, Dharmasastras and Puranas.⁴² The source of law were the code of sacred laws (Dharmasastras), case-law (Vyavahara), customs and tradition (Caritam) and the king's orders (Sasana).⁴³ The chief officer of justice was the NyayaKaranika. NyayaKaranika was also an "adjudicator who had to inspect and decide if the boundaries of lands were properly marked out or not, and to settle all case of dispute arising out of land."⁴⁴ Another official closely associated with him was the Vyavaharin or Vyavaharika.⁴⁵ The term Vyavahara has been defined in the Arthasastra as "judicial administration and procedures in accordance with established conventions."⁴⁶ The Vyavaharin would, therefore, mean an official who conducted judicial proceedings. The Kayastha was another official attached to the judiciary in the capacity of a clerk or secretary.⁴⁷

The land grants contain ordinances promulgated by the rulers which were binding on officers and people concerned and violation of which were to be punished. These 'sasanas' had the force of law and these were expected to be in consonance with the rulers laid down in the law books.⁴⁸ We have no details of definite judicial system of Kamrupa. Nothing is known about the procedure of trials. We do not have any record of the nature of the punishment meted to the criminals, except fine.

5. Revenue Administration

In a kingdom the administration depends upon the procedure of revenue collection. The principal sources of revenue were classified in six heads:

1. Regular Taxes
2. Occasional Taxes
3. Commercial Taxes
4. Fines
5. Income from state properties.
6. Tribute from Feudatories.⁴⁹

The regular tax raised by the rulers of Kamrupa was the 'Kara' levied on cultivators.⁵⁰ The Nidhanpur grant mentions one Dattakara and Utkhetana, levied on special occasions and "chatabhatapravesam" or "exactions at the time of the arrival of regular and irregular military and police forces."⁵¹ The commercial levies included the customs-duties and polls. The Tezpur grant inscription refer to the collection of taxes on merchandise carried in keeled boats.⁵² It further mentions levying of sulka (toll) collected from the

³⁹ H.K.Borpujari: The Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol-I,p.181.

⁴⁰ B.L.Fadia,KuldeepFadia; Public Administartion,p.1106.

⁴¹ P.C. Chodhury: History of Civilization of the people of Assam to the 12th century A.D.p.302.

⁴² B.K. Barua, A Cultural History of Assam, p.61.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Nidhanpurgrant.

⁴⁵ op.cit.

⁴⁶ Arthasastra, VI,1, VII.1

⁴⁷ Both in the Mrcchakatika and in the Damodarpur Plates Kayastha is used to denote an official.

⁴⁸ Ibid.p.282.

⁴⁹ B.K. Barua; A cultural History of Assam, p.62

⁵⁰ Ibid.p.91

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Journal of Bihar Orissa Research Society, vol-III, pp.508-14.



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Kaivartas on the bank of the Brahmaputra and the imposition of fines.⁵³ The Baragaon grant tells us that the state derived considerable revenue from coppermines (kamalakara).⁵⁴

Officers associated with revenue administration included 'uparika' (officer in-charge of recovery of the uparikara tax), 'utkhetika' (officer in-charge of collecting utkhetana).⁵⁵ Besides them, there were other officers like 'bhandagaradhikrita'⁵⁶ and 'kothangarika'⁵⁷ who were in-charge of the royal store house and the treasury respectively. Land revenue was collected through the head of the local administrative units.

Discussion about Military Administration

It was also a very important branch of administration of Kamrupa, because it maintained the structure of military administration of Kamrupa. The geographical position of the kingdom of Kamrupa demanded a fairly strong defensive system and organised standing army to meet any external threat or internal trouble.⁵⁸ The rulers of Kamrupa were aware about the strong defence required to preserving the integrity of their kingdom.⁵⁹ The major sub-branches of military administration of Kamrupa were as discussed below.

1. The officers

From epigraphic records it is learnt that most of the ruler were expert warriors and fought bravely in the battle field.⁶⁰ In the organisation of the army, the king was helped by a war minister. Under him there was a commander in-chief or General. The commander in-chief was known as 'Senadhyaksa'.⁶¹ Sometimes he was given the title of Samanta or Mahasamanta but this presumably only when he is in his own right feudatory chief.⁶² Under the Senadhyaksas were other lesser officers such as Senapati, Nayaka and Ranaka. Besides these, there were special officer's in-charge of elephants, horses and the navy.⁶³

The Nidhanpur grant mentions an officer, Sri Gopala, as issuing hundred commands and as qualified with the Great sounds (prapta-pancha-maha-sabda).⁶⁴ He was staying with Bhaskaravarman at Karnasuvarna and was his General.⁶⁵ The Hayunthal grant of Harjaravarman mentions Sri Guna as the Mahasenapati or commander-in-chief. Under the Mahasenapati, there were other officers called Senadhyaksa, Baladhyaksa etc.⁶⁶ In times of war, the king was also assisted by the tributary chiefs, who usually commanded their own detachments.⁶⁷

2. The Navy

The inscriptions refer many times to the royal navy maintained by the kings. The Apsabd inscription alludes to a naval engagement which took place between Susthiavarman of Kamrupa and later Gupta king Mahasena Gupta.⁶⁸ The Nidhanpur grant also refers incidentally to naval engagement, which was probably fought between Bhaskaravarman and Sasanka, king of Bengal.⁶⁹ The Kamauli grant also records a glorious naval victory which Vaidyadeva won over his enemy of south Vanga, near the mouth of the Ganges.⁷⁰

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Baragaon grant.

⁵⁵ B.K.Barua; A cultural History of Assam, p.63.

⁵⁶ A large part of the Government revenue was collected in kind and so this title given to the officer in-charge of the treasury is significant.

⁵⁷ The word Kotha occurs in the Gauhati grant of Indrapala, which Hoernle takes to mean "granary".

⁵⁸ H.K.Borpujari; Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol-I,p.191-93.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Nidhanpur Grant.

⁶¹ Tezpur Rock Inscription.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ B.K.Barua; A cultural History of Assam, p.67.

⁶⁴ K.L.Baruah; Early History of Kamrupa,p.38-40.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Hayunthal grant.

⁶⁷ H.K.Borpujari; Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol-I,p.192

⁶⁸ Op.cit. p.68

⁶⁹ Nidhanpur grant.

⁷⁰ Epigraphia Indica, II, p.151



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HiuenTsiang throws some light on these naval activities. Bhaskarvarman, to this account, had a flotilla of 30,000 ships.⁷¹ Vanamala's inscription provides a fine description of the royal ships that were berthed on both banks of river, near the capital city of Harupesvara.⁷² The boats were well carved and provided with various devices which made their movements fast and swift. The officers in charge of them were the Nauvandhaka, officers responsible for mooring, and Nau-rajaka⁷³. Nau-rajaka occurs in the Rock inscription of Harjjara and may mean a class of officers who were responsible for towing the boats by means of rope from the bank.⁷⁴

3. The War Elephants

Elephant formed an important element of the army of Kamrupa as it had been in other parts of India. Bhagadatta fought in the Mahabharata war with troops of elephants and has been credited with as "the best wielder of elephant goad".⁷⁵ The Nidhanpur Grant mentions elephants in royal Army of Bhaskarvarman.⁷⁶ Hiuen Tsang says that it consisted of 20,000 elephants.⁷⁷ He states that there were elephants in herds in the south-east of Kamrupa and so there was a good supply of elephants for war purposes.⁷⁸ In the writings of Kautilya it is also found use of the elephants bred in place like Kalinga, Anga, Karusa and the East are the Best;⁷⁹ the eastern country probably stands for ancient Kamrupa. Kalidasa writes that elephants were caught in jungles of Kamrupa.⁸⁰ Epigraphy bears testimony to the fact that most of the rulers fought with the help of elephants.

4. The Cavalry

Cavalry did not seem to occupy an important place in army of the Kamrupa king, probably due to the want of good horses. The Mahabharata however mentions that Bhagadatta presented Yudhisthira with "horses of noble breed, swift as the wind."⁸¹ The Visnupurana narrates that Krishna, after defeating Naraka, took away his twenty-one lakhs of Kamboja horses, which appears to be much exaggerated.⁸² The grant of Vallabhadeva also indicates that horses were imported from Kamboja. The Tabaqat-I-Nasiri records those horses in large numbers imported to Bengal and Kamrupa from Tibet through mountain passes in the North.⁸³ It is mentioned that between Kamrupa and Tibet there were thirty-five mountain passes through which horses are brought to Lakhnauti.⁸⁴ Watt says that the pure ponies of Manipur are the best of all Indian ponies, being possessed of wonderful powers of endurance and weight carrying capabilities.⁸⁵

5. The Forts

The ancient Nitisastras talked about the importance to the construction of forts (durga) and the literary sources prove the existence of numerous forts in different parts of Kamrupa. Kautilya considers the fort as one of the seven constituent elements of the state. He also classified forts to their location into four types, namely parvata (hill-fort), audaka (water fort), dhanvana (desert fort) and vanadurga (forest fort).⁸⁶ The Kalikapurana also lays much stress on the construction of fort and besides the above four, mentions two more types of forts namely, bhumi (earth fort) and vrksa (tree fort). The Mahabharata speaks of the strong forts of measure.⁸⁷ The geography of Kamrupa afforded an ideal opportunity for the construction of hill forts.⁸⁸ The cities of Kamrupanagara, Pragjyotispur, Harupeswara and Durjjaya were well fortified with natural barriers and forts.⁸⁹ The Bargaon grant states that the invincible city of

⁷¹ B.K.Barua; A cultural History of Assam, p.69.

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Hem Chandra Ray: The Dynastic History of Northern India, I, p.243

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Nidhanpur grant.21

⁷⁷ Life of Hiuen Tsang, p.173.

⁷⁸ Watter, II, p.186

⁷⁹ Arthasastra, II, chap. II

⁸⁰ Raghuvamsa, IV, p.84

⁸¹ Sabha parva, I, 15-16.

⁸² Visnupurana, V. XXIX.

⁸³ Elliot and Dawson(ed): The History of Muhammadan India, II, pp.311-312. Raverty, pp.567-568.

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ The Commercial Products of India, p.751.

⁸⁶ Arthasastra, II, chap. III

⁸⁷ B.K.Barua: A cultural history of Assam, p.73

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Ibid



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Durjaya was encompassed by a rampart furnished with strong fences.⁹⁰ The rulers of Kamrupa realised the importance of forts and other defences for the safety of the kingdom.

6. Weapons of War

Architectural remains and the epigraphs showed the chief weapons of war were asi (sword), parasu (axe), khatvanga (spear), Gada (mace) as well as the bow and arrow.⁹¹ The Doobi epigraph mentions that the battle between Bhaskarvarman and the Gauda army used the wheels (cakra) and javelins.⁹² The plates of Vallabhadeva refer to the use of churika (dagger) as a weapon of war.⁹³ The Guakuci Grant it enumerated as one of the thirty-two birds of king Indrapala;⁹⁴ and the Brahmana Himanka, as stated in the Subhakarapataka Grant, earned royal patronage for skill in archery.⁹⁵ Vallabhadeva in his epigraph is credited with having mastered the science of archery.⁹⁶ The Bargaon Grant mentioned the “cloth which protects the king’s broad chest”. Dhvaja (flag) and pataka (banners) were used in the battlefield.

Conclusion

From the discussion, it is clear that the political structure in ancient Kamrupa has referred to its different facets-trying to ferret out information from the available epigraphic sources. The organisational set-up of ancient Kamrupa were not different from the one of any north Indian rulers. Usually, the king was the head of the kingdom, not a constitutional monarch but a real head of the state claiming as divine origin. Rulers were sometimes elected; otherwise, the law of primogeniture was followed. It was only in extraordinary circumstances that such a step was resorted to. The consecration of ruler was done by the Vedic rites. The ruler was expected to bestow paternal affection on his subjects. His circle included his council of ministers and bureaucracy besides the alter ego, the royal purohit, who always provided him moral counsel and, in a way, kept some form of check on him.

The division of the kingdom, sometimes shaping into a greater empire into provinces or division was quite a normal feature. The political divisions could be traced from the provincial to the district and local levels in descending order with their heads. The list of officials connected with the different sectors is also recorded. Reference is made to land, its problems and its administration. The fiscal administration relating to the collections of revenue and other taxes through an official agency and also on a cumulative basis is noticed in proper perspective. The judicial system was same in different from other dynasties. Closely connected with the problem of law and order, the officials in charge of law and justice had dual functions- prevention of crimes and punishment of offenders. There were no division between the executive and judicial powers. The dharmadhikarin and nyayakaranikas were the judicial officers. The defensive system seems to have been properly planned with plans for civil defence through fortification backed by a good fighting force under the mahasenadhipati. The baladhyaksha seems to have looked after the organizational wing and supply line was maintained under bhandagarikka. On the whole political system as visualised on the basis of the available evidence seems to be fair enough to look after the interest and welfare of the people of Kamrupa.

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⁹⁰ Baragaon grant, L.34-35

⁹¹ Even now the spears and bows used by the tribes of Assam are the finest of their kinds. British Museum Handbook to the Ethnographical Collections,1910, pp.51-85.

⁹² B. K. Barua: A cultural history of Assam, p.75

⁹³ During the Ahom period, Bartop and Hilai, large and small guns, were largely used in war. “It is believed”, remarked Tavernier, “that these people (Assamese) in ancient times, first discovered gun-powder and guns, which passed from Assam to Pegu, and from Pegu to China; this is reason why the discovery is generally ascribed to the Chinese.” He further mentions that the “gun-powder made in that country is excellent.” Travel, II, p.217.

⁹⁴ Kamrupa Sasanavali, p.139.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.



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Grants

- ▣ Doobi Grant of Bhaskarvarman, vv.17.
- ▣ Hayugthal Grant of Harjaraman, vv.8.
- ▣ Baragaon grant, vv.15.
- ▣ Nagaon Grant of Balavarman, vv.21-3.
- ▣ Nidhanapur Grant of Bhaskarvarman, vv.8.
- ▣ Gauhati Grant of Indrapala, vv.17
- ▣ Tezpur Rock Inscription
- ▣ Vanamala grant, vv.24.