

THE RASHTRAKUTAS (PART-4)

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

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CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Religion and Literature

- ❖ They were great patrons of literature and religion. The three main religions flourished during this period are Brahminism, Jainism and Buddhism.
- ❖ The opening verse in the Rashtrakuta copper plates pays homage to both Siva and Vishnu. The Rashtrakuta seals contained either the Eagle or the Garuda. Later king leaned towards Jainism.
- ❖ Jainism was highly popular
- ❖ Tolerance was the keynote of the Rashtrakuta rulers.
- ❖ There was complete harmony among the adherents of different religions.

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- ❖ Magnificent temples were erected and endowments were granted by the Rashtrakuta rulers.
- ❖ In the field of literature the contribution of the Rashtrakuta is at once rich and many sided.
- ❖ This period witnessed the beginning of Kannada literature. The earliest Kannada literature can only be traced from the Rashtrakuta period.
- ❖ According to Kavirajmarga, written by Amoghavarsa, Vimaladoya, Nagarjuna, Jayabandhu, Durvinita and others were notable Kannada prose writers.
- ❖ Among the poets Kavisara, Pandita, Chandra and Lokapala are named as most admired. Asasa, the author of Vardhamanacharita, Guanvarma the author of Neminathpurana and Gunanandi were living in this period. Harisena, the spiritual preceptor of Amoghavarsa composed the Harivansa. Krishna III was a liberal patron of literature. In his court flourished many great Kannada poets-Pampa-Ponna and Chavudraya.

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- ❖ Chavudraya has written a prose work Chavudrayapurana. Pampa wrote Adipurana.
- ❖ The poet laureate of the time was Ponna who wrote Santipurana for which he received the title Ubhaya Kavichakravartin.
- ❖ Sanskrit literature also flourished to a great extent Sakatayana was an eminent scholar in Sanskrit and he was the author of Savdanusasana.
- ❖ The Rashtrakutas widely patronized the Sanskrit literature. There were many scholars in the Rashtrakuta court. Trivikrama wrote Nalachampu and the Kavirahasya was composed by Halayudha during the

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

reign of Krishna III.

- ❖ The Jain literature flourished under the patronage of the Rashtrakutas. Amogavarsha I, who was a Jain patronized many Jain scholars. His teacher Jinasena composed Parsvabhudaya, a biography of Parsva in verses.
- ❖ Another scholar Gunabhadra wrote the Adipurana, the life stories of various Jain saints. Sakatayana wrote the grammer work called Amogavritti.

Rashtrakuta Art and Architecture

The Art of Rashtrakuta bears imperishable testimony to the cultural progress of Deccan. Famous rock cut

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

shrines at Ellora and Elephanta belongs to this period.

- ❖ **Kailasa Temple:** At Ellora, the most remarkable temple is the Kailasa temple excavated during the reign of Krishna I. It is carved out of a massive block of rock. . Kailashnath Temple at Ellora is similar to the Lokesvara temple at Pattadakal. The Kailasa temple is an architectural marvel with its beautiful sculptures. The sculpture of the Goddess Durga is Kailasa, the abode of Siva. The scenes of Ramayana were also depicted on the walls. The general characteristics of the Kailasa temple are more Dravidian. Supplementary shrines apparently were excavated at a later date.

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The sculptured panels depicting Dasavatara, Bhairava, Ravana shaking the mount Kailasa, dancing Siva, and Lakshmi and Vishnu listening to music are exquisitely crafted.

- ❖ **The Dasavatara temple:** marvelous blend of simplicity with amplexness. Saiva and Vaishnava themes are depicted on the surrounding walls by stupendous sculpted figures. The Hiranyakasipu relief is the most outstanding, inspiring awe and reverence. Among the Ellora caves some are dedicated to Jainism and these dates back to the ninth prove that art in India attained its highest achievements under the Rashtrakutas

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- ❖ The sculptural art of the Rashtrakutas reached its zenith in Elephanta, an island near Bombay. There is a close similarity between the sculptures at Ellora and those in Elephanta. They might have been carved by the same craftsmen. The architecture of the caves in Elephanta and Salsette islands near Bombay are of the same design as Ellora but are smaller in scale and irregular in execution.
- ❖ About the Rashtrakuta art a scholar opined that —The cave sculptures of Ellora and Elephanta will convincingly prove that art in India attained its highest achievements under the Rashtrakutas

SUMMARY

The Rashtrakutas created a vast empire and established their glorious rule. In the field of religion, art and architecture the Rashtrakuta contribution is noteworthy. They not only brought the entire south India under their control but also penetrated deep the territories of north. Many of them earned laurel as invincible conquerors and efficient rulers. On the Rashtrakuta *A.S.Altekar* opined — The period of Rashtrakuta ascendancy in the Deccan constitute perhaps, the most brilliant chapter in its history. No other ruling dynasties in Deccan played such a dominant part in the history of India till the rise of Marathas as an imperial power in 18th century.... Their campaign against their powerful adversaries were repeatedly crowned with brilliant success.