

Karnataka History - Chalukyas Of Kalyani Part 2

Special class

The long rule of Vikramadithya VI has been considered as a glorious chapter in the history of Karnataka. Being a great warrior, a patron of scholars and a religious-minded ruler, Vikrama VI has the pride of place in Karnataka history. No single ruler of Karnataka prior to Vijayanagara times has left so many inscriptions as this monarch and, of these records, a large majority are grants to scholars and centres of religion. He started a new era, known as Chalukya Vikrama Era, beginning with the cyclic year Nala in 1076, to commemorate his accession to the throne.

Vikrama invaded the territory of the Paramaras at least three times. The first invasion was in 1077, and the second in 1087 when he plundered Dhara, the Paramara capital, and erected a pillar of victory. A third expedition was conducted in 1097 perhaps with a view to instal the Paramara prince, Jagadeva, on the Paramara throne. Though this effort did not succeed, Jagadeva sought shelter in the Chalukya kingdom and became one of the feudatories of Vikramadithya VI. But, the Chalukya power remained undisturbed right upto the banks of the Narmada.

Vikrama's own younger brother, Jayasimha, who had sided with him in his war against Someshvara II, later revolted against him in 1080. The emperor defeated him and later pardoned him. Vikrama had to face the revolts of many feudatories of whom mention must be made of the Hoysalas. They conquered Nolambavadi and crossed the Tungabhadra; they came as far as Bellary and Kummata. Vikrama sent his able commander Achugi of the Sinda family (of Yerambarge) against the Hoysalas. Achugi succeeded in defeating Hoysala Vishnuvardhana in 1122 at Halasuru and again at Hosavidu, and till the death of Vikrama the Hoysalas remained loyal to the Chalukyas. Vikrama succeeded in conquering major parts of the Vengi kingdom from the Cholas in 1088. Kollipake-7000, a province in Vengi kingdom, was under his control for long after this. He also led an expedition against the Cholas and captured Kanchi in 1085 and held it for some years. Chalukya Karna of Gujarat and Chedi Jajalladeva of Ratnapur were also subdued by him. Vengi was under his control between 1093 and 1099, and though it was captured by the Cholas in 1099, he reconquered it in 1118 and retained it till 1124. The Kadambas of Goa, who had revolted against him, came to be subdued and Vikrama married his daughter Mailaladevi to Kadamba Jayakeshi II. Vikrama had married the daughter of the Shilahara ruler of the Karhad branch. This queen, was the celebrated artiste, Chandaladevi. Vikrama sent an ambassador to the court of Vijayabahu of Ceylon.

Except for few wars, the long rule of Vikramadithya was peaceful. He was a religious-minded monarch who sought pleasure in the company of religious leaders and scholars. Bilhana from Kashmir was his court poet. Vijnyaneshvara, the noted jurist, was patronised by him. Kirthivarman, the author of Govaidya in Kannada, claims to be Vikramadithya's younger brother.

Vikrama's chief queen, Chandala, was well versed in dance, music and other fine arts. She was called 'Abhinava Saraswathi'. Inscriptions speak of many of his queens who also administered some territory or the other. Queen Kethaladevi looked after Siraguppa region, and Savaladevi looked after the Agrahara at Naregal. His own commander, Mahadeva, built the celebrated Mahadeva temple at Itagi. Vikrama had titles like Permadideva and Tribhuvanamalla. Scholars have considered his rule as a bright period in Karnataka history. Bilhana described it as Ramarajya. "A king like Vikramarka is neither to be seen nor heard of", says Vijnyaneshvara. He was the greatest among the Later Chalukyan rulers, and a great king who ruled over South India.

He was succeeded by his son Someshvara III, born of Chandaladevi, in 1127. He was also known as Tribhuvanamalla and Bhulokamalla. Hoysala Vishnuvardhana raised his head again during the period, but was suppressed once again. But, by the close of Someshvara's reign, the Hoysalas had become powerful and conquered Uchchangi in 1136. Though Someshvara lost Vengi in 1130, he could retain major parts of his territory under his control.

Someshvara III was a versatile scholar. He compiled an encyclopaedia in Sanskrit known as Manasollasa or Abhilashithartha Chinthamani. He was called 'Sarvajnyabhupa' (omniscient king) for his encyclopaedic knowledge. He was followed on the throne by his son Jagadekamalla II in 1139. Though Jagadekamalla had to face the revolt of the Hoysalas and the Kadambas, he could maintain peace in his vast empire. But, the Telugu-speaking territories in his empire were lost by him. He defeated Paramara Jayavarman in 1143 and dethroned him.

Jagadekamalla II was succeeded by his younger brother, Taila III or Trailokyamalla in 1149. He had to wage a war against Kakatiya Prola, his feudatory who defeated him and took him captive. Though released, Taila III lost his prestige and the empire shrank in size due to revolts of many feudatories. Not only the Kakatiyas, but the Seunas in the north and the Hoysalas in the south also encroached upon the empire. In 1157, one of his feudatories and a relation, Bijjala of the Kalachuri family, conquered Kalyana. Taila III had to station himself at Annigeri. Later in c. 1162, he died. Dr. Seetharam Jagirdar has pointed out that Taila III was killed by Hoysala Narasimha. Thus, there followed the Kalachuri interregnum which began from 1162 and continued at least till 1183, when Taila's son Someshvara IV staged a comeback and captured Kalyana. But, the Chalukya successes were shortlived, and within a few years Kalyana was captured by the Seunas together with the northern parts of the empire. The Kakatiyas of Warangal and the Hoysalas also secured the rest of their territories. By 1189, Someshvara II lost his empire and he had to seek shelter in the territory of his Kadamba feudatory of Goa.