

# **THE PALAS**

## **(PART-3)**

### **B.A, PART-2, PAPER-3**

**DR.MD. NEYAZ HUSSAIN**  
**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR & HOD**  
**PG DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**  
**MAHARAJA COLLEGE, VKSU, ARA(BIHAR)**

# DEVAPALA

Dharmapala was succeeded by Devapala (his son by the Rastrakuta princess Rannsdevi). During the reign of Devapala the Pala arms were crowned with success everywhere. It is stated in the *Monghyr plate* that in course of his '*digvijaya*' he advanced as far as the Vindhya and the Kamboja country. This is confirmed by the 13th verse of the *Badal Pillar inscription* where Devapala's victories in the Vindhya and Kamboja is described. It seems that he fought with the Rastrakutas during the interregnum and the period of minority of Amoghavarsha I. It is not precisely known where the Kambojas lived at this time.

## DEVAPALA

Thus the statement in the Badal Pillar inscription that by the wise counsel and policy of his minister the whole tract bounded by the Vindhyas and the Himalayas and by the eastern and western seas paid tribute to Devapala was not a mere political exaggeration but an actual fact. These achievements in the said *prasasti* have been attributed to Darbhapani, but it is also stated therein that by the policy and counsel of Kedaramisra, who also served Devapala the Gauda king "*eradicated the race of the Utkalas, humbled the pride of the Hunas and shattered the conceit of Dravida and Gurjara kings.*"

# DEVAPALA

It seems that the victories and supremacy won during the first part of his reign were challenged, and Devapala had to undertake another expedition to curb their power and maintain Pala supremacy. That the two rival powers, the Pratiharas and Rastrakutas, tried to assert their power is also hinted at in their own records, though they are scrupulously silent of their own defeats. The *Gwalior inscription of Vailabhata* indicates that Gwalior was the boundary of the Pratihara kingdom at the time of Ramabhadra and in the early part of the reign of Bhoja. The 12th verse of the Gwalior prasasti of Bhoja seems to imply that Ramabhadra freed his country from the yoke of foreign soldiers.

# DEVAPALA

The evidence of *Daulatpura plates* and *Ghatiyala inscription* goes to show that some time before 843 A.D. Pratiharas under Bhoja made an attempt to reassert their power, and though it met with some initial success, his power was again checked some time before 861 A.D. This is in complete agreement with what we know from the Pala records. Amoghavarsha I was the Rastrakuta contemporary of Devapala. During the period of his minority and anarchy Devapala victoriously advanced as far as the Vindhya in course of his first expedition.

# DEVAPALA

It is stated in *the Sirur and Nilgund grants* that the kings of Anga, Vanga and Magadha paid homage to Amoghavarsa, but there are reasons to hold that the Rastrakutas advanced through Odisha after the conquest of Vengi. Amoghavarsa finally crushed the power of the Vengi ruler Vijayaditya II sometime before 866 A.D., the date of the issuing of the Sirur grants. It seems, therefore, that the Rastrakuta invasion of Bengal should be placed after 860 C.E, and that Devapala defeated the Rastrakatas sometime before that date in course of his second expedition, when Amoghavarsa was perhaps engaged in war with his Gujrat cousins and in putting down risings of the rebellious chiefs.

## DEVAPALA

It is not known who was the contemporary Utkala king defeated by Devapala. The conquest of the Utkalas is corroborated by the *Bhagalpur plate* in which it is recorded that Jayapala, cousin and general of Devapala, drove away the Utkala king from the throne. Hunamandala in northern Malwa has been mentioned in an inscription of the Paramara king Vakpati-Munja. The Bhagalpur plate also records that Jayapala defeated the king of Pragytisa (Kamarupa). The Kamarupa king defeated by Jayapala was most probably Harjaravarman whose *Tezpur rock inscription* is dated in 829 A.D., or his successor Vanamala.

## DEVAPALA

The *Nalanda inscription* of the 39th year of Devapala reveals the fact that there was constant intercourse between the Pala kingdom and the Indian colonies in the Pacific Ocean, specially Java and Sumatra. The object of the inscription was to grant five villages for the upkeep of the Buddhist monastery built by the Sailendra king Balaputradeva of Suvarnavipa and Yavadvipa at the instance of his mother Taradevi. He requested Devapala to grant the income of five villages for its maintenance. This request was gladly and readily complied with, thus showing that his wide charities compared with those of Bali, Karna and Vikramaditya were not vague flattery of the court-poet. This religious contact must have been accompanied by brisk commercial activity, as the testimonies of *Fa-hien, I-tsing* and other Chinese travellers point to such a state of things even before the rise of the Palas.



# DEVAPALA

Thus, *Devapala* the third king of the dynasty is considered by most historians to have been the *most illustrious and powerful of the Pala kings after Dharmapala*. While his predecessors had concentrated on growing westwards, Devapala's interests lay to the east. He led his army as far as the banks of the Indus, the first and only time a king of Bengal achieved this feat. It has not been repeated anytime thereafter. A historian remarks —The reigns of Dharmapala and Devapala 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. He was a devoted Buddhist and ruled for 48 years.

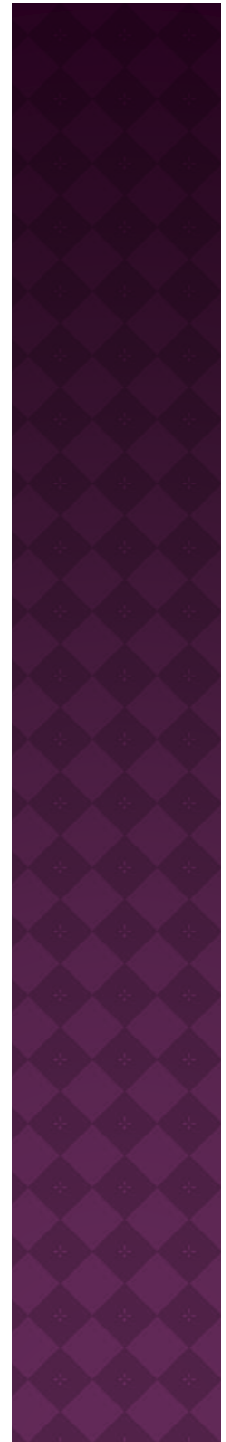
# SUCCESSORS OF DEVAPALA

Devapala was succeeded by Vigrahapala. The short reign of Vigrahapala I was not without political significance

- the king of Anga, Vanga and Magadha who paid homage to Amoghavarsha I was very likely Vigrahapala I, as it has already been pointed out that the Rastrakuta invasion took place after 850 A.D.
- The acceptance of an ascetic life by him by shirking all responsibilities to his son might have been due to defeats by the foreign invaders and humiliation consequent thereon It cannot be clearly stated whether Vigrahapala I suffered defeats at the hands of Bhoja ,

## SUCCESSORS OF DEVAPALA

though the probability is strongly so. The Pala records are significantly silent over the Pratihara invasions of the time. But the gradual extension of the Pratihara empire at the cost of the Palas can no longer be doubted. Bhoja, like his grandfather, made extensive preparations in his Bengal campaign. It is known from the Kalha plates of Sodhadeva that the Kalchuri chief Gunambodhideva who ruled in Kalanjara got some territories from Bhoja and took away the fortune of Gauda by a warlike . The evidence of the Benares and Bilhari inscriptions has, been generally construed to imply that Bhoj a was most probably assisted by the Kalacuri king Kokkaladeva against the Palas.



## SUCCESSORS OF DEVAPALA

After the publication of the *Amoda plates* that view is perhaps to be changed, and it seems that Kokkaladeva I raided Vanga on his own account most probably during the reign of Vighrahapala I or that of his successor.

### *Narayana Pala:*

Vighrahapala I was succeeded by Narayana pala. During his reign an image was set up at Nalanda

According to *Dinajpur Pillar inscription* in the second half of 10<sup>th</sup> Century the ruling Pala was ousted by a hill tribe called *Kambojas*.

# SUCCESSORS OF DEVAPALA

## *Mahipala:*

- He was the 9<sup>th</sup> Pala king.
- He expelled the Kambojasin probably 978-80 and regained the kingdom
- Ruled for 52 years
- His rule was marked by two important events:
  - (1) The revival of Buddhism
  - (2) invasion of Pala kingdom by powerful kings from other parts of the subcontinent
- Sent a mission to Tibet in 1013 A.D. under Dharmapal, a well known sage.

# SUCCESSORS OF DEVAPALA

- Sarnath inscription (1026 A.D.) claims that he built Buddhist temples and monasteries and also repaired many structures that had fallen in disrepair.
- Probably he ruled the entire Gangetic basin from the Bay of Bengal to at least Benares
- In 1023 A.D., Mahipala was attacked by the Chola ruler, Rajendra Chola who conquered northern Radha. It was only a sweeping raid that spanned a vast area, without any aim to conquer and hold territory.
- Towards the end of his rule he was attacked and defeated by the Kalchuri ruler, *Gangayadeva*

# SUCCESSORS OF DEVAPALA

- The timeframe of Mahipala's rule coincide with the initial Ghaznavid invasion from North-West.
- He saved the Pala Empire and to a large extent restored its old glory against great odds, which is a highly credible achievement.
- He is rightly considered as the founder of the second Pala empire

## *Nayapala:*

- Mahipala was succeeded by Nayapala who is mentioned as the king of Magadha in Tibetan records.
- He waged war with Kalchuri king Karna and defeated him.
- In 1040-42 A.D. sent a Buddhist Mission to Tibet under Atista, a Buddhist monk.

# SUCCESSORS OF DEVAPALA

## *Vigrahapala III :*

- He was son of Nayapala.
- Defeated the Chedi ruler Karna
- Died around 1070 A.D.

## *Ramapala:*

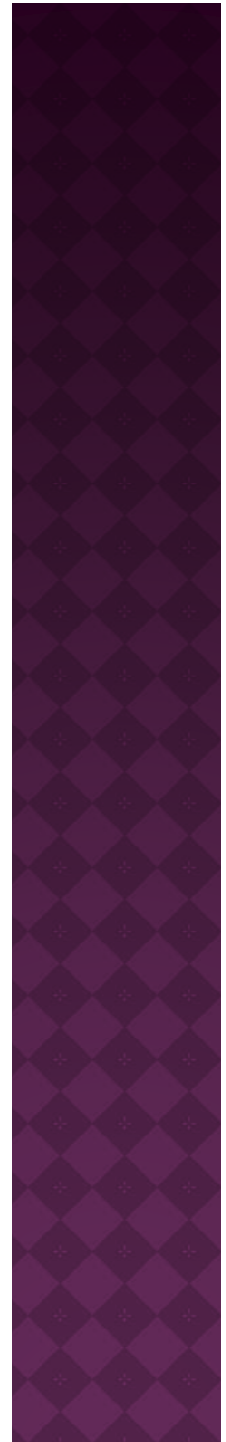
- An ambitious king, conquered Mithila and moved towards East Bengal
- Sent his chief general Timgyadeva to annex Kamarupa, whose king Harivarman surrendered.
- During his rule Buddhism continued to flourish



# SUCCESSORS OF DEVAPALA

- Succeeded by his son Kumarapla.
- According to Tibetan historian Taranath, Ramapala was the last of his dynasty.
- According to Dinajpur Pillar inscription atleast another five kings ruled after Ramapala.

At the height of their power, the Palas controlled a wide realm and enjoyed extensive influence across entire North India. As the predominant dynasty of the time, they were able to assert the right to reorder the affairs of North India to their own advantage. Bengal was no more at the periphery of Indian polity, but the core of politico-economic and military strength.



# SUCCESSORS OF DEVAPALA

The century between 780-890, which coincides with the combined rule of Dharmapala and Devapala, can be correctly assumed to be and rise of feudal power which finally led the decline and disintegration of the Pala Empire.

(To be continued)

