



Literary Sources

Comprehensive Course on History Optional - Paper I

Post Gupta Dynasty-Part II

▲ 1 • Asked by Syed

Please help me with this doubt

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- In later Buddhist sculpture, the horse symbolizes the departure of Siddhartha from his home. Buddhist tradition refers to a mythical Anotatta lake situated in the Himalayas, with rocks in the shape of a horse, bull, lion, and elephant. Taken together, all the symbols associated with the Ashokan pillars had a special Buddhist significance, but they also blended into a wider fabric of cultural meaning.
- It can be noted that many of these symbols occur on ring stones, disc stones, and punch-marked coins of early historical India. Some art historians have emphasized foreign influence, especially Persian influence, on the court art of the Maurya empire.
- It has been suggested that Ashoka got the idea of inscribing proclamations on pillars from the Achaemenids.
- It has been pointed out that the words *dipi* and *lipi* occur in the inscriptions of Darius as well as Ashoka. The inscriptions of both kings begin in the third person and then move to the first person.
- Distinct Greek influence, and even greater Persian influence, has been identified in the polished surface of the Ashokan pillars and the animal capitals.
- The stiff, heraldic pose of the lions is seen as further evidence of Western influence. As far as this issue is concerned, Coomaraswamy pointed out many years ago that India formed part of an 'ancient east'—an area extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the Ganga valley, which had some elements of a common cultural heritage from very early times.
- There was plenty of interaction between ancient India and ancient Iran, whether in the form of trade or the conquest of Gandhara by the Persian emperors. The use of the Aramaic script in certain Ashokan inscriptions in the north-west and the emergence of Kharoshthi from this script were direct results of the interactions between India and West Asia.

At the same time, Niharranjan Ray has drawn attention to the many differences between

STUPA

The tradition of making stupas—originally funerary mounds—may be pre-Buddhist, and stupas did not have an exclusively Buddhist significance. The *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* tells us that eight stupas were built over the cremated remains of the Buddha and two others over the cremation vessel and embers of the funeral pyre. Some archaeologists have suggested that the mud stupas at Piprahwa and Vaishali may represent these early stupas.

- Initially, relics of the Buddha were enshrined in the solid core of stupas, which became places of veneration and pilgrimage. Soon, relics of the Buddha's disciples and famous monks were similarly enshrined.
- Veneration and worship were transferred from the relics to the stupa itself, whether or not it contained relics.
- The stupa swiftly became an emblem of the Buddha's *dhamma* and an important part of Buddhist monasteries.
- According to the Avadana texts, Ashoka re-distributed portions of the Buddha's relics to every important town in the land and ordered the construction of stupas over them.
- The *Nigali Sagar inscription* records this king's enlargement of the stupa of a Buddha named Kanakamuni when he had been consecrated 14 years and commemorates his visit to this site.
- There is thus quite a bit of evidence to show that Ashoka played an important role in popularizing the stupa cult. Ashoka's reign marked an important stage in the history of Buddhist stupa architecture.
- Old mud stupas were rebuilt or enlarged with bricks, as evident from excavations at Vaishali and Piprahwa.
- A fragment of what may be an Ashokan inscription at Amaravati suggests the possibility that the stupa-monastery complex located here dates to Ashoka's time.

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- Most of these images do not bear inscriptions, nor were they found in the course of an archaeological excavation.
- They were initially ascribed to the Maurya period due to the fact that some or all of their surface was polished. More recent assessments have pointed out that a polished surface is insufficient ground to assign a Maurya date to a piece of sculpture, since the so-called 'Maurya polish' continued into the early centuries CE.
- Stylistic considerations are, therefore, also very important. The yaksha sculpture found at Parkham was initially associated with the Maurya period. Later, some scholars assigned it to the 1st century BCE on stylistic grounds.
- However, its base has an inscription in Maurya Brahmi letters, so the earlier view may be correct.
- Other important examples of stone sculptures include the torso of a nude male figure found at Lohanipur in Patna.
- It is carved out of Chunar sandstone and has a polished surface.
- Antiquities of the Maurya type, including two polished sandstone pillar fragments, were excavated near the place where the sculpture was found. It is possible, but by no means certain, that this figure depicts a Jaina *erhankara*.
- The 'Didarganj yaksh' was found at Didarganj village in Patna.
- The figure actually seems to be an attendant and not a yakshi.
- Some scholars think that its style, refinement, and polished surface indicate a Maurya association, while others (on the basis of the voluptuous body and the nature of the ornamentation) think it belongs to the 2nd century CE. A headless

these highlighted sir are my doubts please adress these and sir were some pillars pre mauryan on which ashoka issued proclamations

Post Gupta Dynasty-Part II

Salankayanas and Vishnukudin Dynasty

The Vishnukundina dynasty was an Indian imperial power controlling the Deccan, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha and parts of South India during the 5th and 6th centuries, carving land out from the Vakataka Empire.

- It played an important role in the history of the Deccan during the 5th and 6th centuries. The dynasty initially ruled from Indrapalanagara (in present day Nalgonda district of Telangana), and later shifted to Denduluru, and Amaravathi.

- The area north of the Godavari, Kalinga, became independent. The area south of the Krishna River fell to the Pallavas. The Vishnukundina reign came to an end with the conquest of the eastern Deccan by the Chalukya, Pulakesi II.
- Pulakesi appointed his brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana as Viceroy to rule over the conquered lands. Eventually, Vishnuvardhana declared his independence and started the Eastern Chalukya dynasty.

ORIGIN

- "Vishnukundina" is a Sanskritised name for Vinukonda.
- The early rulers of the dynasty migrated to the west in search of employment and under the Vakatakas they might have attained feudatory status.
- During the reign of Madhava Varma, they became independent and conquered coastal Andhra from the Salankayanas and established their capital at Denduluru near Eluru, West Godavari district.

CHRONOLOGY

- The Vishnukundina reign might be fixed between the end of the Salankayana and the rise of the Eastern Chalukyan power in 624.
- Some historians mention Vishnukundinas' reign was from 420 to 624, while some other historians say their reign was from the early 5th century to the 7th century.

Govinda Varma I

- Govinda Varma I took the imperial title of Maharaja and his son Madhava Varma I was the founder of the power based on grants from Sriparvata (Nagarjunakonda) and Indrapalagutta.

Madhava Varma I

- The reign of Madhava Varma (c. 420 – c. 455). He was the founder of the Vishnukundina power.

Madhava Varma II

- Madhava Varma II, He is the Most Powerful King of Vishnukundina dynasty in India. The reign of Madhava Varma II (c. 440 – c. 460) was a golden age in the history of the Vishnukundinas.
- He is regarded as the Greatest Ruler of the Vishnukundina dynasty. The Vishnukundina Empire reached its greatest territorial extent under him.
- He defeated Prithvishena II, the powerful Vakataka king. The daughter of Prithvishena II, Vakataka Mahadevi, was given in marriage to Madhava Varma II.

By the middle of the 5th century, the dynasty began its imperial expansion under its most efficient ruler Madhava Varma II who ruled for nearly half a century.

- The reign of Madhava Varma (c. 440 – c. 460) was a golden age in the history of the Vishnukundinas. It was during this period, the small Vishnukundina dynasty rose to imperial heights.
- A princess of the then powerful ruling family of the Deccan the Vakatakas was given in marriage to Madhava Varma's son, Vikramendra Varma.
- This alliance gave them great power and made it easy for them to extend their influence to the east coast and vanquishing the petty chieftains lingering on in that area.

- Madhava Varma II led his arms against Ananda Gotrikas who were ruling over Guntur, Tenali and Ongole, probably enjoying subordinate position under the Pallavas of Kanchipuram.
- After occupying these areas from the Ananda Gotrikas, Madhava Varma II made Amarapura (modern Amaravati) his capital.
- Keeping in view the constant threat from the Pallavas, he created an out-post to check their activities and appointed his son, Deva Varma and after his death the grandson Madhava Varma III as its Viceroy.

- Madhava Varma II next turned his attention against the Vengi kingdom which was under the Salankayanas. The Vengi region was annexed. The Godavari tract became part of the Vishnukundina territory.
- After these conquests the capital might have been shifted to Bezwada (Vijayawada), a more central location than Amarapura. These extensive conquests entitle him to the title of the lord of Dakshinapatha (southern country). After these various conquests Madhava Varma performed many Asvamedha, Rajasuya and other Vedic sacrifices.

Successors of Madhava Varma II

- The fortunes of the Vishnukundinas were at a low point during the reign of the next ruler Vikramendra Varma I (508–528).
- The next two and half decades also experienced the constant strife and dynastic struggles during the reign of Indra Bhattaraka Varma (528–555).
- Though Indra Bhattaraka could not withstand the hostile Kalinga subordinate, Indra Varma and lost his life in battle. The Vishnukundinas lost their Kalinga possessions north of the Godavari.

Vikramendra Varma II

- With the accession of Vikramendra Varma II (555–569), the fortunes of the Vishnukundina family were restored.
- To have immediate access to the Kalinga region, he shifted his capital from Bezwada to Lenduluru (modern Denduluru in the West Godavari district). He repulsed the attack of the Pallava ruler Simhavarman.
- He was successful enough to restore the fortunes of the Vishnukundinas in the Kalinga region. His son Govinda Varma II enjoyed a comparatively short period of rule (569–573).

Janssraya Madhava Varma IV

- The Vishnukundina empire set about again to imperial expansion and cultural prosperity under its able ruler Janssraya Madhava Varma IV (573-621). This prudent king spent his early years of rule in consolidating his position in Vengi.
- The later part of his reign is marked by wars and annexations. In his 37th regnal year, he suppressed the revolt of his subordinate chief the Durjaya Pruthvi Maharaja in Guddadivishya (modern Ramachandrapuram in the East Godavari district).

- Madhava Varma IV had to face the Chalukyan onslaught in his last years of rule. By about 616, Pulakeshin II and his brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana conquered Vengi from the Vishnukundinas and the Pithapuram area from their subordinate Durjayas.
- In 621 in his 48th regnal year, Madhava crossed the Godavari probably to oust the Chalukyas from his territories.
- However, he lost his life on the battlefield. His son Manchana Bhattaraka also might have been expelled by the Chalukyas.
- Thus the Vishnukundina rule was brought to a close by 624.

SALANKAYANAS

The Salankayana dynasty of ancient India ruled a part of Andhra region in India from 300 to 440 CE. Their territory was located between the Godavari and the Krishna rivers. Their capital was located at Vengi, modern Pedavegi near Eluru in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.

- Salankayana is a Brahmin Sage. Their name is derived from their symbol and gotra name, which stood for Nandi (the bull of Shiva).

- The Salankayanas succeeded the Andhra Ikshvaku dynasty and were vassals of the Pallava kings of southern India.[citation needed] During their time the script for Telugu and Kannada began to clearly separate from that of the other South Indian and North Indian languages.
- Hastivarman, the first king, was one of the many kings who were defeated by Samudragupta, but were later released and paid him tribute
- The Salankayanas ruled the part of Andhra regions between Godavari and Krishna with their capital at Vengi, modern Pedavegi near Eluru in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.

- Their rule extends between 300 to 440 AD. Some sources claim that they ruled between 350 to 450 A.D.
- They were Brahmins and their name is derived from their symbol and gotra name, which stood for Nandi (the bull of Shiva).
- This indicates that Salankayanas were worshippers of Lord Shiva. However, some evidence shows that they also worshipped Chitra-Ratha-Swami (who may be linked to god Surya or Shiva).
- The term Salankayana is a gotra and not a dynastic name.

- The Salankayanas succeeded the Andhra Ikshvaku dynasty and were vassals of the Pallava kings of southern India.
- During their time the script for Telugu and Kannada began to clearly separate from that of the other South Indian and North Indian languages.
- According to inscriptions scholars came to know about the Salankayana kings – Hasti Varma, Nandi Varma-I, Vijaya Deva Varma, Vijaya Nandi Varma, Skandavarma, Buddhavarma. A close analysis reveals that there is a close resemblance between the names of the members of the Salankayana and the Pallava rulers.

- The Salankayana rulers' names, Skandavarma, Buddhavarma and Nandivarma also occur in the Pallava copper plates. The figure of the seated bull which frequently finds a place in the seals of the Pallava charters also figures in the Salankayana charters.
- Further the fact that for more than six' generations the Pallavaa and the Salankayanas are never known to have come into conflict even once is a significant one, and probably indicates that the Salankayanas were on friendly terms with the Pallava and continued to rule independently along with them.

- It is just possible that the Pallavas and the Salankayanas had a common ancestry as Salankayana is a gotra belonging to the Bharadvaja clan.
- Salankayanas ten inscriptions are the sources for historians to reconstruct their history. In which nine are copper plate inscriptions and one is rock inscription.

They are

- Kanukollu Prakrit Inscription
- Eluru Prakrit Inscription
- Kanukollu Sanskrit Inscription
- Pedavegi Inscription
- Kolleru Inscription

- Kantheru Inscription
- Kantheru Inscription
- Dhari-Kaatooru Inscription
- Penugonda Inscription
- Guntapalli Rock Inscription
- Hasti Varma:

According to Pedavegi Inscription of Hastivarma,

- He established an independent kingdom.
- His title was Aneka Samaravapta vijaya.
- He expanded his kingdom by defeating Ikshvaku samanthas.
- Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudra Gupta mentioned his victory over Salankayana King Hastivarma and mentioned him as VAINGEYAKA (lord of vengi). So, Hastivarma was a contemporary of Samudragupta.
- The scholars also came to know about various small kingdoms that ruling coastal Andhra regions at that time with the help of this inscription.

Nandi Varma-I:

- He was the son of Hastivarma.
- He issued the Kanukollu inscription in prakrit language. It mentioned his title Swaprathanihithavarma.
- As per Guntapalli inscription his other titles were Arjitha Dharmasya, Gosahasra Pradayi.
- He extended his rule towards south of Krishna river.

Vijaya Deva Varma

- May be after the death of Nandi Varma, his brother Deva Varma occupied the throne. By performing Aswamedha sacrifice he ascended the throne as Vijaya Deva Varma. His title was Parama maheshwara.
- His Eluru inscription provides information about his rule. During his rule he had a conflict with Nadivarma's son Aachanda Varma for the throne. After 15 years of rule he lost his throne to Aachanda Varma.

Vijaya Nandi Varma:

- He was the last king of the Salankayana Dynasty.
- He issued Guntapalli inscription.
- He built a vihara for aparashaila sect of Buddhist. He had a conflict with VijayaSkanda Varma (son of Hastivarma-II).

GANGAS AND KADAMBAS

Western Ganga was an important ruling dynasty of ancient Karnataka in India which lasted from about 350 to 1000 CE. They are known as "Western Gangas" to distinguish them from the Eastern Gangas who in later centuries ruled over Kalinga (modern Odisha). The general belief is that the Western Gangas began their rule during a time when multiple native clans asserted their freedom due to the weakening of the Pallava empire in South India, a geo-political event sometimes attributed to the southern conquests of Samudra Gupta.

- The Western Ganga sovereignty lasted from about 350 to 550 CE, initially ruling from Kolar and later, moving their capital to Talakadu on the banks of the Kaveri River in modern Mysore district.
- After the rise of the imperial Chalukyas of Badami, the Gangas accepted Chalukya overlordship and fought for the cause of their overlords against the Pallavas of Kanchi. The Chalukyas were replaced by the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta in 753 CE as the dominant power in the Deccan.

- After a century of struggle for autonomy, the Western Gangas finally accepted Rashtrakuta overlordship and successfully fought alongside them against their foes, the Chola Dynasty of Tanjavur.
- In the late 10th century, north of Tungabhadra river, the Rashtrakutas were replaced by the emerging Western Chalukya Empire and the Chola Dynasty saw renewed power south of the Kaveri river.
- The defeat of the Western Gangas by Cholas around 1000 resulted in the end of the Ganga influence over the region.

- Though territorially a small kingdom, the Western Ganga contribution to polity, culture and literature of the modern south Karnataka region is considered important.
- The Western Ganga kings showed benevolent tolerance to all faiths but are most famous for their patronage toward Jainism resulting in the construction of monuments in places such as Shravanabelagola and Kambadahalli.
- The kings of this dynasty encouraged the fine arts due to which literature in Kannada and Sanskrit flourished. Chavundaraya's writing, Chavundaraya Purana of 978 CE, is an important work in Kannada prose.
- Many classics were written on various subjects ranging from religion to elephant management.

ORIGINS

Multiple theories have been proposed regarding the ancestry of the founders of the Western Ganga dynasty (prior to the 4th century). Some mythical accounts point to a northern origin, while theories based on epigraphy suggest a southern origin.

- According to some records, the Western Gangas were of the Kanvayana gotra and traced their lineage to the Ikshvakus of the solar dynasty.
- Historians who propose the southern origin have further debated whether the early petty chieftains of the clan (prior to their rise to power) were natives of the southern districts of modern Karnataka, the Kongu Nadu region in modern Tamil Nadu or of the southern districts of modern Andhra Pradesh.

- These regions encompass an area of the southern Deccan where the three modern states merge geographically.
- It is theorised that the Gangas may have taken advantage of the confusion caused by the invasion of southern India by the northern king Samudra Gupta prior to 350, and carved out a kingdom for themselves.
- The area they controlled was called Gangavadi and included regions of the modern districts of Mysore, Hassan Chamarajanagar, Tumkur, Kolar, Mandya and Bangalore in Karnataka state.

- At times, they also controlled some areas in modern Tamil Nadu (Kongu region starting from the 6th century rule of King Avinita) and Andhra Pradesh (Ananthpur region starting from the middle of the 5th century).
- The founding king of the dynasty was Konganivarma Madhava who made Kolar his capital around 350 and ruled for about twenty years.

By the time of Harivarma in 390, the Gangas had consolidated their kingdom with Talakad as their capital. Their move from the early capital Kolar may have been a strategic one with the intention of containing the growing Kadamba power.

- By 430 they had consolidated their eastern territories comprising modern Bangalore, Kolar and Tumkur districts and by 470 they had gained control over Kongu region in modern Tamil Nadu, Sendraka (modern Chikkamagaluru and Belur), Punnata and Pannada regions (comprising modern Heggadadevanakote and Nanjangud) in modern Karnataka.

- In 529, King Durvinita ascended the throne after waging a war with his younger brother who was favoured by his father, King Avinita.
- Some accounts suggest that in this power struggle, the Pallavas of Kanchi supported Avinita's choice of heir and the Badami Chalukya King Vijayaditya supported his father-in-law, Durvinita.

- From the inscriptions it is known that these battles were fought in Tondaimandalam and Kongu regions (northern Tamil Nadu) prompting historians to suggest that Durvinita fought the Pallavas successfully.
- Considered the most successful of the Ganga kings, Durvinita was well versed in arts such as music, dance, ayurveda and taming wild elephants. Some inscriptions sing paeans to him by comparing him to Yudhishtira and Manu – figures from Hindu mythology known for their wisdom and fairness.

Politically, the Gangas were feudatories and close allies who also shared matrimonial relations with the Chalukyas. This is attested by inscriptions which describe their joint campaigns against their arch enemy, the Pallavas of Kanchi.

- From the year 725 onwards, the Gangavadi territories came to be called as the "Gangavadi-96000" (Shannavati Sahasra Vishaya) comprising the eastern and western provinces of modern south Karnataka.

- King Sripurusha fought the Pallava King Nandivarman Pallavamalla successfully, bringing Penkulikottai in north Arcot under his control temporarily for which he earned the title Permanadi.
- A contest with the Pandyas of Madurai over control of Kongu region ended in a Ganga defeat, but a matrimony between a Ganga princess and Rajasimha Pandya's son brought peace helping the Gangas retain control over the contested region.

In 753, when the Rashtrakutas replaced the Badami Chalukyas as the dominant force in the Deccan, the Gangas offered stiff resistance for about a century. King Shivamara II is mostly known for his wars with the Rashtrakuta Dhruva Dharavarsha, his subsequent defeat and imprisonment, his release from prison and eventually his death on the battlefield.

- The Ganga resistance continued through the reign of Rashtrakuta Govinda III and by 819, a Ganga resurgence gained them partial control over Gangavadi under King Rachamalla.

- Seeing the futility of waging war with the Western Ganga, Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha I gave his daughter Chandrabalabbe in marriage to Ganga prince Butuga I, son of King Ereganga Neetimarga.
- The Gangas thereafter became staunch allies of the Rashtrakutas, a position they maintained till the end of the Rashtrakuta dynasty of Manyakheta.
- After an uneventful period, Butuga II ascended the throne in 938 with the help of Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha III (whose daughter he married).

- He helped the Rashtrakutas win decisive victories in Tamilakam in the battle of Takkolam against the Chola Dynasty. With this victory, the Rashtrakutas took control of modern northern Tamil Nadu. In return for their valour, the Gangas were awarded extensive territories in the Tungabhadra river valley.
- King Marasimha II who came to power in 963 aided the Rashtrakutas in victories against the Gurjara Pratihara King Lalla and the Paramara kings of Malwa in Central India.
- Chavundaraya, a minister in the Western Ganga court was a valiant commander, able administrator and an accomplished poet in Kannada and Sanskrit.

- He served King Marasimha II and his successors ably and helped King Rachamalla IV suppress a civil war in 975.
- Towards the end of the 10th century, the Rashtrakutas had been supplanted by the Western Chalukya Empire in Manyakheta. In the south, the Chola Dynasty who were seeing a resurgence of power under Rajaraja Chola I conquered Gangavadi around the year 1000, bringing the Western Ganga dynasty to an end.
- Thereafter, large areas of south Karnataka region came under Chola control for about a century.

Inscriptions have revealed several important administrative designations such as prime minister (sarvadhikari), treasurer (shribhandari), foreign minister (sandhivirgrahi) and chief minister (mahapradhana). All of these positions came with an additional title of commander (dandanayaka). Other designations were royal steward (manevergade), master of robes (mahapasayita), commander of elephant corps (gajasahani), commander of cavalry (thuragasahani) etc. In the royal house, Niyogis oversaw palace administration, royal clothing and jewellery etc. and the Padiyara were responsible for court ceremonies including door keeping and protocol.

- Officials at the local level were the pergade, nadabova, nalagamiga, prabhu and gavunda.
- The pergades were superintendents from all social classes such as artisans, gold smiths, black smiths etc.
- The pergades dealing with the royal household were called manepergade (house superintendent) and those who collected tolls were called Sunka vergades.
- The nadabovas were accountants and tax collectors at the Nadu level and sometimes functioned as scribes.

- The nalagamigas were officers who organized and maintained defence at the Nadu level.
- The prabhu constituted a group of elite people drawn together to witness land grants and demarcation of land boundaries.
- The gavundas who appear most often in inscriptions were the backbone of medieval polity of the southern Karnataka region. They were landlords and local elite whom the state utilized their services to collect taxes, maintain records of land ownership, bear witness to grants and transactions and even raise militia when required.

- The Western Gangas, who were based in the south Karnataka area, were enthusiastic patrons of Jainism.
- A tradition recorded in later inscriptions suggests that Konkanivarman, the founder of the dynasty, was assisted in his rise to power by a Jaina saint named *acharya* Simhanandi.

- A late 5th century inscription found at Nonamangala records a land grant made by king Madhava III to a Jaina temple established by monks belonging to the *Mulasangha*.
- Three inscriptions (one of which is considered a forgery) of the reign of Avinita Konkanivarman record grants made in favour of Jaina establishments. One of them (from Nonamangala) states that the king made the grant on the advice of his preceptor (*upadhayaya*), the great *arhat* Vijayakirti.

KADAMBAS

The Kadambas (345–525 CE) were an ancient royal family of Karnataka, India, that ruled northern Karnataka and the Konkan from Banavasi in present-day Uttara Kannada district. The kingdom was founded by Mayurasharma in c. 345, and at later times showed the potential of developing into imperial proportions. An indication of their imperial ambitions is provided by the titles and epithets assumed by its rulers, and the marital relations they kept with other kingdoms and empires, such as the Vakatakas and Guptas of northern India. Mayurasharma defeated the armies of the Pallavas of Kanchi possibly with the help of some native tribes and claimed sovereignty. The Kadamba power reached its peak during the rule of Kakusthavarma.

- The Kadambas were contemporaries of the Western Ganga Dynasty and together they formed the earliest native kingdoms to rule the land with autonomy.
- From the mid-6th century the dynasty continued to rule as a vassal of larger Kannada empires, the Chalukya and the Rashtrakuta empires for over five hundred years during which time they branched into minor dynasties. Notable among these are the Kadambas of Goa, the Kadambas of Halasi and the Kadambas of Hangal.

- During the pre-Kadamba era the ruling families that controlled the Karnataka region, the Mauryas and later the Satavahanas, were not natives of the region and therefore the nucleus of power resided outside present-day Karnataka.
- The Kadambas were the first indigenous dynasty to use Kannada, the language of the soil at an administrative level.
- In the history of Karnataka, this era serves as a broad-based historical starting point in the study of the development of the region as an enduring geo-political entity and Kannada as an important regional language.

ORIGIN

- Old Kannada inscriptions of Kadamba king Kamadeva of the Hangal branch (c.1180) and Hoysala king Veera Ballala II (c. 1196) in the open mantapa of the Tarakeshwara temple at Hangal.
- There are several legends regarding the origin of the Kadambas. According to one such legend the originator of this dynasty was a three-eyed four-armed warrior called Trilochana Kadamba (the father of Mayurasharma) who emerged from the sweat of the god Shiva under a Kadamba tree.

- Another legend tries to simplify it by claiming Mayurasharma himself was born to Shiva and Bhudevi (goddess of the earth). Other legends tie them without any substance to the Nagas, and the Nandas of northern India.
- An inscription of c.1189 claims that Kadamba Rudra, the founder of the kingdom, was born in a forest of Kadamba trees. As he had "peacock feather"-like reflections on his limbs, he was called Mayuravarman.
- From the Talagunda inscription, one more legend informs that the founding king of the dynasty, Mayurasharma was anointed by "the six-faced god of war Skanda".

- Historians are divided on the issue of the geographical origin of the Kadambas, whether they were of local origin or earlier immigrants from northern India.
- The social order (caste) of the Kadamba family is also an issue of debate, whether the founders of the kingdom belonged to the Brahmin caste as described by the Talagunda inscription, or of local tribal origin.
- Historians Chopra et al. claim the Kadambas were none other than the Kadambu tribe who were in conflict with the Chera kingdom (of modern Kerala) during the Sangam era. The Kadambus find mention in the Sangam literature as totemic worshipers of the Kadambu tree and the Hindu god Subramanya.

- According to R.N. Nandi, since the inscription states the family got its name by tending to the totem tree that bore the beautiful Kadamba flowers, it is an indication of their tribal origin.
- However the historians Sastri and Kamath claim the family belonged to the Brahmin caste, believed in the Vedas and performed Vedic sacrifices. According to the Talagunda and the Gudnapur inscriptions, they belonged to the Manavya Gotra and were Haritiputrās ("descendants of Hariti lineage"), which connected them to the native Chutus of Banavasi, a vassal of the Satavahana empire.

- According to Rao and Minahan, being native Kannadigas, the Kadambas promptly gave administrative and political importance to their language Kannada after coming to power.
- The Kadambas, another dynasty based in the Karnataka area, also patronized Jainism. Their inscriptions refer to various Jaina sects such as the Nirgranthas, Shvetapatas, Yapaniyas, and Kurchakas.

- The Halsi grant of king Kakutsthavarman begins with an invocation to Jinendra (lord of the *jinas*), and suggests the presence of a Jaina temple at this place. Several grants in favour of Jaina establishments were also made by king Mrigeshavarman.
- The Banavasi inscription, dated in the third regnal year of the same king, records the grant of black-soil land in Brihat-Paralura village in favour of a Jaina shrine to provide for the following activities—sweeping the temple; anointing the image with ghee; and for worship and repairs.

- It also records the grant of an additional piece of land for decorating the image with flowers. Another Banavasi grant, dated in this king's fourth regnal year, records a grant in favour of three beneficiaries—a temple of Jinendra at Paramapushkala, the *sangha* of the Shvetapata-*mahashramanas* and the Nirgrantha- *mahashramanas*.
- It is interesting to note that the Jinendra temple seems to have been the joint property of the Digambaras and Shvetambaras. An undated inscription of the reign of Ravivarman mentions that part of the grant was to meet the expenses of the eight-day festival of the lord *jina* at Palashika, in which the king also participated.

SOMAVAMSI OF ODISHA

From the middle of the ninth century CE to the early twelfth century, the Somavamsis, also known as Panduvamsis, ruled over Odisha. They initially ruled over a region known as Dakhina Kosal or South Kosala in the seventh and eighth centuries CE (corresponding to the Raipur and Bilaspur districts of Madhya Pradesh and the Sambalpur and Kalahandi districts of Odisha). Sirpur, a town in the Raipur district, was the capital of the south Kosala Somavamsis. This dynasty was founded by Udayana.

There is no such written record of the Somavamsi rulers' complete history and accomplishments. The Banda copper plates of Tivaradeva, the Adhavara copper plates of Mahanannararaja, and the Banda copper plates of Mahasivagupta; the Patna, Kalibhana, and other copper plates of Janrneiaya Cuttack, Nibinna, and Patna copper plates of Yayati I; the Kalanjar stone inscription, the Arang stone inscription, the Sirpur stone inscription, and other inscription.

Rulers of the Dynasty

Janmejaya I Mahabhavagupta (C- 882 - 922 CE)

Mahasivagupta Yayati I (C-922-955 CE)

Bhimaratha Mahasivagupta I (C-955-980 CE)

Dharmaratha (C-980-1005 CE)

Nahusa (C-1005-1021 CE)

Indraratha (C-1021-1023 CE)

Chandihara Yayati II (C-1023-1040 CE)

Udyotakesari Mahabhavagupta (C-1040-1065)

Janmejaya II (C-1065-1085 CE)

Puranjaya (C-1085-1100 CE)

Karnadeva (C-1100-1110 CE)

The King's Position

- In terms of administrative structure, the king held the highest position. While kingship was unquestionably hereditary, ministers occasionally had a say in the selection of a king, as was the case with Yayati II.
- When a king was a minor, he was regent by a member of the royal family. The king possessed unrestricted royal authority.
- The king generously granted grants to the merchant community in order to promote trade and commerce within the country.

- They granted lands to the Brahmins to promote learning.
- They patronised Brahmins and performed several Vedic sacrifices, including the Asvamedha sacrifice, in order to spread Brahmanism throughout the land.
- Additionally, they constructed a sizable number of Saiva temples to accomplish the same goal.
- All of these activities demonstrate that, while the Somavamsi kings were powerful, they were not despotic; rather, they were liberals who looked out for the welfare of their subjects.

Ministers and government officials

- Numerous important ministers and officers aided the king. Among the notable ministers were Mantritolaka (Chief Minister), Mahasandhivigrahika (Minister of War and Peace who was also responsible for the charter's preparation), and Mahakshapatalika (Minister, preparing charter).
- The Mahasenapati (Commander-in-chief) was responsible for promoting religion and morality within the army. Additionally, several officers such as Samahartri, Sannidhatri, Outaka, Niyuktaka, Dandapasika, Mahakashapataia, Mahakshapataladhyaksha, Chattas, Bhattas, Ranaka, and Rajaputra were appointed.
- The Somavamsis divided their kingdom into mandalas, each of which represented a province.

- A mandala was further subdivided into several bhuktis, with each bhukti subdivided into bhoga, khanda, and grama, the smallest administrative unit under the Somavamsi kings.
- The rulers of Somavamsi maintained substantial standing armies comprised of infantry, cavalry, and elephantry.
- The kings were the supreme commanders of the military forces, leading them into battle.

Architecture and Art

Odishan temple architecture began in the Sailodbhava period and reached its pinnacle of perfection near the end of the Somavamsi period. By the end of the Somavamsi period, the Odishan temple had taken on its final form. Among the numerous temples constructed by the Somavamsis, Lingaraj, Brahmeswar, Mukteswar, and Rajarani are the most magnificent (all in Bhubaneswar).

Promotion of Education

During the Somavamsi period, there was a phenomenal growth in the field of Sanskrit learning and literature. The period's inscriptions attest to the scholars' proficiency in the Vedas, Vedanga, Smtitis, and Puranas, as well as in medical sciences, astronomy, arthasastra, grammar, poetry, history, political science, and logic. Several Sanskrit scholars flourished during the Somavamsi period, including Sadharana, Purushottam Bhatta, Bhavadeva, Acharya Subhachandradeva, and Narayana Satakarni. Sadharana, Janmejava I's chief minister, was versed in Veda, Vedanga, Vidya, Siksa, Kalpa, Itihas, Smriti, and Arthasastra. Purushottam Bhatta memorialised King Udyota Keshari in a eulogy. Several of the Somavamsi kings were scholars. The Somavamsi inscriptions contain a number of Odia terms, including Khamba, Punya, and Machha. This period undoubtedly played a significant role in the development of the Odia language.

VARMANS OF KAMARUPA

The Varman dynasty (350-650) was the first historical dynasty of the Kamarupa kingdom. It was established by Pushyavarman, a contemporary of Samudragupta. The earlier Varmans were subordinates of the Gupta Empire, but as the power of the Guptas waned, Mahendravarman (470-494) performed two horse sacrifices and the status of Kamarupa as an independent state remained unimpaired.

- According to the Allahabad Prasasti, the ruler of Kamarupa was a frontier ruler (Pratyanta-nrpatis) of the great Gupta emperor.
- As per the Apsad Inscription of Adityasen, Suthivarman was defeated by Mahasengupta on the bank of Lauhitya.
- The first of the three Kamarupa dynasties, the Varmans were followed by the Mlechchha and then the Pala dynasties.

- The first king in this dynasty was Pushyavarman, possibly a contemporary of Samudragupta (c. 335/350-375 CE). The kingdom which he established with much effort, grew in the periphery of the Gupta Empire, adopted the north Indian political model, and its kings took on names and titles of the Gupta kings and queens.
- Nothing much is known directly about the initial kings till the sixth king, Mahendravarman, who established a rock temple and assumed the title of Maharajadhiraja (king-of-kings) in the last quarter of the fifth century.

- The last king Bhaskaravarman claimed he was a descendant of Narakasur, Bhagadatta and Vajradatta, though it is considered to be a fabrication.
- The dynastic line from Pushyavarman first appears in the 7th century, in Dubi and Nidhanpur copperplate inscriptions issued by Bhaskaravarman and in the Harshacharita, though the descriptions are panegyric, repetitive and devoid of dates.

BHAUMA DYNASTY

The Bhauma dynasty, also known as Kara dynasty, ruled in eastern India between 8th and 10th centuries. Their kingdom, called Toshala included parts of present-day Odisha. By the last quarter of the 8th century, the Bhauma-Karas had gained control of the former Shailodbhava territory.

- The early rulers of the dynasties followed Buddhism, and its later rulers followed Shaivism and Vaishnavism. The dynasty, whose rulers included five women, was supplanted by the Bhanjas and the Somavamshis in the 10th century.

- The origin of the Bhauma-Kara family is not certain.
- The earliest records of the dynasty name their family as "Bhauma". "Kara" is first mentioned as a dynastic name in an inscription of the dynasty's sixth king, Shubhakara II. The names of all the male kings ended in "-kara", which may explain the usage of "Kara" as a family name.
- Some scholars, such as Binayak Misra and R. C. Majumdar, argued that the dynasty was associated with a tribe called Bhauma, whose members originally lived on the Mahendra mountain. This theory is based on the occurrence of the phrase "Mahendra Bhauma" in a manuscript of Vishnu Purana.