CHAPTER I

THE RĀSHTRAKŪTA EMPIRE

We have already seen¹ how the Chālukya emperor was overthrown by one of his feudatories, Dantidurga, some time about A.D. 752. The family of the new ruler is known as Rāṣṭrakūta. The origin of this name and the early history of the Rāṣṭrakūtas have been discussed above.² Dantidurga’s family originally belonged to Laṭṭalūra situated in the Osmānābād District of the Hyderābād State, but it migrated to Ellichpur in Berār in c. A.D. 625, where it, carved out for itself a small principality³ and ruled as a feudatory of the Chālukya empire for several generations. The fortunes of the family began to rise during the reign of Dantidurga’s father Indra I, who had married a princess of the Chālukya family.⁴ Dantidurga, who is also sometimes referred to as Dantivarman, ascended the throne in c. A.D. 733.⁵ He was able, ambitious, and sagacious; and managed to become the overlord of the Deccan in less than fifteen years.

1. DANTIDURGA

Two records of his reign, viz. the Samangad plates dated A.D. 754⁶ and the undated Daśāvatāra cave inscription of Ellora⁷ give a grandiloquent description of the triumphal career of Dantidurga. He is said to have fought on the banks of the Mahi, Mahanādi and Revā and won victories over Kāñchi, Kaliṅga, Kosala, Śrī-Śaila, Mālava, Lāṭa, and Ṭaṅka. He is also said to have made liberal rewards to various rulers at Ujjayini and fixed his quarters in a Gurjara palace in that city. A later record⁸ probably elaborates this when it says that Dantidurga performed Hiranyagarbha (or the Great Gift) at Ujjayini in which “kings such as the Gurjara lord and others were made door-keepers”. But his crowning act of glory was the overthrow of the Chālukya king, described in several records. According to contemporary records, he defeated with a small force the formidable Karṇāṭaka army and won victories over Valla-bha, the lord of all kings. In later records he is credited with having wrested the supreme sovereignty from the Chālukyas⁹ and “humbled the circle of proud kings from the Himālayas down to the limit of Setu” (i.e. Adam’s Bridge).¹⁰

While these statements leave no doubt that Dantidurga was the real founder of the greatness of the family, it is difficult to recon-
struct his history by arranging his victories in chronological sequence. It is probable that some of his victories were achieved while he was yet a feudatory of the Chālukyas, and on this basis we may provisionally reconstruct his history somewhat as follows:—

His first exploits were performed during the campaign organised by his feudal lord Vikramāditya II and the latter's Gujarāt feudatory Pulakesīn to repulse the Arab invasion. A sanguinary battle was fought near Nāvsāri in c. A.D. 738 in which the invaders were so completely overthrown that they never again dared to invade Gujarāt. The brunt of the battle was naturally borne by Pulakesīn and Dantidurga whose principalities lay in Gujarāt and Berār. The Chālukya emperor appreciated the heroism of his feudatories by conferring the titles of Chālukyakulālaṁkāra (the Ornament of the Chālukya family), Prīthūvivallabha (the Lord of the Earth) and Avanijanāśraya (the Asylum of the People of the World) on Pulakesīn and those of Prīthūvivallabha and Khadgāvaloka (one whose mere sight is as effective as sword) on Dantidurga.¹¹

Dantidurga continued to be a loyal feudatory of Vikramāditya for some years more. He accompanied his Chālukya suzerain in his expedition against Kāśchī in c. A.D. 743 and shared the credit for the victory over the Pallavas.¹²

Dantidurga was ambitious; and he decided to take full advantage of the varied and valuable military experience he had gained in his campaigns in the north and south. When Vikramāditya II died in A.D. 747, he embarked upon a bold career of conquest, but took care to see that his annexations were, as far as possible, not at the cost of the Chālukya empire. He wiped out the Gurjara kingdom of Nāndipuri (Nāndod) and appointed his nephew Karkka to rule over the region.¹²a Then he led an expedition into Mālwa; and proclaimed its conquest by performing Hiranyagarbha-dāna ceremony at its capital Ujjayini. Next he proceeded against eastern Madhya Pradesh and brought it under his political influence. By c. A.D. 750 he had thus become the master of Central and Southern Gujarāt and the whole of Madhya Pradesh and Berār.

Kirtivarman II, the Chālukya emperor, could now no longer ignore the rising power of his nominal feudatory and decided to challenge it. The armies of the two claimants to the overlordship of the Deccan probably met somewhere in Khāndesh and Dantidurga was victorious. As a result of this victory, he became the master of the whole of Mahārāṣṭra by the end of A.D. 753. He now assumed full imperial titles Mahārājādhirāja Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka. He, however, did not survive his victory for
long but died some time before A.D. 758. This is the earliest known date of his successor, his uncle Kṛishṇa I, who, we may presume, was a valued lieutenant of his ambitious nephew in his military conquests.\[13\]

2. KṛISHṆA I

Dantidurga had defeated Kirtivarman, but had not extinguished his power. The Chālukya emperor retired to Karnāṭak and proceeded to reorganise his forces for a further trial of strength. The challenge was so successfully met by the new Rāṣṭrakūṭa ruler that the Chālukya empire was wiped out of existence by c. A.D. 760. Kṛishṇa then proceeded against the Gaṅgas ruling in Mysore and occupied their capital Māṃyapuram for some time. Later on he sent his son, the crown-prince Govinda, to invade the dominions of Vishṇuvardhana IV, the Chālukya king of Veṅgi, who being a ruler of a Chālukya branch was naturally hostile to the new power that had swept away the Chālukya supremacy from Western Deccan. The expedition was successful and, as a consequence, the whole of the former Hyderabad State was incorporated in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire in c. 772. Śīlabhāṭṭārikā, a daughter of Vishṇuvardhana IV, is known to have been a queen of Dhrūva, a younger brother of Govinda. Probably her marriage followed the conclusion of the peace.

Kṛishṇa I also defeated a king called Rāhappa, whose identity is uncertain. He brought under his sway southern Konkan and placed it in charge of Saṇaphulla, the founder of the Śīlāhāra family. The Bhandak plates prove that practically the whole of Marāṭhi-speaking part of Madhya Pradesh was under Kṛishṇa.

Kṛishṇa was great not only as conqueror but also as builder. The famous rock-cut Śiva temple at Ellora, which is justly regarded as a marvel of architecture, was constructed at his orders, and bears an eloquent testimony to the high level of skill attained by India in the arts of sculpture and architecture under the Rāṣṭrakūṭa patronage. Kṛishṇa had the titles Śubhatuṅga and Akāla-varṣa.

3. GOVINDA II AND DHRUVA\[14\]

Kṛishna I died about A.D. 773 and was succeeded by his eldest son Govinda II, Prabhūtavr̥ṣa Vi$kṛ$amāvaloka. He had been nominated as yuvrāja by his father and had distinguished himself on the battlefield by defeating Vishṇuvardhana IV of Veṅgi. He is also credited with some conquests after his accession; but he proved an utter failure as a ruler. Soon after his accession, he abandoned himself to a life of pleasure and debauchery and practically left the whole administration to his younger brother Dhrūva. The latter
took advantage of the situation to secure all power for himself. Govinda realised this and immediately removed Dhruva from the administration. Evidently it led to some confusion including a rebellion of feudatories and Dhruva made it an excuse for revolting openly against his brother. It has been stated in a record of the time of Dhruva that he proceeded to fight his brother, not so much to gain the throne for himself, as to prevent the danger of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa family itself being ousted from the throne. Such excuses, however, should not be taken at their face value. In any case Govinda II refused to abdicate without resistance as he was urged to do. He sought help from the rulers of Kāñchī, Gaṅgavāḍī, Veṅgī and Mālāvā. But Dhruva defeated his brother and usurped the throne before the other kings could come to Govinda's aid.

Dhruva must have ascended the throne before the end of A.D. 780. He assumed the titles Nirupama Kali-Vallabha, Dhārāvarsha, and Śrī-Vallabha, and is sometimes referred to as Dhora, a Prakrit form of Dhruva. Shortly after his accession, he proceeded to punish the kings who had supported his brother.

The Gaṅga king Śrīpurusha Muttarasa was defeated, his crown-prince Śivamāra was taken prisoner, and the whole of Gaṅgavāḍī was annexed to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire, whose southern boundary was thus pushed to the Kāverī. The victor then proceeded against the Pallava ruler Dantivarman, who however conciliated him by offering an indemnity of elephants. The ruler of Veṅgī, Vishṇu-vardhana IV, was also humbled and sued for peace.

These victories made Dhruva the undisputed overlord of the entire Deccan, but he was not satisfied with this achievement. He wanted to be the overlord of Northern India as well, and decided to make a bold bid to attain that position.¹⁵

Since the days of Harsha, Kanauj enjoyed the status of the premier city of Northern India, but Indrāyudha, who was ruling there at this time, was a mere titular emperor like Shah Alam II ruling at Delhi in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The Pālas of Bengal and the Gurjara Pratihāras of Rājpūtāna were rising to prominence, and seeking to establish their own hegemony over Northern India by conquering Kanauj and making its nominal emperor a creature of their own. Vatsarāja, the Gurjara Pratihāra ruler, first marched upon Kanauj and succeeded in occupying it. He, however, permitted Indrāyudha to rule as a puppet emperor under his protection as the Marāṭhās did with Shah Alam II towards the end of the eighteenth century. The success of Vatsarāja roused the jealousy of his Pāla rival Dharmapāla who challenged his power and marched into the Doāb, only to be defeated by Vatsarāja.
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Dharmapāla, however, soon rallied his forces and proceeded to make a second bid for hegemony in the north. At this time when Dhruva had decided to try his luck as a third claimant to the kingdom of Kanauj in c. A.D. 786, the army of Dharmapāla was heading towards the Doāb and Vatsarāja was once again on the way to meet it.

Dhruva planned his northern expedition with great skill. He collected a strong force on the banks of the Narmadā and put his able and energetic sons Govinda and Įndra in charge of the different sections. He could cross the Narmadā and occupy Mālava without much opposition, as the main army of Vatsarāja was in the Doāb. He then advanced towards Kanauj, and Vatsarāja had to withdraw his forces from the advanced position in the Doāb to meet this new danger from the south. The two armies met somewhere near Ḍhānśi, and the Deccan invader inflicted such a crushing defeat upon the forces of Vatsarāja that he had to fly to Rājputāna to take shelter in its sandy deserts. Flushed with this sensational victory, Dhruva decided to measure his strength with Dharmapāla as well, whose forces were hovering on the outskirts of the Doāb. The Goddess of Victory once more smiled on the Deccan emperor, and Dharmapāla had to flee from the battlefield leaving behind his white imperial umbrellas. The victor spent some weeks on the banks of the holy Gaṅgā and Yamunā and, as a memento of this sojourn, these famous rivers were incorporated in the Rāšṭraṇa Imperial banner.

Dhruva could not press home his victories by marching upon and occupying Kanauj. He was too far away from his base; he was also getting old and had to settle the problem of succession. He therefore returned to the south in c. A.D. 790, laden with rich booty.

At the close of Dhruva's reign the Rāšṭraṇa power had reached its zenith. The Gaṅga crown-prince was in the Rāšṭraṇa prison, and the Pallava king could save himself only by surrender; Vatsarāja had fled, and Dharmapāla had been overthrown. There was no power in the country to challenge the Rāšṭraṇa supremacy.

Dhruva had several sons, the names of four of whom are known. The eldest Stambha (or Kambha) Raṇāvaloka was the viceroy of Gaṅgavāḍī, and the other sons were also capable administrators. In order to prevent a struggle for succession after his death, Dhruva chose the third son Govinda as his successor. The latter was formally appointed as yuvarāja and invested with a kaṇṭhikā or necklace which was the insignia of the heir-apparent. But as the old emperor still apprehended trouble, he proposed to abdicate in favour of the heir-apparent. Though Govinda is said to have opposed this proposal, some records state that he was invested with the royal
state by his father at a formal coronation. Unless we take these expressions to refer to his installation as a *yuvarāja*—though *rājādhi-rāja-parameśvaratā* would hardly bear that sense—we must conclude that in spite of Govinda’s real or pretended opposition, Dhruva actually abdicated in favour of his son Govinda III who assumed the titles *Jagattuṅga, Prabhūtavarsha, Śrīvallabha, Janavallabha, Kirttinārāyana* and *Tribhuvānadhavala*.

According to an inscription of the time of Govinda III, Dhruva chose Govinda as his successor because he was the ablest and worthiest among his sons. Normally no great importance attaches to a statement like this, but the career of Govinda III fully justifies his father’s choice if it was based upon any such consideration.

4. GOVINDA III

Govinda III ascended the throne in A.D. 793 and, as was expected, his accession did not go unchallenged. For a time Stambha kept quiet, but when he was assured of the support of a number of feudatories and neighbours, he broke out in open revolt against his brother. Govinda, however, quelled the rebellion of “twelve kings headed by Stambha” and took his brother prisoner. He, however, treated him leniently and, being convinced of his loyalty in future, Govinda took the magnanimous step of reinstating him in the Gaṅga viceroyalty. Throughout the rest of his life, Stambha remained loyal to his plighted word.

Śivamāra, the Gaṅga prince in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa prison, had been released by Govinda soon after his accession, evidently to act as a check on Stambha’s ambitions. Śivamāra, however, joined the side of Stambha, contrary to Govinda’s expectations. When the two brothers became reconciled, they jointly marched against Gaṅga-vāḍī, captured Śivamāra, and once again put him into prison. Next came the turn of the Pallava king Dantīga, who also was compelled to submit. Vishnuvardhana IV of Veṅgī was the maternal grandfather of Govinda and so was not disposed to challenge his supremacy. When Govinda III thus became the undisputed overlord of the Deccan in c. A.D. 795, he decided to intervene in the political tangle of Northern India. Subsequent to the retirement of his father from the Gaṅga valley in c. A.D. 790, considerable changes had taken place in the political situation. Dharmapāla recovered from his defeat earlier than Vatsarāja, and eventually succeeded in putting his own nominee Chakrāyudha on the Kanauj throne. Vatsarāja’s successor Nāgabhaṭa II, however, soon turned the tables and reoccupied Kanauj after defeating Chakrāyudha and Dharmapāla. Such was the situation in the north on the eve of Govinda’s invasion.
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The northern expedition of Govinda was skilfully planned and boldly executed. Indra, the younger brother and loyal supporter of Govinda, was the viceroy of Gujarāt and Mālava; he was entrusted with the task of keeping watch over the Vindhyan passes in order to prevent Nāgabhaṭa from bursting into the Deccan, when the main Rāshṭrākūṭa army was away in the North. A number of detachments were kept in Central India to keep the local rulers in check and secure the lines of communication.

After taking these prudent precautions, Govinda marched into Northern India via Bhopāl and Jhānsi, Kanauj being his main objective. Nāgabhaṭa marched out to meet the invader. The two armies probably met in Bundelkhand. Victory once more favoured the southern army and Nāgabhaṭa fled to Rājputāna, leaving the Doāb at the mercy of the conqueror. Chakrāyudha, the puppet ruler of Kanauj, was quick to realise the futility of opposition and came forward with unconditional surrender. Govinda was satisfied and did not deem it necessary to march upon Kanauj. Dharmapāla also offered submission, as he too thought it politic and prudent to do so. He knew that Govinda could not long remain in Northern India and he was really grateful to him for having shattered the power of his mighty rival, Nāgabhaṭa II. Besides the powerful Gurjarā Pratihāra and Pāla kings, other rulers of Northern India were also humbled by Govinda III. A detailed account of his conquests is given in the Sanjān plates of his son and successor which seem to describe the events in chronological order. Even at the risk of repetition, we may therefore sum up as follows the verses referring to the glorious conquests of Govinda III:

After defeating Nāgabhaṭa and Chandragupta, a king whose identity is not certain, Govinda III uprooted other kings but afterwards reinstated them in their dominions. He then proceeded as far as the Himālaya mountains, and it was presumably on the way that Dharmapāla and Chakrāyudha submitted to him. He returned and “following again the bank of the Narmāḍa...and acquiring the Mālava country along with the Kosala, the Kaliṅga, the Vaṅga (or Veṅgi), the Dāhala, and the Oḍraka, that Vikrama (i.e. Govinda III) made his servants enjoy them”. After having subjugated his enemies he returned to the banks of the Narmāḍa and established himself in a befitting manner in a capital city at the foot of the Vindhayas, performing pious deeds by constructing temples.

While he was encamped there, Mārāśarva or Sarva, the ruler of a small principality with his capital at Śrīhavāna (modern Sarbhon in Broach District), submitted and presented to Govinda III valuable treasures which he had inherited from his ancestors.16
Govinda III stayed for some time in his capital and there his son and successor Amoghavarsha was born. It is somewhat curious that most of these details of the northern campaign are not found in the records of Govinda's reign and known only from an inscription recorded nearly 70 years later. But still, as they are substantially corroborated by contemporary records, we need not dismiss them as altogether fictitious though there may be some amount of exaggeration.

The date of the great northern campaign of Govinda III has been a subject of keen controversy among scholars. For a long time it was believed that it took place about A.D. 806 or 807. But it is now generally held that all these conquests were achieved before A.D. 802, most probably in A.D. 800.¹⁷

Vishṇuvardhana IV of Veṅgi died in A.D. 799 and was succeeded by his son Vijayāditya II. The new ruler challenged the Rāṣṭra-

kūṭa supremacy, but Govinda defeated him and put his younger brother Bhīma Salukki on the Veṅgi throne in c. A.D. 802. The new ruler naturally enough became a loyal henchman of Govinda.

Taking advantage of Govinda's absence in the north, the Pallava, Pāṇḍya, Kerala and Gaṅga rulers formed a confederacy against him. Govinda marched against them with lightning speed and scattered them all before the end of A.D. 802. The occupation of Kaṅchi by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa forces created a tremor in the heart of the king of Ceylon, who tried to ingratiate himself into Govinda's favour by presenting him two statues, one of himself and the other of his premier. Govinda installed one of them in the Śiva temple at Kaṅchi to serve as a column of victory to proclaim to the subjects of his enemy his great power and might.

Govinda III was undoubtedly the ablest of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperors, unrivalled in courage, generalship, statesmanship, and martial exploits. His invincible armies had conquered all the territories between Kanauj and Cape Comorin, and Banaras and Broach. Veṅgi was governed by a nominee of his; and the power of the Dravidian kings in the extreme south was completely broken. Even the ruler of Ceylon was terrified into submission. Never again did the prestige of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire rise so high.

5. ŚARVA OR AMOGHAVARSHA

Govinda III was succeeded by his son Śarva, better known as Amoghavarsha, in A.D. 814. He assumed the titles Nripatuṅga, Mahārājashamda, Vira-Nārāyaṇa, and Atisaya-dhavalā. The new emperor was a boy of 13 or 14, and his father had arranged that Kaṅka,
who had succeeded his father Indra as the viceroy of Gujarāt, should assume the reins of government during his minority.

The arrangement worked satisfactorily for two or three years, but a formidable revolt broke out in A.D. 817. It seems to have been led by the Veṅgi ruler Vijayāditya II who, though ousted from the throne by Govinda III, had subsequently managed to regain it. A number of disgruntled officers, relations, and feudatories swelled the ranks of rebels; and they eventually gained the upper hand. The boy emperor had to flee and the Rāṣṭrakūṭa power was for a time completely eclipsed about A.D. 818. Karkka, however, soon retrieved the situation and reinstated his ward upon the imperial throne some time before A.D. 821.

After spending five or six years in restoring order and authority in the different provinces of his empire, Amoghavarsha launched an attack on Vijayāditya of Veṅgi and inflicted a severe defeat upon him in c. A.D. 830. It appears that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa forces were in occupation of Veṅgi for about a dozen years thereafter. The city was recaptured by Pāṇḍuraṅga, a general of Vijayāditya II, shortly before A.D. 845.

An almost continuous war was going on between the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Gaṅgas during the first twenty years of the reign of Amoghavarsha. Eventually the latter were able to drive out the Rāṣṭrakūṭa forces from the major part of their country. Amoghavarsha also did not make any serious effort to regain his ascendancy in that province. In c. A.D. 860 he married his daughter Chandrobalabbe to a Gaṅga prince named Būtuga, which put an end to the hostility between the two houses and ushered in an era of co-operation between them.

According to the Sirur plates the rulers of Aṅga, Vaṅga, Maga-dha, Mālava, and Veṅgi paid homage to him. The reference to the last is easily intelligible. As regards Mālava, it was a bone of contention between the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Pratihāras and, in spite of casual victories on either side, it ultimately passed into the hands of the latter. The first three countries in the list were included in the Pāla dominions, and it is interesting to note that the Pāla emperor Devapāla claims to have defeated the Draviḍa king who is usually identified with Amoghavarsha. It is probable, therefore, that hostilities occasionally broke out between these two; and that first Devapāla, and later Amoghavarsha had some success. It is difficult to believe that the latter actually invaded Aṅga and Vaṅga (Bengal and Bihār), though its possibility cannot be altogether ruled out.
Amoghavarsha built the city of Mānyakheṭa and established his capital there. This city is now represented by Mālkhed in the Hyderābād State, about 90 miles to the south-east of Sholapur. It is difficult to say where the capital was situated before this. Various suggestions have been made locating it at Mayūrakhiṇḍi or Morkhind (Nāsik District), Nāsik, Soolobunjan near the Ellora caves, and Ellichpur. But there is no satisfactory evidence in support of any of these views.

The later part of the reign of Amoghavarsha was also full of rebellions. Even the crown-prince Kṛishṇa appears to have been involved in them. Bankeya, the great general of the king, who distinguished himself in the wars against the Gaṅgas, succeeded in crushing these rebellions. But the most unfortunate, and in some respects the most serious, rebellion was that of the Gujarat Branch of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas founded by Indra. When Amoghavarsha attained majority and assumed the reins of government in c. A.D. 821, his cousin Karkka, who was carrying on the regency administration, retired to Gujarat as viceroy. His relations with Amoghavarsha continued to be cordial till his death in c. A.D. 830. He was succeeded by his son Dhruva I. The friendly relations between the two Rāṣṭrakūṭa families terminated soon after the accession of Dhruva. Either Amoghavarsha was ungrateful or Dhruva became too overbearing, puffed up by the consciousness that it was his father who had won the throne for Amoghavarsha. Whatever the real cause, protracted hostilities raged between Amoghavarsha and his cousin which lasted for about 25 years. Dhruva I was eventually killed in this struggle and was succeeded by his son Akālavarna in c. A.D. 845. The latter succeeded in winning back his throne, but the tables were soon turned against him when Bankeya, the famous general of Amoghavarsha, assumed the command of the imperial army. Eventually peace was concluded between the warring houses when Akālavarna was succeeded by his son Dhruva II. By this time the Gurjara-Pratihāra ruler Bhoja I had become very powerful and cherished designs to avenge the defeat inflicted upon his grandfather Nāgabhaṭa II by Govinda III, the father of Amoghavarsha I. Dhruva II could never hope to meet the Pratihāra invasion single-handed, and Amoghavarsha had little chance to emerge victorious unless his viceroy in Gujarat and Mālava gave him wholehearted support. The tragic and long-drawn war, therefore, came to an end in c. A.D. 860. The threatened Pratihāra invasion did not materialise; there were only frontier skirmishes, and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas were able to hold their own and confine the enemy to the other side of the Narmadā.

Amoghavarsha was no born military leader, but he was nevertheless able not only to reconquer his kingdom and establish peace
and order but also to send an expedition against the Pālas. The arts of peace attracted him more than feats of war. He was a liberal patron of literature and his court was adorned by a number of famous Hindu and Jain writers such as Jinasena, the author of the Adipurāṇa, Mahāvirāchārya, the author of Gaṇitasārasaṅgraha, and Śākaṭāyana, the author of Amoghavṛitti. He was himself the author of Kaviśarjamārga, the earliest Kanarese work on poetics. He treated all creeds with impartiality and his own life was a striking synthesis of what was best in Hinduism and Jainism. He revered Mahāvīra as profoundly as Mahālakṣmi, and on one occasion proffered to the latter a finger of his own in the belief that such sacrifice would abate a severe epidemic. Kings rarely bleed for others; usually they make others bleed for themselves. Towards the evening of his life from c. A.D. 860, he used off and on to retire from the work of administration in order to devote himself as much as possible to religious worship. Amoghavarsha’s name will endure as of a ruler who established peace and order in his kingdom, encouraged art and literature practised the principles he preached, and did not flinch even from offering a limb of his body by way of sacrifice, when he thought that public welfare demanded it.

6. KRISHNA II

Amoghavarsha I died about A.D. 878 and was succeeded by his son Kṛṣṇa II who, like his illustrious namesake, assumed the titles Akālavarsa and Subhatuṅga. He married the daughter of the Chedi ruler Kokkalla I and received substantial help from his wife’s relations in the arduous struggles of his reign.

Several Rāṣṭrakūṭa records¹⁹ make a bold claim on behalf of Kṛṣṇa II that he terrified the Gurjaras, destroyed the pride of Lāṭa, taught humility to the Gauḍas, deprived the people on the sea-coast of their sleep, and that his command was obeyed by the Anāga, the Kaliṅga, the Gaṅga, and the Magadha, waiting at his gate. Much of this is, no doubt, mere conventional praise based upon a kernel of historical truth. But there is no doubt that his reign was full of wars.

The most arduous of his campaigns were those against the Pratihāras and the Eastern Chālukyas. Several records refer to his fight with the Gurjara-Pratihāra ruler Bhoja²⁰, and the Begumra plates, dated A.D. 914, state that even then old men remembered the great battle and talked of it. It is clear from the records of the Lāṭa (Gujarāt) Branch of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas that they, particularly their chief Kṛṣṇarāja took a distinguished part in the
campaign against the Pratihāras. Although the advance of Bhoja was checked, the Lāṭā Branch seems to have come to an end shortly after. Kṛishṇarāja is known to have been on the throne till at least A.D. 888, but no successor of his is so far known. Whether he died without leaving any issue, leading to the lapse of his kingdom, or whether there was a further war between the main dynasty and the Lāṭā Branch which wiped out the existence of the latter, we do not know.

The war with the Eastern Chālukyas was a more serious affair, and at one time even threatened the very existence of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kingdom. The campaigns will be more fully described in connection with the Eastern Chālukyas in Chapter VI and a short summary here must suffice.

Vijayāditya III, the contemporary of Kṛishṇa II on the Veṇgi throne, had freed his kingdom from the Rāṣṭrakūṭa yoke during the reign of Amoghavarsha; the advent of a new king on the Rāṣṭrakūṭa throne emboldened him to take the offensive, and he was for a time successful. In the south he attacked the Noḷambas and the Gaṅgas, who were Rāṣṭrakūṭa feudatories, and in the north his invading forces penetrated right into the heart of Berār. For a time Kṛishṇa was defeated all along the line. But in a few years he reorganised his forces, summoned the battalions of his feudatories, and hurled back the Chālukya invaders. His victory was decisive, and the Chāluksya king Bhima, who had succeeded his father, was taken prisoner. Eventually, Bhima was released after a few years and permitted to rule his kingdom as a feudatory. In course of time, however, he once again challenged the Rāṣṭrakūṭa overlordship, but was again defeated in a sanguinary battle, in which his crown-prince lost his life.

Kṛishṇa II seems to have had political relations with the Cholaś. One of his daughters was married to the Chola king Āditya I, and there was a son by this marriage named Kannara. On the death of Āditya, his other son Parāntaka ascended the throne. Thereupon Kṛishṇa II invaded the Chola kingdom in order to secure the throne for his grandson. But he was decisively defeated at Vallāla (modern Tiruvallam in North Arcot District).

The wars of Kṛishṇa II thus generally ended in failure and sometimes in disaster in spite of his initial brilliant victories against the Eastern Chālukyas.

7. INDRA III

Kṛishṇa II died towards the end of A.D. 914 after a reign of about 36 years. Like his father he had a leaning towards Jainism.
He was succeeded by his grandson Indra III, whose father Jagat-
tunga predeceased Kṛishṇa. Indra assumed the titles Nityavarsha,
Ratjakandarpa, Kirttinārāyaṇa, and Rājamārtanda.

Indra III was a youth of 30 at the time of his accession, and he had inherited the military dash and daring of Govinda III. Soon after his accession, he emulated his great ancestor by declaring war against the Gurjara-Pratihāra emperor Mahipāla. It has been suggested by some writers that he did this in sympathy with his Chedi relations, who had espoused the cause of Mahipāla's rival and half-brother Bhoja II. There is, however, no positive evidence in support of this, and Indra's expedition against the Gurjaras may be merely a phase of the long-standing hostility between the two powers. The southern army followed the Bhopāl-Jhānsi-Kālpi route, crossed the Yamunā at the last mentioned place, and marched upon Kanauj and occupied it. The capture of Kanauj, the imperial city of Northern India, was a sensational achievement and immensely enhanced the prestige of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa arms. Mahipāla fled and Indra sent his own Chāluksya feudatory, Nara-
sūrīha II of Vemulavāḍa, in pursuit. This campaign has been dealt in detail in the next chapter.

The war with the Veṅgis continued in the reign of Indra also, but with no conspicuous success on either side. Indra died some time after A.D. 927 and was succeeded by his son Amoghavarsha II. The latter fell a prey to the foul play of his younger brother Govinda IV; his widow fled to Veṅgi, and lived under the protection of its ruler Amma I, as she did not feel that either her honour or her son would be safe anywhere within the empire over which her husband once ruled. Govinda naturally did not like this action of Amma I, and when the latter died in 925, he intervened in the war of succession for the Veṅgi throne that ensued, and eventually succeeded in putting his own nominee Tāḍapa upon it.

8. GOVINDA IV AND AMOGHAVARSHA III

Govinda was a youth of about 25 at the time of his accession, and soon gave himself up to a life of vicious pleasures. His administration became tyrannical and unpopular, and his ministers and feudatories felt that his removal was necessary in the interests of the empire. They therefore made overtures to Amoghavarsha, an uncle of Govinda, and requested him to displace Govinda. Amoghavarsha had a high reputation for character and integrity, and when he marched against Mālkhed with the assistance of his Chedi relations, he was openly welcomed by the distressed people who had become disgusted with Govinda's vices and excesses.
Amoghavarsha found no difficulty in overthrowing Govinda and ascending the throne in A.D. 936. Whether Govinda was killed in battle or was put in prison, we do not know.

Amoghavarsha III was aged about 50 at the time of his accession. He was religious by temperament and did not take any active interest in administration. During his short reign of three years, therefore, the government was entirely carried on by his able and ambitious son Krishṇa. The latter sent an expedition into Gaṅgavāḍi, and deposed its king Rājamalla with a view to enthrone the latter's younger brother Būtuga, who had married a sister of Krishṇa. As crown-prince, Krishṇa also led an expedition into Bundelkhand and captured the important forts of Kālanjar and Chitrakūṭa. During this expedition a misunderstanding and possibly a conflict arose between him and his Chedi relations, which put an end to the long-standing entente cordiale between the two royal families.

9. KRISHṆA III

Krishṇa III Akālavarska succeeded to the throne as the de jure emperor on his father's death towards the end of A.D. 939. Soon after his accession he planned an invasion of the Chōla kingdom in collaboration with his brother-in-law Būtuga, ruling in Gaṅgavāḍi. The two brothers-in-law led a lightning expedition to the south and captured the important cities of Kāņchi and Tanjore some time in A.D. 943. Parāntaka, the Chōla king, soon rallied his forces and repulsed the invaders, who could retain effective possession only of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam, consisting of Arcot, Chingleput and Vellore Districts. In A.D. 949 the Chōla army penetrated into Arcot District with a view to drive out the invader, but sustained a signal defeat at the battle of Takkalām, in which the Chōla crown-prince Rājaditya, who was leading his forces, was killed in his howdah by Būtuga. Krishṇa pressed home his victory by marching down to Rāmeśvāram, where he set up a pillar of victory; then he came back to North Arcot and encamped for some years at Melpāḍi. He built the temples of Krishṇesvara and Gaṅḍamārtanaḍāditya at or near Rāmeśvāram to shine there 'as resplendent hills of fame.' Krishṇa eventually decided to annex only Toṇḍamaṇḍalam which remained an integral part of his empire to the end of his reign.

In recognition of the valuable help rendered by his brother-in-law, the Gaṅga king, Krishṇa bestowed upon him the governorship of Banavāsī 12000, Belvola 300, Purigere 300, Kinsukāḍ 70, and Bāgenāḍ 70.
THE RĀṢṬRĀKŬṬA EMPIRE

In c. A.D. 963 Kṛishṇa led a second expedition into Northern India in which Mārasimha, the successor of the Gaṅga ruler Būtuga, offered valuable assistance. Kṛishṇa seems to have marched into Bundelkhand; but his objective is not definitely known. Later on he led an expedition into Mālwā against the Paramāra ruler Siyakā and occupied Ujjayinī.

Kṛishṇa succeeded in bringing Veṅgi effectively under his control by championing the cause of Bāḍapa against Amma II, and putting him on the Veṅgi throne in A.D. 956. Though Bāḍapa remained a loyal Rāṣṭrākūṭa feudatory till the end of his life, Amma II soon regained the throne and put an end to the Rāṣṭrākūṭa influence.

Kṛishṇa III was one of the ablest monarchs of the Rāṣṭrākūṭa dynasty. Possibly he was not as successful in his northern campaigns as Dhruvā, Govinda III, or Indra III. But there is no doubt that, unlike any of his predecessors, he was the lord of the whole of Deccan (Sakala-dakshina-dig-adhipati) in the full sense of the term. Govinda III conquered Kāñcchī, but could not penetrate to Rāmeśvaram and thus effectively break the power of the Draviḍa kings. Veṅgi was a source of trouble to him; during the latter half of Kṛishṇa's reign, it was ruled by a submissive feudatory. Kṛishṇa was in effective possession of a large part of the Chola kingdom and his temples of Kṛishnevāra and Gaṅḍamārāntādāditya at or near Rāmeśvaram proclaimed his conquest of the extreme south of the Peninsula. No other Rāṣṭrākūṭa king was the overlord of the entire Deccan in so complete a sense of the term as Kṛishṇa was in c. A.D. 965.

10. KHOṬṬIGA AND KARKKA II

Kṛishṇa III apparently had no issue living at the time of his death, since he was succeeded by his younger brother Khoṭṭiga in A.D. 967. The new ruler was an old man at the time of his accession and seems to have lacked military capacity. At any rate he was unable to repulse the invasion of the Rāṣṭrākūṭa dominions by the Paramāra king Siyaka, who was keen on avenging his defeat by the previous Rāṣṭrākūṭa emperor. Siyaka crossed the Narmadā and advanced straight upon Mālkhed. The Rāṣṭrākūṭa capital was captured and plundered in the spring of A.D. 972. The imperial treasury was completely sacked and the raider carried away even the office copies of copper-plate charters lodged in the record office. Khoṭṭiga died of a broken heart soon after this calamity, probably in September, A.D. 972.

Khoṭṭiga was succeeded by his nephew Karkka II, son of Nirupama. The prestige of the empire had been already shattered
by the sack of its capital, and matters were worsened by the maladministration of the new emperor and his two vicious ministers. This naturally aroused imperial ambitions in the minds of the feudatories, and one of them eventually deprived Karkka of his sovereignty over the Deccan within eighteen months of his accession.

This feudatory was Taila II of the Chālukya family. He was ruling over a small fief at Tarddavāḍi in Bijāpur District as a submissive feudatory of the Rāshṭrakūṭas from the time of Kṛishṇa III down to A.D. 965. He, however, believed that he was a direct descendant of the Imperial Chālukya family of Bādāmi, and his ability and military capacity urged him to make a bid for the imperial status snatched from his ancestors by the Rāshṭrakūṭas. He made elaborate but secret preparations, and by the end of A.D. 973 openly revolted against the authority of Karkka. The latter marched against him, but was signally defeated in a sanguinary battle fought somewhere in northern Karnāṭaka. The notorious ministers of Karkka were killed in the battle, but Karkka himself escaped and managed to carve out a small principality for himself in Sorab tāluk of Mysore State, where he continued to rule up to A.D. 991. Though Karkka gave up the task of restoring Rāshṭrakūṭa supremacy as hopeless, it was attempted by the Gaṅga ruler Mārasimha on behalf of his nephew Indra, a grandson of Kṛishṇa III. This effort also failed, as Taila succeeded in crushing his enemy's forces in A.D. 974. Both Mārasimha and Indra turned Jain monks and died by the Sallekhana vow, and Taila became the overlord of the Deccan by A.D. 975. His reign and the history of his family will be described in the next volume.

11. RETROSPECT AND REVIEW

The period of Rāshṭrakūṭa ascendancy in the Deccan from about A.D. 753 to 975 constitutes perhaps the most brilliant chapter in its history. No other ruling dynasty in the Deccan played such a dominant part in the history of India till the rise of the Marāṭhās as an imperial power in the eighteenth century. No less than three of its rulers, Dhruvra, Govinda III, and Indra III carried their victorious arms into the heart of North India, and by inflicting severe defeats upon its most powerful rulers changed the whole course of the history of that region. Their success in the south was equally remarkable, and Kṛishṇa III literally advanced as far as Rāmeśvara in course of his victorious career. All the great powers of India, the Pratihāras and the Pālas in the north, and the Eastern Chālukyas and Chōlas in the south, were subjugated by them at one time or another. They,
no doubt, suffered reverses at times but on the whole their military campaigns against powerful adversaries were repeatedly crowned with brilliant success.

The Rāṣṭrakūṭas also excelled in arts of peace. The Kailāsa Temple at Ellora, to be described elsewhere, will keep alive forever the name of its builder Kṛiṣṇa I. Amoghavarsha, though not renowned like his father and grandfather as a conqueror, was a remarkable personality. By virtue of his literary accomplishments and religious temperament he occupied a unique position among contemporary sovereigns. The Arab writers who visited Western India for trade or other purposes speak very highly of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings whom they refer to as Balharā, no doubt an abbreviation of Ballaha-rāya, a Prakrit form of Vallabha-rāja. According to these foreigners the Balharā was recognised as the greatest king in India and homage was paid to him by all the other princes. It is further said: "He gives regular pay to his troops and has many horses and elephants and immense wealth". On the other hand Mas'ūdī says: "His troops and elephants are innumerable, but his troops are mostly infantry, because the seat of his government is among the mountains." Both the king and his subjects are described as being friendly to the Muslims, and according to some writers Muslims were appointed even as governors of cities in the kingdom. Mas'ūdī says: "There is none among the rulers of Sindh and Hind who in his territory respects the Muslims like Rāja Balharā. In his kingdom Islam is honoured and protected. And for them mosques and congregational mosques, which are always full, have been built for offering prayers five times." All these undoubtedly testify to the liberal and progressive views of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings.

2 Vol. III, pp. 198-202. In later times the Rāṣṭrakūṭas regarded themselves as having been descended from Yadu, and one record describes them as belonging to the Sātyaki branch of Yaduvanśa. There is hardly any doubt that these Rāṣṭrakūṭas were of Kannaḍa origin; at least Kannaḍa was their mother tongue.
3. According to Mirashi, Dantidurga's "ancestors were ruling, not over Vidarbha, but over the Aurangābād District (ancient Mālaka) where the earliest inscriptions of the family have been found." (POC. XV Summary of Papers, p. 98).
4. It is said in the Sanjān Plates of Amoghavarsha that "Indrarāja, in the (marriage) hall, namely Khetaka, seized in battle the daughter of the Chālukya king by the rākhasa form of marriage" (EI, XVIII 252). This is also referred to in other records which give the name of the princess as Bhavaganā. Khetaka is modern Kaira, where a battle must have taken place, though we do not know the cause of it. The princess probably belonged to the Gujārat branch of the Chālukyas. The circumstances relating to the battle and the forced marriage are shrouded in obscurity.
5. The Ellora plates of Dantidurga, the earliest record of the family, are dated in Saka 663. This has been referred to the Śaka era, and the resulting date is A.D. 742 (EI, XXI. 26). Prof. V. V. Mirashi, however, reads the date as 463 and refers it to the Kalachuri era of A.D. 250-51 (POC. XV. Summary of
The Age of Imperial Kanauj

Papers pp. 97-8). The equivalent Christian date being A.D. 715, it pushes back the accession of Dantidurga by more than 25 years. If we accept this interpretation, Dantidurga must have had a long reign of more than 40 years, as his other known record, Samangad plates, is dated A.D. 754.

6. IA, XI. 111.
7. ASWI, V. 92.
8. EI, XVIII. 252.
9. EI, IV. 287.
10. EI, XVIII. 252.
11. This para is based upon the inference suggested by the Navsāri plates of Pula-keśin and Ellora plates of Dantidurga.
12a. For a different view on this point, cf. next chapter (pp. 20-21. fn. 14).
13. According to some records (IA, XII. 264) Dantidurga died without a son, and Kannara (i.e. Krishna) succeeded him. According to the Baroda plates of A.D. 812-13 (IA, XII. 158), Krishna I had replaced a relative who had gone astray. The view that Dantidurga was deposed by his uncle Krishna for oppressing his subjects cannot be upheld. For a full discussion of the point, cf. Altekar, Rādhārakṣas, pp. 41-2.
14. For the reign of Govinda II, cf. Alas Plates (EI, VI. 208), Daulatābād Plates (EI, IX. 195), and Bhor State Museum Plates (EI, XXII. 176).
15. A large number of inscriptions refer to the conquests of Dhuva and Govinda III. Among them may be specially mentioned:
(i) Rādhān pur and Wani plates of Govinda III (IA, XI. 157).
(ii) Baroda Plates (IA, XII. 158).
(iii) Nilgund, Sirur, and Sanjān plates of Amoghavarsha (EI, VI. 98, VII. 203; XVIII. 244).
16. This detail is found in Rādhān pur and other plates, but not in Sanjān plates which merely refer to the birth of his son in Šarva’s kingdom.
17. The vexed problem of the chronology of the campaigns of Govinda III was discussed by the author of this chapter and Mirashi, in D. R. Bhandarkar Volume, pp. 153 ff. and EI, XXIII. pp. 214-7, 293-7. The views given above are slightly different from those held previously by the author. Cf. also EI, XXXII, 159 (Ed.).
18. This will be described more fully in Chapter VI.
19. Karlnd Pl. (EI, IV 287)
20. This will be described more fully in Chapter II.
21. Indra himself, his father Jagattunga, grandfather Krishna II, and son Amogha varsha II had all married princesses of the Chedi family of Tripurī.
22. According to one view, he ruled till at least A.D. 927 and was succeeded by his son Amoghavarsha who was removed by Govinda IV in A.D. 930 (EI, XXVI. 192-3). Some scholars believe that he ruled till the end of A.D 928 (EI, XXXII. 50). The date 922, for the death of Indra III as given in the first edition (p. 13) by the late Dr. Altekar has been proved to be wrong by epigraphic records and has been changed to 927 (Ed.).
23. Some authorities place it in A.D. 934 (EI, XXVI. 163-4).
24. This is denied by Prof. K. A. N. Sastri (JOR, XVI. 155).
24a. For a different view, cf. Ch. V, Section II.
26. Al Istakhri (ibid 34) says, “There are Mosalmans in its (land of Balharā) cities, and none but Mosalmans rule over them on the part of the Balharā. There are Jama Masjīds in them (where Muhammadans assemble to pray).” The bracketed portion is added by Ibn Haukal (ibid) who repeats the rest.
27. POC, X. 406.
CHAPTER II

RISE AND FALL OF THE PRATĪHĀRA EMPIRE

The early history of the Gurjara-Pratihāras has been dealt with in the third volume.¹ We have seen how the Pratihāra dynasty, founded by the Brāhmaṇa Harichandra, carved out a powerful kingdom in Rājputāna, and various other Gurjara families, probably branches of the same dynasty, set up small principalities to the south and east. The southern branches ruled in Lāṭa with its capital at Nāndīpurī,² but we have no definite information about the capital of the eastern branch or the exact locality and extent of its dominions. Some scholars hold the view that Bhilamāla was the early capital of this family, as they identify it with the capital city of the Gurjara kingdom mentioned by Hiuen Tsang. But apart from their identification being doubtful, that kingdom was ruled, as has been shown already,³ by the main branch. As a matter of fact, the eastern branch did not come into prominence till about a century later, and as the main branch in Jodhpur continued to rule for 150 years more after that, there is no valid ground for taking Bhilamāla as the original capital of the eastern branch.⁴ The only clue to the original location of the family is furnished by the details available about the fourth king Vatsarāja. There are grounds to believe that he ruled over both Jālor and Avanti. But these are disputed points and will be treated more fully later, in connection with that ruler. For the present we may accept as a probable hypothesis, though not as a proved fact, that he and his ancestors ruled over Avanti and had their capital at Ujjayinī.

1. NĀGABHAṬA I

The family came into prominence in the second quarter of the eighth century A.D. by the successful resistance it offered under Nāgabhaṭa I to the Arajs. He is described in the Gwālior Inscription as “having crushed the large armies of the powerful Mlechchha king.” It has already been noted above⁵ how he saved Western India from the Arabs and gradually brought under his sway a large number of states that had been overrun by them. In particular, he established his supremacy over the Gurjara kingdom of Nāndīpurī, and probably also over the Pratihāra family of Jodhpur. A new feudatory family—the Chāhamānas—was set up in Broach, but the old dynasty of Harichandra continued at Jodhpur. Śiluka, whose history has been related above,⁶ was perhaps the last indepen-
dent ruler of this family. His two successors Jhoṭa and Bhillā-
ditya are said to have proceeded respectively to the Bhāgirathī and
Gaṅgādvāra, and no martial glory is ascribed to them. This would
indicate that the Jodhpur family was politically insignificant during
the latter half of the eighth century A.D. It is obvious that
Nāgabhaṭa and his descendants now attained the supremacy and
leadership of the Gurjara confederacy, so long enjoyed by the Jodhp-
pur chiefs.

It is unfortunate that we know practically nothing of the ances-
tors of Nāgabhaṭa I. Very likely they had carved out a kingdom
in Eastern Rājputāna and Mālwā about the same time as the other
branch had conquered the region round Broach. Like the latter,
they too probably acknowledged the suzerainty of the Jodhpur
Pratihāras until Nāgabhaṭa established the independence of his king-
dom on a firm footing in the wake of the political disruption that
followed the disastrous Arab raids.

The date of Nāgabhaṭa's accession is not definitely known,
but since he successfully opposed the Arabs, he must have ruled
in the second quarter of the eighth century A.D. Whether he de-
teated Junaid or his successor Tamin it is difficult to say, but in any
case, he must have ascended the throne within a few years of A.D.
730. He ruled probably till A.D. 756 as will be noted below.

About the time when Nāgabhaṭa was laying the foundations of
the future greatness of his family, another powerful dynasty arose
in the Deccan, immediately to the south of Mālwā. These were the
Rāshtrakūṭas whose history has already been dealt with in the pre-
ceding chapter. The Rāshtrakūṭa king Dantidurga, who reigned
between c. A.D. 733 and 758, is said to have defeated the Gurjara
king and made him serve as a door-keeper (pratiḥāra) when he per-
formed the Hiranyagarbha-dāna ceremony at Ujjain. It has been
suggested by some scholars that there is a pun on the word prati-
hāra and an allusion to the Pratiḥāra king of Avanti. Though this
view is not accepted by all, there is no doubt that a Gurjara king
had to submit to Dantidurga, who went to the extent of occupying
the palace of the vanquished ruler.

Dantidurga also claims to have conquered Lāṭa (Southern Guja-
rāt) and Sindh. Since Dantidurga died before A.D. 758, it is more
or less certain that his Gurjara adversary could not have been any-
body else but Nāgabhaṭa I. But since the latter is acknowledged as
suzerain by Bharṭrīvaidyāha, the Chāhamāna ruler of Broach, in A.D.
756, it does not appear that Dantidurga's military victory was
followed by any permanent conquest. Both Nāgabhaṭa I and
Dantidurga fished in the troubled waters caused by the Arab raids.
RISE AND FALL OF THE PRATHIHARA EMPIRE

Though Dantidurga gained some initial successes, he could not conquer permanently the territory north of the Kim river, i.e. the old Gurjara principality of Nándipuri. Perhaps the impending conflict with his Chālukya overlord forced him to abandon his aggressive designs in the north. In any case there are good reasons to believe that in spite of initial discomfiture Nāgabhata was able to leave to his successors a powerful principality comprising Mālwā and parts of Rājputāna and Gujarāt. The Gwālior Inscription describes him as the image of Nārāyaṇa, and there can be no doubt whatever that he achieved distinction as a great national hero by defeating the Arabs.

2. VATSARĀJA

Nāgabhata I was succeeded by his brother’s sons, Kakkuka and Devarāja, of whom nothing is known. Devarāja’s son Vatsarāja was, however, a powerful ruler. The author of a Jain work, Kuvalayamālā, says that he composed the work in the year 700 (= A.D. 778) at Jávalipura (modern Jālor) which was at the time ruled by the Raṇahastin (war-elephant) Vatsarāja.16 This Vatsarāja has been generally identified with the Pratihāra ruler. Another Jain work, Jinasena’s Harivāṁśa-purāṇa, contains a reference to Vatsarāja and his kingdom, but unfortunately the interpretation of the passage is not free from difficulty, and has given rise to a keen controversy.16 Jinasena gives the names of kings who flourished in different directions when he finished his work at Vardhamānapura in the year 705 (= A.D. 783). The first two lines of the verse tell us that in that year Indrāyudha was ruling in the north, and Śrī-Vallabha, son of king Krishṇa, in the south. The next two lines of the verse run as follows:—

Pūrvāṇ Śrīmad=Avanti-bhūbhrīti nripes Vatsādirāje=parām |
Saurāṇām=adhimāṇḍale(lain) jaya-yute vire Varahe=vaṭi ||

According to some scholars17 it means that Vatsarāja, the ruler of Avanti, was the king in the east, while victorious Varūha (or Jaya-Varūha) was ruling over the Sauras in the west. Others,18 however, point out that Avanti-bhūbhrit (king of Avanti) must be distinguished from Vatsarāja, as otherwise the word nripa (king) is redundant. They accordingly infer from the passage that the ruler of Avanti was the king of the east and Vatsarāja of the west, while Varūha was ruling over the Sauras. This interpretation is, however, open to serious objections. In the first place, the name of the eastern king is omitted, while the names of all other kings are given. No purpose is served by saying that the ruler of Avanti was the eastern king, which would be almost tantamount to stating that the ruler of the eastern kingdom is the king of the east. Second-
ly, it appears from the general tenor of the verse that the author proposes to name the four rulers in the four directions. The proposed translation adds a fifth without indicating its connection or relevancy to the context. It is urged by some that the fifth ruler has been named because he reigned over Vardhamānapura where the work was composed. But if we accept the identification of Vardhamāna with Wadhwān in Kāthiāwār Peninsula, we can hardly regard Vatsarāja as a western ruler, even though his kingdom was in Rājputāna, as is argued by scholars who do not accept the other translation locating it in Avanti. To obviate this difficulty one scholar proposes to identify Vardhamāna with Badnawar, about 40 miles to the south-west of Ujjain. But in that case, we cannot assign any reason why the fifth king should be mentioned at all. Thus there are difficulties in the second translation which are of a more serious nature than those of the first. For, as regards the redundance of the word nṛipa, it should hardly surprise us if we remember such expression as Gurjareśvara-pati used with reference to the son of the same Vatsarāja, in a record dated A.D. 812, i.e. less than thirty years after Jinasena wrote. On the whole, therefore, it is a more reasonable view to regard Vatsarāja as the king of Avanti in A.D. 783. This view is also corroborated by what has been said above regarding the Gurjara king defeated by Dantidurga.

The two Jain works would thus prove that the Pratihāra king Vatsarāja ascended the throne in or before A.D. 778, and his kingdom comprised both Mālwā and eastern Rājputāna. That he ruled over Central Rājputāna also is proved by two epigraphic records. Some idea of the extent of his kingdom may be gained from the fact that the northern king named by Jinasena as his contemporary was Indrāyudha, who was probably king of Kanauj. There is no doubt that Vatsarāja gradually extended his dominions in the north. The Gwālior inscription of his great-grandson records that he forcibly wrested the empire from the famous Bhāṇḍi clan. This Bhāṇḍi clan has been taken by some to refer to the ruling family founded by Bhāṇḍi, the maternal uncle of Harsha. It would then follow that this clan wielded imperial power, probably with its seat of authority in Kanauj, though we have no independent evidence of this. But whatever we might think of these probabilities, there is no doubt that Vatsarāja was ambitious of establishing an empire in Northern India and attained a great deal of success. We learn from the Rāshaṭrakūṭa records that he defeated the Lord of Gauḍa, who must be identified with a Pāla king of Bengal, probably Dharmapāla; and carried away his umbrellas of state. Vatsarāja was aided in this expedition by his feudatory chiefs, one of whom, the Chāhamāna Durlabharāja of Śākambharī, is said to have overrun
the whole of Bengal up to the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the sea. But as this occurs in a poetical work composed about four centuries after the event described, it is difficult to take it as literally true. As the kingdom of Gauḍa at that time extended up to the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doāb, it cannot be said definitely whether Vatsarāja actually invaded Bengal, or met and defeated the lord of Gauḍa somewhere in the Doāb. Be that as it may, Vatsarāja must have established his supremacy over a large part of Northern India and laid the foundations of a mighty empire. He thus appears to have scored over Dharmapāla who was equally ambitious of founding an empire. Unfortunately the imperial dreams of both were rudely shattered by the invasion of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Dhruva. While Vatsarāja and Dharmapāla were fighting for the empire in the north, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Dhruva seized the opportunity to emulate Dantidurga by renewing the attempt to conquer the north. The details of his campaign are not known, but, according to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa records, Dhruva inflicted a crushing defeat upon Vatsarāja, who was forced to put the desert of Rājputāna between him and the invading army. Dhruva next turned against Dharmapāla and defeated him somewhere between the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā.

Thus began that triangular struggle between the Gurjaras, the Pālas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas for supremacy in Northern India which was destined to be an important factor in Indian politics for more than a century. The city of Kanauj, which was raised to the position of imperial dignity by Harsha-vardhana, seems to have been the prize coveted and won by each, with a varying degree of success. It is very likely, though not known with certainty, that Vatsarāja took possession of it before marching towards Gauḍa. Dharmapāla, the king of Gauḍa, was also proceeding towards the west with the same object, and thus ensued the fight between the two rival claimants, probably somewhere in the Doāb. Although both Dharmapāla and Vatsarāja were defeated by Dhruva, the Pratihāra king seems to have fared worse. For Dharmapāla, in spite of his successive defeats, was in possession of Kanauj not long afterwards, and held a durbar there in the presence of a host of rulers of northern states including Avanti, all of whom acknowledged his imperial position. As we have seen above, Indrāyudha was the ruler of the north in A.D. 783. As Dharmapāla is expressly said to have conquered Kanauj by defeating Indrarāja and others, it is generally held that Indrarāja was the same as Indrāyudha. If, as is presumed, Vatsarāja had conquered Kanauj before Dharmapāla, he, too, must have defeated Indrāyudha and permitted him to rule as a vassal. But
Dharmapāla placed on the throne a new ruler Chakrāyudha, whose name-ending shows that he was probably connected with the ruling family.

3. NĀGABHAṬA II

After his defeat at the hands of Dhruva, Vatsarāja passes completely out of our view. Nothing is known of him or of his kingdom during the palmy days of Pāla imperialism under Dharmapāla. It is probable that his power was confined to central Rājputāna. His son and successor Nāgabhaṭa II, however, retrieved the fortunes of his family. The Gwālior Inscription of his grandson tells us that the rulers of Andhra, Saindhava, Vidarbha and Kaliṅga succumbed to him, that he defeated Chakrāyudha and the lord of Vāṅga, and forcibly seized the hill-forts of the kings of Anartta, Mālava, Kirāta, Turushka, Vatsa, and Matsya.29 The records of some of the families feudatory to him corroborate and supply details of these conquests. On the other hand, the Rāshṭrakūṭa records categorically assert that Nāgabhaṭa was defeated by Govinda III who overran his dominions and reached the Himālayas.

Although we thus know a great many details of the eventful career of Nāgabhaṭa II, it is not easy to arrange them chronologically, and view his reign in a correct perspective. We do not know, for example, whether his discomfiture at the hands of the Rāshṭrakūṭas preceded or followed his victories,—in other words, whether his reign began in disaster and ended in glory, or whether the reverse was the case. No wonder, therefore, that different views have been adopted by different scholars about the life and career of this great emperor.30 The following reconstruction of his history may be regarded as merely provisional:—

The forcible seizure of the hill-forts of Anartta, Mālava, etc. is said to have begun even in his boyhood. It has been suggested that some of these events might actually have taken place in the reign of Vatsarāja.31 But as the same record refers to the achievements of Vatsarāja, and is silent about them, this view is not probable. They may, therefore, be regarded as the earliest military exploits of Nāgabhaṭa II. The geographical position of the rulers shows that Nāgabhaṭa advanced towards North Gujarāt (Anartta) and Mālwa in the south and east, and this probably brought him into conflict with the Rāshṭrakūṭas, which is referred to in the records of both the parties. Indra, the Rāshṭrakūṭa ruler of Lāṭa, is said to have defeated the Gurjara king who fled to distant regions.32 On the other hand Vāhukadavala, a feudatory chief of Nāgabhaṭa II, is said to have defeated the Karṇāṭakas, which apparent-
ly refer to the Rāṣṭrakūṭas (Inscription No. 3). It may be con-
ccluded, therefore, that no party gained a decisive victory, though Nāgabhaṭa probably retained some of the captured hill-forts. His similar enterprises in the north (Matsya), east (Vatsa), and west (Turushka) were probably more successful, but we possess no de-
tails of these campaigns. The Turushkas undoubtedly refer to the Muslim rulers of the west against whom he scored some success, and the Kirātās represent some primitive tribes, probably of the Himālayan region.

The initial successes of Nāgabhaṭa in these military raids em-
boldened him to carry on further campaigns which resulted in the submission of the Saindhava chiefs, ruling in Western Kāthiāwār, and the rulers of Andhra, Kaliṅga and Vidarbha. It is difficult to believe that Nāgabhaṭa actually advanced as far as Andhra or even Kaliṅga country on the eastern coast of the Deccan. It is not, therefore, unlikely that he entered into a confederacy with them, though, as usually happens in such cases of unequal alliance, they became, for all practical purposes, subordinate, rather than independent, allies. Although this view has been challenged, it seems to be true at least in the case of the Saindhavas of whom alone we possess any contemporary records. It appears from the contemporary copper-plate grants of the Saindhava chiefs that while they were devoted and loyal to the Pratihāras, they did not invoke their name as suzerains as was done by the Chāpas and Chālukyas of the Kāthiāwār Peninsula—the other feudatories immediately to their east.

Nāgabhaṭa’s next move seems to have been to reconquer Kanauj. As already noted, its ruler Indrāyudha had probably acknowledged Vatsaraṇā’s suzerainty and was, perhaps for that very reason, de-
feated by Dharmapāla, who put instead Chakrāyudha on the throne. Nāgabhaṭa defeated Chakrāyudha and conquered his kingdom. He probably occupied Kanauj which later became the permanent capital of the Pratihāras. It was a challenge to the power of Dharmapāla, and both sides made preparations for the inevitable conflict. Nāgabhaṭa was joined by at least three of his feudatory chiefs in this momentous struggle for the empire. These were Kakka, of the Jodhpur Pratihāra family, Vāhukadhavala, the Chā-
lukya chief of Southern Kāthiāwār, and the Guhilot Saṅkaragaṇa. The family records (Ins. 2-4) of these three refer to the first as having fought the Gauḍas at Monghyr, the second as having defeated king Dharma, and the third as having defeated Gauḍa and made the whole world, gained by warfare, subservient to his overlord. All the three evidently refer to the great battle between Nāgabhaṭa and the lord of Vaṅga, described in the Gwālior Inscription, in
which the latter, though possessed of "crowds of mighty elephants, horses, and chariots", was vanquished by the former. There is no reference to this encounter in the Pāla records, but the combined testimony of the four different records, coming from four different sources, and particularly the fact that the Pratihāras advanced as far as Monghyr, almost in the heart of the Pāla dominions, leave no doubt that Nāgabhaṭa scored a great victory over his Pāla rival Dharmapāla.

But Nāgabhaṭa’s success was not destined to be more permanent than that of his father. Once more the hereditary enemies from the south upset the grandiose imperial scheme of the Pratihāras. Nāgabhaṭa, as noted above, had already come into conflict with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in the early part of his reign. This took place probably about A.D. 794-95, early in the reign of Govinda III, when the new king was engaged in the south in putting down the rebellion of his brother and fighting with the Gaṅga ruler. The brunt of the attack fell upon his viceroy of the north, Indra, who ‘alone’ is said to have defeated the Gurjara lord. But, as noted above, the Pratihāras also claimed victory, and probably gained some hill forts in Mālwa. The northern frontier was, however, guarded effectively by Indra and his son Karkka, who says in one of his records that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king had “caused his arm to become an excellent door-bar of the country of the lord of Gurjaras.”

But the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda III could not be content merely with a defensive policy against the Pratihāras. As soon as he was free from internal troubles, he made preparations to invade the north as his father Dhruva had done before. Like the latter he achieved phenomenal success, though probably more than one campaign was necessary for the purpose. He “destroyed the valour of Nāgabhaṭa”, who “in fear vanished nobody knew whither”, and then having “devastated his home” and overrun his dominions, proceeded up to the Himālayas. Even making allowance for exaggerations, there can be hardly any doubt that Govinda III inflicted a crushing blow on Nāgabhaṭa and shattered his dreams of founding an empire.

A Rāṣṭrakūṭa record informs us that Dharmapāla and Chakrāyuḍha surrendered of their own accord to Govinda III. If we remember that both of them were defeated by Nāgabhaṭa II, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they had invited the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king, or at least made common cause with him against Nāgabhaṭa II, their common foe. This would satisfactorily explain the triumphant march of Govinda III right up to the Himālayas and the complete discomfiture of the Pratihāras for some time to come.
RISE AND FALL OF THE PRATIHARA EMPIRE

If the success of Govinda III matched his father’s in brilliance, it was equally ephemeral. He was called to the Deccan on account of internal troubles that had broken out during his long absence in the north, and for nearly half a century the Rāshtrakūtas ceased to play any dominant part in north Indian politics. The field was thus left free to the two rival powers, the Pālas and the Pratihāras. The reverses of Nāgabhaṭa II gave an opportunity to Dharmapāla and his son Devapāla to re-establish the power and supremacy of the Pālas, and there was a decline in the Pratihāra power for the time being.

It is difficult to fix the date of the great victory of Govinda III over Nāgabhaṭa II, but it must have taken place before A.D. 809-10.⁴¹ Although Nāgabhaṭa’s imperial ambitions were curbed, his power was not destroyed. A record,⁴² dated A.D. 815, found at Buchkalā in Bilada District, Jodhpur, gives him all the imperial titles and describes the locality as svavishaya, or his dominions proper. In addition to the three feudatories who helped him in his wars against the Pālas, we know of another, Güvaka I, the founder of the Chāhamāna dynasty of Śākambhari (near Ajmer), who was his vassal (Ins. 6). Whether they threw off their allegiance to him after his discomfiture we cannot say, but this does not appear very likely. For, though the record (Ins. 2) of Bāuka, the Pratihāra king of the Jodhpur dynasty, dated A.D. 837, would lend some colour to such a supposition, we should remember that Nāgabhaṭa’s grand-son Bhoja was able to enlist the support of his feudatories within a few years of his grandfather’s death. On the whole we may conclude that Nāgabhaṭa II continued to exercise his sway over the greater part, if not the whole, of Rājputāna and Kāthiāwār Peninsula. In the east his sway extended up to Gwālior,⁴³ and probably further east so as to include Kanauj and Kālaṅjara.⁴⁴

We learn from a Jain book, Prabhāvaka-charita,⁴⁵ that king Nāgāvaloka of Kānyakubja, the grandfather of Bhoja, died in 890 V.S. (=A.D. 833). This Nāgāvaloka is undoubtedly Nāgabhaṭa II, and if we can rely on this passage, his death must have taken place in A.D. 833. It would also appear that Nāgabhaṭa II had fixed his capital at Kanauj. But although Kanauj was the capital of Bhoja, we have no independent evidence that it was the Pratihāra capital before his time. The reference to Kānyakubja in Prabhāvaka-charita may be explained by the fact that Kanauj had been the well-known capital of the Pratihāras long before the thirteenth century A.D. when this book was composed. The reference to svavishaya in the Buchkalā record, noted above, and the claims of Dharmapāla and Devapāla in the Pāla records cannot be easily reconciled with the renewed imperialist ambition of Nāgabhaṭa II as would be neces-
sarily indicated by his permanent transfer of capital to Kanauj. The admittedly inglorious reign of his son is also against such a supposition. The fact that the grandson of Nāgabhaṭa II was on the throne within three years of the date of his death, as given in Prabhāvaka-charita, throws doubt on the whole passage, but even if we accept it as true, we can only presume that the capital was changed towards the very end of his reign. The same passage in Prabhāvaka-charita also tells us that Nāgabhaṭa II put an end to his life by immersion in the holy waters of the Gaṅgā—a religious process adopted in later years by Rāmapāla of the Pāla dynasty and Amoghavarsha, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king. This shows his religious temperament, which is also testified to by his performance of religious ceremonies enjoined by the Vedas. An active religious sentiment is further proved by the eclectic spirit of the royal family—for four generations of Pratihāra kings beginning from Devarāja were devotees respectively of Viṣṇu, Śiva, Bhagavatī, and Śūrya.40

In spite of doubts and uncertainties, due to the paucity of data, the reigns of Vatsarāja and Nāgabhaṭa II occupy a prominent place in the contemporary history of India. Both of them were remarkable personalities and had a high degree of military skill; and the ultimate reverses at the hands of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas cannot minimise the glory they had achieved by extensive military conquests from one end of north India to the other. They raised a provincial principality into a first-rate military and political power, and although their dreams of founding a stable empire were not actually realised, they laid its foundations so well that ere long king Bhoja succeeded in the great task even in the face of very strenuous opposition from his hereditary foes, the Pālas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas.

Nāgabhaṭa II was succeeded by his son Rāmabhadrā, who had a very short and inglorious reign of probably three years. His kingdom, which certainly extended up to Gwālīor in the east,47 but probably no further, seems to have been overrun by hostile forces.48 It is curious, as two copper-plate charters49 record, that two grants, made by his father, had lapsed during his reign, and had to be confirmed by his successor. All this shows a period of weakness and trouble, probably brought about by the aggressive policy of the Pāla emperor Devapāla as will be noted in the next chapter.

4. BHOJA

With the accession of Rāmabhadrā’s son and successor Bhoja, a new and glorious chapter begins in the history of the Pratihāras. The earliest record of the king is the Barah copper-plate50 which
he issued in A.D. 836 from his camp (skandhāvāra) at Mahodaya in order to confirm an endowment in the Kālañjara subdivision (maṇḍala) of the division (bhukti) of Kānyakubja which had been obstructed during the reign of his father. It shows that Bhoja had ascended the throne in or before A.D. 836, and was already in possession of the region round Kālañjara (Bändā District, U.P.). If Mahodaya denoted Kanauj, as is generally supposed, we must further presume that he was also in occupation of that city and probably had his capital there. It has been urged, however, against this view, that Mahodaya, in this record, was not identical with Kānyakubja which is mentioned separately as such, and that the epithet skandhāvāra or camp could not have been appropriate for a rājadhānī (capital) like Kanauj. The latter objection may be easily ruled out, as even famous capital cities like Pātaliputra and Vikramapura have been referred to as skandhāvāra in the records of the Pāla and Sena kings. The other objection, though more valid, is also not decisive. For the older name might have been used for the big Division, while the city proper could be referred to by the alternative name. On the whole it is likely, though not certain, that as early as A.D. 836, Bhoja had fixed his capital at Kanauj, and obtained mastery of the region round it, which had been probably lost during his father’s reign.

The Jodhpur Pratihāras, whose history has been dealt with above, also came into prominence and probably regained independence during the inglorious reign of Rāmabhadra. This seems to follow from the family records of both the branches. The Jodhpur Inscription, as noted above, describes the two successors of Śīluka as practising austerities, an unmistakable indication of the decline in their political and military authority. But the next king Kakka is described as a great fighter who, as noted above, accompanied Nāgabhaṭa II in his expedition against the Pāla king of Bengal. But although he acknowledged the suzerainty of Nāgabhaṭa II at first, he seems to have practically behaved like an independent king in later years. In the Jodhpur Inscription dated A.D. 837 (Ins. 2), Kakka’s queen-consort is called a Mahārājīni, and the career of their son Bāuka is described in terms which make him out to be an independent king, at least de facto, if not de jure. This conclusion is corroborated by the Daulatpura copper-plate of Bhoja which records that a piece of land in Gurjaratā, the home-territory of the Jodhpur Pratihāras, which was originally granted by Vatsarāja and continued by Nāgabhaṭa II, fell into abeyance, and was renewed by Bhoja in A.D. 843. This indicates like the Barah copper-plate, that there was obstruction in the enjoyment of land during the reign of Rāmabhadra, and this fits in well with the view that the Jodhpur
Pratihāras threw off the yoke of this king. The copper-plate further shows that by A.D. 843 Bhoja had reasserted his authority over Gurjaratrā or Central and Eastern Rājputāna. The success of Bhoja was undoubtedly due to the loyal devotion of some of his feudatories, one of whom, the Guhilot prince Harsharāja, son of Saṃkaragaṇa, is said to have overcome the kings in the north and presented horses to Bhoja (Ins. 4).

It is thus clear that Bhoja succeeded, within a few years of his accession, in re-establishing, to a considerable extent, the fortunes of his family. But soon he had to measure his strength with the Pāla king Devapāla. Bhoja was defeated, and his triumphant career was arrested, as will be related in the next chapter. He now turned his attention to the south, no doubt tempted by the distracted condition of the Rāśḥtrakūṭas. Some time between A.D. 845 and 860 he seems to have invaded the Rāśḥtrakūṭa dominions, but was defeated by Dhruva, the Rāśḥtrakūṭa chief of the Gujarāt branch. Thus the growing power of the Pratihāras was once more checked by their two hereditary enemies. Bhoja was also defeated by the Kalachuri king Kokkalla (c. 845-880). It is interesting to note that the Rāśḥtrakūṭa inscription, which records the defeat of Bhoja, refers to him in very flattering terms, and describes him as “united to fortune and surrounded by crowds of noble kinsmen,” and having “conquered all the regions of the world.” This shows that Bhoja had already raised his kingdom to a position of eminence. But there is no doubt that the defeat at the hands of the Pālas, the Rāśḥtrakūtas, and the Kalachuris was a great blow to his rising power which perhaps declined to a considerable extent.

An indication of this decline is seen in the renewed power of the Jodhpur Pratihāras. Bāuka’s step-brother and successor Kakkuka refers in two of his inscriptions, dated A.D. 861 to Gurjaratrā and other provinces as forming part of his own dominions. Thus Bhoja must have lost his hold over this part of Rājputāna some time between A.D. 843 and 861. It appears that after some initial successes Bhoja’s attempt to re-establish the glory of his family proved a failure.

But Bhoja did not lose heart and bided his time. An inscription, dated A.D. 876, refers to his resolve “to conquer the three worlds”, and there is no doubt that he renewed his aggressive career some time in the third quarter of the ninth century A.D. The death of Devapāla removed a thorn in his side, for the next two kings of the Pāla dynasty, who ruled during the second half of the ninth
century A.D., were weak and peace-loving. Fortunately for him
the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Amoghavarsha, who ruled from A.D. 814 to c.
A.D. 878, was also of a religious disposition, and did not have the
aggressive imperialism or military ambition of his two illustrious
predecessors, Dhruva and Govinda III. Nevertheless Amoghavarsha
came into conflict with the Pāla rulers, and probably, after his
conquest of Veṇģi, invaded the Pāla dominions from the south
and gained some successes. Perhaps taking advantage of the
weakness of the Pāla rulers and their distracted condition due to
the Rāṣṭrakūṭa raids, Bhoja planned a campaign against Bengal.
The combined testimony of several records indicates that he was
helped in this enterprise by Guṇāṃbhodhideva, the Chedi ruler
of Gorakhpur, and the Guhilot chief Guhila II, son of Harsharāja.60
Assisted by these powerful chiefs Bhoja appears to have inflicted
a crushing defeat upon the Pāla king Nārāyaṇapāla and conquered
a considerable part of his western dominions.

Bhoja was also engaged in a prolonged struggle with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas.61 Reference has already been made to his fight with
Dhruva of Gujarāt. It was renewed during the reign of Kṛishṇa II
(c. A.D. 878-914). Bhoja probably took the offensive and gained
considerable success. A Pratihāra record62 refers to the defeat of
Kṛishṇa II, probably on the banks of the Narmadā, and his retreat
to the south of the river. After having thus occupied Mālwā,
Bhoja advanced towards Gujarāt. The Rāṣṭrakūṭa records admit
that not only Kheṭaka (Kaira District) but also the region round it
fell into his hands. They, however, assert that Kṛishṇa II recovered
them, and there was a sanguinary battle between the two hosts
at Ujjayini which made a deep impress even upon posterity.63 It
is generally held that Bhoja lost Mālwā as a result of this defeat,
which took place some time between A.D. 878 and 888. But this
is by no means certain. An inscription64 at Partābgarh, in Southe-
ern Rājpūtāna, refers to a local Chāhamāna dynasty which was a
source of great pleasure to king Bhojadeva. It has been suggested,
with a great degree of plausibility, that these Chāhamānas helped
their overlord Bhoja in his wars against the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. This
Chāhamāna dynasty acknowledged the suzerainty of the Pratihāras
in the time of Mahendrapāla II (A.D. 946), and asked for some
favours from the representatives of their overlord at Ujjayini and
Maṇḍapikā (Māṇḍu) about the same time. It would thus appear
that Mālwā formed a part of the Pratihāra dominions even so late
as A.D. 946, and as we know that it was conquered by Bhoja, it is
more reasonable to suppose that it continued to be in the posses-
sion of the Pratihāras rather than that it was reconquered by his
successors all of whom, except his son Mahendrapāla I, were too
weak to be credited with any such new acquisition. In any case, we may take for granted that the Pārībgarh region formed a part of the dominions of Bhoja, and Mālwā, even if lost, was reconquered by Mahendrāpāla I.

Although Bhoja lost his hold upon Kheṭaka or Kaira District, he maintained supremacy over probably the whole of Kāthiawār Peninsula. In the north-west his dominions extended to the Punjāb. In the east the Kalachuris of Gorakhpur were his feudatories, and probably the whole of Awadh (Oudh) was included in his dominions. The Chandellas of Bundelkhand also acknowledged his overlordship. Bhoja thus consolidated a mighty empire in Northern India for which Vatsarāja and Nagabhaṭa had fought in vain, and raised Kanauj, his capital, once more to the position of an imperial city.

Bhoja had a long reign of more than 46 years, two of his known dates being A.D. 836 and 882. An Arab account of India, composed in A.D. 851 and generally attributed to Sulaimān, refers to the great power and resources of the king of Juzr. As Juzr undoubtedly stands for Gurjara, the Arab account may be taken to refer to Bhoja. As such it is an interesting commentary upon his reign and personality and may be reproduced in full:

"This king maintains numerous forces and no other Indian prince has so fine a cavalry. He is unfriendly to the Arabs, still he acknowledges that the king of the Arabs is the greatest of kings. Among the princes of India, there is no greater foe of the Muhammadan faith than he. His territories form a tongue of land. He has got riches, and his camels and horses are numerous. Exchanges are carried on in his states with silver (and gold) in dust, and there are said to be mines (of these metals) in the country. There is no country in India more safe from robbers."

It is thus evident that Bhoja had the reputation of a strong ruler, able to maintain peace in his kingdom and defend it against external dangers. He stood as a bulwark of defence against Muslim aggression, and left this task as a sacred legacy to his successors.

Bhoja was undoubtedly one of the outstanding political figures of India in the ninth century, and ranks with Dhruva and Dharma-pāla as a great general and empire-builder. Unfortunately, we know very little of his personal history, except that he was a devotee of Bhagavatī and was known by various names such as Pra-bhāsa, Ādivarāha, and Mihira, in addition to Bhoja which was most commonly used.
5. MAHENDRAPĀLA

Bhoja probably died about A.D. 885, and was succeeded by his son Mahendrapāla I, whose earliest known date is A.D. 893 (Ins. 3). A verse in Rājaṭarāgīṇī, the meaning of which is obscure, seems to indicate that he lost some territory in the Punjāb, gained by his father, to Sankaravarman king of Kāshmir. But, with this doubtful exception, Mahendrapāla not only maintained intact the vast empire inherited by him, but also further expanded it towards the east. No less than seven of his records have been found in South Bihār and North Bengal with dates ranging from years 2 to 19. These indicate that shortly after his accession he conquered Magadhā and even a part of Northern Bengal, the home territory of his hereditary enemy, the Pālas. Mahendrapāla’s records have also been found in Kāthiawār Peninsula, Eastern Punjāb, Jhānsi District and Awadh (Oudh), and we may say, without much exaggeration, that his empire extended from the Himālayas to the Vindhayas and from the Eastern to the Western ocean.

The name of Mahendrapāla is also written in slightly varying forms such as Mahindrapāla and Mahendrāyudha, and he was also known as Nirbhaya-narendra or Nirbhayaratā. His guru, or spiritual preceptor, Rājaśekhara, is a famous personality in Indian literature. Although his writings do not throw any light on the career or personality of Mahendrapāla, they refer in unmistakable terms to the glory and grandeur of the imperial city of Kanauj.

6. MAHIPĀLA

Mahendrapāla’s last known date is A.D. 907-8, and he probably died not long afterwards. The succession to the throne after him is a matter of dispute, as the available data lend themselves to various interpretations. He had at least two queens, Dehanagādevī and Mahīdevī (or Mahādevi). The son of the former, Bhoja II, ascended the throne before Vināyakapāla, the son of the latter, one of whose known dates is A.D. 931 (Ins. 9). Mahipāla, a son of Mahendrapāla, is known to have ruled in A.D. 914 and A.D. 917 (Ins. 8), while a king Kshitipāla is known to be the father of king Devapāla ruling in A.D. 948-9 (Ins. 7). There are good grounds to believe that the last two kings also belonged to the same family. A king Devapāla, with the epithet Hayapati (lord of horses), son of Herambapāla, is mentioned in another contemporary inscription, and it is held by some that this Devapāla is identical with his namesake, ruling in A.D. 948-9. Thus his father would be Herambapāla alias Kshitipāla, and as these are synonymous respectively with Vināyakapāla and Mahipāla, the identity of all the four
is generally presumed, and the genealogy is drawn up as follows 76:

Dehanāgādevī = Mahendrapāla I = Mahīdevī (or Mahādevī)

Bhoja II

Vināyakapāla
(alias Mahipāla
alias Kshitipāla
alias Herambapāla)
(A.D. 914, 917, 931)

Some scholars, however, do not accept the identification of the two kings named Devapāla, and therefore regard Vināyakapāla as different from Mahīpāla alias Kshitipāla. 77 Others again identify the latter with Bhoja II. 78 It is impossible, with the insufficient data now available, to prove or disprove any of these hypotheses. So we may provisionally accept the genealogy drawn up above.

It is significant that while the Grant of Vināyakapāla, dated A.D. 931, refers to his elder brother Bhoja II as his predecessor, the earlier Grant, dated A.D. 917, makes no reference to Bhoja II, and represents Mahīpāla as having succeeded Mahendrapāla. It has been suggested that this omission may be due to short duration of Bhoja’s reign or to a struggle for succession between the two. 79 But it may be easily explained by the not uncommon practice of tracing only the direct descent of the ruling king by omitting all references to collateral line. The short duration of reign is not a satisfactory explanation, and if we accept the identification of Mahīpāla and Vināyakapāla, we can hardly explain the omission in one Grant and not in the other as due to rivalry. It has been urged that with the lapse of time the memory of the old rivalry faded away, and hence the reference to the reign of the elder brother was made in A.D. 931 but not in A.D. 917. But this is questionable.

A struggle for succession to the throne has been inferred from the statement in the Kalachuri records that Kukkalladeva I “set up Bhojadeva” and “granted him freedom from fear.” These expressions have been taken to mean that Bhoja II invoked the aid of Kekkalla in the war of succession against his brother. 80 But apart from the fact that it is uncertain whether Bhoja here refers to the father or son of Mahendrapāla, 81 we need not assume that any help that Kukkalla might have rendered to Bhoja II was necessarily against his brother. For a Rāṣṭrakūṭa record seems to imply that Kṛṣṇa II invaded the dominions of the Pratīhāras and occupied the Yamunā-Gaṅgā Doab. The veracity of this claim has been
doubted by many scholars, but there may be some truth in it, and if Bhoja II sought the help of Kokkalla, it might have been on such an occasion.

On the whole, we have no definite knowledge of the events that followed the death of Mahendrapāla. The weakness of the empire, as revealed by the advance of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas to the very gates of the imperial city and its destruction by them, not much later, about A.D. 916, undoubtedly lends colour to the theory of internal dissensions, but we must remember that the Rāṣṭrakūṭas achieved similar successes even during the reigns of powerful kings like Vatsarāja and Nāgabhaṭa II.

In any case there are no good grounds against the view that when Mahīpāla ascended the throne, about A.D. 912, the empire enjoyed peace and prosperity. An inscription, dated A.D. 914, proves his suzerainty over the Kāthiāwār Peninsula. Al Mas‘ūdī, a native of Baghdād, who visited India in the year A.D. 915-16, refers to the great power and resources of the Pratihāra king of Kanauj, and the wide extent of his kingdom, which touched the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kingdom in the south, and the Muslim principality of Multān in the west, with both of which he was at war. He was, we are told, rich in horses and camels, and maintained four armies in four directions, each numbering 700,000 or 900,000 men.

The poet Rājaśekhara, who graced the court of Mahīpāla, as that of his father, refers to the former as “the pearl-jewel of the lineage of Raghu” and “the Mahārājādhīrāja of Āryāvarta”. He also describes the conquests of Mahīpāla in a grandiloquent verse according to which the emperor defeated the Muralas, Mekalas, Kalingas, Keralas, Kulūtas, Kuntalas, and Ramaṭhas. This would mean the suzerainty not only of nearly the whole of Northern India, but also of a part of the Deccan where the Rāṣṭrakūṭas ruled. Even making due allowance for the panegyric exaggerations of the court-poet, it may be reasonably held that Mahīpāla not only maintained intact the empire inherited by him, but probably even extended it in the early part of his reign.

But once more the eternal enemies, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, were to prove the doom of the Pratihāra empire. Leaving aside the boast of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛishṇa II that he advanced up to the Gaṅgā, there is no doubt that his successor Indra III conducted a campaign against the Pratihāra dominions some time between A.D. 915 and 918. According to a Rāṣṭrakūṭa record, Indra III advanced through Mālwa, crossed the Yamunā, and completely devastated the city of Kanauj. According to a Kanarese poem, Pampabhārata, Indra’s feudatory Narasimha (Chālukya) took a
prominent part in inflicting a crushing defeat upon Mahipāla. It is said that “Mahipāla fled, as if struck by thunderbolts, staying neither to eat, nor rest, nor pick himself up; while Narasimha, pursuing, bathed his horses at the junction of the Gaṅgā.”

Thus according to the Rāśhṭrakūṭa version Indra III had a complete victory. He occupied the capital city of his enemy and sacked it, while Mahipāla fled for his life, hotly pursued by the hostile forces as far as Allāhābād. But, as on previous occasions, the Rāśhṭrakūṭas did not stay long enough to consolidate their conquests in the north.

It redounds to the credit of Mahipāla that he survived this terrible shock and re-established the fortunes of his family. This was due mainly to the help of his powerful feudatories. According to a Chandella record, king Harsha placed Kshitipāla on the throne. It refers most probably to the help rendered by the powerful Chandella chief to Kshitipāla or Mahipāla in regaining the throne after the Rāśhṭrakūṭa debacle. The Guhilot chief Bhaṭṭa, grandson of Harsharāja, who helped Bhoja I, is said to have defeated in battle the king of the south, at the command of his paramount lord, at a time of great danger when the kingdom was invaded by foreign soldiers and everything was in confusion (Ins. 4). This also probably alludes to the defeat inflicted upon the Rāśhṭrakūṭas after they had overrun the Pratihāra dominions. The recovery of Mālwā is hinted at by the vainglorious claim made by Bhāmāna, the feudatory Kalachuri chief of Gorakhpur, that he conquered Dhrārā (Ins. 5).

Whether Mahipāla succeeded in recovering all the territories he had lost is difficult to determine. But we have literary and epigraphic records to show that in A.D. 931 the empire of Mahipāla-Vināyakapāla extended up to Saurāshṭra (Kāthiāwār Peninsula) in the west and Banaras in the east (Ins. 9), and in A.D. 942-3 up to Chanderi (Narwar) in the south. Even so late as A.D. 946, the Pratihāra empire included Mālwā (Ins. 10). It would thus appear that Mahipāla recovered at least a large part, if not the whole, of his dominions, but there can be no doubt that the prestige of the Imperial Pratihāras suffered a severe blow from which they never fully recovered. The feudatory chiefs and provincial governors slowly asserted independence, and new dynasties rose to power. This will be evident from the history of the Chandellas, Chedis, and Paramāras dealt with in a separate chapter. The decline and the process of disintegration of the Pratihāra empire offer a close parallel to the fate which overtook the Mughal empire in the eighteenth century.
RISE AND FALL OF THE PRATIHARA EMPIRE

Towards the close of Mahipāla's reign the Rāṣṭrakūṭas seem to have again invaded the north. It is said in a Rāṣṭrakūṭa record,93 dated A.D. 940, that "on hearing of the conquest of all the strongholds (by Kṛishṇa III) in the southern regions simply by means of his angry glance, the hope about Kālaṇjara and Chitrakūṭa vanished from the heart of the Gurjaras." It has been inferred from this that these two forts of the Pratihāras were occupied by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa army shortly before A.D. 940.94

7. MAHĪPĀLA'S SUCCESSORS

Vināyakapāla ruled till at least A.D. 942,95 and was succeeded by his son Mahendrapāla II,96 whose known date is A.D. 945-6 (Ins. 10). During the next 15 years there is a succession of no less than four kings, viz. (1) Devapāla (A.D. 948-9), son of Kṣitipāla (Ins. 7); (2) Vināyakapāla II (A.D. 953-4); (3) Mahīpāla II (A.D. 955);97 and (4) Vijayapāla (A.D. 960), successor of Kṣitipāla (Ins. 11). Whether all these were distinct rulers or two or more of them were identical, it is difficult to say. Dr. Bhandarkar identifies Mahendrapāla II with Devapāla, and takes the kings Nos. 2, 3 and the predecessor of No. 4 to be the same person.98 Dr. N. Ray99 takes No. 1 to be son of Bhoja II, whom he identifies with Mahīpāla alias Kṣitipāla, but distinguishes him from Vināyakapāla. He also suggests that No. 2 was probably a son of Mahendrapāla II, No. 3 a son of No. 1, and No. 4 a son of No. 3, who was also called Kṣitipāla. Dr. Tripathi100 regards Nos. 1 and 2 respectively as a brother and a son of Mahendrapāla II, and No. 4 as a brother or half-brother of No. 1. He argues that there is not sufficient ground to hold that No. 3 was a Pratihāra emperor, and he might have been a vassal ruler who, as Rajor Inscription (Ins. 11) shows, often assumed imperial titles.101 It is also doubtful whether No. 2 is a separate king ruling in A.D. 953-4, or is to be identified with Vināyakapāla I whose name appeared in a record long after his death.102

The different views are quoted above just to indicate the great uncertainty prevailing about the succession to the imperial throne between A.D. 945 and 960. There is, however, no doubt that there was a steady decline in the power and authority of the empire during this period. The Chāhamānas of Partāḫar, in south-east Rājputāna, acknowledged Mahendrapāla II as overlord, and the imperial officers were posted at Ujjayinī and Maṇḍapikā (Māndu) in A.D. 945-6 (Ins. 10). But in a record dated A.D. 954, we find the Chandellas taking credit for defeating the Gurjaras and forcibly taking possession of the famous fort of Kālaṇjara, though they still refer to Vināyakapāla as protecting the earth.103 An inscription dated A.D. 960 (Ins. 11), found at Rajorgarh, about 28 miles south-west of the town of Alwar, records an order issued by the Mahā-
rājādhīrāja, Paramēśvara, the illustrious Mathanadeva of the Gurjara-Pratihāra lineage, residing at Rājyapurā (i.e. Rajor), to his officials. This record leaves no doubt that although, like the Chandellas, he invoked the name of the Pratihāra Emperor Vijayapāladeva as his suzerain, yet he ruled as a de facto independent king.

Most probably the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛishṇa III led a second expedition to Northern India about A.D. 963. His feudatory, Gāṅga chief Mārasiṃha, distinguished himself so much in this northern campaign that he came to be known as the king of the Gurjaras. This proves that the main brunt of the attack fell upon the Pratihāras. The great success of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king is proved by his Kanarese record incised on a stone slab found at Jura, 12 miles from Maihar Railway Station in Bundelkhand.¹⁰⁴

Although the Rāṣṭrakūṭas could not achieve any permanent success they probably gave the final blow to the Pratihāra domination in Central India. The Chandella ruler Dhaṅga (A.D. 950-1000) claims to have attained “supreme lordship after inflicting a defeat over the king of Kānyakubja.” Even Gwalior, which was a stronghold of the Pratihāras ever since the time of Rāmabhadra, if not earlier still, fell into the hands of the Chandellas. A few years later the Kachchhapaghāta chief Vajrādāman conquered it after defeating the Pratihāra Emperor.¹⁰⁵

The Chāhamānas of Śākambhari, many of whose chiefs helped their Pratihāra overlords as noted above,¹⁰⁶ asserted their independence, and so did also the Guhilas¹⁰⁷ and perhaps some other vassals. While the feudatories were gradually defying the imperial authority, there arose new powers like the Kalachuris in Central India, the Paramāras in Mālwā, and the Chaulukyas in Gujarāt to weaken still further the declining authority of the Pratihāras.

The history of these powers, which is related in detail in a subsequent chapter, leaves no doubt that about the middle of the tenth century A.D. the Pratihāra empire disintegrated and was gradually reduced to the territory round about Kanauj. We do not possess any record of the Pratihāra emperors for nearly half a century after Vijayapāla, who was on the throne early in A.D. 960. When the curtain rises again in A.D. 1019, the Pratihāra empire had vanished and North India presented the same political features as inevitably followed the disruption of an empire. Rājyapāla, the successor of Vijayapāla, ruled over the small kingdom of Kanauj, but the old imperial name and fame still lingered for a decade, to be finally swept away by the invasions of Sultān Mahmūd. Trilochanapāla,¹⁰⁸ the successor of Rājyapāla, ruling in A.D. 1027, is the last of the Imperial Pratihāras known to us.
Attention may be drawn to the fact that three of the powerful succession states that arose out of the ruins of the Pratihāra empire were those of the Chaḥamānas (Chauhāns) in Rājputāna, Chaulukyās (Solankis) in Gujarāt, and the Paramāras (Pawārs) in Mālwā. It is interesting to note that these three, along with the Parihāras (Pratihāras), are described in bardic traditions as Agnikula, originating from a sacrificial fire-pit (agnikunda) on Mount Abu. Whatever we might think of this mythical legend, it is not unlikely that these four tribes were connected by ethnic ties or some other close association, and we may therefore hold that a considerable part of the empire of the Pratihāras, specially their home-territory and original dominions, passed into the hands of kindred peoples who had hitherto accepted their suzerainty.

8. THE PRATIHĀRA EMPIRE—A GENERAL REVIEW

The Pratihāra empire, which continued in full glory for nearly a century, was the last great empire in Northern India before the Muslim conquest. This honour is accorded to the empire of Harsha by many historians of repute, but without any real justification; for the Pratihāra empire was probably larger, certainly not less in extent, and its duration was much longer. It recalled, and to a certain extent rivalled, the Gupta empire, and brought political unity and its attendant blessings upon a large part of Northern India. But its chief credit lies in its successful resistance to the foreign invasions from the west. From the days of Junaid (c. A.D. 725) to those of Mahmūd of Ghaznī, the Pratihāras stood as the bulwark of India's defence against the aggression of the Muslims. This was frankly recognised by the Arab writers themselves. Historians of India, since the days of Elphinstone, have wondered at the slow progress of Muslim invaders in India, compared to their rapid advance in other parts of the world. Arguments of doubtful validity have often been put forward to explain this unique phenomenon. But now there can be little doubt that it was the power of the Pratihāra arms that effectively barred the progress of the Muslims beyond the confines of Sindh, their first conquest, for nearly three hundred years. In the light of later events this must be regarded as the chief contribution of the Pratihāras to the history of India.

The Pratihāra empire was the logical end of the tripartite struggle for power that characterised the history of India for nearly a century (A.D. 750-850). Dhruva and Govinda III, as well as Dharmapāla and Devapāla, played the imperial role, and then came the turn of the Pratihāras under Bhoja and Mahendrapāla. Though in each case the empire, like waves of the sea, rose to the highest
point only to break down, the Pratihāras had a longer spell of success than either of their rivals.

The Pratihāra line was distinguished for its long succession of able rulers. Apart from the hero who founded the royal dynasty, four such remarkable personalities as Vatsarāja, Nāgabhata II, Bhoja, and Mahendrapāla, ruled almost uninterruptedly for a century and a half with a short break of three years. They created the tradition of an imperial glory which long endured and survived many rude shocks. It is reflected in the literary works of Rāja-şehir, the last Indian poet who could, with justifiable pride, refer to his royal patron as “the Mahānājāhūrāja of Āryāvarta” (King-Emperor of Northern India). But the best testimony to the power and glory of the Pratihāras is the eloquent tribute paid to their wealth and resources by their inveterate enemies, the Arabs.

GENERAL REFERENCES
1. R. C. Majumdar, The Gurjara-Pratihāras. JDL. X. 1-76 (abbreviated as GP).
2. R. S. Tripathi, History of Kanauj (abbreviated as THK).

IMPORTANT INSCRIPTIONS (Referred to in the text by the serial No.)
2. Jodhpur Inscription of Bāuka, EI, XVIII. 87.
3. Two Grants of Chālukya Chiefs of the Time of Mahendrapāla, EI, IX. 1.
5. Kahla Plate of Kalachuri Soṅhadeva, EI, VII. 88.
6. Harsha or Haras Stone Inscription of the Chāhamāna Vigrahārāja, EI, II. 119 ff.; IA, XXII. 60 ff.
7. Siyadoni Inscription, EI, I. 162.
8. Ani Inscription of Mahipāla (A.D. 917), IA, XVI. 173.
11. Rajorgarh Inscription of Vijayapāla (A.D. 960), EI, III. 263.

4. Cf. JDL, X. 10 and the authorities referred to therein.
10. JDL, X. 25; EI, XVIII. 239; THK. 226-7; AR. 40 (fn. 32).
11. IHQ. VI. 733; ABORI, XVIII. 398; IC. XI. 161.
12. Curiously enough this fact, mentioned in the Ellora Ins. (ASWI, V. 87), is not referred to by any of those who oppose the view that Vatsaraja ruled in Mālwā.
13. Cf. Hansot Pl. EI, XII. 197. The name of the suzerain king is given as Nāgāvaloka, but he is generally identified with Nāgabhata I (tibd. 200). The grant was issued from Broach and records the gift of a village in Ākrūreśvara-vihāra which has been identified with Ankleśvar tāluk on the left bank of the Narmadā. We may, therefore, regard the Chāhamāna principality as extending up to the Kim river and thus corresponding to the old Gurjara kingdom of Nāndipuri.
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14. It has been urged (JIH, XXII. 94) that according to Antroli-Chhavoli pl. (JBBRAS, XVI. 105), dated A.D. 757, "Karka II, a feudatory Rāṣhṭrakūṭa chief of Gujārāt, gave away villages from practically the same region, showing thereby that sometime between A.D. 756 and 757 the Rāṣhṭrakūṭa ruler Dantidurga had succeeded in defeating the Pratihāras and ending their supremacy in Lāṭa." But the villages granted lay to the south of the Kim river. Dr. Altekar argues (AR. 11) that "since the donee hailed from Jambusāra in the Broach District this region was included in the dominions of Karka II. But this assumption can hardly be justified. On the whole, there is nothing to indicate that Nāgabhaṭa lost his supremacy over the feudatory principality of Broach which extended up to the Kim river in the south (see preceding note)."

15. ABORI, XVIII. 397-8.
17. Fleet (EI, VI. 195); Bhandarkar (EI, XVIII. 238-9); Altekar (AR. 39); Tripathi (THK. 225-6).
18. J. C. Ghosh (IHQ, VI. 755); Dasaratha Sarma (ABORI, XVIII. 396; JIH, XXIII. 43); H. L. Jain (IC, XI. 161).
19. H. L. Jain, op. cit. But in the map on p. 165, Badnawar is placed to the north-west of Ujjain.
20. Baroda Pl. of Karkaraja, IA, XII, 163.
21. Daulatpura CP. (EI, V. 208); Osia Ins. (ASI, 1908-9, p. 108; JRAS, 1907, p. 1010).
22. THK. 213.
23. I proposed the identification of the Bhandis with the Bhaṭṭis (JDL, X. 28), and this view was accepted by Tripathi (THK. 229). Their identification with Bhaṭṭis was first proposed by Ojha and is accepted by many. Bhandi is referred to in Harsha-charita, but we do not know anything about him or his successor, not even whether he was a ruling chief.
24. Rādhanpur and Wani Grant of Govinda III (EI, VI. 248; IA, XI. 157).
25. IHQ, XIV. 844.
26. Cf. HBR. 105, fn. 1, 2 and also Ch. III. §2, below.
28. Vide infra, Ch. III, § 2.
29. The identification of these places has been discussed in JRAS, 1909, pp. 257-8. Anartta is northern part of Kāśiāwār Peninsula, and Vatsa probably represents the region round Kauśāmbi, or Rewa country, further to the south, which is associated with the name of Vatsa.
30. Cf. JIH, XXII. 89 ff, PIHC, XI. 141.
31. JIH, XXII. 103.
32. Baroda Pl. IA, XII, 163; Sisavai Grant, v. 15; EI, XXIII, 209.
32a. References are to the list of "Important Inscriptions" given at the end of this Chapter.
33. Vide infra, Ch. V, § VI.
34. For a possible conflict or alliance between Nāgabhaṭa II and the E. Chāluksya king Vijayāditya II, cf. Ch. VI.
35. JIH, XXII. 102-3.
36. EI, XXVI. 185.
37. The Barah CP (EI, XIX. 15) shows that the Kālaṇjara-maṇḍala in the Kānya-kubja-bhuṭki was included in the dominions of Nāgabhaṭa II.
38. Baroda Pl. IA, XII, 163.
39. The victory of Govinda III is referred to in many Rāṣhṭrakūṭa records of the main and Gurjara branches. Nāgabhaṭa is mentioned by name in Sanjān CP. (EI, XVIII. 235) which also refers to Govinda’s advance up to the Himaḷayas. The Pathari Pillar Ins. (EI, IX. 255) refers to the ‘hasty retreat’ and ‘devastated home’ of Nāgayaloka, who has been identified with Nāgabhaṭa II. Karka, to whom the credit for this achievement is given, probably accompanied the Rāṣhṭrakūṭa king Govinda III (IA, 1911, 239).
40. Sanjān CP. v. 23 (EI, XVIII. 245).
41. Dr. Altekar has shown good grounds for the belief that Govinda III led more than one expedition to Northern India, and has given a revised chronology of his campaigns (D. R. Bhandarkar Vol. 153). But he has somewhat changed his views in the preceding chapter.
42. EI, IX. 198.
43. EI, I. 158-7.
44. EI, XIX. 15.
45. THK. 238; JIH, XXII. 104.
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46. This appears from the epithets given to the various kings in the official genealogy contained in the royal charters.

47. El, i. 154.
48. This seems to be hinted at in v. 12 of the Gwālior Ins. (No. 1).
49. El, XIX. 15; v. 208.
50. El, XIX. 15; XXIII. 242.
52. See p. 20.
54. See above p. 25.
55. See above, p. 10.
56. Begumra Pl. IA, XII. 179.
57. See later, Ch. V. §§.
58. JRAS, 1895. 513; El, IX. 277.
59. El, i. 156.
60. Tripathi thinks that Guhila II accompanied Mahendrapāla I in his expedition against Bengal (THK. 250-255; cf. also Ch. V. §VII. 2). The question cannot be definitely decided one way or the other.

61. For a detailed account, cf. PIHC, VI. 166.
63. Begumra Grant of Krīṣṇa (IA, XIII. 66); Begumra Grant of Indra III, No. I, v. 15, El, IX. 31.
64. El, XIV. 176.
65. This follows from the description of Arab writer Sulaimān that Bhoja’s territory formed a tongue of land. It is also confirmed by a tradition in the Skanda Purāṇa to which Dr. Raychaudhuri drew attention (IHQ. V. 129-133).

66. Pehoa Ins. (El, i. 184).
67. HIED, i. 4.
68. According to the story in the Skanda Purāṇa, referred to in fn. 65 above, Bhoja, king of Kānyakubja, abdicated his throne and went on a pilgrimage to the holy sites of Saurāshṭra. But this story, mixed up with myths and fables, can hardly be regarded as historical. Dr. Raychaudhuri has sought to prove the abdication by reference to epigraphic data, but without success (cf. THK. 245).

69. For full discussion on this point, cf. JDL, X. 55.
70. The name read by Fleet as Mahishapāla in the Asni CP. (IA, XVI. 173) is obviously a misreading for Mahīndrapāla.
71. Siyadoni Ins. (El, i. 162).
72. This form occurs in Partābgarh Ins. (El, XIV. 182).
73. Tripathi is wrong in his statement that according to Asni Ins. Mahīpāla was born of Mahidevi (THK. 254). This (or any other) inscription does not give the name of Mahīpāla’s mother.
74. Hadda Ins. IA, XII. 190; XVIII. 90.
75. Khajurāho Ins. El, i. 122.
76. JDL, X. 58-63; THK. 257.
77. El, XIV. 180.
78. IA, LVII. 230.
79. THK. 255.
80. Ibid.
81. See later, Ch. V. §§.
82. PIHC, VI. 169.
83. HIED. I. 21.
84. For full discussion, cf. JDL, X. 63; THK. 263.
85. As Rājaśekhara was the guru of Mahendrapāla also, it is likely that he wrote his poems in the early part of Mahīpāla’s reign.
86. El, VII. 38.
87. AR, 101-2; THK. 260; JDL, X. 66.
88. Khajurāho Ins. El, i. 121.
89. Some scholars hold that the incident refers to the help that Mahīpāla received in his struggle against his brother (THK. 256). But, as already noted above, we have no evidence of any such struggle for the throne.
91. ASI, 1924-25, p. 163.
92. This is strongly denied by Tripathi (THK. 262, 270). He, however, observes that the Chandella ruler Yāsovarman gave ‘a great blow to the prestige of the Prāthāras’ (ibid. 272).
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93. Deoli Pl. (v. 25). EI, V. 188.
94. THK. 267-8; AR. 113. But this does not seem very likely. Possibly the two forts were conquered by a third power (Kalachuris or Chandellas) allied to the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Gurjara-Pratihāras gave up all hopes of recovering them (cf. JOR. XVI. 155-58). For a critical discussion of Mahipāla's reign cf. JIH, XXXVIII. 611-28.
95. ASI, 1924-25, p. 168.
96. Bhandarkar infers from Ins. 10 that Vidagdha was an epithet of Mahendrapāla II (List No. 61. fn. 3).
98. List of Ins. p. 400.
99. IA, LVII. 224.
100. THK. 271-4.
101. Ibid. 275.
102. The Khajurāho Ins. of Dhaṅgā, dated A.D. 954 (EI, I. 122), mentions, in the last line, Vināyakapāladēva as protecting the earth. There is no doubt that he was the Pratihāra ruler of Kanauj to whom the Chandellas still paid at least nominal allegiance. He was formerly identified with Vināyakapāla I whose last known date is A.D. 942. But as he must have died before A.D. 946, the known date of his son and successor Mahendrapāla II (ins. 10), it was held that the inscription, though originally drafted earlier than A.D. 946, was actually set up in A.D. 954, without any modification of the suzerain's name. But this explanation is not accepted by some scholars who regard him as a different ruler Vināyakapāla II (THK. 273; IA, LVII. 232).
103. See preceding note. If, as noted above, the fort of Kālaṇjara had been seized by the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, the Chandellas probably recovered it from them. But even then they conquered it on their own account and not on behalf of their Gurjara-Pratihāra overlord. It is possible that the successful reconquest of this region from the Rāṣṭrakūṭas made the Chandellas virtually an independent power.
104. EI, XIX. 287. Altekar takes quite a different view of the expedition (AR. 121), but does not meet the argument of Mr. N. L. Rao (EI, XIX. 289) that the northern campaign of Kṛṣṇa III took place in A.D. 963-4. The reference to the Gurjaras makes it unlikely that the campaign was directed against a Paramāra king, as Altekar thinks. Evidently Altekar has changed his view; cf. above p. 14.
105. IA, XV. 36. This must have taken place before A.D. 977 when Vajradāman was already in possession of Gwālior (JASB, XXXI. 393).
107. Vide infra, the history of the Guhilas and Chāhamānas in Ch. V.
108. Jhusi CP. IA, XVIII. 33. Another king Yasahpāla is known from Karā Ins. (JRAS, 1927, p. 692), but it is not definitely known whether he belonged to the Imperial Pratihāra family.
CHAPTER III

THE PĀLAS

1. THE RISE OF THE PĀLAS

Reference has been made above to the political disintegration of Bengal resulting in anarchy and confusion for more than a century after the death of Śaśāṅka. But about the middle of the eighth century A.D. a heroic and laudable effort was made to remedy the miserable state of things. The people at last realized that all their troubles were due to the absence of a strong central authority and that this could be set up only by the voluntary surrender of powers to one popular leader by the numerous chiefs exercising sovereignty in different parts of the country. It reflects no small credit upon the political sagacity and the spirit of sacrifice of the leading men of Bengal that they rose to the occasion and selected one among themselves to be the sole ruler of Bengal to whom they all paid willing allegiance. It is not every age, it is not every nation, that can show such a noble example of subordinating private interests to public welfare. The nearest parallel is the great political change that took place in Japan in A.D. 1870. The result was almost equally glorious and the great bloodless revolution ushered in an era of glory and prosperity such as Bengal has never enjoyed before or since.

The hero who was thus called to the throne by the popular voice was named Gopāla. We do not know anything of his early history, but may very well presume that he was a leading chief who had already made his mark as a ruler and a general. His father Vapyaṭa is said to have destroyed his enemies, and was perhaps a military chief of renown, but we cannot say whether he was a ruling chief. Dayitavishṇu, the grandfather of Gopāla, is only described as a learned man and evidently had no military achievements to his credit. Gopāla was thus the real founder of the ruling dynasty which came to be known as Pāla, from the last part of his name which formed the name-ending of all his successors —affording an almost exact parallel to the Gupta dynasty. Gopāla was a Kshatriya, or at least came to be regarded as such, and it was only at a very late age that his family claimed any mythical pedigree such as descent from the Sun or the Ocean. Gopāla was a Buddhist and so were all his successors. According to Tibetan tradition, Gopāla founded a monastery at Nālandā.
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In a poetical work Rāmcharita⁴, written by a court-poet of a later Pāla king, Varendra or North Bengal is said to be the fatherland (janakabhū) of the Pālas. At the same time, there are good grounds to believe that Gopāla’s original kingdom was in Vaṅga or East Bengal. We may, therefore, readily accept Tāranātha’s account according to which Gopāla was born of a Kshatriya family near Pundravardhana (Bogra District), but was subsequently elected ruler of Bhaṅgala, which was undoubtedly a corrupt form of Vaṅgāla or Vaṅga. Tāranātha seems to imply that the election was only in respect of this kingdom which formed a part of Bengal. But the Khālimpur copper-plate (No. 1)⁴a of Gopāla’s son Dharmapāla speaks of his having been elected without any such geographical limitations. But whatever might have been the original limits of his kingdom, it is probable that before his death he consolidated his rule over the whole of Bengal.⁵ His reign-period is not definitely known but probably extended from A.D. 750 to 770.⁶

2. DHARMAPĀLA (c. A.D. 770-810)

When Dharmapāla ascended the throne of Bengal, the political horizon was gloomy in the extreme. The Pratihāras, who had established their power in Mālwa and Rājputāna, were gradually extending their territories in the east, and the newly established Rāśtrakūṭa power in the Deccan also cast covetous eyes on the rich fertile plains of the north.⁷ Dharmapāla was shortly involved in a struggle with these two powers—whether deliberately out of imperial designs, or as a means of defence against aggressive enemies, we cannot say. The course of events in this long-drawn struggle cannot be definitely traced in chronological order, but some of the main incidents can be broadly noted. The first encounter took place between the Pratihāra ruler Vatsarāja and Dharmapāla, probably somewhere in the Gangetic Doáb,⁸ in which the former gained a complete victory. He is said to have “appropriated with ease the fortune of royalty of the Gauḍa” and “carried away Gauḍa’s umbrellas of state.” But before Vatsarāja could collect the spoils of his victory, he was defeated by the Rāśtrakūṭa king Dhruva and forced to take refuge in the deserts of Rājputāna. Dhruva then advanced to the Doáb⁹ and defeated Dharmapāla, but shortly after his victory he retreated to the Deccan.

It would appear that Dharmapāla gained more than he had lost by the incursions of the Rāśtrakūṭas. For while Vatsarāja’s power was effectively destroyed, Dharmapāla did not suffer much either in power or prestige. The Rāśtrakūṭas not only freed him from the Pratihāra menace, but left in the harried and devastated Northern India a free field for his military ambitions. He was
not slow to take full advantage of the situation, and by a series of victorious campaigns, made himself the suzerain of nearly the whole of Northern India.

Although the details and chronology of Dharmapāla's campaigns are not known to us, we can form some idea of their nature and extent from the description of the dūrbār which he held at Kanauj. His main object in convoking the great assembly was to proclaim himself as the suzerain and install Chakrāyudha on the throne of Kanauj in place of Indrāyudha whom he had defeated. The dūrbār was attended by a number of vassal chiefs among whom are mentioned the rulers of Bhoja, Matsya, Madra, Kuru, Yadu, Yavana, Avanti, Gandhāra and Kīra, who uttered acclamations of approval, "bowing down respectfully with their diadems trembling." This categorical and specific statement, occurring in a contemporary record, cannot be lightly brushed aside, and we must hold that Dharmapāla must have enjoyed, at least for some time, the unique position of a paramount lord in Northern India. This view is supported by the fact that even in a poetical work composed by a Gujarāti poet in the eleventh century A.D., Dharmapāla is referred to as the "Lord of Northern India" (Uttarāpathasvatīn).

We know very little of the different states, mentioned above, which acknowledged the suzerainty of Dharmapāla, but most of them are well-known names. Gandhāra represents the Western Punjab and the lower Kābul valley. Madra was in the Central Punjab, while Kīra, Kuru, and Matsya correspond respectively to Kāngra, Thāneswar and Jaipur regions. Avanti denotes the whole or a part of Mālwā, and the Yavana must be taken to refer to a Muslim principality in the Sindhu valley. The location of Yadu and Bhoja, though these are very well-known in ancient Indian history, offers some difficulty. The Yadus or Yādavas had various settlements such as Simhapura (Punjāb), Mathurā, and Dvārakā (Kāthiāwār Peninsula), and probably the first is meant here. The Bhojas probably ruled over Berār or a part of it.

These states were not annexed by Dharmapāla, but their rulers acknowledged his suzerainty, and were evidently left undisturbed so long as they paid homage and fulfilled the other conditions imposed on them. The kingdom of Kanauj was, however, on a different footing. Its ruler Indrāyudha, who was probably a vassal of Vatsarāja, was defeated and dethroned, and another ruler, Chakrāyudha, probably a member of the same royal family, was placed on the throne by Dharmapāla. It was the visible symbol of the most significant change in the political situation of the time, viz. the transfer of supreme power in Northern India from the Pratihāras
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to the Pālas and the formal assumption of imperial authority by the latter. Kanauj thus became once more the seat and symbol of imperialism,\(^\text{16}\) though it was ruled directly not by Dharmapāla, but by his nominee Chakrāyudha.

The empire of Dharmapāla may thus be broadly divided into three distinct parts. Bengal and Bihār, which formed its nucleus, were directly ruled by him. Beyond this, the kingdom of Kanauj, roughly corresponding to modern U.P., was a close dependency, whose ruler was nominated by, and directly subordinate to, him. Further to the west and south, in the Punjāb, Western Hill States, Rājputāna, Mālwā and Berār, were a number of vassal states which did not form an integral part of the dominions ruled over by Dharmapāla, but whose rulers acknowledged him as their overlord and paid him homage and obedience. According to a tradition preserved in the Sva-yamabhū-Purāṇa, Nepāl was also a vassal state of Dharmapāla.\(^\text{17}\)

The position of supremacy attained by Dharmapāla must have been the result of a series of victorious military campaigns. We are told that, in the course of these, Dharmapāla’s army visited such holy places as Kedāra and Gokarṇa. The former is even now a famous place of pilgrimage on the Himālayas in Garhwal and may be regarded as a landmark in the northern campaign of Dharmapāla in course of which he subdued Kuru, Madra, Kira and probably other neighbouring states. The location of Gokarṇa is somewhat uncertain. It has been identified with a holy place of that name in the North Kānarā District of the Bombay State,\(^\text{18}\) as well as with a sacred site in Nepāl\(^\text{19}\) on the bank of the Bagmatī river. The latter view is more probable. If we accept the other, we have to presume that Dharmapāla marched over the whole of the Deccan right across the entire length of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dominions. We have no independent evidence of such a brilliant military campaign, and if there was any basis for it, it would surely have been prominently mentioned in the Pāla records.

Dharmapāla’s triumphant career did not remain unchallenged for long. Nāgabhaṭṭa II, the son and successor of Vatsarāja, revived the fortunes of his family and adopted an aggressive imperialist policy like his father. He achieved great success and even conquered Kanauj and drove away Chakrāyudha. This was really a challenge to Dharmapāla whose protégé Chakrāyudha was. A struggle for supremacy between the two rivals was inevitable, and Nāgabhaṭṭa made extensive preparations.\(^\text{20}\) According to the Pratihāra records, a pitched battle was fought, probably near Monghyr, in which Nāgabhaṭṭa defeated the mighty lord of Vṛanga “who appeared
like a mass of dark, dense cloud in consequence of the crowd of mighty elephants, horses, and chariots".21

The Pāla records make no reference to this struggle, but the very fact that the Pratihāras advanced up to Monghyr supports their claim to a great victory. Unfortunately, Nāgabhaṭa II had to suffer the same fate as his father. Once more it was the Rāṣṭrakūṭas who decided the political issue in Northern India. Govinda III completely defeated Nāgabhaṭa II and forced him to give up the dream of founding an empire in India.22

The Rāṣṭrakūṭa records tell us that both Dharmapāla and Chakrāyudha submitted of their own accord to Govinda III.23 Considering the great advantages which these two had derived from the timely intervention of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king, this is by no means surprising or improbable. Indeed it is even possible that they appealed to Govinda III for aid to save themselves from Nāgabhaṭa’s domineering power, and secured it by a formal acknowledgment of his suzerainty. But in reality this meant nothing, for, as they could have easily anticipated, Govinda III soon left for the Deccan and Dharmapāla was once more free to pursue unchecked his imperial ambitions.

On the whole there are good grounds to believe that the great success of Nāgabhaṭa II was a passing phase that ended with the Rāṣṭrakūṭa invasion, and Dharmapāla continued to rule as a mighty emperor till the end of his life. When he died at an advanced age, after a reign of 32 years or more, he left intact24 his extensive dominions to his son Devapāla.

Although we know so little of the personal history of Dharmapāla, there is enough to indicate that his career was a remarkable one. He was the hero of a hundred fights and passed through many crises, when not only his own fortunes, but the fate of Bengal hung in the balance. But he never faltered; he overcame all difficulties, and in the end achieved phenomenal success. His triumph in the political field seems almost miraculous. Bengal, which had lost all political homogeneity and had almost been eliminated as a factor in Indian politics, suddenly emerged under him as the most powerful state in Northern India. The country, which was hopelessly divided by internal dissensions and trampled upon by a succession of foreign invaders for more than a century, was raised by him to the position of a strong integrated state exercising imperial sway over a considerable part of Northern India. Śaśānka’s dream of founding a great Gauḍa empire was at last fulfilled. The new imperial status attained by Bengal is reflected in the records of Dharmapāla. He assumed full imperial titles Paramēśvara, Paramabhaṭṭāraka,
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Mahārājādhirāja. Reference has been made above to the great imperial durbar which he held at Kanauj. A grandiloquent description is also given (Ins. No. 1) of the pomp and splendour of the court which he held at the other imperial city Pātaliputra, “where the bed of the Gaṅgā was covered by his mighty fleet and the daylight was darkened by the crowd of his mighty elephants and the dust raised by the hoofs of numberless horses presented by the kings of the north, some of whom also attended in person with their innumerable infantry.” These are no doubt poetic embellishments, but they reflect the new spirit of the people.

The credit for this great transformation of Bengal is no doubt mainly due to the spirit of self-sacrifice and the sense of political wisdom displayed by her people and leading chiefs when they voluntarily surrendered their power and authority to their elected chief, Gopāla. Verily a remarkable act produced a remarkable result, of which there are few parallels in the history of India. But king Dharmapāla is also entitled to a large share of the credit. He personified the new energy and vision of the people, and led them to the Promised Land. His grateful subjects fully realized what they owed to him, and his name and fame were sung all over the country. It is a strange irony of fate that he should have been forgotten in the land of his birth but his memory should be kept green in Tibet. According to Tibetan tradition,25 he was a great patron of Buddhism and founded the famous Vikramaśīla monastery which developed into a great centre of Buddhist learning and culture,26 second only to that of Nālandā. It was located at the top of a hill, on the banks of the Gaṅgā in Magadha, and most probably the hill at Pātharghāta near Bhāgalpur represents the site of this great university. It was named after the great emperor who had a second name Vikramaśīla. Dharmapāla also founded a great vihāra at Somapuri in Varendra, the ruins of which have been recently excavated at Pāhārpur in the Rajshāhi District.27 According to Tibetan authority, Dharmapāla also founded a big and splendid monastery at Odantapurī in Bihar, but others give the credit for this achievement to Devapāla or Gopāla. Dharmapāla was the patron of the great Buddhist author Haribhadra and, according to Tāranātha, founded fifty religious schools. He thus distinguished himself also in the peaceful pursuits of life in spite of his untiring activities in the field of war and politics.

Dharmapāla married Raṇnādevī, the daughter of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Parabala. A Rāṣṭrakūṭa king of this name is known to have ruled in Central India in A.D. 861.28 Although he is usually regarded as the father-in-law of Dharmapāla, it seems very doubtful in view of the fact that Dharmapāla must have died more than half
a century before this date. It is not, of course, beyond the range of possibility that out of political considerations Dharmapāla married at a fairly advanced age a young lady of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa royal family. The issue of this marriage was Devapāla who succeeded his father about A.D. 810. The last known date of Dharmapāla is his 32nd regnal year (Ins. No. 1). According to Tāranātha he ruled for 64 years; but such a long reign is not supported by any other positive evidence. We may, therefore regard Dharmapāla as having ruled from c. A.D. 770-810.

3 DEVAPĀLA (c. A.D. 810-850)

Devapāla was a worthy son of a worthy father. Not only did he maintain intact the great empire inherited by him, but he even appears to have extended its boundaries. He is said to have exacted tributes from the whole of Northern India from the Himālayas to the Vindhyas and from the eastern to the western ocean. More specifically we are told that his victorious campaigns led him as far as Kāmboja in the west and Vindhyas in the south, and that he exterminated the Utkalas, conquered Prāgjyotisha (Assam), curbed the pride of the Hūnas, and destroyed the haughtiness of the lords of the Dravīḍas and Gurjaras. In these victories he was considerably helped by the diplomacy and wise counsels of his ministers, Darbhapāni and his grandson Kedāramiśra, and the bravery and military skill of his cousin, Jayapāla. It would appear from these statements that Devapāla, like his father, followed an aggressive imperialist policy and spent a great part of his life in military activities. He was materially helped by his cousin Jayapāla, son of Dharmapāla's younger brother Vākpāla. Jayapāla was the commander of the army, and we are told that on his approach the king of Prāgjyotisha (Assam) submitted without any fight and the king of Utkala fled from his capital city. It is likely that both the kingdoms acknowledged the suzerainty of the Pāla empire but, as will be shown below, threw off the yoke within a short time.

On the opposite extremity of the empire lay the Hūnas. They had several principalities, one of which was situated in Uttarāpatha near the Himālayas. This was probably subjugated by Devapāla, who then proceeded to the Kāmboja territory which lay still further to the west in the North-West Frontier Province. Unfortunately, we do not know the details of his campaign or the extent of his success.

The Gurjara lords against whom Devapāla fought must have been the Pratihāra rulers. It is possible that Nāgabhaṭa II tried
to assert his power after the death of Dharmapāla and if, as some scholars believe, he transferred his capital to Kanauj, he must have achieved some success. But Devapāla soon re-established the Pāla supremacy, and it was possibly after his successful campaign against the Pratihāras that he advanced to the Hūna and Kāmboja principalities. Nāgabhaṭa’s son, Rāmabhadra, probably also had his kingdom invaded by Devapāla. The next Pratihāra king Bhoja also, in spite of his initial success, suffered reverses at the hands of Devapāla, and could not restore the fortunes of his family so long as the Pāla emperor was alive. Thus Devapāla successfully fought with three generations of Pratihāra rulers.33 and maintained the Pāla supremacy in Northern India.

The Draviḍa king defeated by Devapāla is generally supposed to be the Rāṣṭrakūṭa ruler Amoghavarsha. This view is not unlikely in view of the part played by Dhruva and Govinda III in Northern India, and the weakness and pacific disposition of Amoghavarsha. But Draviḍa, it should be remembered, normally denotes the land of the Tamils in the south and not the Deccan, the territory of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. From this point of view, it has been suggested that the Draviḍa king defeated by Devapāla was most probably his contemporary Pāṇḍya king Śrī-Māra Śrī-Vallabha who claims in an inscription to have defeated a hostile confederation consisting of the Gaṅgas, Pallavas, Cholas, Kāḷingas, Magadhas and others.34 The Magadhas in this list obviously refer to the Pāla forces, and it is not unlikely that the conquest of Utkala brought Devapāla into contact with the southern powers. As the Rāṣṭrakūṭas were common enemies of these powers and the Pālas, an alliance between them might have been dictated by political exigencies. Unfortunately, we know little of this phase of Pāla diplomacy, and cannot say anything definite about the expedition of Devapāla to the far south. But some victorious campaign in this region may be the basis of the claim put forward in the Monghyr copper-plate (No. 2) that the empire of Devapāla extended from the Himālayas in the north to Rāmeśvara Setubandha in the south.

But whatever we might think of Devapāla’s victory in the extreme south, there cannot be any doubt that he occupied the position of a paramount ruler in North India. It does not appear that his direct rule extended beyond Bengal and Bihār, but as his victorious arms reached the frontier both in the east and the west, there is no reason to doubt that he effectively maintained the suzerainty which he had inherited from his father. His great rivals, the Pratihāras, in spite of some initial successes, could not re-establish their power till after his death. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas left North India alone...
during his reign, and Devapāla probably carried the fight to their dominions. He certainly led his army as far as the Sindhu and claimed an imperial position in North India, a feat to which no other ruler of Bengal could lay claim during the next thousand years.

Devapāla had a long reign of about forty years. He was a great patron of Buddhism like his father, and his fame spread to many Buddhist countries outside India. About this time a powerful Buddhist dynasty, the Sālendras, ruled over an extensive empire in the East Indies. Bālaputra-deva, a king of this dynasty, sent an ambassador to Devapāla, asking for a grant of five villages in order to endow a monastery at Nālandā. Devapāla granted the request. Another record informs us that a learned Buddhist priest, hailing from Nagarahāra (Jelālābād), received high honours from Devapāla and was appointed the head of Nālandā monastery.

The reigns of Dharmapāla and Devapāla constitute the most brilliant chapter in the history of Bengal. Never before, or since, till the advent of the British, did Bengal play such an important role in Indian politics. A brief but interesting account of the Pāla empire at the height of its glory is given by the Arab merchant Sulaimān who visited India and wrote his account in A.D. 851. He refers to the Pāla kingdom as Ruhmi, a name which cannot be satisfactorily explained. According to him the Pāla ruler was at war with his neighbours, the Gurjaras and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, but his troops were more numerous than those of his adversaries. We are told that the Pāla king took 50,000 elephants in his military campaigns, and ten to fifteen thousand men in his army were “employed in fulling and washing cloths.”

The Tibetan records claim that some of their rulers, who were contemporaries of Dharmapāla and Devapāla, conquered the dominions of the Pālas, and specifically refer to Dharmapāla as submitting to Tibetan supremacy. This is not, however, corroborated by any independent evidence, and we cannot say how far the claims can be regarded as historically true. It is not unlikely that Tibet exercised some political influence in Eastern India during the period A.D. 750-850, and the occasional reverses of the Pāla rulers at the hands of the Prathiharas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas may be partly due to Tibetan aggression.

4. FALL OF THE PĀLA EMPIRE

Devapāla was succeeded by Vigrahapāla. He was most probably a nephew, descended from Vākpāla, the younger brother of Dharmapāla, but some scholars regard him as a son of Devapāla. After a short reign of probably three or four years he abdicated the
throne and retired to an ascetic life. His son and successor Nārāyaṇa-
pāla, who ruled for more than half a century, was also of a pacific
and religious disposition. During the reigns of these two unmartial
kings the Pāla empire fell to pieces. Some time after A.D. 860 the
Rāṣṭrakūṭas defeated the Pāla rulers. The Pratihāras took
advantage of the distress and weakness of their rivals; and their
rulers Bhoja and Mahendrapāla gradually extended their power to
the east. Nārāyaṇapāla not only lost Magadha (South Bihār), but
for a time even North Bengal, the homeland of the Pālas, passed into
the hands of the Pratihāra king Mahendrapāla.

The triumph of the Pratihāras encouraged the subordinate chiefs
to throw off the yoke of the Pālas. King Harjara of Assam assumed
imperial titles and is credited with many victories; and the Śailod-
bhūtas established their power on a firm footing in Orissa.

The disintegration of the Pāla empire was thus almost complete,
and for a time the rule of Nārāyaṇapāla was probably confined to a
part of Bengal. He, however, recovered North Bengal and South
Bihār from the Pratihāras some time before the year 54 of his
reign, which probably corresponds to about A.D. 908. This was
probably due to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa invasion of the Pratihāra dominions
—the factor which had saved the Pālas more than once in the past.
The Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛishṇa II, who defeated the Pratihāras, how-
ever, also claims success against the Gauḍas and it is not unlikely
that Nārāyaṇapāla was defeated by him. But peace was estab-
lished and probably cemented by a marriage alliance. For the
Rāṣṭrakūṭa Tūṅga, whose daughter was married to Nārāyaṇapāla’s
son Rājyapāla (Ins. No 5), is most probably to be identified with
Jagattūṅga, the son of Kṛishṇa II. In any case, Nārāyaṇapāla re-
established the Pāla supremacy in Bengal and Bihār before his death
which took place about A.D. 908. He was succeeded by his son
Rājyapāla.

The Pāla kingdom steadily declined during the reigns of Rājya-
pāla and his two successors, Gopāla II and Vīgrahapāla II, which
covered a period of about eighty years. The collapse of the Pratihāra
empire might have offered some respite to the Pālas, but they
suffered equally from the new powers that arose out of the ruins
of that empire. The records of both the Chandellas and the Kala-
churis refer to the defeat inflicted by their rulers upon Gauḍa,
Rādhā, Aṅga, and Vaṅgāla. The mention of these separate units
indicates a disintegration of the Pāla kingdom into a number of
independent or semi-independent principalities. And we definitely
know the existence of at least two such states within the boundaries
of Bengal.
The first is a kingdom in West Bengal ruled by a Kāmboja family. We know the names of three rulers of this family, viz. Rājyapāla and his two sons Nārāyaṇapāla and Nayapāla. In a charter issued by Nayapāla in which both he and his father are given imperial titles, Paramēśvara, Paramabhaṭṭāraka and Mahārājaṇḍhirāja, lands are granted in the Vardhamāna-bhukti, i.e. Burdwān division in West Bengal. The Kāmboja rule in North Bengal is testified to by an inscribed pillar found in Dinajpur District which mentions a lord of Gauḍa belonging to the Kāmboja family. The date of this record has been interpreted as 888 (Śaka), though this is doubtful. But there is no doubt that both the records belong to the latter half of the tenth century A.D. and probably refer to the same family. The names of the three kings who thus ruled over both North and West Bengal were all borne by the Pāla kings of Bengal and, what is curious, Rājyapāla’s queen is named Bhāgyadevi, as is also the case with the Pāla king Rājyapāla. Nevertheless we cannot identify the two without more evidence. It is held by some scholars that the Kāmbojas, a hill tribe from Tibet or other regions, conquered Bengal. But it is more likely that some high official of the Pālas, belonging to the Kāmboja family or tribe, took advantage of the weakness of the Pāla kings and set up an independent kingdom. Its capital was Priyāṅgu which cannot be identified.

A copper-plate found at Chittagong mentions a Buddhist king of Harikelā named Mahārājaṇḍhirāja Kāntideva. Harikelā primarily denotes Eastern Bengal, or a part of it comprising the Sylhet and portions of neighbouring districts, though it was sometimes used in a wider sense, as a synonym of Vaṅga (East and South Bengal). The capital of Kāntideva was Vardhamānapura. If it denotes the modern city of Burdwān then his kingdom must have comprised a portion of West Bengal also, but this is very doubtful. The date of Kāntideva is not definitely known, but he probably reigned during the century following the death of Devapāla.

Kings with names ending in -chandra also ruled in East Bengal as independent kings after Kāntideva. One of them is Layahachandra whose record dated in his 18th regnal year has been found near Comilla. Two Buddhist kings, Traillokyachandra and his son Śrīchandra, ruled over Harikelā and Chandradvīpa (Bākarganj District). Śrīchandra, who ruled for no less than 46 years, probably flourished towards the close of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century A.D. Later, this dynasty extended its power to South Bengal. The original home of this dynasty was Rohitāgiri which has been identified by some with Rohtasgāhp and by others with Lalmai or Maināmati hills near Comilla in Bengal.
THE PĀLAS

Gopāla II is known to have ruled in East Bengal in the first, and North Bengal in the sixth year of his reign. But gradually he or his son and successor Vigrahapāla II lost hold of nearly the whole of Bengal and ruled only in Bihār. The Pāla kingdom had thus reached the very nadir when Mahipāla I, the son of Vigrahapāla II, ascended the throne about A.D. 988. The new king was, however, made of sterner stuff, and succeeded to a large extent in recovering the old glory of his family. A full account of his reign will be given in the next volume, and it will suffice here to state that before he had reigned for three years he had reconquered nearly the whole of North and East Bengal “after defeating the usurpers who had seized his ancestral kingdom” (Ins. No. 5). Thus by the year A.D. 1000, with which this volume closes, the Pālas had once more become a powerful ruling family in Eastern India. Mahipāla, who is justly described as the second founder of the Pāla kingdom, gave it a new lease of life which continued with strange vicissitudes, for nearly another century and a half.

GENERAL REFERENCE
1. *HBR* Ch VI. (It contains a full reference to authorities for topics discussed in this chapter).

IMPORTANT INSCRIPTIONS
4. Bādāi Pillar Inscription, *EI* II 160
   (All the above inscriptions are edited in *Gaudatekhośala*, a Bengali work, by Akshaya Kumar Maitreyan)

2. The election of a ruler by the prakṛtis or people of Bengal in order to remove misrule and anarchy is referred to in Ins. No. 1, and also described by the Tibetan historian Līmā Tāranātha (*History of Buddhism in India*, Tr. by A. Schiefner). Tāranātha’s work was written in A.D. 1608, but he had evidently access to old traditions and records now lost. His statements about the Pāla kings, though interesting and informative, should not be accepted as historical unless corroborated by independent evidence.
   The common meaning of the word prakṛti is ‘subjects’, and hence it is generally held that Gopāla was elected king by the general body of the people. But we cannot think of a general election in the modern sense. The choice was evidently made by the leading chiefs and endorsed by the people.
3. Military skill and administrative capacity must have been the indispensable qualifications of a leader in those troubled times.
4. A fuller account of this work will be given in connection with the history of Rāmapāla in the next volume.
4a. References are to the list of “Important Inscriptions” given above.
5. It is said in Ins. No. 2 (v. 3) that his conquests extended up to the sea.
6. The chronology of the Pāla kings is not yet definitely settled. The view adopted here is based on *HBR* (Ch. VI, App. II, p. 176).
7. The history of the Rāṣṭrakūtas and the Pratihāras has been dealt with in Chapters I and II.
8. Some scholars take the view that Vatsarāja advanced as far as Bengal and actually conquered it up to the sea. This does not seem likely, and the only evidence in support of it is a casual verse in a poetical work composed four centuries after this event.
9. It is definitely said in the Rāṣṭrākūṭa records that Dhruva met the king of Gauḍa between the Gāṅga and the Yamunā and carried off his umbrellas of state (Sanjān CP. v. 14; EI, XVIII, 244). It has been recently urged by a scholar (IHQ, XX, 84) that Dhruva did not defeat the king of Gauḍa, but really got his state umbrellas from Vatsarājā when the latter was returning from his expedition to Bengal. In his opinion, it was Vatsarājā whom he met and defeated between the Gāṅga and the Yamunā, but the writer of the Rāṣṭrākūṭa records, who knew that Dhruva captured the white umbrellas belonging to the Gauḍa king, naturally, but erroneously, thought that the Gauḍa king was defeated by Dhruva. This theory is no doubt ingenious and even plausible, but cannot be accepted in view of the categorical statement in Sanjān CP, so long as at least we have no evidence in support of it.

10. The full significance of v. 12 of Ins. No. 1 which contains an account of this assembly has been discussed in HBR, 107.

11. Cf. e.g. THK. 216, 230.


13. Uttarakatha technically means the western part of North India, but applied to Dharmapāla, ruler of Bengal and Bihār, it evidently means the overlordship of North India.

14. This is clearly indicated by Ins. No. 2, v. 8.


16. It is significant that all three contending powers, the Pālas, the Pratihāras, and the Rāṣṭrākūṭas, had their eyes fixed upon Kanauj. The Pratihāras finally transferred their capital to this city. The Rāṣṭrākūṭa king Dhruva and Govinda III overran this region, and one of their successors, Indra III, captured and ruthlessly sacked this city which was then the imperial capital of the Pratihāras.

17. IC, IV, 266.

18. IA, 1892, p. 257, fn. 6.

19. IC, IV, 266. The capital of the Kirātas was situated in the jungles of Gokarna to the north-east of Pasupati (Levi, Le Nepal. II. 83).


21. Gwālior Ins. of Bhoja, v. 10 (EI, XVIII, 112). The description shows the strength of the Pāla army and may be contrasted with the 'easy victory' obtained by Vatsarājā against the king of Gauḍa referred to above.

22. Cf. Chapters I and II.

23. According to Sanjān CP. "Dharma and Chakrāyuḍha surrendered of themselves" to Govinda III (EI, XVIII, 253). There is no evidence in support of the view that Dharmapāla was defeated in a battle by Govinda III (JBORS. XII, 362).


25. For authorities, cf. HBR. 115.

26. It consisted of a central temple surrounded by 107 others—all enclosed by a boundary wall. It provided for 114 teachers in different subjects (JASB, N. S. V (1909), pp. 1 ff.).

27. For detailed description, see Vol. V, Ch. XVI.

28. EI, IX, 248.

29. Ins. No. 4, v. 5.


31. Ins. No. 4, v. 13; No. 3. v. 6. Darbhapāṇi's father Garga was a minister of Dharmapāla.


33. For details see Ch. II.


35. The last known date of Devapāla depends upon the reading of the figure for his regnal year in the Nālandā CP. It is usually read as 39 (EI, XVII, 318), but seems to be really 35 (JRSASL. VII, 215).

36. Vide infra, Ch. XV.

37. Nālandā CP. (EI, XVII, 318).


39. HIED, I, 6, 25. But some scholars doubt whether the account was really written by Sulaimān (cf. Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India by S. M. H. Naimer, pp. 7 ff.).

40. IHQ, XVI, 232.

41. HBR. 124. Cf. also Ch. IV, §1.
THE PALAS

42. The whole question has been fully discussed in IHR. 188.
43. His latest known date is year 51 (IA. XLVII. 110).
44. According to Sirur Ins. dated A.D. 866 (IA. XII 218), Anaga, Vaṅga and Magadha paid homage to king Anghavanarsha, who could not possibly have undertaken an expedition against the Pālas before his conquest of Vengi which took place about A.D. 860.
45. Several inscriptions of Mahendrapāla have been found in South Bihār (Pālas of Bengal. 64) and one in Pāhārpu (North Bengal) (MASI. 55. 75).
46. See next Chapter.
47. This is proved by an image found in Bihār with an ins. dated in the year 54 (IA. XLVII. 110). Inscription No. 3 shows that Nārāyanapāla was in possession of Bihār in the year 17. So the Pratihāras conquered it probably during the interval between these years (c. A.D. 870-908). As Mahendrapāla did not ascend the throne till after A.D. 882, his conquest of Bihār and North Bengal may be placed between A.D. 890 and 900.
48. According to v 5 of the Dōli CP, Krishna II was the preceptor "charging the Gaudas with the vow of humility" and that "his command was obeyed by Anaga, Kaliṅga, Gaṅpa and Magadhā" (EI. V. 193). The Rāṣṭrakūṭa king was probably accompanied by Malla, a chief of Velanāḍu (in Krishnā District), or the latter claims to have subdued the Vaṅgas, Magdhas and the Gaudas (Pithāpuram Ins. v. 11: EI. IV. 40).
49. For other views, cf HBR. I. 131, fn 4.
50. The Pāla records have nothing to say about them except that Rājyapāla dug tanks deep like the sea and constructed temples high as the mountains (cf. Ins. No. 5, vv. 7-10). In a verse applied to Gopāla II and Vighraḥapāla II in two different records (No 5 and Jājilprā Copper Plate of Gopāla II. JASL. XVII. 137) their elephant forces are said to have wandered in the eastern regions, western deserts, Malaya mountains in the south and the Himālayas in the north. These aimless wanderings were formerly regarded by some scholars as a covert allusion to the loss of ancestral kingdom by Vighraḥapāla, but as the same verse is now known to apply to the earlier king Gopāla II also, this interpretation is doubtful (cf. HBR. 136). But the verse may indicate the hopelessly weak position of both the kings.
51. For the history of these dynasties, cf. Ch. V. For the effect of Chandella invasions on Bengal, cf IHQ. XXVIII. 177.
52. As noted above, some of these units are separately mentioned also in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa records (cf. in 44 and 48 above).
53. Irdā CP. EI. XXII 130 XXIV. 43.
54. JASB. VII 619.
55. EI. XXVI. 213.
56. Cf. IC. XII. 88.
57. EI. XVII. 349.
58. IHR. Ch. VII. The year 46 is found in Madanpur Plates (EI. XXVIII. 51, 337).
59. Cf. Mandhuk (Tippera District) Ins. of Gopāla II year 1 (IHQ. XXVIII. 55) and Jājilpāra CP. of the same king (JASL. XVII. 137).