THE BASIS OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY (II) *

D. D. KOSAMBI
TATA INSTITUTE OF FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH

6. RISE AND DECLINE OF TRADE. Land tenure cannot be expected to show greater uniformity than contemporary society with its varied concepts of property and right within each component caste, subcaste, guild. The royal *sītā* lands of the *Arthaśāstra* were the economic foundation of Mauryan state power; the *Manusmṛti* does not know the word. However, the difference is partly regional. The Chinese travellers mention *sītā* domains in passing (Legge 42-43; Giles 20-21; Beal I, xxxvii-xxxviii and I, 87-88), the rest of the land being tax-free or very lightly taxed. It is obvious that the revenue in U. P. and Bihār would be far less than in Mauryan times, hence that a flourishing state like that of the Gupta emperors would have to derive relatively more income from the south, with its newer settlements and trade. Fa-hien notes (A. D. 400-410) that the king's bodyguards and attendants all have salaries, Hiuen Tsang (about 630 A. D.) that "when public works require it, labour is exacted but paid for." Both of these are survivals of Mauryan usage. But the later pilgrim also reports that "the governors, ministers, magistrates, and officials have each a portion of land consigned to them for their personal support," which is the beginning of feudalism as is the unpaid corvée. In those two centuries, the populous cities of Magadha were deserted, Patna dwindled to a pair of hamlets, though the Magadhan villages flourished and the land yielded very well; this shows the effect of the new settlements upon the whole economy. The time could not be far distant when the villages, now completely dominating the cities economically, would be reduced to an approximate common status for tax purposes.

Candragupta's general Āmrakārddava (*F*, pp. 31-3) purchased the village of Īśvaravāsaka in A. D. 409-10 with money furnished by certain members of the royal household and presented it, with the interest of an added sum, to the support of the Buddhist monastic order at Sāñcī. The purchase could only have been from the state, in the sense of compensation to the royal treasury after which the village revenues were assigned to the monastic order by the state; but this must be conjectured, in the absence of any further data about the village, from other grants of the Gupta period in Bengal (*EI*, XV, pp. 130-132, 133-4, 135-6, 138-41, 142-5). Indeed, purchase of any sort is unusual in these charters, and a private owner of that day selling land is unheard of. The Dāmodarpūr plates (*EI*, XV above) do not indicate purchase of plots from the village council by immigrant strangers, as has sometimes been claimed. The payment there is clearly to the state, by a brahmin or his patron, of compensation at the rate of 3 *dīnāras* per *kulyavāpa*, for the right to cultivate family-size holdings in hitherto unploughed, marginal (*khila*), waste land, WITHOUT payment of taxes. What had been purchased was freedom (in perpetuity) from taxation by a brahmin or for a temple-plot, not the land itself; the officials concerned were ultimately responsible to the king. Who paid interest on the extra 25 *dīnāras* donated in cash by Āmrakārddava to feed ten monks and light two lamps forever is not clear, but it would presumably have been some guild, perhaps of merchants, who were such frequent donors to Buddhist monasteries, and on whose repeated alms the great foundations (at the intersections of major trade routes) such as at Sāñcī, Kārle, etc. mainly relied in the absence of any city in the neighbourhood.

This contrasts painfully with the heavy cash outlays made about 120 A. D. by so many individuals, including the Śaka Uṣavadāta, Nahapāna's son-in-law. That comparatively insignificant lord went through the usual brahminising gestures by giving away 16 villages to brahmins, endowing the marriages of eight, building ferries and rest-houses at sacred tīrthas. A single donation of his to gods and brahmins was of 70,000 silver *kahāpaṇas*, the equivalent of 2000 gold *suvarṇas*. He endowed the monks at Kārle with a whole village, but his food-gift to the Buddhist monks of cave 10 at Nasik was a field purchased outright for 4000 silver pieces from a brahmin; in addition, he deposited 2000 and 1000 *kahāpaṇas* with two separate weavers' guilds, on perpetual loan at 12% and 9% interest to clothe the same monks and to supply them with

* See above, pp. 35-45.

kusaṇa (? travel money; *EI,* VIII, pp. 78-82). Not only the weavers, but guilds of oilmen, potters (*?Kularika*), Odayantrikas (hydraulic engineers) then flourished sufficiently to enter into such financial transactions. The fisherman (*dāsaka*) Mugūdāsa had a following—presumably a guild also—prosperous enough to donate a whole cave, no. 8 at Nasik, to the *saṃgha.* Even a *kuṭuṃbika* made the attempt (*EI,* VIII, p. 94), but his funds seem to have run out, as the cave beyond no. 23 at Nasik is still unfinished; however, no *kuṭuṃbika* village settler, passive spectator-tenant addressed by the Gupta or later copper-plate grants, could have even dreamt of such munificence. It seems to me that the carpenter Sāmina of Dhenukākaṭa whose name appears on the verandah pillar in front of the central doorway of the Caitya cave at Kārle (*EI,* VII, p. 53) cannot be a mere workman signing because of some hypothetical, vanished woodwork, but was undoubtedly a substantial donor like all the others whose names are there carved in rock.

The range of patrons, flexibility of caste and occupation, respectable status of craftsman and trader, and even the cheerful, simple, direct expression in a popular language are all strongly reminiscent of the Buddhist *Jātakas,* which independent text-criticism takes as having been fixed far away from Magadha at about this period, say the 1st-2nd century A. D. In these works parents often discuss the choice of a profession for their son, where brahmin writings would take the paternal employment for granted, or in case of the "mixed" cast, assign a new but theologically fixed profession, without choice, by their *smṛti* rules. The argument that earlier reliefs at Bhārhūt, Sāñcī, Amarāvatī represent the themes of Jātaka stories faithfully, and that the tradition must have been centuries earlier still, is not relevant. Neither the glyptic, nor the brief Jātaka verses from which the traditional stories have been expanded say anything about the social milieu which determines the approach, colouring, background of the completed text. This can only be referred to social conditions of the time of writing down the extant versions. Here, not only time but locality and the *class* of people transmitting and patronizing the work are of material importance, as is seen by comparison with another text constituted at about the same epoch, the Manusmṛti. This priests' handbook fights bitterly against brahmins degrading themselves in secular professions (*Ms.* 3.151 ff.), permitted however as desperate expedients (*Ms.* 10.81 ff.), but attested by the Jātakas (cf. Fick: *Sociale Gliederung,* chap. 8) without scorn or contempt as not unusual brahmin occupations. To become a brahmin meant at worst going off at a sufficiently early age to some distant place to learn the sacred texts; to make it stick, a share in the surplus was essential, and a type of society that thought it necessary that the hierophant should receive such a share without labor.

A single complex like that at Kaṇherī, or Kuḍā (Lüders *EI,* X, appendix, nos. 984-1066) shows that princes, royal officials, bankers (*seṭhin*), scribes (*lekhaka*), merchants (*negama*), physicans (*veja*), perfumers (*gaṃdhika*), money-changers (*heraṇika*), caravan traders (*sathavāha*), blacksmiths (*kamāra*), iron-mongers (*lohavaṇiyiya*), ploughmen-householders (*hālakiya, kuṭubika, gahapati*), gardeners (*mālākāra*) contributed to the construction, along with guilds even of corn-traders (*dhaṃñika*), bamboo workers (*vasakāra*), and braziers (*kāsākāra*). Most of these donors came from some distance, so their payment must have been in cash—something that would be unheard of for the humbler in the list, with a dominant village economy, without share in the profits of a flourishing trade in commodities. Let us note further that Rudradāman finished rebuilding the shattered dam [12] of lake Sudarśana below Girnār

[12] This dam, now lost without trace, was begun under Candragupta Maurya, finished by Asoka's Persian satrap Tuṣāspha, rebuilt in greater size by Rudradāman, and again extensively repaired by Cakrapālita, son of Skandagupta's administrator Parṇadatta, in A. D. 456. Thus, a shrunken kingdom meant that regulation of water supply and conservation of the water—one of the few essential functions of a central power in India—deteriorated. The other lost function, beyond the jurisdiction of a single village, would be the regulation of trade and its encouragement; but here we have less the effect than the cause of decay for the kingdoms. The semi-isolated valley of Kaśmīr enables us to study the general development quite clearly; the history there differs only as regards time-scale. The conquests of Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa (A. D. 733-769?) derived ultimately from water-conservation and irrigation projects in Kaśmīr; the same kingdom again showed prosperity and expansion as soon as Suyya completed new waterworks under Avantivarman (A. D. 855-883). The expense of maintaining a great central army and bureaucracy afterwards led to heavy taxes, internal discontent, local uprisings, and the development of feudal barons. Let it be suggested that the greatness of Bhoja Paramāra of Dhārā is shown less by his tremendous erudition, patronage of Sanskrit poetry, and additions to our culture, than by the great reservoir at Bhopal, a unique piece of engineering later blown up by Hoshang Shah.

to thrice the original size, at his own expense, "without having plagued the regular town and country settlers with corvée labour, taxes, or voluntary contributions" (*EI*, VIII, p. 44: *apīḍayitvā kara-viṣṭi-praṇaya-kriyābhiḥ paura-jānapadaṃ janam*). He was a ruler of foreign extraction like Nahapāna and Uṣavadāta; but we have numerous private Yavana donors (*EI*, VII, pp. 47-74) at Kārle and Nasik, with a Śaka or two for good measure, who could have gained their wealth only by commerce. Add to this the discovery of tremendous hoards of silver coins, as at Joghaltembhi (which hoard yielded over 20,000 pieces of Nahapāna and his conqueror Śātakarṇi) and only one conclusion is possible: THERE WAS HEAVY COMMODITY PRODCTION AND TRADE IN A FEW CENTERS IN THE ŚĀTAVĀHANA-KṢATRAPA PERIOD WHICH INTERVENES BETWEEN THE MAURYAN AND GUPTA AGES THIS TRADE GAVE RISE TO COMPARATIVELY SMALL BUT RICH PRINCIPALITIES WHOSE CONQUEST WAS THE MAIN SOURCE OF PROFIT FOR THE EARLY GUPTA EMPIRE.[13] WHEN THE IMPERIAL RULE LED TO STEADY INCREASE IN NUMBER OF SETTLEMENTS, WITH NEARLY SELFSUFFICIENT VILLAGE UNITS, TRADE AND COMMODITY PRODUCTION PER HEAD DECREASED SUBSTANTIALLY. The general incidence of cash transactions and trade would naturally affect the whole concept of private property in land at any given time and place. We have noted Uṣavadāta's purchase of a field at Nasik for 4000 silver pieces. Richly endowed temples and their administrative bodies tend always to sell or lease some of their possessions, though such a temple is generally a civic, not a rural institution (e. g. Nālūr, K. A. N. Sāstri, pp. 85-95). Trade certainly affected the administration of justice as seen from the peculiar Jātaka word *lañca* for bribe, (with the modern idiom *lañcam khādati,* Fausböll II. 186) surviving to this day, but unknown to Sanskrit, or earlier Pāli. The ephemeral trade centers of the interegnum are fairly well represented by the list of conquests in Gotamīputra Sātakarṇi's inscription (*ITM*, p. 216-7): Aśmaka, Paiṭhaṇ, Surāṣṭra, Aparānta (north Koṅkaṇ), Anupa (near Māhiṣmatī on the Narmadā), Berār, Vidiśā, Ujjain, Vejayanti (Banavāsī in North Kanara), and some coastal ports of the peninsula, with undeveloped hinterland. The older centers in the north had already begun to their long, slow decline, with increasingly self-sufficient villages.

Money plays a negligible role in the closed economy of a village with communal production. Taxes were paid in kind, except for the occasional cash crops that had to be traded immediately. The observation that only a part of that surplus which reached the hands of the state became a commodity, to be exchanged as such, attests Marx's unique insight. What has been said about salt, metals, and cloth makes little difference, the quantity needed per village being very small, and bartered for grain. Trade was large only in the aggregate, its density noticeably important only at a few emporia.

7. LAND GRANTS. The charters dug up till now are overwhelmingly of land or village gifts made by kings to brahmins. Merchant recipients share the land-grant in *F.* 28 with brahmins, presumably for support of the Sun-temple founded by one of them, which would be managed by brahmins in any case. This again differs from the *Arthaśāstra,* which advises against any but simple *brahmadeya* groves, not transferable; explicitly, against gifts of villages or arable land. Yet there is formal continuity through changed circumstances. The older book devotes an entire chapter (*Arth.* 2.2) to the disposal of unploughable land (*akṛṣyāyāṃ bhūmau*), called there *bhūmi-chidra.* The principal recommendation is that the land be devoted to elephant-breeding for the army. The chapter begins, however, with the advice that such land can be used for sparse dissemination of untaxed brahmin Druidical teaching groves—which would not interfere with other uses. This laid the foundations of the very practice that the great text wished to avoid though no cultivator was allowed to shift from taxed to tax-free land. The brahmins, undoubtedly influenced by the trading environment, managed to get enough cultivators together (in our period, from tribesmen) to start regular clearing and farming, while preserving the original tax-free rights. The charters of the Gupta (and later) age give the land away regularly *bhūmi-chidra-nyāyena* 'by the law of the waste land,'

[13] *Gupta* includes the allied Vākāṭakas, for whose power and independence a case can be made out as by S. K. Aiyangar, *Ancient India* (Poona, 1941), vol. I, pp. 91-166. They, rather than the Guptas, seem to have held most of the Sātavāhana Deccan till the rise of the Cālukyas, but the main point is that we hear little of the wealth, power and democratic generosity of the coastal trade centers at this time, though the caves of Elephanta prove that the capacity was present. The overinflated work of K. P. Jayaswal: *History of India, 150 A.D.-350 A.D.* can hardly be recommended.

though the land was then well developed. The only explanation is that it had at one time been waste land, the first new grants only confirming the original *brahmadeya* brought under cultivation by the initial donee's descendants. The legal terminology of the grant survives though the nature of the land and the role of the brahmin changed. Just as the word *sītā* denotes 'plough-furrow' and thence the royal plough-lands, so *bhūmi-chidra* might indicate seed-holes made by the digging stick (dibble) in burnt-over forest land. To the end, the brahmin is not supposed to set his own hand (*Ms.* 10.84) to the plough or metal-tipped digging tools; but we know that, even from vedic times, the brahmin kept some cattle, the standard measure of his wealth. Thus, he always had the preliminary requirements for agriculture at his command.

Why brahmins or temples? Let it be suggested that the Buddhist monasteries had been a civilising influence, but useless for royal administrative purposes. By the very rules of his order, the monk had no family, caste, property, technique, or productive labour; even the practice of social ritual was forbidden him, as were the incantations thought so necessary by the society of his day. This put him beyond the class division of society. Though that division was not without effect upon his canonical writings (as for example the rich nobleman's Mahāyāna in the north as against the more primitive Hīnayāna of the less developed south), he was unable to compete with the brahmin in promoting social production, except at the earliest stage of bearing the message of peace to warring tribes, or the brief period when trade was expanding. The rustic brahmins were a valuable direct support to the new state mechanism that sprang up with increasing settlement of tribal areas, and they helped, as shown above, in the introduction of village settlements. The brahmin certainly never deluded himself about the CLASS function of caste. *Ms.* 8.148 says: "(The king) should, with force, compel the vaiśyas, and śūdras to perform their (prescribed) work; for if these two (castes) fell from their duties, this whole world would be thrown into confusion." State and priest combine in keeping the primary producer to his task, without which neither could find a surplus to share. However, there is, by the Gupta period, one important difference from the Yajurvedic caste system. The vaiśya settler (according to our lexica *arya*, the Aryan par excellence) had formerly been the chief producer of taxable surplus, the śūdra being a helot; now there is hardly a vaiśya in sight except perhaps as an occasional trader while more and more tribes are enrolled (mostly as śūdras of new type) into the general body of society and settled in peaceful, unarmed villages. It seems to me that most land grants would not otherwise have been possible. Our information here is somewhat one-sided, as the average settlement had no charter. But it is known that other villages imitated the structure of the special ones whose records survive in the copper plates. The council (*sabhā*) which decided on behalf of the village was dominated by the shareholders, usually the private land-holding class of *kuṭumbins*, among whom there might again develop a class division, as for example the *rāṣṭrakūṭa* settlers of some rather late southern epigraphs. The *kuṭumbin*, equivalent to *gahapati* in the Jātakas, is not called a Vaiśya. There was, besides the *sabhā*, the general assembly of the inhabitants, who either attended the *sabhā* meetings (as in Goa) and made their wishes known without voting, or constituted a separate body like the Ūr of Coḷa settlements. With no force at its disposal, and a low incidence of trade, the ruling class could and need not be as oppressive as in later feudal days; so the earlier village workers had a greater measure of democracy.

Generally, the king grants the right to tax-free cultivation; at a later stage, the village taxes themselves are also given to the donee. The taxes, being usually in kind, amount to a gift of grain. The tax donation conveys no proprietary rights in the land itself, which cannot be sold or alienated as a rule. The beneficiary is not accountable for tax-dues received, nor does he pass on some agreed fraction to the state, as would be the case in later, feudal times. On the other hand, he has not the armed force nor the legal power to extract anything more than the king's share, determined by parochial usage even before the charter. The *Arthaśāstra* would grant only clearance and cultivation rights to fields in state land on condition of paying all taxes. The thief-tax, i. e. fine to be levied when some robbery occurred within village territorial limits but could not be traced, was usually reserved for the state and excepted from the donation; the reason was that the king would in such cases have to reimburse the merchant for the goods stolen. Tribal land is never property, only territory; hence land ownership in the same

sense as that of goods is not probable for the new settlements of the Gupta rule, while any claim to bestow occupation rights would vest in the successor to tribal authority, the king. Where the tribe remained as such, we have no example of any land grant at all. The beginning of a peculiarly Indian feudalism is visible in the corvée, here called *viṣṭi,* coming to mean unpaid labor for the king; in the *Arthaśāstra* it meant only drudge labour, perhaps compulsory but paid at the (lowest) rate of 5 silver *paṇas* a month per man. It now becomes a tax upon the villager; *Ms.* 7.138 allows the king the right to a day's unpaid work per month from all craftsmen and those śūdras who live by their own labour. Kaśmīr, with its difficult transport, had a special porterage corvée (*Rāj.* 5.172-4; Stein's note, *Rāj.* I. p. 209).

The Vākāṭaka king Pravarasena II (*F.* 55) states, with unusual clarity, typical conditions of such a grant in the early 5th century A. D.:—

> The village named Carmāṅka on the bank of the river Madhunadī, in the Bhojakaṭa kingdom (measuring) 8000 *bhūmis* according to the royal measure is, according to the request of Koṇḍarāja, son of Śatrughnarāja, given to 1000 brahmins of various *gotras* and *caraṇas.* We grant the fixed usage, such as befits this (village), such as has been approved by former kings, of a village which belongs to a community of *caturvedins.* Namely, it is not to pay taxes; it is not to be entered by the regular troops or by umbrella-bearing officials; it does not carry with it the right to cows and bulls in succession of production, nor to the surplus of flowers and milk, nor to the pasturage, hides, charcoal, nor to the diggings for purchase of undried salt; it is entirely free from all obligations (to the state) of forced labor; it carries with it the (right to) treasure trove, and the *kḷpta* and *upakḷpta*; it is (granted) as long as the moon and the sun (shall endure), to follow in the direct line of sons and sons' sons. It should be protected and increased by all possible means. Whosoever, disregarding this charter, shall give or cause to be given the slightest vexation, on him shall we inflict punishment together with a fine when he is denounced by the brahmins . . . And this condition of the charter should be maintained by the brahmins and future rulers: Namely (that the grant is valid) as long as the moon and the sun (endure) provided they commit no treason against the sevenfold kingdom (king, ministers, ally, territory, fortress, army, treasury) of (succeeding) kings; that they are not slayers of brahmins, and are not thieves, adulterers, poisoners of kings &c; that they do not wrong other villages. But if they act otherwise, or assent (to such transgression) the king will commit no theft in rescinding the land.

Noteworthy features of this clearly worded but not unusual grant deserve comment. Bhojakaṭa has the appearance of a tribal name. The village is GRANTED IN COMMON to a thousand holders, of whom 49, presumably heads of families, are given by name later on. Apparently the brahmins were already settled in the village, hence must have derived food from its land, before the charter. The net gain would seem to be the right to cultivate with freedom from taxes, and from the royal corvée. The gift is made by the king, at the request of Koṇḍarāja, whose name and ancestry denote a kṣatriya, perhaps the district governor or commandant, yet one who had nevertheless no power himself to make any such grant.[14] That is, no proper feudal nobles exist, and THERE IS NO LOCAL LORD WITH MANORIAL HOLDINGS IN THE VILLAGES. Certain rights are reserved to the original villagers (not brahmins) namely common pasturage, cattle and their products, salt and mineral rights. The non-brahmin villagers in this case at least must have been mainly pastoral, the brahmins the first systematic agriculturists. It is also clear that the village had no force whatever at its command; any armed action by the village or encroachment upon other village land would forfeit the grant altogether. The emphatic and constantly repeated *a-cāṭa-bhaṭa-praveśyaḥ* proves how thoroughly disarmed the village generally was, so that any royal soldier or official could tyrannize over it at will; immunity from their entry was always a tremendous boon—as it would be to this day. The village had, therefore, no real interest beyond its boundaries, and so could witness the ruin of empires with equanimity while concentrating upon its miserable patch of land.

8. FIELDS AND INHABITANTS. This should prove the existence of common ownership of most land at the period. But there is also a type of individual right which has to be considered. For example, Dharasena II of Valabhī (*F.* 38) made a gift in A. D. 571-2 to a brahmin Rudrabhūti, of various plots of land whose measure and precise description are given:

[14] The Nagardhan grant (*EI,* XXVIII, p. 1-11) is made at the request of a local elephant-trainers' guild, sealed with the guild seal; but the piece of land is granted actually by king Svāmirāja (March 19, 573 A. D.), who adds a whole village on his own account. Thus, land was not property in the modern sense, ownership vested in the collective residents, in the sense of exploitation and occupation; but transfer could only be effected by the state, here the king, that had taken over tribal rights to territory, and hence to granting of tenancy.

"At the village of Antaratrā, in the Śīvaka *padraka,* 100 *pādāvartas* of land, the holding of Vīrasenadantika, and 15 *pādāvartas* to the west of this; also, at the western boundary 120 *pādāvartas,* the holding of Skambhasena and 10 *pādāvartas* at the eastern boundary; in the village of Ḍombhigrāma, in the eastern boundary, 90 *pādāvartas* known as the carpenter's plot (*vardhaki-pratyaya*). In the village of Vajragrāma at the western boundary 100 *pādāvartas* at the summit of the village and a well, with an area of 28 *pādāvartas,* known as the holding of the Elder (*mahattara*) *Vikidinna.* In the Bhumbhusa *padraka* 100 *pādāvartas* known as the holding of the settler (*kuṭumbi*) Boṭaka and a well. (The whole of) this (is given) together with the *udraṅga* (tax) and the *uparikara* (tax); with the right to the *viṣṭi,* corvée) at the occasion for it occurs; not even to be pointed at by the hand by any of the king's people."[14a] (Similarly, Dharasena I, A. D. 525, *EI,* XI pp. 107-8, 113-4; *cf.* also *EI,* XI pp. 80-85).

This shows in the first place the existence of some personal holdings, all rather small in area as a *pādāvarta* is taken to be "one square pace," say 8 square feet. One of these was originally assigned[15] to the elder (*mahattara*), one to the village carpenter (*vardhaki* as in Vainyagupta's Gunaighar grant *IHQ* VI (1930), pp. 45-60; Fleet takes this as a proper name), as was the known custom in other places. All the plots are in the *padraka,* which means clearly MARGINAL land, as does the unploughed *khila* land of the Dāmodarpūr charters (*EI,* XV, pp. 113-145) not the prime common land under cultivation. The difference between the two is that these *padraka* lands, though described as within the limits of a given village, have separate names of their own; presumably, they were tiny settlements emanating from the main village for ease of cultivation, as yet without separate entity, and may be taken as the equivalent of *vāḍi, vāḍā, pāḍi* etc. which now terminate so many modern village names. All could be given away by the king, along with any wells constructed therein, without any talk of compensation. How is this to be explained? This can only mean that the village had a certain amount of common food-producing land besides the pasture, and that the remaining (*padraka*) land, which would normally be waste, could be cultivated by individuals or groups possessed of the necessary energy; some of this land was assigned (besides their normal perquisites) to

[14a] If in this inscription and others of the king, the word *-pratyaya* is translated as "adjoining (the holding of the person named earlier in the compound," all the inscriptions make better sense. The king does not transfer holdings belonging to someone but bestows waste-land bounded by such individual holdings, explicitly named.

[15] For the common and private holdings under the old system, see my note on "The village community in the Old Conquests of Goa," *J. Bombay Univ.* Vol. XV, pt. 4, 1947, pp. 63-78. For that climate, extra land was often a liability, because of the torrential rain and rank jungle; but the main food-producing land was held in common, and the community retained the right of periodical reassignment of any private holding, according to changed needs and capacities of the families. There was in addition a peculiar method of sharing the surplus, after all village public works had been paid for. The artisans had a share of the surplus, or a charge upon the general yield of food-grain, besides any plot assigned for development by their own labor. Such artisans come under the *nāru-kāru* and *baḷutedār-aḷutedār* of Mahārāṣṭra villages, whose nature and functions are clearly described under the given words in Molesworth's Marāṭhī-English dictionary; these include the *gurava* who need not be a brahmin but serves or tends to the village cult, clear remnant of tribal belief. F. Kielhorn, discussing the Dibbida *agrahāra* plates of a Matsya king dated Apr. 6, 1269 A. D. seems to me to misinterpret lines 65-7 of the inscription (*EI,* V, p. 112), where the *grāmakārukāḥ* are named as carpenter, goldsmith, barber, blacksmith, potter, and sesamum-grinder; these have their holdings exempted from the gift, just as was that of the *amātya* Peddana, whereas the editor takes the charter as directing them to pay their dues hereafter to the donees. *EI,* V, p. 96 gives a different set of *agrahāra* functionaries; in addition, we seem to have feudal landlords developing under Vīracoḍadeva: *rāṣṭrakūṭas,* as the leading *kuṭumbins,* not the royal dynasty. The *kāru* occur in Gupta period inscriptions, being warned in each copper-plate charter of the new title. The *kuṭumbin* of the inscription could also be a brahmin, and this is supported by the modern label *kuṭuṃbaṇa* applied to small food-producing plots, away from the actual house-garden plot, that might be assigned to a brahmin. Some writers now deny that common holdings ever existed, and some prefer to see the *ryotwārī* system as the general form of Indian landholding right up to vedic time; these may be ignored after the evidence cited. The duties, privileges, ultimate decay into parasitism of the Balutedars and Ālutedars are described for Mahārāṣṭra by T. N. Ātre in his book *Gāṃva-gāḍā* (Poona & Karjat, 1915). In giving a good picture of the old village organization in its declining years, with shopkeeper and moneylender becoming powerful, where every group shook off its duties without failing to claim its fullest rights, the petty-bourgeois brahmin landholder author fails to mention the deadliest encroachment of all: that of his own class supported by the British.

certain village workers (*kāru*) or functionaries. But the existence of such individual plots implies the existence of an owning class, and of another that had no such rights. Nevertheless, THE TITLE EVEN TO THIS PADRAKA LAND MUST HAVE VESTED IN THE VILLAGE AS A WHOLE, if the right of reassignment could be claimed by the king from the upper class of villagers, whatever it was at the time. The wells were almost certainly the product of communal labour, as probably also the first clearing of the small *padraka* fields; possibly both had been done by *viṣṭi* labour at some earlier period. It must not be forgotten that we are still close to the time of original settlement and forest-clearing; the stage when all tillable land is closely occupied lies in the distant future. Thus we have *Ms.* 9.44: "the land belongs to him who first clears the forest (for sowing), as does the buck to him who gets in the first arrow." There can have been no question of any individual just wandering off to clear a patch of land. Either it would be complete wilderness, in which case a group of settlers alone could manage and hence own it; or the lone settler would have to come to terms with the forest tribes. With tribal slash-and-burn cultivation, land would lose its fertility so quickly that a small fixed patch would have no value; such land sown without ploughing has to shift from year to year, making individual title meaningless for tribesmen. If the forest lay within the undeveloped area of some village, the village itself would have to grant the right of clearance, as was generally done even in later settlements of which we have precise knowledge. Thus, king Dharasena was transferring ON BEHALF OF THE VILLAGE certain rights of cultivation originally granted by the village. With either the Manusmṛti type of title cited above, or later notions of ownership, the grant would be an act of tyranny which not even a greedy brahmin would dare to accept without the backing of a local police force. We are at the transitional stage where territory is becoming property, leading to feudalism from above while the workers have progressively less ownership rights of any sort.

The question of property in land is touched upon most nearly by "Three Copper-Plate Grants From East Bengal" (F. E. Pargiter in *IA* XXXIX (1910), pp. 193-216). Of these charters in 6th century Brahmi the first is the clearest, and may be quoted in Pargiter's translation (slightly modified):—

The leading men of the district (modern Faridpur), who were headed by Iṭīta, Kulacandra, Garuḍa, Bṛhaccaṭṭa, Āluka, Anācāra, Bhāśaitya, Śubhadeva, Ghoṣacandra, Anamitra, Guṇacandra, Kālasakha, Kulasvāmin, Durlabha, Satyacandra, Arjuna-bappa, and Kuṇḍalipta, and the common folk (*prakṛtayaḥ*) were apprised by the agent Vātabhoga thus: "I wish to buy a parcel of cultivated land (*kṣetrakhaṇḍa*) from your honours and bestow it on a brahman; therefore do ye deign to take the price from me, to divide (the land) in the district and give it (to me)." Wherefore we, giving heed to this request (and) being unanimous, determined (the matter) by an appraisal by the keeper of the records (*pustapāla*) Vinayasena. There is in this district the rule established along the eastern sea (that) cultivated lands are things which may be sold according to the (rate of the) sum of four *dīnāras* for the area that can be sown with a *kulya* of seed (*kulyavāpa*) and that the evidence of a sale is by the custom of (giving) a copper-plate, which custom applies immediately on seeing the counting made for the parcel of cultivated lands of such-and-such-sowing (area), and thereby the feet of the Emperor receive the sixth part (future taxes) (*tacca parama-bhaṭṭāraka-pādānām atra dharmma-ṣaḍbhāga-lābhaḥ*), according to the law here. Therefore the agent Vātabhoga having adopted this procedure, (and) having by tendering the deposit (compiled with it) by the act as well as by the intentions of one who has desired to establish the fame of his own merit (and) having paid twelve *dīnāras* in our presence—we, having severed (the land) according to (the standard measure of) eight reeds (*nala*, perhaps bamboo here) by nine (per *kulya-vāpa*) by the hand of Śivacandra, have sold to Vātabhoga a triple *kulya-sowing* (area) of cultivated land in Dhruvilāṭi by the custom of the copper-plate. This very Vātabhoga, who desires benefit in another world as long as (this land) shall be enjoyed, while the moon, the stars, and the sun endure, has joyfully, for the (spiritual) benefit of his own parents bestowed the land on (the brahmin) Candrasvāmin who is of the Bharadvāja gotra, who is a Vājasaneya, and student of the six *aṅgas*, (imprecation against violators of the grant; limits of the area donated). The third (regnal) year, 5th day of Vaiśākha.

Pargiter opines that the land here was the joint property of all the villagers; in the second grant, of an individual; in the third, of a group. Yet it is admitted that extraordinary measures, going far beyond rights of such ownership, have been taken at the alienation. This land is not property in the sense of trade goods. The fact of payment is clear, as are the terms for sale and purchase in an area as important then for trade as Calcutta today; but the transaction was not for financial profit, nor an investment. In each case, the land went to a brahmin for spiritual merit gained by the purchaser and his parents. The main question, then, is: to whom was the payment made, and for what purpose? Certainly, the *mahattaras* and common people present cannot have been the owners, for

the former are the leading men of the whole district; we have, in fact, a convocation of the district *sabhā*. Pargiter takes the *pustapāla* as keeper of ownership records. This would be extraordinary, as no owner's name is given in any of the transfers. The official could only have been keeper of TAX-rolls. It follows that the payment is either to the state treasury, or to those originally responsible for payment of taxes, for the brahmin's allotment would not be taxed, according to custom, once clear title had been given to him. Thus the 'sixth part' mentioned would not be a sixth of the total price, but would indicate PAYMENT MADE TO THE TREASURY (OR TO THOSE WHOM THE STATE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TAXES) IN COMMUTATION OF THE SIXTH PORTION OF THE YIELD, which was the standard land tax in this period. For further support, we may note that the rate of 4 *dīnāras* per *kulyavāpa* (as in the Damodarpur plates) is fixed in common to all three grants, but the second grant specifically mentions this as payment for waste (*khila*) land (not "belonging to" but "adjacent to"—*sambaddha* that of the *mahattara* Thoḍa); hence the land in the other two cases must also have ranked as uncultivatad waste. Thus, the correct translation of *kṣetra* would be 'plot' or 'field,' not 'cultivated land.' To develop the argument, we may consider two[16] 16th century survivals. First, the payment of revenue in cash or kind depended upon the available supply of precious metals, hence upon trade; for the Delhi empire, upon the possession or independence of the coastal ports of Gujarat and Bengal. Secondly, it was possible for an immigrant cultivator in Gujarat to go to a village headman, and have a plot of uncultivated land assigned to him MERELY ON CONDITION OF PAYING THE TAXES due to the state.

The donee is changed in *F.* 31 where Śarvanātha (A. D. 533) assigns to Kumārasvāmin, for the service of a temple to the goddess Piṣṭapūrikā, the two villages of Vyāghrapallikā and Kācarapallikā in the Maṇināga-peṭha, originally bestowed upon Pulindabhaṭa. Here the villages had been a royal grant in the first instance, so the situation is not comparable with the action of Dharasena; nor is anything said about small private holdings. The whole affair has a far more primitive flavour. Not only the village names and that of the *peṭha* seem aboriginal, as pointed out earlier, but the goddess Piṣṭapūrikā (? supplier of flour in abundance) is not in the standard pantheon, and Pulindabhaṭa definitely has a tribal (*P.* 52, 73) connotation too.

At the end of the period under consideration, such charters become valuable enough to forge. We possess one such forgery in the name of Samudragupta (*F.* 60; cf. also *EI* XXV, p. 51 for another); even there, the forger copied the ancient condition that villagers from tax-paying villages should not be enticed to the tax-free settlement. King Harṣa of Kanouj discovered a brahmin holding the village Somakuṇḍa by means of a forged copper-plate (*EI,* I. p. 73, line 10; *EI,* VII, pp. 155-60), which he broke to bestow the land upon another brahmin. However, the matter of tenure becomes less clear at this time. The *mahārāja mahāsāmanta* Samudrasena (7th cent.; *F.* 80) is seen giving away the whole village of Sūlisagrāma, as an *agrahāra* for the temple of Mihireśvara-Kapāleśvara—an odd form Sun-Śiva—to the entire body of Atharvan brahmins resident at the *agrahāra* of Nirmand on the Sutlej. These *agrahāras* formed model villages for agriculture, as well as centers of brahminism. Continuity is shown by the copper-plate being discovered nailed to the wall of the modern Paraśurāma temple, though no one could read the grant for centuries, and the god had changed too. This charter of Samudrasena is peculiar because of two phrases. First, the village is granted together with plain, marsh, forest, AND WITH ITS INHABITANTS = *sa-prativāsi-jana-sametam.* This means that the inhabitants[17] were all śūdras; other charters show that *kuṭumbins* (= family-settlers), though philological ancestors of the modern *kunabī,* could also be brahmins, or of other high caste, who owned separate holdings and certainly could not have been given away along with the land. These

[16] W. H. Moreland, *The Agrarian System of Moslem India* (Cambridge, 1929), pp. 68, 129.

[17] Fleet takes the fields named as belonging to certain *kuṭumbins* to be part of the gift, which would make these people serfs. This is most unlikely, for only the *śūdra* colonus in these cases had no property rights, as against the Arya (member of the three upper castes). The correct interpretation is that the fields whose owners are named set the boundaries to the gift, but were not included therein; the word *paryantām* and the general usage of such charters prove this. The Punjab having been settled even before the Mauryans, it is difficult to interpret the rest of the village as pastoral—particularly in the absence of any evidence in the grant—hence one must admit, in such cases at least, the development of serfs attached to the land, by 700 A. D.

śūdras, therefore, had become quasi-feudal serfs tied to the soil, without proprietory rights of any sort; only then could the whole village be granted (though still contrary to Jaimini) people and all, to the temple [18] with its collective priesthood. The other striking phrase is in line 15 of the inscription: *rāṣṭrasametasyeyam dattiḥ paripālyā*: "This grant, (made with the consent) of the popular assembly, is to be preserved." The transfer needed some formal popular sanction, presumably of a noble or upper class, as the cultivators involved do not seem to have been consulted. However, the śūdra was the essential producer; what groups imposed themselves upon him as part of the class superstructure became progressively less material to production.

The people given away by Samudrasena could not even have been arbitrary śūdra villagers. The whole of the peninsula and the greater part of India has now just two major castes (*varṇa*): brahmin and śūdra. This can be understood from the historical development sketched earlier, though it has led some to deny that the traditional four-caste system ever existed. The śūdras today are divided into countless, endogamous, local, *jāti* subcastes whose tribal origin may clearly be proved, with remnants of tribal practice in caste *sabhās* or councils that give a measure of strength and unity to the *jāti* group. Such people cannot be given away with a piece of land, not even the Caṇḍālas. Therefore the quite rare śūdra of Fa Hien, Jaimini, and Samudrasena belonged to a group which had neither solidarity nor kinship support outside the village. This fits the older, *smṛti* type of śūdra; standing apart from the three upper castes that count together as Aryan, he had no initiation rights, virtually no right to property, being himself property of the (vedic) tribe as a whole. The Ṛgvedic *dāsa* is certainly given away on occasion though the *Arthaśāstra* forbade the sale of a free śūdra, granting him occupational rights in land. The Nirmand villagers would have been śūdras of classical type, who could never be really free (*Ms.* 8. 414), helots reduced to serfdom, with the *rāṣṭra* of the charter representing the Aryan owner-tribe; otherwise the copper plate becomes incomprehensible.

Land was regularly donated with slaves (*dāsa*) or with the settlers (*sa-kuṭumbi-jana*) to temples and to Buddhist foundations in the kingdom of Campā [19] by rulers of the 5th to the late 9th centuries. A little later, Vallabhadeva of Assam followed a similar practice (*EI,* XV, p. 185, 12th century) even dedicating certain people with their families to the service of the temple. The land and the people transferred in Assam as well as Campā had barely emerged from tribal conditions. It is not possible here to argue, as in the case of the Punjab, back to Aryan usage with the ancient Śūdras. Some form of bondage, presumably deriving from conquest, though perhaps reinforced by tribal attachment to a certain territory, is definitely involved; all we can say is that it was rare. THE TRIBAL ANTECEDENTS WITH CONSEQUENT UNITY OF THE *jāti* ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR NON-DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA OF GENERAL SERFDOM, HENCE LACK OF FEUDALISM PROPER IN THE EUROPEAN SENSE.

After all, serfdom and the manor are the basis of European feudalism, while the common military features which led Tod (*Annals of Rājasthān;* see criticism in A. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies* (London, 197), I, pp. 243-250) to write of Rajput feudalism are of tribal origin, developing from the oligarchic position of a conquering group or clan. Historical reasons explain the difference, for neither the Mauryan nor any other state in India developed villas, latifundia, or large-scale slave production as did Rome. In addition, India lacked an organized church. Pre-Muslim Rajput inscriptions show military subordinates holding a few villages (say 84) from an overlord, without serfs or manors. The Muslim attempts at direct cultivation with slave labour (*e. g.* Alā-ud-dīn Khilji's 50,000 *bandagān-i-khās*) also failed because of the estab-

[18] Fa-hien (Legge 43; Giles 21) reports that the *vihāras* of his day possessed ancient copper-plate charters of endowment "with fields, houses, gardens and orchards, *along with the resident population and their cattle.*" The words I emphasize are rendered by Giles "with men and bullocks for cultivation." The same traveller reports cultivators as being free to move away so the precise nature of the grant is not clear. At any rate the cultivators in general were not serfs in 400 A. D., nor at the time of Hiuen Tsang, say to 644 A. D. *JBORS* II. 407, 415, 423 gives inscriptions found in and probably originating in Dhenkanal, of which that of Śubhaṃkaradeva is the earliest, and which transfer tenants —including craftsmen—with the land; but this seems merely gift of dues owed to the king by these workers, not servitude of any sort.

[19] The inscriptions have been collected and translated in R. C. Majumdar's *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East*, vol. I, *Champa*, part III, particularly pp. 6, 7, 69, 82, 90.

lished village economy with *jāti* divisions which made less intense exploitation profitable with far less expenditure.

More important than such local variations are the advances by specialized production. For example, settlement of the coastal strip in the face of the dense jungle and terrific rainfall became really profitable when cocoanut plantations were introduced. The trees were gaining hold on the Orissa coast by the time of Varāhamihira and modelled in clay for Rājyaśrī's wedding pavilion at Thanesar (*Harṣacarita* p. 142). The north Indian climate is unsuitable for this plant of Malayan provenance. Suśruta knows it only as a comparatively rare medicinal fruit. The use of the nut in all Hindu ceremonial where it has supplanted the water-jar (*uda-kumbha*) is excellent proof of the effect of local usage upon ritual brahminism, for only on the coast is it absolutely fundamental in the means of production. Other commodity plants from south-east Asia are the betel leaf (mentioned in the Mandasor weavers' *praśasti* of Vatsabhaṭṭi cited above) and areca nut, but they are luxury articles in comparison to the cocoanut. The cocoanut and by-products, particularly the oil, had to be exchanged for other necessities on the west coast, cocoanuts and salt remained the main exports against imports of cloth. Cocoanut trees grew in tremendous profusion on the coast of Thāṇā district by 120 A. D., (though the fruit is not mentioned by the *Periplus* of the preceding century; *trans.* W. H. Schoff [New York, 1912]) when Uṣavadāta gave them away by the thousands (Nasik cave no. 10, *EI*, VIII, p. 78, *nāligera-mūla-sahasra;* p. 82 *nāligerāṇi*. The *mūla* refers to the pits, the modern *āḷīṃ* of Marāṭhī usage; the date may be 90 A. D.). Thus trade and the middleman-trader could never lose all their importance on the coast. The self-sufficient village unit is not suited to such production and exchange without a minimal security for private tenure or ownership of land. Hence the Goan communes held food-producting land in common, but cocoanut plantations on private leasehold from the commune.

Muslim trade on the international market brought a new demand for commodities which could not be satisfied by the static village community. The inevitable counterpart of the caravan merchant and maritime trader was the new armed feudal landlord who squeezed a greater surplus from the land by force, for exchange. Dues rose to 50% or more of the produce, as compared to the former sixth or less. Here the rustic, parochial training of the brahmin unfits him for action beyond the village; again we find brahmins increasingly, though slowly, drawn into trade on the coast. Alberuni's *India* brings out, by its sharp comments, the brahminical mentality produced by the protracted "idiocy of village life," as against that of the Arab trader who had to face rapidly changing reality. The difference is precisely equivalent to that between the mythological geography of the purāṇas (founded upon real travel, probably during the Jātaka-Sātavāhana interlude) and the clear useful, itineraries of the Arabs.

9. RECAPITULATION: The increase in number of villages led in particular to degeneration of the wealthy and enterprising guilds into mere castes [20] whose scattered members slowly became integrated with the particular village, the *seṭhis* turning into ordinary moneylenders. This was, on the whole, well after the Gupta empire had passed; the decay was not uniform in any case, though apparently complete long before the Mohammedan period. Production as a whole increased BUT IT WAS NOT COMMODITY PRODUCTION, whose DENSITY became very much less. The significant donations of the early part of this epoch are gifts to brahmins already settled or invited to settle in undeveloped

[20] J. Jolly, *ZDMG* L (1896), 507-518 and H. Oldenberg, *ibid.* LI (1897), 267-290 criticize E. Senart's book *Les castes dans l'Inde* (then new; 2nd ed. Paris, 1927) for taking the four vedic *varṇa* classes as equivalent to the *jāti* castes, developed by intermixture according to brahmin *śāstra* writings; also for neglecting the role of the guilds, so prominent in the Buddhist works analyzed by R. Fick in *Die sociale Gliederung im nordöstlichen Indien zu Buddhas Zeit* (Kiel, 1897). All of these neglect changing productive relations, the influence of tribal contact and endogamy, formation of guilds from tribal fractions and castes from both. Buddhist texts were re-edited far from Magadha, in a trading environment, at a later date than that even of Asoka, some being translated from Māgadhī with new additions after Puṣyamitra (J. Przyluski, *Légende de l'empereur Aśoka*, chap. IV). Lack of rigidity in occupational as well as caste rules are concomitants of a commodity-producing society, where the stagnant village was not the norm, and change of occupation would be profitable. If, as in the Pāli texts, whole villages were constituted at times solely of members of a single occupational *jāti*, it means that the inhabitants were fabricating wares for exchange, were producing commodities. The Indian village as it finally emerged had to entice a few indispensable craftsmen by allotting special plots, and shares in the produce.

territory, to which they first brought—generally without themselves performing the physical labor—knowledge of agriculture, new techniques [21] and seeds, consciousness of distant markets, and a totally new social organization. They settled as a rule in small groups to which agrarian retinues were attracted. Once implanted, this productive structure was rapidly disseminated beyond the capacity of the brahmin for development. The *dharmaśāstras* (*Baudhāyana Dh. Sūtra* 2. 3. 33) bear the stamp of incurable rusticity which helped the brahmin become a good colonist. The great classical Sanskrit literature was not developed in the villages, but at court; the court itself degenerated speedily into a parasitic growth upon the aggregate of villages unless it regulated irrigation and trade, matters beyond the control of a single village. So many later grants are made from royal camp-headquarters (*skandhāvāra*) that the chief activity of the central power is seen to have become movement with an armed force; this would accelerate the decay of cities as administrative centers, hence of urban culture as a vigorous force, urban production having declined with the guilds; what might have developed into a bourgeoisie withered away. The pioneer settler-priest is the ancestor of the later esurient brahmin whose main function was to discourage innovation, originality, progress, initiative by perpetuating superstitious ignorance. The really important economic need he served at the time of first village development had vanished. The type of later gifts is foreshadowed by the prodigality of Uṣavadāta and represented by the dangerous extravagance of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda IV of Mānyakheṭa who in A. D. 930 (*EI*, VII, p. 40) claims to have given away at a *tulāpuruṣa* as many as 800 villages to brahmins, along with 3,200,000 *drammas* and 40,000 *suvarṇas*. At most, this put some accumulated money back into circulation. Rudradāman's much-advertised mastery of Sanskrit and Harṣa's proven command of the medium show how rulers of foreign descent were assimilating themselves creatively to the priesthood and aristocracy of their times; the village brahmin's Sanskrit remains sterile parroting of ancient formulae, whose origin and meaning was progressively forgotten. There is no Georgic verse, nor an Indian Hesiod. We have necessarily a different mentality and cultural pattern from that which produced, by the cooperation of many donors to a great design, the monuments of Sāñcī, Kārle, Amarāvatī, Kaṇherī. Cooperation within the restricted horizon of a village had to be different in scope and vision, or the lack of it, than joint action by people who gained knowledge and cash profit by commodity production and trade over long distances. The change is marked archaeologically by the disappearance of finer silver coinage in favor of coarser or cruder issues, and the vanishing of the fine polished black ware (for export) which was replaced in the main Gangetic basin by local pottery with simpler production techniques that survive to this day. Both of these indicate lower density of trade and commodity production, simultaneously with the rise of self-sufficing villages over the greater part of the country. The process was completed between the second century A. D. and the early Gupta period. The system was ripe for collapse, or for the historical alternative of Muslim conquest with feudalism from below and heavier forced expropriation of a surplus which was traded: the creation of a commodity market through force, without reliance upon brahmin support.

[21] This refers not only to the replacement of digging-stick, hoe, or slash-and-burn tribal cultivation by the plough, but also to the calendar. Plough agriculture as the mainstay of food production cannot be successful in India without foreknowledge of the monsoon. It is necessary that the land receive its first ploughing and harrowing before the monsoon sets in, final preparation and sowing in time for the seeds to sprout well before the monsoon slackens, weeding during the slack period before the northeast monsoon breaks; and harvesting without loss can only be after the monsoon has ended. All these are essential for the main crop, whatever might be done by irrigation which was generally beyond the scope and means of a single village. The lunar calendar with its zodiac divided into 27 *nakṣatras* enabled the predictions to be made after correlation with long empirical observations; some knowledge of mathematics is involved here, for the predictions have to be made even when the stars are not visible. Naturally, the heavenly bodies were taken as themselves the cause of the weather, which led to complicated systems of propitiation which would influence them, and through them the climate. The inevitable development of crippling superstition is therefore the consequence of a great initial success which materially helped food production. This also explains the slightly different calendars used in the greater meteorological divisions of India, where the monsoon behaves differently. Tribesmen learned all they needed for food-gathering from direct observation of plants, birds, animals, which may have left some mark upon the art of divination by omens. The superstition can be most effectively ended by successful forecasts and extensive broadcasts of the weather at long range in time.

Even after a region had been settled by agrarian villages, it was well worth the king's while to seed it with a few brahmins. Apart from the religious merit thus gained by the royal donor and his parents, the grateful brahmin colonist, as a sharer in the local revenue, was of considerable help to the state; the superstition he preached and helped the villagers practice replaced violent coercion. There were two concomitants. First, protest against exploitation took on a succession of theological disguises, like the originally revolutionary movement of Basava, the first Liṅgāyata, or the *smārta-vaiṣṇava* controversy. Secondly, it made the kingdom more helpless against invasion. As long as the invader, even Greek, Scythian, Hun, or aborigine, was himself a brahminizer (e. g. the Hūṇa Mihiragula's *agrahāras* to imported brahmins, *Rāj.* 1. 306-11; *ITM,* p. 191), all reverted in time to the previous state. This cycle was broken by the Islamic conquest, as it would have been without the Muslims, once a saturation level had been reached. The proof is again from Kaśmīr, where the *vaiṣṇava* king Jayāpīḍa (A.D. 751-782) plundered brahmins ruthlessly and systematically; Śaṃkaravarman (A. D. 883-902) robbed temples. The spoliation of temples and melting down of metal images was methodically carried out by Harṣa (1089-1101) of Kaśmīr under a special Hindu minister *devotpāṭana-nāyaka,* as a matter of fiscal policy with no theological excuse whatever. The Muslim conquest took place only in 1340 A. D., without a blow; conversion of the majority to Islam had taken place silently much earlier, also without a struggle. The Muslim kings were, with one exception, benevolent towards the temples and the brahmins, while the administrative language continued to be a Sanskrit jargon mixed with Perso-Arabic technical terms. The real struggle had been fought out bitterly centuries earlier (*Rāj.* II, p. 305 ff.), between local chiefs and the central power, ending the victory of feudalism though not of the Ḍāmaras. That the major consequent change was increased trade is seen from the well known, enormous rise in the price of Kaśmīr grain to conformity with prices elsewhere in the Delhi empire.

The Mauryan conquest of large tribal areas led first to the sprouting of a few centers of vigorous trade, and then of small kingdoms. The Guptas reduced these principalities to set up a new type of empire which promoted village settlements by private enterprise. The increase in number of villages first led to feudalism from above. In these stages, the brahmin caste plays an important but shifting role. The end is marked, both in theology and politics, by the onset of feudalism from below, which is the principal feature of the Muslim period, though the appearance of the village did not change greatly with the new method of extracting a greater surplus.

THE HISTORY OF VOWEL-LENGTH IN TELUGU VERBAL BASES[1]

BH. KRISHNAMURTI
ANDHRA UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

1. THERE ARE TWO GRADES of vowel-length in Dravidian, viz., long and short, which are distinctly phonemic.[2] In historical and phonetic discussions we can also speak of reduced and zero grades, but these are non-phonemic. The history of vowel-length is one of the less discussed aspects of Dravidian philology, though it is found to play an important role in etymology. I attempt to pre-

[1] The abbreviations for the languages and the main sources of vocabularies are as follows: Te. Telugu (*Śabdaratnākaramu, Śūryarāyāndhra nighaṇṭuvu*—4 vols.; Sankaranrayana's *Tel.-Eng. Dict.* for certain English meanings); Ka. Kannada (Kittel), Tu. Tulu (Manner), Ta. Tamil (Tamil Lexicon, Madras Univ.), Ma. Malayalam (Gundert), Go. Gondi (Trench), GoM. Gondi Maṛia (Mitchell), Klm. Kolami (P. Setumadhavarao), Pj. Parji, Nk. Naiki (T. Burrow and S. Bhattacharya, *The Parji Language,* Stephen Austin, Hert., 1953), Kur. Kurukh (Grignard), Mlt. Malto (Earnest Droese), Brah. Brahui (Denys Bray). Unabbreviated, Kui (Winfield), Kuvi (Fitzgerald; Schulze), Toda (Pope, from the appendix to Marshall Metz's *A Phrenologist among the Todas*; some items taken from the etymological lists of Prof. Emeneau quoted in his articles). The Poya items are from my field-work in the Poya area (Salur Taluq, Srikakuḷam Dist. Andhra) during the last summer. For