

# THE RASHTRAKUTAS (PART-2)

B.A. (HISTORY) PART-2  
PAPER-3

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# POLITICAL HISTORY

The Rashtrakuta lived in various parts of Deccan in the 5th Century A.D. In the 7th Century A.D. they became feudatories of the Chalukyas. In subsequent years one of the Rashtrakuta clans established a strong kingdom under Indra. He was married to a Chalukya princess and managed to maintain friendly relations with them. The power of the Rashtrakuta dynasty further increased under the reign of Dantidurga, the son and successor of Indra.

## (1) Dantidurga.

Indraraja was followed on the throne by his son Dantidurga who is credited with re-establishing the Rashtrakuta rule over most of Deccan, which his descendants thereafter sustained for the next 225 years.

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- ❖ He recaptured territory lost to the Chalukyas earlier by defeating the Chalukya king Kirtivarman II sometime between 747 A.D. and 753 A.D.
- ❖ He went on to conquer Shri Saila (Kurnool district in Andhra), Kalinga, South Kosshala, Malwa and Lata.
- ❖ After the initial victory over the Chalukyas, he assumed the title of Rajadhiraja (King of Kings) and Parameswara (Supreme Lord).

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- ❖ His rule extended upto Gujarat and Malwa in the north and included Rameswaram in the south, while it stretched across the Peninsula to touch both the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal.
- ❖ He put down a revolt in Kanchi
- ❖ He assumed the title of Khadagavaloka (the one wielding the Khadaga) and towards the end of his reign he was also called Maharajadhiraja (The Greatest King of Kings).

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## (2)Krishnaraja-I

Around 760 A.D. Krishnaraja-I(the uncle of Dantidurga) came to power.

Three stone inscriptions, one copper grant and 1800 silver coins of Krishnaraja's reign have been found and identified. The first inscription in Hattimattur is not dated; the second at Telegaon is dated to 768; and the third at Alas is dated to 770 A.D. with the copper grant being dated 772 A.D.The flag of Rashtrakuta ascendancy was kept flying by Krishna I.

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- ❖ He extinguished the lingering power of the Chalukyas in 760 A.D. by inflicting the final defeat on Kirtivarman II.
- ❖ Assumed the title of Subhatunga and Akalavarsa.
- ❖ He became the unrivalled master of Deccan by defeating the Gangas of Mysore and the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. He extended his sway up to Southern Konkona. The Bhandaka plate informs us that Krishna ruled over the whole of central India. Perhaps he captured Lata or Gujrat.
- ❖ Rashtrakuta empire under Krishna I comprised whole of modern Maharashtra, a good part of Mysore, the whole of Andhra Pradesh. A part of Vengi and Central India acknowledged his supermacy.
- ❖ He patronized art and architecture



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- ❖ Constructed the famous rock cut temple of Siva at Ellora, which is known as the Kailashanatha temple.
- ❖ He also built another eighteen Shiva temples, which confirms him as a Shiva worshipper.
- ❖ He was a great patron of learning and founded a college called Kanneshawara where a large number of scholars lived and worked. The famous Jain author Akalanka Bhatta, the author of the tome Rajavartika lived in the college during the time of Krishnaraja.
- ❖ Krishnaraja had two sons-Govindaraja and Dhruvaraja.

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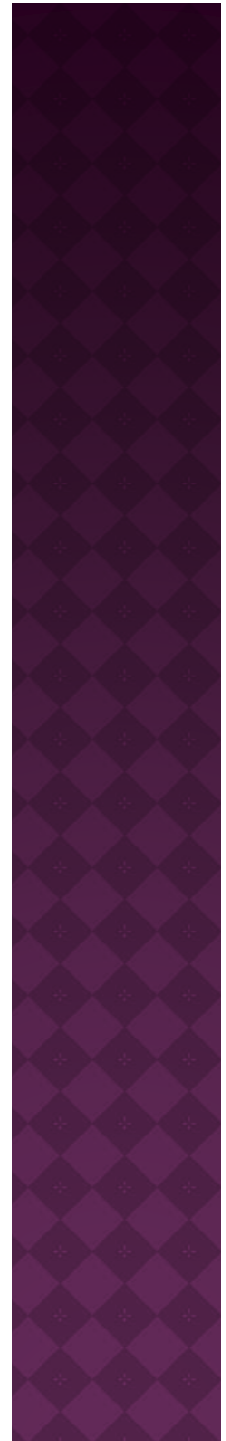
## (3) Govindaraja II

- ❖ He succeeded Krishnaraja to the throne
- ❖ As a prince, he had conquered Vengi, the eastern coastal district that lie between the Rivers Krishna and Godavari, annexing it to the spreading Rashtrakuta kingdom. Although two copper plates of the time of his reign has been found (one dated 775 and the other 779 A.D.), they do not mention the king by name, but only that of his brother Dhruvaraja as well as that of his son Karakaraja.
- ❖ The copper grant found in Wardha reports that Govindaraja was excessively fond of the good life and of women and entrusted the governance of the



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kingdom to his younger brother Nirupama, one of the titles of Dhruvaraja. Dhruvaraja subsequently deposed him from the throne. Govindaraja unsuccessfully tried to regain the throne with the assistance of the kings of Malwa and Kanchi, during which the combined armies were defeated by Dhruvaraja.



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## (4) Dhruvaraja

- ❖ The second son of Krishnaraja dethroned his brother, with the actual date of his accession being confirmed as 780 A.D., although he had been the virtual ruler for some years before that.
- ❖ He took over the kingdom only to save it from its covetous neighbours who were planning to take advantage of the weak rule of Govindaraja II.
- ❖ A brave and wise king and defeated both the Pallavas of Kanchi and Chera king further south.
- ❖ He also attacked and routed Pratihara Vatsaraja, who had already conquered Gauda, and drove him towards

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Marwar. This particular event is mentioned in the Harivamsha Purana. He is said to have captured the canopies of the defeated kings, obviously a custom of the day that denoted complete subjugation of the defeated forces.

- ❖ His kingdom extended from Ayodhya in the north to Rameshawaram in the south. Three inscriptions in Canarese found at Pattadakal, Naregal and Lakshmeshvar, made during his reign corroborate the information from other sources.
- ❖ During his lifetime itself he appointed his son Govindaraja III as the ruler of a kingdom that by then extended from Kanthika (Konkan) in the south to Khambat (Cambay).
- ❖ There is some indication that he was fatally wounded while trying to put down a rebellion in

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Gujarat, although this cannot be conclusively proved. However, it is certain that Dhruvaraja was found of waging aggressive wars, so dear to the heart of typical Indian rajas or kings.

- ❖ He assumed a number of high sounding titles like Nirupama (one who has no equal), Kali-Vallabya (fond of war) and dhara varsa (heavy rainer) etc. Dhruva established himself as the lord paramount of Deccan. He made a bid for mastery over northern India. Under him the history of Rashtrakuta became a part of the general history of India.

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## (5) Govindaraja III

- ❖ Nine copper grants that date between 794 and 813 A.D. provide a great deal of information regarding his rule
- ❖ In order to fulfill his dream of imperial supremacy in the north Govinda III had to fought with Pratihara king Nagabhata II and Pala king Dharmapala.
- ❖ Govinda routed Nagabhata in a pitched battle in the Bundelkhand region. Dharmapala and his protégée Chakrayudha of Kanauj submitted to him without resistance and followed his camp.
- ❖ He also defeated many other king of northern India

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and reinstated them again as his vassals. He marched up to the Himalayas and became the suzerain of northern India.

- ❖ The Sanjan plate states that Govinda also humbled the pride of the kings of Kalinga, Dahala, Odraka and Vengi.
- ❖ He marched southward to the south of Tungabhadra against the Dravida, Kerala, Pandyas and Cheras.
- ❖ He defeated king Dantiga of Kanchi. This Dantiga could have been the Pallava king Dantivarman, whose son Nandivarman subsequently married princess Shankha, Govindaraja's granddaughter.



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- ❖ Govindaraja was magnanimous enough to liberate the Chera king Ganga who had been imprisoned for life by his father, but was also pragmatic enough to put him back in prison when Ganga rebelled after being free for some time.
- ❖ He invaded and conquered Malwa
- ❖ He conquered Lata (central and southern Gujarat) and made his younger brother Indraraja the ruler of the region.
- ❖ The kings of Bengal and Magadha also yielded to the power of Govindaraja, probably without going to war.

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- ❖ Govindaraja III was one of the most successful Rashtrakuta kings, a dynasty that produced a number of very capable rulers.

(To be continued)

