

VIJAYANAGARA AND BAHMANI KINGDOM (PART-2)

B.A. PART-3, PAPER-5

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POLITICAL HISTORY-VIJAYANAGARA

The Sangama dynasty (1336 – 1485)

Harihara I (1336 – 1356):

- ◉ Harihara I was one of the founders and also the first king of the Vijayanagara. The kingdom of Vijayanagara soon expanded into an empire largely through the efforts of Harihara I and Bukka I. In the first instance, the infant Vijayanagara kingdom had to contend with Hoyasala ruler of Mysore and the Sultan of Madurai. The Sultan of Madurai was ambitious and had defeated Hoyasala ruler and executed him in barbarous manner. The dissolution of the Hoyasala kingdom enabled Harihara and Bukka to expand their principality.

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By 1346 whole of Hoyasala kingdom passed into the hands of Vijayanagara rulers. To celebrate the conquests the kings and their families visited Sringeri, to offer homage to Vidyaranya, the head of Matha.

Establishment of Bahmani Kingdom :

- In the next year the Bahmani kingdom was established, posing new threat to the rising kingdom. The Bahmani kingdom arose out of one of the many revolts that broke in the Tughlaq empire. Hasan Gangu alias Zafar Khan proclaimed independence in 1347, and founded the Bahmani kingdom with the capital at Gulbarga in Karnataka. After coronation Hasan Gangu assumed title of Alauddin Bahmani Shah (1347 – 1358).

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- ◉ Bahmani Shah attacked Vijayanagara twice in 1349 and 1354. Hindu sources claim that Harihara I defeated Alauddin, whereas latter styled himself as second Alexander in his coins. The fact however remains that Alauddin's kingdom extended from Goa in west to Bhuvanagiri in the east. This was the beginning of the conflict between the Bahmani kingdom and Vijayanagara empire for political dominance of the south and their mutual rivalry ruined them in the long run.

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Bukka I (1356 – 1377)

- ◉ Harihara was succeeded by his brother Bukka I
- ◉ He took up the task of strengthening and expanding the kingdom.
- ◉ Two important political events
 - (1) Vijayanagara-Bahmani conflict. He fought with the Bahmani sultan Muhammad Shah I and signed a treaty with him, which made him virtual master of the Krishna Tungabhadra Doab.
 - (2) Madura campaign undertaken to overthrow the Madura Sultanate by his son Kumara Kampana in 1371. The details of the campaign are very well

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recorded in the historical work *Maduravijayamu* written by Kampana's wife Gangadevi.

- ◉ In the field of foreign affairs the most notable act of Bukka I was to *send an embassy to China*. This is recorded in the annals of Ming dynasty.

Harihara II (1377 – 1404):

Bukka I, was succeeded by his son Harihara II, consolidated the new kingdom.

- ◉ Waged wars against Bahmanis and the Reddi dynasty. Extended his dominions by the conquest of Kanara, Mysore, Trichinopoly and Kanchi.
- ◉ He waged a war with the Bahmanis for the possession of *Raichur-Doab*, situated between Krishna and Tungbhadra rivers which formed a bone of contention

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between the two kingdoms. The ports on the west- coast like Goa, Chaul, Dabhol were also captured from the Bahmanis.

Devaraya I (1406 – 1422)

The accession of Devaraya I is an important event in the Sangama dynasty.

- ◉ The Bahmani ruler Tajuddin Firoz Shah fought a war with him and ultimately Firoz scored victory. Devaraya I, at a later date, inflicted a crushing defeat on Firoz Shah and annexed the entire territory upto the mouth of the Krishna River.
- ◉ Devaraya undertook a number of schemes for the welfare of the people

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- ◉ Towards the close of Devaraya I reign, the Italian traveler *Niccolo-de-conti* visited Vijayanagara and gave a picturesque description of the city of Vijayanagara.
- ◉ Devaraya I, was succeeded by his son Ramachandra, ruled for six months only. He was succeeded by his brother Vijaya I. He was a weak ruler, took no interest in the affairs of government and left it to the care of his son and co-regent, Devaraya II.

Devaraya II (1423 – 1446):

- ◉ Greatest sovereign of the Sangama dynasty. He was called Immadi Devaraya and also Proudha Devaraya or the great Devaraya by his subjects.
- ◉ The inscriptions speak of his *title Gajabetakara* i.e. the elephant hunter.

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- ◉ Devaraya II waged many wars, secured victories and occupied vast regions.
- ◉ By 1424 Devaraya annexed the Kondavidu country which had been weak and disorganized after the death of Peda Komati Vema Reddi.
- ◉ Devaraya II also defeated the Gajapatis of Orissa.
- ◉ He also carried his arms into Kerala, subjugating the ruler of Quilon and other chieftains. The Zamorin of Kozhikode (Calicut) was allowed to remain independent.
- ◉ Alauddin II was the Bahmani Sultan and in the initial stages the Vijayanagara forces were beaten very badly by the Bahmani forces.

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- ◉ In order to strengthen his army, he inducted more Muslims in his army and asked all his Hindu soldiers and officers to learn the Art of Archery from them.
- ◉ Devaraya II fought three battles against the Bahmanis, but in the end the two parties agreed to the existing boundaries. Thus neither gained advantage over the other.
- ◉ Nuniz, a Portuguese writer of 16th century, tell us that the kings of Quilon, Srilanka, Pulicat, Pegu and Tenasserin (Modern Burma and Malaya) paid tribute to Devaraya II.
- ◉ The Persian traveler Abdur Razzak, who had travelled

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widely in and outside India, visited Vijayanagara in the reign of Devaraya II. He gives glorious account of the country. According to him, the Vijayanagara empire extended from Srilanka to Gulbarga and from Orissa to Mabar.

- ◉ Devaraya II was a great builder and a patron of poets.
- ◉ He himself was an accomplished scholar in Sanskrit and is credited with the authorship of two Sanskrit works, Mahanataka Sudhanidhi and a commentary on the Brahmasutras of Badarayana.
- ◉ The exquisite Hazararama temple was built during the reign of Devaraya II.

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- ◉ Devaraya's long and generally prosperous reign came to an end in 1446. He was succeeded by Vijayalaya II and then very shortly after, his son Mallikarjuna was crowned sometime in 1447. His rule saw the decline of the Sangama dynasty. The weakness of Mallikarjuna was exploited both by Alauddin II, the Bahmani ruler and Kapileswara Gajapati of Orissa.
- ◉ Virupaksha II was the last ruler of Sangama dynasty. Actually there was confusion in the Vijayanagara empire after the death of Devaraya II. There were a series of civil wars among the various contenders to the throne. Many feudatories assumed independence in the process. The rulers were sunk in pleasure and neglected the affairs of the state. After sometime the throne was usurped by the king's minister

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Saluva Narasimha. Thus the Sangama dynasty came to an end and the Saluva dynasty was established. The overthrow of the Sangama dynasty is known as 'first usurpation'.

(To be continued)

