

CHAPTER-11

THE RASHTRAKUTAS OF MANYAKHETA AND THE CHALUKYAS OF KALYANA



After studying this chapter you learn :

- Dantidurga, the founder of Rashtrakuta dynasty and Amoghavarsha its most famous ruler.
- The contributions of Rashtrakuta's to administration, literature and architecture.
- The administration and literary contributions of Kalyana Chalukyas.
- The extent of Rashtrakuta territory from the map of India.

The Rashrakutas (753 C.E. to 973 C.E.)

The Rashrakutas were Kannadigas. They were the tributary kings of the Chalukyas in the beginning. Later they became famous as the rulers of the vast kingdom in the South. The Rashrakuta age is a glorious epoch in the history of Karnataka. The credit of taking the glory of Karnataka to its peak goes to them. Their kingdom, which extended from the Narmada river in the North to the Cauvery river in the South, has also been immortalized by the Kailasanath temple at Ellora and by the first Kannada work, Kaviraja Marga.

The kingdom which began with Dantidurga, continued with Krishna, Govinda II, Dhruva, Govinda III, Amoghavarsha and others, and reached its peak of glory. The early reign of Amoghavarsha had to face many obstacles. But he was not interested in feuds and desired peace. Hence he got rid of the enmity by developing matrimonial relations with the Gangas and the Pallavas. Since he was a peace-loving king, he had to give up some territories in the north. The ports of the west coast were busy trading centres and enjoyed great prosperity by developing trade relations with Persia and Arabian. Many travellers and merchants visited the kingdom during this period. Prominent among them was the Arab traveller Sulaiman. He has praised Amoghavarsha as 'One of the four powerful emperors of the World.'

Amoghavarsha was brave and peace-loving, and encouraged all faiths. After him, Krishna II, Indra III and Krishna III ruled the kingdom.

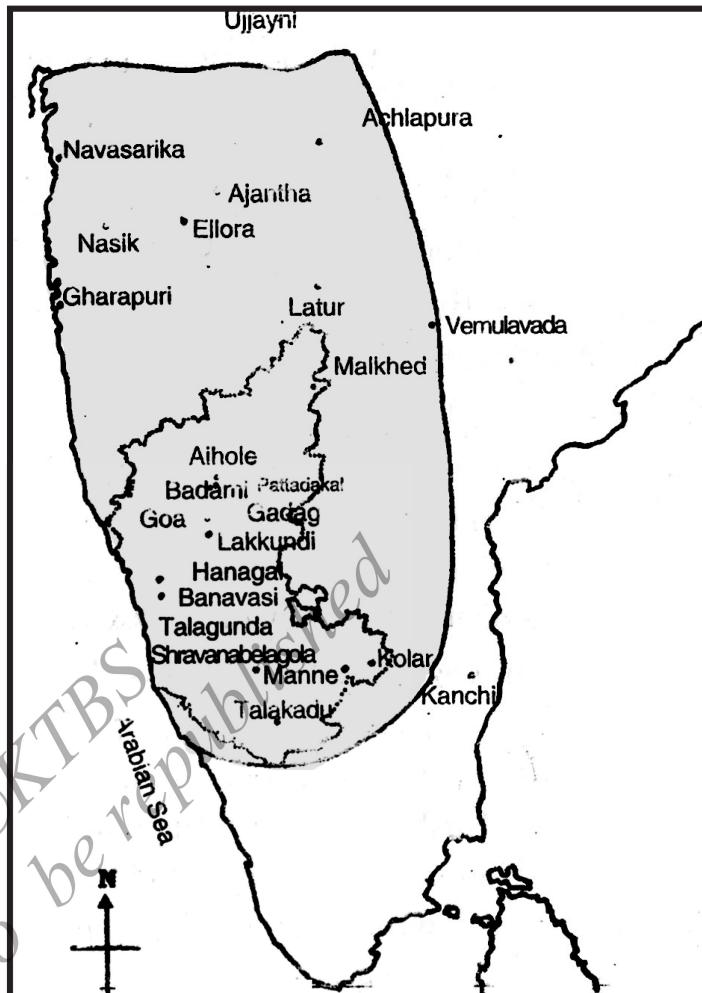
The weakness in administration during the period of Karka II paved the way for the rise of his tributary Tailapa II of the Kalyana Chalukyas and brought the end of the Rashtrakuta rule.

The Contributions of the Rashtrakutas

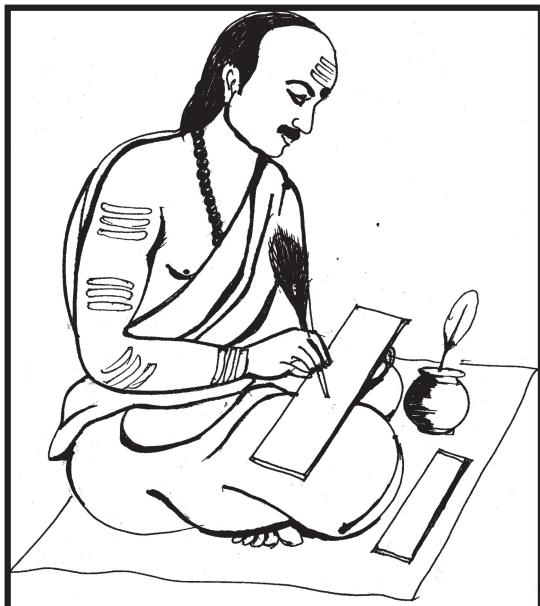
The kingship among the Rashtrakutas was hereditary. There used to be a Council of Ministers to assist the King. There would be a prominent person in the Council of Ministers appointed as the Mahasandhivigrahi to look after the foreign affairs. For the purpose of administrative convenience, the kingdom was divided into Rashtra (Mandala), Vishaya, Nadu and Grama.

The leader of the grama was called gramapati or prabhugavunda. He was the leader of the village army too. He was assisted by the village accountant. There were grama sabhas also. There used to be an official called nadagavunda in the nadus. Similar officials would be there in the vishayas and rashtras. The vishayapati and the rashtrapati were the officers for the vishaya or the district and the rashtra respectively.

Land revenue, toll on goods, houses, shops, and tax on occupations like operating ferries, formed the income of the kingdom. Foreign trade also brought lot of income to the state in the form of taxes.



The Rashtrakuta Empire



Nadoja Pampa

The Rashtrakutas encouraged both Kannada and Sanskrit. Excellent works were written in Sanskrit. Trivikrama wrote Nalachampu, the first champu work in Sanskrit literature. Halayudha wrote ‘Kavirahasya’. Jinasena, mathematician Mahaveeracharya, grammarian Shakatayana, Gunabhadra, Veerasena were in Amoghavarsha’s court. Pampa, known as Adikavi wrote Adipurana and Vikramarjunavijaya in Kannada. Ubhayakavi Ponna composed ‘Shanti Purana’. Shrivijaya, who was in the

court of Amoghavarsha, wrote ‘Kavirajamarga’. This is the first work in Kannada. It is a master piece. All these reveal how Kannada literature has developed from ancient times.

The Kannada University, Hampi, has been awarding the title of Nadoja in memory of the first poet, Pampa, to veteran achievers in Karnataka every year.

Another noteworthy prose work of the Rashtrakuta period is Vaddaradhane. The author of this is Shivakottacharya. It is a collection of Jain religious stories. Special importance has been given to use of native Kannada words here. There is liveliness in plot, structure, characterization and dialogue. This is a great prose work belonging to the pre-Pampa age, and enjoys eternal significance in the history of Kannada literature.

Agraharas and mathas were the prominent educational centres in those days. Knowledge was imparted about Sanskrit, the Vedas, astrology, logic and the Puranas. Salotgi in Indi taluk of Bijapur district was one of the leading centres of learning.

The Rashtrakuta kings were devotees of Shiva and Vishnu, and have built many Shiva and Vishnu temples. Jainism had received

royal patronage and became a wide-spread religion. Apart from these even other religions were encouraged.

The Rashtrakuta kings were patrons of art. Their great contribution to Indian art can be seen in the Ellora and Elephanta cave temples. The Kailashnath temple at Ellora built by Krishna I is a monolithic wonder. This temple has been carved from a rock 100 feet high, 276 feet long and 154 feet wide. Nearby is the famous Dashavatara cave temple. The sculpture at the Elephanta caves near Mumbai is a milestone in the Rashtrakuta sculpture. The statues of Ardhanarishwara and Maheshamurti (three-murthy) have been exquisitely carved. The structural Rashtrakuta temples are in Shiravala of Raichur district. There is a beautiful Jain temple at Pattadakallu.



Kailasanatha Temple, Ellora

The Chalukyas of Kalyana (973 C.E. - 1189 C.E.)

The period of the Chalukyas of Kalyana enjoys an honourable place in the history of India. They gave special encouragement to art, literature and education. They provided opportunities for the development of Kannada and Sanskrit. They gave patronage to famous

Kannada poets like Durgasimha, Ranna, Nagachandra and others. Vachana literature came into prominence during this period. The credit of building a new city called Kalyana and making it the capital goes to Someshwara-I.

Tailapa-II who had been a tributary king of the Rashtrakutas, defeated the Rashtrakuta king, Karka -II, and, captured Manyakheta, then he established the kingdom of the Kalyana Chalukyas. He ruled for approximately 24 years. Someshwara - I is one of the important kings of this dynasty. He built a new city called Kalyana and made it his capital. This is today's Basava Kalyana in Bidar district. Though Someshwara-I had to wage many wars, he took care to see that his kingdom did not shrink in any way. He defeated Rajadhiraja Chola in 'Koppam'.

Vikramaditya-VI, the son of Someshwara-I, is the greatest king of this dynasty. He was an extremely courageous warrior and excellent administrator. He began the 'Chalukya Vikrama era' in 1076 C.E. He suppressed the revolt of the Hoysala King Vishnuvardhana. He had established contact with the Srilankan King Vijayabahu.

Vignaneshwara (the author of Mitakshara) who lived during his time has remarked that there was never a great city like Kalyana in the past and can never be in the future. The king like Vikramaditya has never been seen nor heard of.

The kingdom began to decline during the period of kings who came after Vikramaditya VI and Someshwara III. It became very weak during the period of Someshwara IV and Kalachuri Bija occupied Kalyana and began to rule it. It was at this time that the social revolutionary Sri Jagajyoti Basaveshwara came to the limelight. He devoted his life to spreading the values of the Veerashaiva sect to the common people.



Coins

Mints were set up in Lakkundi and Sudi to mint coins like gadyana, pana, drumma, pon and suvarna.



Jagajyothi Basaveshwara

Basaveshwara preached in three forms: soft advice, harsh criticism, strict warning. He taught that surrendering oneself to Shiva with total devotion was the only path to salvation. He declared that work is worship. He established Anubhava Mantapa in 1162 C.E. He wrote his vachanas in colloquial Kannada.

The Contribution of the Kalyana Chalukyas

Like the Chalukyas of Badami, the Chalukyas of Kalyana too have made special contributions in various fields. The kingship was hereditary. The kingdom was divided into provinces (mandala) and small provinces (nadu). There were kampanas (today's hobli) to enable smooth functioning of administration of villages.

Land revenue was the main source of income for the kingdom. The other sources of income included sales tax, toll and tax on professions. There was an officer called 'Kaditavergade' appointed to look after collection of land revenue. There were different guilds in trade and business.

Literature received encouragement during the period of the Chalukyas. Kannada literature prospered with the support of Jain scholars. The notable works of this period are 'Gadayuddha' (Sahasa Bheema Vijaya) written by Ranna, 'Panchatantra' written by Durgasimha, 'Vikramankadeva Charita' composed by Bilhana, 'Dharmamruta' composed by Nayasena and the legal work, 'Mitakshara', authored by Vignaneshwara. 'Manasollasa' written by King Someshwara III is considered as a sanskrit encyclopaedia.

The unique contribution of the Chalukyan period has been the Vachana literature. Akkamahadevi, Allamaprabhu, Machayya and others were leading vachanakaras.

The Chalukyas were not only lovers of literature but also patrons of art. Their contribution in the field of art is vast. Famous temples like the Kashi Vishweshwara temple at Lakkundi, Mahadev temple at Itagi, Mallikarjuna temple at Kuruvatti, Trikuteshwara temple at Gadag are noteworthy examples of their art. The kings of this dynasty built innumerable temples and contributed to making the Kannada land home to fine arts.

Music and dance forms too prospered. During their period Musicians and dancers used to be appointed to serve in the court. Queen Chandralekha patronised many music scholars and dancers. 'Manasollasa' and the work of Jagadekamalla II 'Sangeeta Chudamani' discuss many topics related to music, dance, art and jewellery.



Kashi Vishweshwara Temple, Lakkundi

EXERCISES

I Fill in the blanks :

1. The founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty was _____.
2. The Chalukya king of Kalyana who was responsible for the defeat of the Rashtrakutas was _____.
3. The author of 'Kavirahasya' is _____.
4. The famous poem written by Ponna is _____.
5. The most famous king among the Kalyana Chalukyas was _____.
6. The person who can be called 'the pioneer of the social revolution' is _____.

II Answer the following questions :

7. How was the administrative system of the Rashtrakutas?
8. Write about the educational system under the Rashtrakutas.
9. Write about the Ellora temple.
10. How did the Kalyan Chalukyas encourage literature?

III Activities :

11. Share from the experiences of students or teachers who have visited temples of the Rashtrakuta period.
12. Go on a trip to Manyakheta or Ellora.

IV Projects :

13. Discuss on Ellora in peer groups and write an essay on it.
14. Collect pictures of Manyakheta.
15. Write an essay on the life of Basavanna.

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