



POLITICAL HISTORY OF PARAMARAS OF CHANDRAVATI

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ABSTRACT

This historical study examines the political trajectory of the Paramaras of Chandravati, a medieval Indian dynasty that wielded influence in the Malwa region. Originating as Rashtrakuta feudatories, the Paramaras, under the leadership of Siyaka-I, established an independent kingdom centered around Chandravati. This research delves into the early consolidation efforts, the reign of Vakpati Munja as a pivotal ruler, and the subsequent decline marked by internal strife and external invasions, particularly by Mahmud of Ghazni. The legacy of the Chandravati Paramaras is explored, emphasizing their contributions to literature, art, and temple architecture. The study also scrutinizes later attempts at revival and the eventual fragmentation of the dynasty.



KEYWORDS: *Paramaras, Chandravati, Malwa, Siyaka I, Vakpati Munja, Medieval India, Rashtrakutas, Mahmud of Ghazni, Political History, Dynastic Decline, Cultural Patronage, Temple Architecture, Indian Literature, Regional Powers, Revival Attempts.*

INTRODUCTION

The Paramaras of Chandravati, a medieval Indian dynasty, emerged as a significant political force in the central region of Malwa, leaving an indelible mark on the socio-political landscape during their zenith. Originating as vassals to the Rashtrakutas, the Paramaras, led by Siyaka I, ventured into a realm of independence by establishing their kingdom with Chandravati as its epicenter. This study delves into the nuanced political history of the Chandravati Paramaras, tracing their origins, examining the reigns of key rulers such as Vakpati Munja, and unraveling the intricate dynamics that defined their ascendancy and eventual decline.

The early chapters of this exploration focus on the foundational years, analyzing the strategic moves that Siyaka I undertook to assert autonomy from the Rashtrakutas. Siyaka's successors, particularly Vakpati Munja, played a pivotal role in expanding and consolidating the Paramara kingdom. Munja's reign is marked not only by political astuteness but also by his patronage of literature and the arts, which contributed to the cultural efflorescence of the region.

However, the golden era witnessed a stark transformation during the subsequent years, marked by internal dissensions and external threats. The incursions of Mahmud of Ghazni in the 11th century had profound implications for the political stability of the Chandravati Paramaras. This study scrutinizes these pivotal moments, shedding light on the internal conflicts that hastened the decline of the once-mighty dynasty.

Furthermore, the legacy of the Chandravati Paramaras extends beyond their political fortunes. The rulers of this dynasty left an indelible imprint on the cultural and literary fabric of the Malwa

region. Temples and artistic endeavors flourished under their patronage, contributing significantly to the rich heritage of the area.

In later periods, this study navigates through the remnants of the Paramara legacy, examining attempts at revival and the fragmentation of the dynasty into smaller principalities. The political history of the Chandravati Paramaras thus becomes a lens through which we can explore the broader dynamics of medieval Indian history, encompassing cultural patronage, dynastic rise and fall, and the enduring influence of regional powers.

Paramaras of Chandravati

The **Paramaras of Chandravati** ruled the area around the Arbuda mountain (present-day Mount Abu) in India during 10th-13th centuries. Their capital was located at Chandravati, and their territory included parts of present-day southern Rajasthan and northern Gujarat. The most notable ruler of the dynasty was Dharavarsha, who helped his Chaulukya overlords repulse a Ghurid invasion at the Battle of Kasahrada in 1178.

Territory

The Paramaras of Chandravati ruled the area around the Arbuda mountain (present-day Mount Abu). Their territory, called Arbuda (or Arvuda in an inscription^[1]), spanned over present-day southern Rajasthan and northern Gujarat. Chandravati (also called Chandrapalyam or Chandrapalli in inscriptions^[1]), a town at the foot of the mountain, was their capital.^[2]

Political History

The Paramaras of Chandravati ruled between 10th and 13th centuries.^[2] The 1161 CE inscription of the Paramara king Ranasimha refers to the Agnivansha myth, stating that the dynasty was created by the sage Vashistha during a ritual sacrifice. It then states that the historical king Utpalaraja was born in this dynasty at Chandrapalli,^[3] which is probably an alternative name for the kingdom's capital Chandravati.^[1]

The inscription then names and praises Utpalaraja's successors, describing them using stereotyped phrases and double entendres. Dhandhuka, the sixth ruler after Utpalaraja, had at least three sons. Purnapala, or Purnapala, the eldest of these, seems to have died without an heir, and was succeeded by his younger brother Dantivarman. The throne then passed on to the third son Krishnadeva, whose descendants Kakkaladeva and Vikramasimha also subsequently became the kings. The throne then passed on to Dantivarman's descendant Yashodhavala.^[4]

According to Ranasimha's 1161 CE inscription, he was a son of Vikramasimha, and ruled after Yashodhavala. However, the Roheda inscription states that Yashodhavala's son Dharavarsha succeeded him on the throne, and that Ranasimha obtained the throne "for a while" (or "in the meanwhile").^[5] Ranasimha's 1161 CE inscription states that Ranasimha vanquished the "immense army" of Malava at the Parnna river.^[3] The Roheda inscription also refers to this victory, although the relevant verse can be read interpreted to mean that either Ranasimha or Dharavarsha obtained this victory.^[6] Based on the Roheda inscription, epigraphist H. V. Trivedi theorizes that while Dharavarsha was busy fighting an invasion from Malava, Ranasimha usurped the throne for a brief period. Historian R. C. Majumdar theorizes that it was Ranasimha who defeated the Malava army as the king of Chandravati, and subsequently ceded power to Dharavarsha.^[7] Dániel Balogh, who edited Ranasimha's 1161 CE inscription, considers another possibility that Ranasimha acted as a regent for Dharavarsha. Balogh notes that Dharavarsha's earliest inscription is dated 1163 CE (1120 VS), while his last inscription dated 1219 CE (1276 VS). This means, he ruled for at least 56 years, which is unusually long for the dynasty. Thus, it is likely that he inherited the throne when he was a child, and had Ranasimha as his regent during his early regnal years.^[6]

Epigraphist H. V. Trivedi identified the Parnna river as the Purna stream that flows beside the Girvad (Girwar) village near Mount Abu and Chandravati.^[8] Balogh doubts the accuracy of this identification, noting that this stream is too insignificant to be mentioned as a landmark in the

inscription, and is not located on the way from Chandravati to Malava, where the battle was likely fought. According to Balogh, "Parnna" may be a shorter form of "Parnnasha" (IAST: Parṇāśā), which is most likely another name for the Banas River.^[9]

Dharavarsha, who ruled as a Chaulukya feudatory, is regarded as the greatest ruler of the dynasty.^[10] According to *Partha-Parakrama-Vyayoga*, a text composed by his younger brother Prahladana, he repulsed a Chahamana attack at night.^[11] Dharavarsha was one of the Chaulukya vassals who repulsed a Ghurid invasion at the Battle of Kasahrada in 1178;^[12] he is called "Darabaraz" (Hasan Nizami) or "Darabaras" (Firishta) by the Muslim chroniclers writing about the battle.^[13]

Religion

The 1161 CE inscription of Ranasimha begins with an invocation to Shiva, describing him as the "stage director" of the world's creation, and naming Brahma and Vishnu as his assistants.^[3]

List of rulers

The following is a list of Paramara rulers of Chandravati, with approximate regnal years, as estimated by epigraphist H. V. Trivedi.^{[4][14]} The rulers are sons of their predecessors unless noted otherwise:

Regional Name	IAST Name	Reign (CE)	Notes
Utpala-rajā	Utpalarāja	c. 910–930	Founder of dynasty
Arnno-rajā or Aranya-rajā	Arṇṇorāja or Araṇyarāja	c. 930–950	
Krishna-rajā	Kṛṣṇarāja	c. 950–979	
Dhara-varaha or Dharani-varaha	Dharāvarāha or Dharaṇivarāha	c. 970–990	
Dhurbhata	Dhūrbhata	c. 990–1000	
Mahi-pala	Mahīpāla	c. 1000–1020	son of Dharavaraha
Dhandhuka	Dhaṃdhuka	c. 1020–1040	
Punya-pala or Purna-pala	Puṇyapāla or Pūrṇapāla	c. 1040–1050	
Danti-varmman	Daṃtivarman	c. 1050–1060	son of Dhandhuka
Krishna-deva or Krishna-rajā II	Kṛṣṇadeva or Kṛṣṇarāja II	c. 1060–1090	son of Dhandhuka
Kakkala-deva, or Kakala-deva	Kakkaladeva, or Kākaladeva	c. 1090–1115	
Vikrama-simha	Vikramasiṃha	c. 1115–1145	
Yasho-dhavala	Yaśodhavala	c. 1145–1160	great-grandson of Dantivarman through Yogaraja and Ramadeva
Rana-simha	Raṇasiṃha	?	son of Vikramasimha; possibly a regent for Dharavarsha
Dhara-varsha	Dhāravarṣa	c. 1160–1220	son of Yashodhavala and the last known ruler of dynasty

Yashodhavala's last inscription is dated c. 1150 CE (1207 VS); Ranasimha's inscription is dated 1161 CE (1218 VS); and Dharavarsha's earliest inscription is dated c. 1163 CE (1220 VS). This suggests that Ranasimha either held the throne sometime between 1150 and 1163, or acted as a regent during Dharavarsha's early regnal years.^[6]

Political History of Paramaras of Chandravati

The Paramaras were a medieval Indian dynasty that ruled over the Malwa region in central India. One of the prominent branches of the Paramaras was the Chandravati branch, which had its

capital at Chandravati (modern-day Chandor in Madhya Pradesh). The political history of the Paramaras of Chandravati is an interesting chapter in the medieval history of India. Here's an overview:

Origin and Early History:

The Paramaras were originally feudatories of the Rashtrakutas and gained prominence during the 9th century. The Chandravati branch was established by Siyaka I, who is considered the founder of the dynasty. He declared independence from the Rashtrakutas and established his rule in the Malwa region.

Siyaka I and Successors:

Siyaka I and his successors worked to consolidate and expand their territories. Vakpati Munja, a notable ruler of the Chandravati Paramaras, expanded the kingdom and played a crucial role in Malwa's political landscape.

Munja and his Contemporaries:

Munja had conflicts with the powerful Pratihara ruler, Bhoja I, but he managed to establish his authority in Malwa. The Paramaras, under Munja, became patrons of literature and learning. Munja himself was a renowned scholar and poet.

Decline and Turmoil:

The decline of the Chandravati Paramaras began with the assassination of Munja. This event led to internal conflicts and a power struggle among his descendants. Continuous external invasions and internal disputes weakened the Paramara rule, and they faced challenges from other regional powers.

Later Period and Fragmentation:

The Chandravati Paramaras faced invasions by Mahmud of Ghazni in the 11th century, contributing to the decline of their power. The dynasty fragmented into smaller principalities, and the Paramaras lost their once-dominant position in the region.

Legacy:

Despite their decline, the Paramaras left a lasting impact on the cultural and literary landscape of the region. They were patrons of art, literature, and temple architecture.

Later Revival Attempts:

The Paramaras made attempts to revive their power in the following centuries, but they were largely unsuccessful, and the once-mighty dynasty became a shadow of its former self. The political history of the Paramaras of Chandravati reflects the broader trends of medieval Indian history, including the rise and fall of dynasties, cultural patronage, and the impact of external invasions.

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