

## Vanga: From Janapada to Country

Dr. A K M Yaqub Ali\*

As noticed in the *Puranas*<sup>1</sup> the *janapada* is a small principality inhabited by *janas* or people of same racial origin having a distinct political and cultural life of their own. It originated primarily from *jana* of a common ancestry and developed from a number of individual units called *kulas* or families which subsequently expanded into *gotras* and *Vamsas*.<sup>2</sup> The *jana* or clan, in its early stage, was not settled in any particular area, but with the multiplication of *gotras* and *vamsas*, the people established themselves in the region which eventually came to be known as the *janapada*. The original settlers who formed the ruling class were called *janapadins*. There also lived in the *janapada* other peoples or aliens, who were distinguished from the privileged class of rulers or the *janapadins* proper.<sup>3</sup> Thus evidently, though not in the beginning, but in the later stages, the *janapada* was composed of a very mixed population.<sup>4</sup>

A *janapada* was usually demarcated by watercourses or some other natural boundaries. In the absence of natural demarcation, a chain of *janapadas* having their own boundaries occupied the entire stretch of land and some of them were big enough to admit of several territorial divisions.<sup>5</sup>

Some sorts of striking parallels are noticed between the *janapada* state in India and the city-state of ancient Greece. The Greek city states were scattered mostly among the hills and valleys and separated by well defined boundaries.<sup>6</sup> Like the Indian *janapada* each city-state of Greece was an independent political unit.

It is hardly possible to count the exact number of *janapadas* in ancient India. According to *Puranic* accounts their number varies from seventy-five to two hundred and forty.<sup>7</sup> Their number does not appear to have remained the same for long, because eventually in many places several contiguous *janapadas* were united together either of their own accord or by the military power of the stronger *janapadas*. In either case they formed a country under a common name with the same set of laws for the whole populace living within a territory demarcated by well-defined boundaries. In the light of these preliminaries we propose to consider how and when Vanga originated as a *janapada* as well as its gradual expansion which ultimately led to its denomination as the country which is now known as Bengal.

Vanga, one of the important *janapadas* of Eastern India,<sup>8</sup> finds no mention in the Vedic *Samhitas*.<sup>9</sup> The Vangas as a tribe have however been traced back to the *Aitareya Aranyaka*.<sup>10</sup> The word '*vagadhah*' has been emended as *Magadhah*. The emendation is doubtful, but should it be correct, the Vangas, as well as the Magadhahs, whom the Aryans branded as an impure people and guilty of

---

\* Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Islamic History and Culture, Rajshahi University, Rajshahi, Bangladesh.

transgression, were doubtless of non-Aryan origin.<sup>11</sup> The same source describes them as *paksi visesa*,<sup>12</sup> because their speech was unintelligible to the Aryans. Apparently, their exclusion from the older text and inclusion in the *Aitareya Atanyaka* presumably belonging to the Vedic literature, appear to be contradictory. A possible explanation is that the absence of the Vangas from the *Samhitas* (*Rg, Sam, Yaju and Atharva Veda*), which were composed much earlier, is quite obvious, but their mention in the *Aitareya Aranyaka* need not appear as surprising, because this work belongs to the late Vedic period when the Aryans had overrun practically whole of the Gangetic valley. It cannot be stated definitely if the Aryans applied the term *Vanga* to designate the tribe or people inhabiting a particular tract of land, or derived it from the name of the inhabitants. Patanjali,<sup>13</sup> the author of the *Mahabhasya*, who possibly lived in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., mentions three important *janapadas* in Eastern India: Anga, Vanga and Suhma, but excludes Vanga from Aryavarta.<sup>14</sup> In the *Digvijaya section of the Raghuvamsa*, Kalidasa, mentions<sup>15</sup> three regions of the Praci as Suhma, Vanga and Kamrupa.<sup>16</sup>

According to the Great Epic,<sup>17</sup> the sage Dirghatama<sup>18</sup> at the desire of King Bali begot on the latter's queen Sudesna five sons who were named Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Pundra and Suhma, and the lands conquered by them seem to be known after their names.<sup>19</sup> This story has been repeated with slight variation in the *Puranas* which ascribe the names of the principalities or kingdoms to the five princes.<sup>20</sup> Of these territorial divisions, Vanga, Pundra and Sumha formed in the early stage three important principalities of Bengal.<sup>21</sup>

The story of Dirghatama is far from creditable as a source of historical information, but it is indicative of the strong influence which the *rsis* and ascetics in ancient India used to exercise in extending the Aryan religion and civilization to the remote regions.<sup>22</sup> This legendary tale permits us however to assume that Vanga as a *janapada* existed in the Epic period extending roughly from the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>23</sup> In the opinion of Umesh Chandra Vatavyal, the *rsi* Dirghatama was alive in 1690 B.C.<sup>24</sup> The creditability of the source as to the existence of Vanga in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. appears to have been corroborated by Patanjali who belongs to the mid-second century B.C.

The epigraphic and literary mention of Vanga continues to come down to the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Vanga as a *janapada* occurs for the first time in the Meharauli Iron Pillar Inscription of King Indra, datable to the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>25</sup> when Kalidasa was alive. The name of Vanga as *Vangala desam* occurring in the Tirumalai Rock Inscription of Rajendra Cola, dated 1025 A.D.,<sup>26</sup> like other *janapadas*, the territorial jurisdiction of Vanga, with the change of political power, extended at times beyond its boundaries, or contracted within its limits. As such it is hardly possible to determine its exact boundaries. But the sources at our disposal enable us to hypothesize that at least in the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Vanga (in some accounts 'Bang, or Bangalah') generally corresponded to the eastern and southern Bengal<sup>27</sup> lying on the eastern side of the river Bhagirathi, and comprising mainly, as it appears, of modern Chittagong and Dacca divisions.<sup>28</sup> King Vallala Sena (c. 1058-1179 A.D.) divided his own dominion, i.e., Bengal into five principalities or divisions.<sup>29</sup> Just before the Muslim conquest of Lakhnawati, 'Vanga' or 'Bang' remained one of those divisions corresponding to the land to

the east and beyond delta the of the Ganges.<sup>30</sup> Thus it may be presumed that in the Sena period the territorial jurisdiction of Vanga had contracted, and on the eve of the Muslim conquest the name Vanga was in vogue denoting only a small portion of Bengal.

The *janapada* of Vanga gradually extended its territorial jurisdiction and ultimately assumed the proportions of a country with the name of Bengal. In tracing its growth from *janapada* to country, the two terms 'Vanga' and 'Vangala' arrest our attention. It is, therefore, necessary to examine their context and meaning. 'Vanga' is no doubt an older term whose origin can be traced back to the Epic age,<sup>31</sup> and possibly even to an earlier period in the legendary account of Dirghatama.<sup>32</sup> As well as in the literary works, copper plates and stone inscriptions, the word 'Vanga' appears frequently,<sup>33</sup> but the term 'Vangala' is conspicuously absent in such records. As early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century A. D.,<sup>34</sup> the term 'Vangala' seems to have been used either to denote a tract of land which was both separate and distinct from Vanga,<sup>35</sup> or to indicate the same territories included into the latter.<sup>36</sup> Both the terms imply moist and marshy region.<sup>37</sup> After examining the various available sources Hem Chandra Raychaudhury observed that 'Vanga' and 'Vangala' were two separate tracts of land; he further suggested that 'Vangala' was probably identical with Candradvipa.<sup>38</sup> In support of his contention he referred to Ablur Inscription of Vijjala and to some South Indian epigraphs in which 'Vanga' and 'Vangala' occur side by side, thereby maintaining that they were two separate countries.<sup>39</sup> The location of Vanga and Vangala in close proximity to each other in the *Hammira Mahakavya*<sup>40</sup> lends support to Raychaudhury's opinion.<sup>41</sup> Besides holding the same view, R.C. Majumdar mentions the existence of Vangala as a separate country as late as the 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>42</sup> He goes a step further and cites the words 'Vanga' and 'Upavanga' which correspond respectively to Vanga and Vangala of later days.<sup>43</sup> The term 'Upavanga' appears to have been formed by adding the prefix 'Upa' to 'Vanga'.<sup>44</sup>

Etymologically indicating a lesser area than Vanga, Upavanga seems to have comprised a part of the Ganges delta embracing Jessore and certain adjoining tracts which included the Sundarbans.<sup>45</sup> The notice of Vanga and Upavanga in ancient literature<sup>46</sup> thus indicates that at some period there were lying side by side two principalities which were regarded as Vanga major and Vanga minor.<sup>47</sup> In course of time the former came to stand for Vanga and the latter for Vangala.<sup>48</sup> But whether Vanga and Vangala should be regarded as two separate countries on the basis of some literary and epigraphic evidences should be seriously considered, because in the sources cited above, the two terms Vanga and Upavanga presume to mean Vangala, but without their precise territorial demarcation. This might prove after all a bad argument for establishing them as separate entities. Moreover, before the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D., we do not find any mention of Vangala, let alone its existence as a separate tract of land. How can Vangala, therefore, stand for Upavanga and as a separate country? The existence of Vanga and Vangala may at best be acknowledged with the same connotation and for the same territorial jurisdiction. It would thus be reasonable to accept Vangala as an etymological derivation of Vanga which was probably done by the foreigners.<sup>49</sup> This is why Vangala as a name gradually superseded Vanga

in ordinary use and emerged as a country comprising all the previous *janapadas* or divisions in its jurisdiction in subsequent times.<sup>50</sup>

There is no denial of the fact that Vanga as one of the five parent *janapadas* of the *Prachi* (Eastern India) existed from an ancient period.<sup>51</sup> It is not, however, among the six divisions (*janapadas*)<sup>52</sup> of the *Prachi* as mentioned by Hiuen Tsang in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. From this account of the Chinese traveller some scholars have erroneously concluded that Vanga as a *janapada* did not exist when he was visiting India.<sup>53</sup> But as we have already noticed, Vanga appears as a *janapada* in the Great Epic, *Puranas*, *Budhayana Sutras* and the Jaina *Prajnapana*. It is quite likely that when Hiuen Tsang visited India, Vanga was not as prominent as the six divisions mentioned by him, or as a moist land it was possibly regarded as identical with Samtata. It will, therefore, be fair to suppose that the omission of Vanga from Hiuen Tsang's accounts does not rule out its existence in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Rather its mention in the various ancient works confirms its entity long before the Chinese pilgrim's visit.

The name 'Vangala' either as an etymological derivation of Vanga, or a separate entity as a principality was not in vogue before the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D., though it appears to have been extensively used during the following two centuries.<sup>54</sup> The two terms 'Vanga' and 'Vangala' being current at the same time, historians of later period differed from one another as to their location and jurisdiction. H.C. Raychaudhury upheld Vangala as a separate region, identifying it with Chandradvipa (the modern Barisal and some parts of Khulna and Noakhali districts).<sup>55</sup> In order to differentiate from Vangala, Vanga has been conjectured as a large country comprising a vast tract of land between the rivers Brahmaputra to the east and Hughli to the west, Varendri to the north and the Bay of Bengal to the south.<sup>56</sup> In some accounts its western limits are said to have extended even beyond the Hughli River to the Kapisa or Kasai in the Midnapur district.<sup>57</sup> The wide extent of Vanga is also vouched for by the Jaina *Upanga* styled as the *Prajnapana* which mentions Tamralipti (Tamluk) as one of its cities.<sup>58</sup> From Lama Taranath's account R.C. Majumdar regards Vangala as originally denoting a small kingdom around modern Chittagong, having for its capital the famous seaport Vangala called by the Europeans Bengala which was either Chittagong or a place in its neighbourhood.<sup>59</sup> His conception of Vangala being obviously wider than that of R.C. Majumdar. R.C. Banerjee locates it to the east of the Brahmaputra river.<sup>60</sup> Thus as regards the location of Vangala historians hold contradictory views, one group identifying it with Candradvipa representing Bakla in the modern Barisal district, and the other group locating it on the east of the Brahmaputra river. In the opinion of the latter group, Vangala comprises a large territory. But if it is admitted that Upavanga represents Vangala, as opined by some scholars, denoting the Ganges delta and embracing Jessore and the adjoining territories, it would partially support the view of those who take it for Candradvipa and in that case, the Vangala of both the contending groups would not vary much in regard to territory, though its exact location would still remain undetermined. A possible explanation of these contradictory views may be sought in the nature of Vangala which was a moist and marshy region.<sup>61</sup> With a view to connotating vangala with a moist region, Nagendra Narayan Chaudhury has tried to trace its derivation from the Tibetan word *bans* which means marshy and moist.<sup>62</sup> Abul Fadl's account of raising mounds ten yards high and twenty

years broad by the rulers of the province of Bengal<sup>63</sup> points to its low, marshy and moist nature. Even in the present day, this practice of raising earthen embankments or *al* is prevailing in many areas of East Bengal for protecting the land from inundation or for storing water for irrigation purpose. The land is particularly low, moist and marshy in the region extending from the eastern bank of the Brahmaputra to Chittagong and in Chandradvipa including Barisal, Khulna and Noakhali. The name Vanga is, therefore, applicable to both. Chandradvipa has been identified with Bakla in the Barisal district.<sup>64</sup> Quite possibly many small islands along the coast and as far as the furthest east were also included in and known as Chandradvipa in ancient times.<sup>65</sup> It may thus be inferred that the territory of Candradvipa extended at some ancient period from modern Barisal in the west to Chittagong in the east along the coastal region. Vangla formed a part of Vanga either in the east or in the south when it emerged in the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>66</sup> The existence of Vangala as a small and separate principality upto the 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D., as maintained by R.C. Majumdar<sup>67</sup> can hardly be accepted, because already in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the term Bangala not only denoted a country, but was also applied to the united kingdom of Bengal.<sup>68</sup> The names Vanga, Vangala and others fell into disuse from this time. It is corroborated by the fact that the term Vanga in its wider application had been changed and the territorial jurisdiction of the principality has also contracted. Perhaps this change can be traced to the Pala and Sena periods. It seems to have comprised a smaller tract than the old territory known to the Jaina *Prajnapana* and the *Raghuvamsa* of Kalidasa.<sup>69</sup> Vanga came to denote mainly eastern Bengal on the left bank of the river Brahmaputra and the eastern side of the Ganges delta.<sup>70</sup> This is supported by Mihaj Siraj's reference to the flight of Laksmansena towards Bang,<sup>71</sup> a principality near Sonargaon in the Dacca district. It would, therefore, be reasonable to say that on the eve of Muslim conquest of Lakhnawati, Vanga denoted a small tract of land which was located in eastern Bengal beyond the river Brahmaputra. In this context Vanga and Vangala appear as two separate regions, the former being larger than the latter, but eventually they came to denote the same tract of land in the river-girt region in eastern Bengal<sup>72</sup> as late as the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. since confirmed by Minhaj's account of 'Bang' and 'Sankanat'.<sup>73</sup> Barani's account of the river-girt Bangalah,<sup>74</sup> a territory distinct from Lakhnawati also supports this contention. Nizam al-Din Ahmad Bakhshi also made a distinction between the Lakhnawati and Bangalah regions.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, the circumstantial evidence points out its location in the eastern side of the country, i.e., Bengal.

It is evident from the above findings that Vanga and Vangala in the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries denoted the river-girt region of the southern, and particularly the eastern Bengal. During this period neither of the two names was taken to mean the country as a whole. Now it is a matter of speculation if the term 'Bang' or 'Vanga' replaced by 'Bangalah' or 'Vangala' had not been popularized and ultimately applied to the entire land as the country of Bengal. Apparently, the terms 'Bang' and 'Bangalah' were adopted by the Muslims from the Hindus,<sup>76</sup> but their application was restricted to a particular tract of land as stated above. It may be inferred from the available sources that the Muslims gave the name Bangalah to the country which comprised the united political units of Satgaon, Sonargaon and Lakhnawati.<sup>77</sup> Barani has been credited for using for the first time the word

'Bangalah'.<sup>78</sup> Before him Minhaj used the word 'Bang'. But as we have seen both 'Bang' of Minhaj and 'Bangalah' of Barani used to denote initially the same territory, i.e., eastern Bengal. That these two terms were synonymous is also supported by numismatic evidence.<sup>79</sup> Satgaon and Lakhnawati regions have been treated as quite distinct from 'Bang' or 'Bangalah' by the Muslim chroniclers. In combining Lakhnawati with Bihar and Bang with Kamrupa, Minhaj has shown that territorially Bang was adjacent to Kamrupa and Lakhnawati to Bihar.<sup>80</sup> Evidently, therefore, Bang was situated in the eastern limit of the country.

Barani uses three connotations for Bangalah '*Arsah Bangalah*, *Iqlim Bangala* and *Diyar Bangalah*.<sup>81</sup> In the light of the circumstantial evidence '*Arsah Bangalah* stands for the Satgaon region, *Iqlim Bangla* for the Sonargaon region and *Diyar Bangalah* for the combined territories of Satgaon and Sonargaon regions.<sup>82</sup> In this regard it is also noticeable that *Diyar Bangalah* with its capital at Sonargaon was quite distinct from *Iqlim* Lakhnawati, for Ibn Batutah clearly distinguishes the Bangalah which was under Fakhr al-Din Mubarak Shah (1338-1349 A.D.) during his visit (1345-1346 A.D.) from the territories of Lakhnawati under 'Ali Shah (1339-1345 A.D.).<sup>83</sup> If Barani is right, we may assume that on the eve of Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq's invasion in 724 A.H./1324 A.D., Bengal was divided into three distinct political units of Lakhnawati, Satgaon and Sonargaon, each under a different ruler.<sup>84</sup> This situation continued till 1339 A.D. when Shams al-Din Ilyas Shah (1339-1358 A.D.) rose to be the sovereign overlord of the country.

By virtue of possessing both Lakhnawati and Bangalah Ilyas Shah became universally acknowledged as Sultan of the whole of Bengal. His policy of utilizing the services of the Hindus even in his army was indeed statesmanlike as it considerably enhanced his popularity which made him a national hero. He was also prudent enough to assume such titles as would please the sentiments of the people of the entire country, i.e., Lakhnawati, Satgaon and Sonargaon regions. Thus his adoption of the title *Shah-i-Bangalah* proved both timely and appropriate. This is as much indicated by 'Afif when he speaks of *Lashkar-i-Bangalah* of 'Ilyas Shah and bestows upon him the title of *Shah-i-Bangalian* and *Shah-i-Bangalah*.<sup>85</sup> The Venetian traveller Marco Polo's (1298 A.D.) use of the word Bangalah in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>86</sup> is another indication of the name having been popularized by the Muslims so that ultimately it came to signify a country (Bengal) in the 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It may not thus be inappropriate to maintain that at the time of Ilyas Shah Bengal received the status of a country comprising all the previous divisions in its jurisdiction. Though the exact date of this unification is difficult to determine, there are still scopes for a conjecture. A stone inscription dated A.H. 743/1342 A.D. recovered from one of the suburbs of Calcutta, about thirty miles from Satgaon, records that Ilyas Shah after establishing his authority by this time over the Lakhnawati and Satgaon regions,<sup>87</sup> assumed the title of *Shah-i-Bangalah*. The Kathmandu Inscription, according to which Sultan Ilyas Shah came in 1346 or 1347 A.D. with innumerable *Vangala vala*, and Nepal was devastated and burnt all around,<sup>88</sup> indicates that Vangala could not possibly have been used here in a restricted sense, but that it was the name of the whole province. Thus Ilyas Shah's adoption of the title *Shah-i-Bangalah* was far from unjustified. Barani described the army of 'Ilyas Shah as the *Paikan* and *Raigan* of Bangalah<sup>89</sup> at the time of Firuz Shah Tughluq's

invasion of Bengal in 1353 or 1354 A.D. From all these records, it would appear that before 1350 A.D. Ilyas Shah had united the political units of Lakhnawati, Satgaon and Sonargaon into one compact country under his own authority and circulated his title of *Shah-i-Bangalah*. From this time onwards, Bangalah emerged as a country and the name was applied to the vast region from Teliaghari in the west to Chittagong in the east, and from the foot of the Himalayas in the north to the Bay of Bengal in the south.<sup>90</sup>

In this connection we may as well examine here the views of some of the historians who have tried to trace the origin of Vangala from a much earlier period. H.C. Raychaudhury not only admits the popularization of the name of Vangala as a country by the Muslims, but he traces it at the same time to the Pala period.<sup>91</sup> In the opinion of R.C. Majumdar, Vangala as a country originated at the time of the Palas,<sup>92</sup> and subsequently it denoted the entire country known as Bengal. He further admits that the wide recognition of this country as Bangalah was made possible by the Muslims.<sup>93</sup> According to A.H. Dani, it was Ilyas Shah who united all the existing units into a compact country which became widely known as Bangalah.<sup>94</sup> His conclusions are based on the Muslim chronicles.<sup>95</sup> He presents R.C. Majumdar as the first scholar to advocate the origin of Vangala in the Pala period.<sup>96</sup> He has failed, however, to take into account the opinion of H.C. Raychaudhury who had traced the origin of Vanala as a country to the Pala period long before R.C. Majumdar<sup>97</sup> who has in modification of his views expressed earlier credited the Muslims for the unification of the country and for widely circulating its name Bangalah.<sup>98</sup> It is an undeniable fact that even on the eve of the Muslim conquest of Lakhnawati in the Sena period, Bengal was divided into five principalities.<sup>99</sup> Thus application of the name Bangalah to the whole country in the Pala period seems improbable, though the Pala kings had brought the major portion of it under their rule.

It would be quite justified to say that Bengal became a country both in fact and in name (Bangala) from the time of Sultan Shams al-Din Ilyas Shah. A.H. Dani's conclusions in this regard are therefore acceptable. The name Bangalah mentioned by the Persian poet Hafiz in a poem, which he sent to Sultan Ghiyath al-Din A'zam Shah (1389-1409 A.D.) of Bengal is also applicable to the entire province rather than to a small part of it.<sup>100</sup> Sakhawi, a 14<sup>th</sup> century Muslim scholar writing about the time of the aforesaid Sultan used the term *Manjalah* or *Banjalah* (Bangalah) to mean the whole country of Bengal.<sup>101</sup> So did Ma-Huan<sup>102</sup> and the later Muslim chroniclers.<sup>103</sup>

---

## Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> See *Vayu Purana*, Ch. 45; *Matsya Purana*; *Markandeya Purana*, Ch. 57. The *Puranas* appear to have been compiled for the preservation of old traditions which came down from remote antiquity. This literature found expression when Buddhism rose as a reaction to Brahmanical Hinduism. European scholars are of opinion that none of the principal eighteen *Puranas* was compiled before the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D., but their view has now to be re-assessed in the light of a recently discovered manuscript of the *Skanda Purana* dated 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The majority of scholars now is of opinion that the oldest *Puranas* were compiled before the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. See Gaurinath Sastri, *Sanskrita Sahityer Itihasa*, Calcutta, 1376 B.S., pp. 1-4; S.M. Ali, *The Geography of the Puranas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, New Delhi, 193, p. 1.
- <sup>2</sup> V.S. Agrawala, "The Janapada and the Greed City State", *Indian Historical Quarterly (IHQ)*, Vol. XXX, No. 1, Calcutta, 1954, p. 40.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 38.
- <sup>8</sup> F.E. Pargiter, "Ancient Countries in Eastern India", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (JASB)*, Vol. LXVI, Part I, Calcutta, 1897, p.85; Sree Radharaman, *Pabna Zillar Itihasa*, Vol. I, Pabna, 1330 B.S., p. 1.
- <sup>9</sup> R.C. Majumdar (ed.), *History of Bengal (HB)*, Vol. I, University of Dacca, 2<sup>nd</sup> impression, 1963, p. 23.
- <sup>10</sup> B. C. Law, *Ancient Indian Tribes*, Vol. II, London, 1634, p. 2; *HB*, p. 7; Rajendra Lal Acharya, *Vangalir Vala*, Calcutta, 1328 B.S., p. 5.
- <sup>11</sup> *HB*, p. 8; B.C. Law, *op.cit.*, p. 2.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>13</sup> Patanjali is the commentator of the grammar (*Astadhyayi*) of Panini who has been placed in or around the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Patanjali's time may tentatively be placed in the mid-second century B.C. His compendium on Panini's *sutras* is known as the *Mahabhasya*. See *Bharat Kosa*, Vol. IV, Vangiya Sahitya Parisad, Calcutta, pp. 291-92.
- <sup>14</sup> B.C. Law, *op. cit.*, p.2; Sukumar Sen, *Vangala Sahityer Itihasa*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1970, p. 1.
- <sup>15</sup> The time of Kalidasa may roughly be fixed between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. He is said to be a contemporary of Vikramaditya who is usually identified with Chandragupta II, "Kalidasa" *IHQ*, Vol XVI, pp. 390-91.
- <sup>16</sup> Sukumar Sen, *op.cit.*, p. 1.
- <sup>17</sup> *Mahabharata*, edited by PanchananaTarkaratna, Calcutta, Saka 1826, *Adi parva*, Ch. 104, pp. 113-14, vv. 9-55. The *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharata* are foremost works in the Sanskrit epic literature. The *Mahabharata* did not appear in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Most probably, its compilation began after the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and continued through the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The *Ramayana* is considered to be older than the *Mahabharata* by at least one century.
- <sup>18</sup> For the story of Dirghatama see *Mahabharata*, *Adi parva*, Ch. 104, vv. 9-55; S.C. Sarkar (compiled), *Pauranic Abhidhana*, Calcutta, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1380 B.S., P.78.
- <sup>19</sup> *Mahabharata*, *Adi parva*, Ch. 104, v. 55.

- 
- <sup>20</sup> *Vayu Purana*, Ch. 99, vv. 26-34, 47-97; *Matsya Purana*, , Ch. 48, vv. 23-29, 43-89; *Brahma Purana*, IV, Ch, 18, v. 1.
- <sup>21</sup> Benoy Chandra Sen, *Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*, University of Calcutta, 1942, p. 2; Sukumar Sen, *op.cit.*, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>22</sup> F.E. Pargiter, *op.cit.*, pp. 29, 36.
- <sup>23</sup> Cited in Rajanikanta Chakravarti, *Gouder Itihasa*, Calcutta, Vol. I, 1317 B.S., p. 2.
- <sup>24</sup> J. F. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, Calcutta, 1888, p. 141; D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Univerisity of Calcutta, 1942, p. 276 and footnote 4 on the same page.
- <sup>25</sup> E. Hultzsch, "Tirumalai Rock Inscription of Rajendra Chola" Calcutta, *Epigraphia Indica* Vol. IX, Calcutta 1907-08, p. 231.
- <sup>26</sup> B.C. Law, *op.cit.*, p. 5.
- <sup>27</sup> Minhaj Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Tr. Major Raverty, Reprinted New Delhi, 1970, p. 557. B.C. Sen, *op.cit.*, p. 2; R.C. Majumdar, "Lama Taranatha's Account of Bengal", Vol. XVI, Culcutta, 1910, p. 220.
- <sup>28</sup> Abdur Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Karachi, 1963, p. 2; B.C. Law, "The Vangas" *Indian Culture*, Calcutta 1934, p. 55.
- <sup>29</sup> Radha, Bagdi, Banga, Barendra and Mithila. See E. Lethbridge, *An Easy Introduction to the History and Geography of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1875, p. 13; Rajanikanta Chakravarti, *op.cit.*, p. 164; H. Blochmann, *Contribution to the Geography and History of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1968, p. 3.
- <sup>30</sup> H. Blochmann, "Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal", *JASB*, Vol. XLII, Part I, 1873, p. 211.
- <sup>31</sup> The epic age when the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were compiled extends probably from the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. See Gaurinath Sastri, *op.cit.*, pp. 29, 36.
- <sup>32</sup> *Mahabharata*, *Adi parva*, pp. 113-14.
- <sup>33</sup> Hem Chandra Raychaudhury, "Vanga Kon Desa", *Manasi O Marmavani*, Calcutta, 1336 B.S. (July, 1929 A.D.), P. 567.
- <sup>34</sup> P.L. Paul, *The Early History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1939, Introduction, p. V; *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, P. 226; P.L. Paul, "Vanga and Vangala", *IHQ*, Vol. XII, 1936, p. 523.
- <sup>35</sup> *Manast O Marmavoni*, *op.cit.*, p. 567.
- <sup>36</sup> A.H. Dani, "Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah Shah-i-Bangalah", *Sir Jadunath Sarkar Conunemoration Volume*, Punjab University, 1958, p. 275.
- <sup>37</sup> N.N. Chaudhury, "A Note on Vanga and Vangala", *The Modern Review*, Calcutta, September, 1936, p. 275.
- <sup>38</sup> *IHQ*, Vol. XII, P. 522.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 523-24.
- <sup>40</sup> *Hanunira Makakavya* was composed by Naya Chandra Suri before 1496 A.D.
- <sup>41</sup> P.L. Paul, *op.cit.*, Introduction, p. V.
- <sup>42</sup> *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, P. 237; *HB*, P.19.
- <sup>43</sup> *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, P. 237.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>45</sup> *HB*, P.19; Rajanikanta Chakravarti, *op.cit.*, p. 31; Satish Chandra Mitra, *Yashohar Khulnar Itihasa*, Calcutta, 1321, B.S., pp. 131-32.
- <sup>46</sup> Cf. *Vrhat Samhita* of Varahamihira, edited by S. Divedi, Benares, 1895, XIV. 8.

- 
- 47 *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, P. 238.
- 48 *Ibid.*
- 49 P.L. Paul, *op.cit.*, Introduction, p. V.
- 50 *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, P. 236.
- 51 Its categorical mention as a *janapada* is found in the *Mahabharata*. See *supra*.
- 52 Kamarupa, Paundravardhana, Samatata, Tamralipti, Karnasuvarna, Odra or Kajangal (Kankjol). See A. Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India*, London, 1871, pp. 499-500.
- 53 Durgadas Lahiri, *Prithivir Itihasa*, Vol. II, Howrah, 1317, B.S. p. 237.
- 54 Sukumar Sen, *op.cit.*, p. 2.
- 55 *Manasi O Marmavani*, p. 2.
- 56 P.L. Paul, *op.cit.*, Introduction, p. V.
- 57 *HB*, p. 15; *Manasi O Marmavani*, pp. 566-67.
- 58 *HB*, p. 15.
- 59 *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, p. 238.
- 60 P.L. Paul, *op.cit.*, Introduction, p. V.
- 61 *The Modern Review*, p. 275.
- 62 *Ibid.*
- 63 Abul Fadl 'Allami, *A'in-i-Akbari*, Vol II, tr. H.S. Jarret (Calcutta, 1891), p. 120.
- 64 R.C. Majumdar, *Vangala Deser Itihasa*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, (Calcutta, 13 B.S.), P.7.
- 65 *Ibid.*
- 66 *IHQ*, Vol. XII, p. 523.
- 67 *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, p. 237.
- 68 A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 56.
- 69 *HB*, p. 15.
- 70 E. Lethbridge, *op.cit.*, p. 56; A.C. Banerji, "Chola Invasion of Bengal", *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London, 1953, p. 666.
- 71 *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, *op.cit.*, p. 558.
- 72 A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 55.
- 73 *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, *op.cit.*, p. 558.
- 74 Diya al-Din Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Calcutta, p. 587.
- 75 Khwajah Nizam al-Din Bakhshi, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, tr. Rajendranath De and Bani Prasad, (Calcutta, 1939), pp. 420-21.
- 76 A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 55.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p. 56; R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p. 253; B.C. Sen, *op.cit.*, p. 2.
- 78 A. Rahim, *op.cit.*, p. 55; A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 54.
- 79 A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 54; H.E. Stapleton, "Contributions to the History and Ethnology of North-Eastern India", *JASB*, New Series, Vol XVIII, p. 410.
- 80 The statement of Minjah: quoted in A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 54.
- 81 *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, *op.cit.*, pp. 53, 95; A. Rahim, *op.cit.*, p. 4; A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

- 
- <sup>82</sup> J.N. Sakar (ed.), *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> impressio, University of Dacca, 1972, p. 71; A. Rahim, *op.cit.*, p. 4; A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 54.
- <sup>83</sup> A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, pp. 54-55.
- <sup>84</sup> *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 83.
- <sup>85</sup> Shams-i-Siraj 'Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, (Abridged in *History of India as told by its Own Historians*, Vol. III, edited by H.D. Elliot and J.Dowson), Allahabad, p. 296; A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 55.
- <sup>86</sup> B.C. Sen, *op.cit.*, p. 1.
- <sup>87</sup> S. Ahmed, "A Rare Unpublished Inscription of Ilyas Shah of Bengal, *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, Calcutta, 1939-40, p. 8; A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 55.
- <sup>88</sup> *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. XXII, 1936, P. 93; A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 55; *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, p. 227.
- <sup>89</sup> Barani, *op.cit.*, p. 593; A. Rahim *op.cit.*, p. 6.
- <sup>90</sup> A. Rahim *op.cit.*, p. 6.
- <sup>91</sup> *Manasi O Marmavani*, pp. 567-68.
- <sup>92</sup> *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, p. 235.
- <sup>93</sup> *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, p. 228.
- <sup>94</sup> A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 56.
- <sup>95</sup> *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* of Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* of 'Afif and *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* of Yahya Sarhindi.
- <sup>96</sup> A.H. Dani, *op.cit.*, p. 57.
- <sup>97</sup> *Manasi O Marmavani*, pp. 568.
- <sup>98</sup> R.C. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p. 253.
- <sup>99</sup> H. Blochmann, *op.cit.*, p. 3; E. Lethbridge, *op.cit.*, p. 253.
- <sup>100</sup> Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riyad al-Salatin*, tr. Abdus Salam, Calcutta, 1902, p. 109.
- <sup>101</sup> Cited in Zaiuddin Desai, "Some New Data Regarding the Pre-Mughal Muslim Rulers of Bengal", *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, Hyderabad, January 1958, p. 202.
- <sup>102</sup> *IHQ*, Vol. XVI, p. 227. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 118-19.
- <sup>103</sup> Abul Fadl 'Allami's *A'in-i-Akbari*, Khwajah Nizam al-Din Bakhshi's *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, etc.

**Published: *Journal of the Varendra Research Museum*, Vol. 5, Rajshahi University, Rajshahi, 1979. Article obtained directly from author.**