

CHAPTER-9



SOUTH INDIAN DYNASTIES : SHATHAVAHANA, KADHAMBA, GANGA

(FROM 3RD CENTURY B.C.E. TO 13TH CENTURY C.E.)

After studying this chapter you learn :

- About the growth of Shatavahanas in south India, their achievements, administration, art and architecture.
- The achievements of Shatakarni.
- That Kadambas were the first to establish an empire in Karnataka.
- About the establishment of Ganga dynasty, their contributions to art, architecture and literature.
- Locating the areas of Shatavahana's, Kadambas and Gangas.

The Vindhya mountains separate North and South India. The area between the Vindhya mountains and Kanyakumari in the south is called South India or the Deccan region. The Shatavahanas, Kadambas, Gangas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and Pallavas have been the important dynasties of this region.

The Shatavahanas (230 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.)

The Shathavahanas were the first to have established a dynasty in the Deccan. They had settled themselves in the land between the Godavari and Krishna rivers. They were the vassals of Chandragupta Maurya and were paying tributes to him. In 220 B.C.E. Simuka became independent and made Srikakulam, his capital.

Gautami Puthra Shatakarni : He was a prominent king of this dynasty. He had done away with the bitter enemies of the kingdom , the sakas, beyond the borders of India. Shalivahana Saka is supposed to have been started by him.

He expanded his kingdom to include not only Konkan, Birar, Saurashtra and Malawa, but also many new areas. He had titles such as 'Trisamudratoyapitavahana' and 'Shatavahana Kulayasha

pratishtapanakara'. Yajnashri Shatakarni was the last king of this dynasty. During his time, on account of continual attacks by the Shakas, the empire declined.

During the Shatavahana rule, the king was supreme. The kingdom had been divided into provinces called Janapada for purpose of administration and officers had been appointed to look after them. The cities and villages were looked after by self-governing institutions.

There was no discrimination on the basis of varna in the society. Even women held high offices and had status in society. There were people of different occupations like farmers, merchants, goldsmiths, fishermen, carpenters, weavers, medicine man etc. There were occupational associations. Later these associations emerged as commercial and trade organisations. There was encouragement for even foreign trade, and Nasik, Kalyan, Broach and Bhatkal were trade centres.

The Shatavahanas who followed the Vedic tradition, encouraged other religions like Buddhism and Jainism and believed in harmony.

They promoted art, literature and education. Literature was created in Prakrit, the language of both scholars and common people. *Gathasaptashati* written by Hala is an example of this.



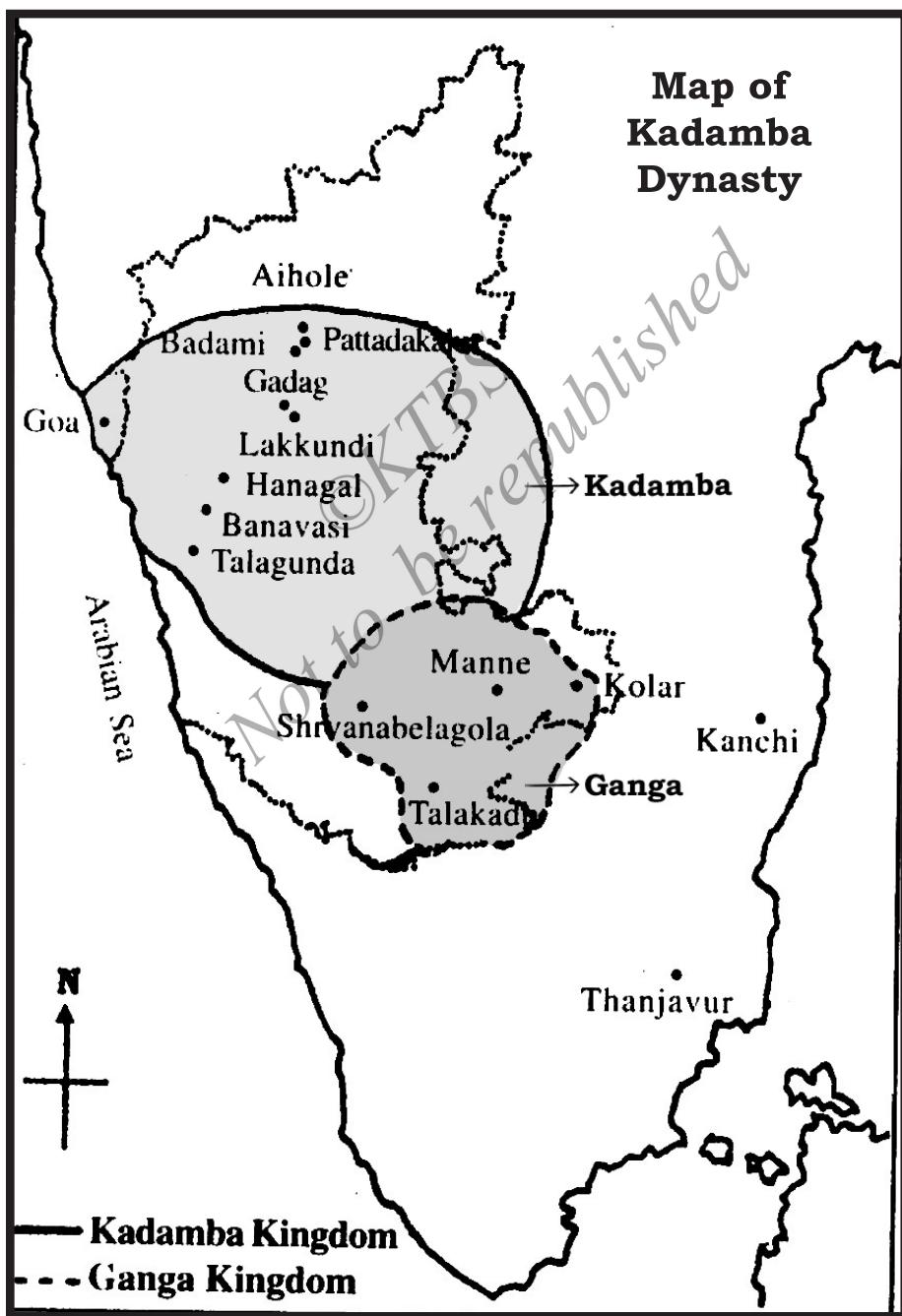
Chaityalaya at Karle

The Ajanta and the Amaravati paintings belong to the period of the Shatavahanas. Temples, viharas and chaityalayas were also constructed. A chaityagraha was built in Karle by the Banavasi merchant Bhootapala.

During the period of the Shatavahanas, the Kannada region was prosperous kannadigas were adventurous and able administrators. They had enriched Indian culture by their contributions.

The Kadambas (325 C.E. to 540 C.E.)

This is the first dynasty to be established in Karnataka. Their capital was Banavasi which is in present North canara district. Mayurasharma was the founder and a great king of this dynasty. When Mayura sharma was insulted by the Pallava king, Shivaskanda Varma, he adopted the kshatriya way of life and became Mayuravarma. He defeated the Pallavas in a war and established the Kadamba empire. He is the pride of all Kannadigas.



According to the Chandravalli inscription at Chitradurga, Mayuravarma is said to have increased the height of the wall of the chandrvathi lake.

The Kadambas made special contributions to Karnataka and Indian culture. There was political unity for around three hundred years under the Kadamba rule. Royal priests, ministers and military generals played a significant role in administration. For administrative ease, provincial officers had been appointed to look after the provinces.

Land revenue was the main source of income in the kingdom. The occupations such as carpentry, goldsmithy, blacksmithy, weaving, oil-extraction, pottery were the main ones in the society. There was greater encouragement for agriculture and trade. Most of the people followed varnashrama. Greater importance was given to patriarchy and joint family.

Though they were the followers of the Vedic culture, the Kadambas encouraged Jainism and Buddhism. They gave charity to Jain temples and scholars at Hangal, Puligere and other places, and promoted the spread of Jain culture.



Madhukeshwara Temple, Banavasi

Buddhism was also flourishing in the Kadamba kingdom. It inculded Ajanta and Banavasi, two of the important centers of Buddism. The temples were centers of festivals and celebrations. Both Prakrit and Sanskrit received encouragement. First Prakrit and later Sanskrit became the court language. Kannada was the language of the people. The ancient Halmidi inscription shows the characteristics of the Kannada language which was in use in the 5th century. This has been the first inscription available in Kannada.

The Malavalli inscription is in Prakrit language. The Talagunda inscription is the first Sanskrit inscription found in Karnataka.

The Kadambas laid the foundation for architecture in Karnataka. They built many temples and basadis in Banavasi. During this period, educational centers like agraharas, brahmapuris and ghatikas were established. The main agraharas of that time were found in Talagunda and Balligave. The agraharas were like residential schools.

The Gangas (350 C.E. to 1004 C.E.)

The rise and fall of the dynasty of Ganga rulers constitute an important chapter in early history of Karnataka. The founders of the Ganga dynasty claimed their descent from the Ikshvaku dynasty. They ruled from Kuvalala, Talakadu and Manyapura (today's Manne in Nelamangala, Bangalore Rural district).

The Gangawadi kingdom which began with the rule of Dadiga (also known as Kongunivarma), was ruled by 27 kings. Durvinita was a famous king of this dynasty. He was a brave warrior and scholar. He ruled for a long period and gained control of Punnata in order to strengthen his Kingdom. The Nallala copper inscription reveal that he constructed many lakes for the purposes of irrigation. He was a lover of Literature and wrote creative works in Sanskrit and Kannada. He even translated the Prakrit work 'Vaddakatha' of Gunadya in to Sanskrit.

The Contributions of the Gangas

The king had a council of ministers to help him. The ministers supervised different branches of administration. The administration in the villages was very systematic. The village committee looked

after land revenue, justice, sanitation and defence. Agriculture was the main occupation. There were other occupations like weaving and black smithy. They had trade relations with other countries.

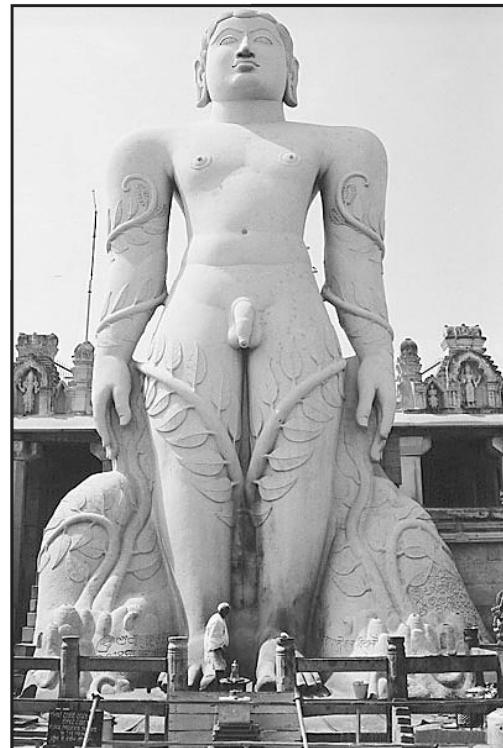
Though the society at the time of the Gangas had been divided into different sects and castes, they were all interdependent. The practice of a patriarchal undivided family was common. Social values like honesty, loyalty, bravery and patience were prominent among the people.

Chaityalayas, temples, mathas and agraharas were centers of education. There were Brahmapuris and Ghatikas for higher education. Talakadu, Shravanabelagola, Bankapura and Peruru have been named as centers of learning.

Since the Gangas were Jains, Jainism flourished here. Poojyapada, Vajranandi, Ajitsena and others popularized this religion. Further, they installed a 58 foot monolithic idol of Gommateshwara at Shravanabelagola and made it a famous centre. You must have heard about the Maha Mastakabhisheka of Gommateshwara which takes place once in every 12 years even to this day.

Bahubali-Gommateshwara

Gommateshwara (Bahubali) of Sravanabelagola is a symbol of life of renunciation. The Statue of Gommateshwara was installed by Chavundaraya, the minister of Rachamalla IV. Among 100 brothers, Bharata was the eldest, Bahubali the youngest. After Bharata was coronated as the king, he finds a Chakraratna (a special wheel), won all the kingdoms and became an emperor. Even before that, all his brothers accepted his sovereignty. But when Bahubali did not accept it, both of them got ready to engage in a battle.



Gommateshwara

Bharata lost in drushti yuddha, jala yuddha and malla yuddha. At the end of malla yuddha, Bahubali lifted Bharata and spinning him in the air like a wheel, was about to throw him away, suddenly he lost all interest in everything around him, and put his brother down. He bowed to his brother and went away to meditate for nirvana, standing all the time. As he did not achieve salvation, he realises that as long as he stood in his brother's kingdom and meditated, he would not achieve nirvana. Later Bharata came and said that the whole kingdom was Bahubali's, and that he was ruling it on Bahubali's behalf. Then Bahubali achieved nirvana.

The Ganga kings encouraged art and architecture. They built beautiful temples and basadis. The Kapileshwara temple at Manne, Pataleshwara and Maruleshwara temples at Talakad, Kolaramma temple at Kolar, Nagareshwara temple at Begur and the statue of Gomateshwara at Shravanabelagola are examples of their architecture. The significant contribution of the Gangas has been the tall pillars called Manastambhas and Brahmamanastambas.



Pathaleshwara Temple in Talakadu

The Ganga kings were lovers of literature and due to their encouragement to Sanskrit, Prakrit and Kannada languages, many works were written in these languages. Madhava II wrote commentary on Dattaka Sutra.

Durvinita wrote the Sanskrit work ‘Shabdavatara’, and translated Gunadhyā’s ‘Vaddakathe’ into Sanskrit. Sree Purusha wrote ‘Gajashastra’ and Shivamadhava wrote ‘Gajashtaka’, a Kannada work. Poet Hemasena wrote ‘Raghava Pandaviya’, Vadibasimha wrote ‘Gadya Chintamani’ and ‘Shatra Chudamani’, whereas Nemichandra wrote ‘Dravyasara Samgraha’ and Chavundaraya wrote ‘Chavunda Purana’, Raya became famous.

EXERCISES

I Complete the following sentences :

- 1 Simukha made _____ his capital.
- 2 The literary work written by Hala is _____.
- 3 The first inscription in Kannada is _____.
- 4 Banavasi, the capital of the Kadambas, is in today's _____ district.
- 5 The prominent king among the Gangas was _____.
- 6 The literary work written by Chavundaraya is _____.

II Answer in brief :

- 7 Who was the last king of the Shatavahanas? How did their dynasty become weak?
- 8 Write about the art of the Shatavahanas.
- 9 What were the values which influenced the Ganga society?
- 10 Name four literary works of the period of the Gangas.

III Activities :

- 11 Discuss with your teacher the way to read inscriptions.
- 12 Visit a historical temple nearby and collect its details. Share the information with your classmates.

IV Projects :

- 13 Cultivate the habit of reading inscriptions.
- 14 Study one inscription and do a project on it.
- 15 Visit the capitals of the Gangas and collect information on them.

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