



MINOR DYNASTIES IN KARNATAKA SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NOLAMBAS OF HENJERU

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Abstract

Minor dynasties come into existence before the birth of an empire. In the same way after the fall of an empire minor dynasty come into existence. It is but natural. In this background before the birth of the empires of the Shatavahanas, Chalukyas, Rastrakutas, Kalyani Chalukyas, Vijayanagar, there were many minor dynasties in Karnataka. The following minor dynasties can be listed as follows: Abhihras of Aparanta, Punnatas of Keerthipura, Banaas, Alupas of Baarakur, Senavaras of Kudalur, Nolambas of Henjeru, Silaharas of Konkana, Cholas of Nidagal, Rattas of Soundatti, Kadambas of Hanagal, Chandalvas of Arakalagudu, Sindhas of Elburga Pandyas of Uchchangi, Gutthas of Gutthala, Bhyrarasas of Karkala, Choutas of Ullala, Hagalavadi Palegars, Saalvas of Gerusoppa, Desais of Belavadi, Madhugiri Palegars, Palegars of Hadinadu, Arasas of Sode, Ghorpades of Sandur, Palegars of Sira, Nayakas of Surapura, Nawabs of Sira, Desais of Sangli, Desais of Miraj, Major Kurandawada Minor , Kurandawada (Wadagao), Jamkhandi, Mudhola, Jatta, Akkalakote, Choorunda, Ramadurga and Savanur-Nawab.

Key Words: *Minor dynasties, Nolambas of henjeru, Contributions of Nolambas.*

Introduction:

Karnataka was ruled by a large number of dynasties. Among them Chalukyas, Rastrakutas, Sangamas, Tulavas belonged to Imperial dynasties. Kadambas, Gangas, Hoysalas, Mysore Wodeyar dynasties can be considered as major dynasties. The remaining small dynasties like the Banas, Nolambas, Chandalvas, Madakaries, Gorpades and others belonged to minor dynasties, which ruled over some taluks or one or two districts. Among such dynasties the Nolambas were prominent in Southern Karnataka area, extending over major parts of Tumkur, Hassan, Chitradurga, Kolar, Bangalore, Ballary, Ananthapura Districts. Their Capital was Henjuru Madagasira taluk, Ananthapura district of Andrapradesh now known as Hemavathi.

The Nolambas were related to Banas of Baanavadi and Pallavas of Kanchi and they were also their vassals for some time. Therefore they were also called Nolamba Pallavas.

Meaning: The word Nolamba is taken from Tamil word "Nol" or "Nola". It means rush into (forge into, Penetrate into or intrude into) the enemies territory or battle field. In another sense the feudal lords of the Chalukyas and Rastrakutas rushed into the political vacume created after the fall of the above empires. They were called Nolambas.

They came to power in the border areas of Tamilnadu, Andhrapradesh and Karnataka comprising Dharmapuri, Ananthapura, Kolar and Bangalore Districts which were bone of contension between Cholas, Banas, Vaidumbas and Gangas. When these ares were attacked by the enemies dauntless and her the local chieftains organised counter attacks and fell on the enemies and used to repelled them. Therefore they came to be called Nolambas. Thus the word Nolamba means repellers.

Origin:

- 1) Some of the copper inscriptions found at Kollapura in Maharastra on the border of North Karnataka refer to the origin of the Nolambas to Kumba, Nikumba who were sons of Kumbakarna a demon.
- 2) In some inscriptions of 11th century the founder was Rakkasa Nolamba Pallavabharana.
- 3) In an inscription of Pallava king Aparajita Varma the symbol of Kumbakarneshwara temple is found.
- 4) In a manuscript of Midigeshi Naada Prabhus of 1 century the Nolambas founder was called Nalambasura. They were the worshippers of Shiva. Thus they belonged to Shaiva sect,

Early Rulers:

According to some inscriptions of Henjeru Thrinayana Pallava (700-735) was the ancestor of the Nolamba Dynasty. He was called Kanchipathi or Lord of Shiva Kanchi. He belonged to Eashwara dynasty.

Mangala Nolambadiraja

The first Nolamba ruler was Mangala Nolambadiraja. He ruled from 735 to 785. He defeated the king of the Kirathas of Arakkadu or Arcot area. He ruled from Hemavati, now called Henjeru in Madakasira taluk of Ananthapur District near the eastern border of Tumkur. Mangala Nolambadiraja ruled over Nolambalige-Sasira mandala (province). By the end of the 10th century it came to be called Nolambawadi 32000.

Simhapotha (785-805):

He was a successor of Nolambadiraja. He was a vassal of the Rastrakuta Emperor Govinda-II. He fought under Rastrakuta commander Permadi-I against Ganga ruler Duggamara of Talakad. Duggamara was killed in the battle and his elder brother Shivamara was enthroned as a vassal of the Rastrakutas, Simhapotha played a major role in the restoration of Shivamara on the Ganga throne.

Charu Ponnera: (805-830)

He was the son of Simhapotha, He ruled for 25 years. He was a vassal of the Rastrakuta Emperor Govinda-III. During his period also the province was called Nolambalige-1000 (one thousand). He made matrimonial alliances with the Gangas of Talkad. Ganga ruler Rachamalla-I gave his daughter Jayashree (Jayabbe) to Polalchora the crown prince and eldest of Chaaruponnera. There was peace and prosperity during his period. He was given many titles like Pallava Nolamba- Adiraja, Raja Parameshwara etc.

Polalchora 1 (830-875):

During his period Nolambalige or Nolambawadi was expanded by the inclusion of Bengaluru, Kolara, Chittur areas from Gangas given as dowry by Ganga Rachamalla I. [These areas had been conquered by Rachamalla from the Bana ruler Mahabali in 810]. There by Nolambawadi extended upto the borders of Kanchi. Polalchora was given the title Nolambadi raja. He built the tower of the Bhoganandishwara temple near Nandi hill. He also constructed a great tank near Kambaduru in Anantapur District.

Mahendra I (875 A.D.-897):

He was an ambitious ruler and conquerer. With the support of Ganga ruler Rachamalla and Telugu Choda ruler Vikrama Mahendra defeated Bana king Vidyadhara in the battle of Soramatti and extended the kingdom up to Pulinadu. Thereafter realising the weakness of the Later Ganga rulers Mahendra annexed some areas around Mandya. In an inscription he was praised as Gangamandaladipathi. However he was killed in a battle by Rachamalla-II as mentioned in copper edict of Koodluru. In this battle Rachamallas younger brother Yareyappa commended the armies. He took the title Mahendraantaka.

In the edict of Hemavati city of Henjeru, Bijjamahadevi, Paramamahadevi, Akkabbe, Dommabbe, Gommabbe ruled over some hoberies in the Nolambavadi.

Ayyappadeva (897-904):

According to Madhugiri edict of 897A.D., Ayyappadeva who was also known as Nolambadiraja and Nolapaiah invaded Asandinaadu. Now known as the Arasikere taluk. The local chief Muttarasa was killed in the battle. He also conquered forts of Madhugiri, Midigesi, Thipperu, Penjeru etc. In 931 he was granted Masavadi and kogali provinces by Rastrakuta Emperor Govinda-IV for his maritorious services to the emperor. It is recovered in Sirathihalli edict found in Ballary District. However in 934 Ayyappadeva was killed while fighting for the Gangas against Bhima-II of the Vengi Chalukyas.

Anniga (934-940):

He succeeded Ayyappadeva who died in the battle field. Anniga had married Attiabbarasi princes of the Chalukyas. As a result he enjoyed high prestige. There was estrangement (quarrel) between Anniga and Rachamalla-III of the Gangas. A battle was fought near Kottamangala, in which Anniga was defeated. In the meantime Rastrakuta emperor Krishna-III was enraged by the orragance of Anniga. A compaign was led gainst Henjeru and Anniga was defeated and imprisoned. And his younger brother Dileepa was brought to the throne.

Dileepa (940-968):

During his period Nolambalige was known as Nolambawadi 32000 as recorded in the edict found at Jangamarahalli, Pavagada taluk. He had many titles like Iriva-nolamba, Immadi Nolapaiah, Pollavarma, Pallavarolganda, Thribhuvandheera, Ekavaakya. In 944 he fought for the Rastrakuta Emperor Krishna-III against the Cholas in the battle of Thakkolam in the north of Kanchi. Dileep fought heroically and defeated Gajaankusha Chola. Dileep was given the title Kandipura Varaadheeshwara, Dakshina-dandaadipati and has granted the province of Vellore. He was appointed as the over lord of Gangawadi-1000 (one thousand) ruled by Thirumalaiah and Kolar region.

Nanni Nolamba(968-970):

He was the crown prince during his father Dileepa. Soon after the death of his father Nanni Nolamba came to throne, but he ruled for a short period and died of ill health. He was succeeded by his son Nanni Polalchora in 975. He also died within a year in a battle fought against Ganga Marasimha. His widowed (dowager) queen Devabbarasi or Dipambika of Kadamba dynasty granted an agrahara to some vedic Brahmin families with hope of merit or punya for the demised king.

Mahendra-II (975-981):

According to Kurgodu edict found in Ballary District Mayidamma was known as Nolamba Pallavarasa. He ruled for seven years. He was able to defeat Rachamalla-IV (Ganga) with the help of Tailapa-II emperor of the Kalyani Chalukyas.

Veera Nolamba Permadi (981-1010):

His Queen Mahadevi issued many land grants which were recorded in inscriptions. During his period RajaRaja Chola invaded Nolambawadi in 1010. Veera Nolamba was defeated and exiled. His cousin Gannarasa was made the vassal of Cholas in Nolambawadi.

Gannarasa (1010-1024):

He was also called Nolmbadiraja Gatiyankakarasa. He also ruled over Kogali-500, Ballakunda-300, Kukanum-30, Maasawadi-5. His younger brother Iriya Nolamba had married the grand daughter of the Chalukyan Emperor Tailapa.

Later Rulers

Udayaditya (1024-1037): Capital: Kampili

He was known as Jagadekamalla Permanadi-1. He ruled from Kampili near Hampi. His son Jagadekamalla Permanadi-II ruled from 1037-1044.

Thrilokyamalla Permanadi (1044-1054):

He ruled about 10 years. During his period frequent wars were fought between Chalukyas and Cholas. Trilokyamalla Nanni Nolamba Permanadi III died in the battle of Koppam while fighting against Cholas in 1054. After his death his successors continued as the vassals of the Cholas until middle of the 12th century, then Nolambavadi was conquered by Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana.

Second Stage Of Nolambas (1245-1766)

After the fall of the Nolambas of Henjeru in the 12 century the first stage of the Nolambas ended. Later on the Nolambas ruled as feudal lords in seven places namely-Kora, Thereyuru, Gubbi-Hosahalli, Yennegere, Bidare and Puravara (Mummadi Pattana). These seven feudal states were called 7 naadus or Yelunaadu also known as Yalanadu (Yannegere region). Seven brothers were: Kalappa Gowda, Channappa Gowda, Sangappa Gowda, Kalachikkappa Gowda, Ramappa Gowda, Chikkappa Gowda, Maaregowda respectively. These were ruled by their sons and grandsons upto the middle of the 17th century, when they were conquered by Mysore Wodeyars. These 7 Naada prabhus were also called Mahanaada Prabhus. They were also known as Nadagowdas. According to their inscriptions they served vassals under Hoysala as well as Vijayanagara Emperors.

In 1245 an inscription was issued by Chikkamaara nayaka who died in the battle field. Many inscriptions refer to immigration of Nolamba Gowda families from the Andur border near Tumkur and Kolar. During the Vijayanagara period they immigrated from Andhra border to Kora and other (7) places in Tumkur District. In 1338 inscription found at Kora it is said that Ramegowda Mahanaada Prabhu of Kora had given his daughter to Bommanayaka of Holakallu. Gundugal village was given as dowry. An inscription of 1496 refer to a grant of Naganahalli village to Kora Maha naadaprabhu, along with Nidagul. Madhugiri, Hagalawadi for his heroic service to the Vijayanagar Emperor Salva Narasimharaya. Around 1490, Kari Thimmappa Gowda was a disciple of Yedeyuru Siddalingeshwara (Thontada Siddalingeshwara Yati) who converted a large number of Shaiva and Vaishnava Vakkaliga families to Veerashaivism. Their rulers came to be called Nolambas of 7 Mahanaadus. Honnappa Gowda was a Nolamba chieftain who ruled at Gubbi-Hosalli as a Mahanadaprabhu. In the days of Krishnadevaraya the Mahanadaprabhus participated in the Vijayanagar imperial army and played an important role as feudal chiefs. Unfortunately in one of the campaigns Mummadi Pattana of Nolambas (Veerappagowda) was plundered and destroyed by the Bijapur army. Nolamba Veerappa Gowda died in the conflict. His son Hire-Chikkappa Gowda built the new capital at Bijjawara about 5 km west of Mummadi Pattana. He and his successors fought heroically against the later Bahamani sultans on the side of Vijayanagar rulers during Sadashivaraya, Thirumalaraya, Srirangaraya and others who ruled from Penugonda.

In 1601 Chikkappa Gowda-II built Siddapura Matha near Madhugiri for the Jangamas. He also built a new fort at Madhugiri, Channarayagiri, Midigeshi etc., for the defence purpose. In the last days there was no harmony between Ramappa Gowda and Thimmappa Gowda. In such circumstances Mysore Wodeyar conquered Bijjawara, Channarayagiri, Midigeshi etc., Both the brothers were captured and imprisoned. Later they were given Madhugiri jagir. However their Jagirs were taken away by Hydar Ali. Thus the Nolamba nadaprabhus lost their power. During the same time the remaining other six Mahanadus were conquered by Hydar in 1760's.

Contributions of Nolambas :

Administration:

Extent of the Kingdom:

Nolambawadi, Nalambalige, Nolamba rashtra were some of the names were mentioned in many inscriptions issued by Vengi Chalukya, Rastrakutas, Kalyani Chalukyas,

Hoysalas and the Vijayanagar rulers. It was known as Nolambalige-savira (one thousand). Later it was called Nolambavadi 32000. It comprised of Kolar, Ananthapura, Tumkur, Chitradurga, Bangalore, Dharmapuri and some parts of Ballary District. Hemavathi Pattana or Henjeru in Madakashira taluk of Ananthapur District was their capital. Some of the large towns were Nandi, Avani in Kolar District. Barguru, Sira, Madhugiri, Bijjawara in Tumkur District., Thagadur in Dharmapuri District. Thus border districts of Karnataka, Andhra, Tamilnadu had come under Nolambadi.

Kingship:

Some of the Nolamba kings were fond of titles like Prithvivallabha, Nolambadiraja, Thribhuvanadhara Pallava, Kule, Thilaka, Pallavaarma, Pallava Aabharana, Chalankakara, Ekavakya, Amoghavakya etc. Some queens were in charge of Hoblies and taluks. Chief queen was called Agramahishi. Among the queens Bijjamahadevi (Vijaya Mahadevi). Parama-Mahadevi were in charge of capital cities like Bijjawara, Midigeshi etc.

Council of Ministers:

According to Epigraphia Carnatica (12:24) there were Pancha Pradhans or 5 ministers (called Amatyas, Nishata Amatyas, Pergades etc.). In some cases ministers varied from 4 to 6. The commander was called Prachanda-dandanayaka. Subordinate ruler was called Mahanta Adhipathi. For example: Varuna-Shiva-Bharata was a mahasamanthadhipati under Anniga Veera. Nolamba Basavaiah was a Pergade of Avani. Some chieftains were called Nadagowda, Uragounda, Urodeya. They were assisted by elders of towns and cities. They were leading merchants and land lords. Villages were governed by Gramagoundas assisted by Shanubogas and Talavaras.

Revenue System:

Land tax was called Siddhaaya. It included entire land-tax of the village as noted by Neelakanta shastri, Pannasu was half land-tax as mentioned by D.C. Sarkar. There were many other types of taxes on lands, houses, shops, transportation etc.

Land Grants:

Nolamba rulers were very pious rulers, who granted tax free lands to mathas, temples, basadies, scholars and poets, musicians and dancers. These land grants were called Raajamaanya. Some times land lords and rich merchants constructed tanks for the use of villagers and formers. They were known as Keremanya or Kerekoduge. Other land grants called Koduges were given to persons for their special services to the king and the people.

Entire Village or a city was given as a grant. For example: Nolamba king Mahendra-II granted Belagatturu town in Pulinadu as a land grant to the local Gowda.

Other Form of Grants (Khillats): Horses, white umbrellas, jewelled belts (Girdle or sontapatti or Addige) and other symbolic gifts to persons for their meritorious service. These honours were given along with a land grant for ex.: Kolathur Karavaiah was given white umbrella with a land grant along with a title Pallavaditya Nolamba Shresthi.

Blood Gifts (Nettara Koduge):

Families of the chieftains who died in the battle were given land grants. These lands were called Baalagalchu, Veeravolgalchu, or nettarakoduge (in Kannada).

Brahmadeya:

Land-grants to Brahmins were called Brahmadeyas. For ex: Nolamba king Mahendra-I gave Thipparuru village grant to Ponnadi Kowshika and vedic Brahmins. Aiyappa-mangalam village was granted to another group of vedic Brahmins.

Weights and Measures:

In Nolambavadi lands were measured as Mattara, Kanduga, Kalani. Mattara means 4 acres of land, Khanduga-bhumi means land producing 160 serus of paddy. Kolaga-land mans land producing 20 serus of paddy. Kalani category of land is not clear.

Coins:

Though the Nolambas were feudatories, they were permitted to issue their own coins of gold, silver and copper. Gold coins were called ponu and Gadyana. Ponnu in Tamil means gold or honnu in Kannada word which is modified from of Gaja+hana = Gajjana. These coins had elephant figures on one side and names of the kings-Mahendra and others on the other side. Many gold coins weighed 4 grams some gold coins had nandifigures. It was the sacred symbol of the Shaivas.

Army:

According to the inscriptions of Shrivana Belagola, Kudaluru, the Nolambas were great warriors and maintained large armies to support the emperor in their conquests. They had built strong forts at strategic places. For example: They had built fort at Henjeru, Madhugiri, Midigeshi, Channarayadurga, Nidugal, Nandi, Kolara etc. On many occasions they fought for the Rashtrakuta Emperors and defeated Ganga rulers like Rachamalla-I, Rachamalla-II, Ereyappa-II and others. Therefore Nolamba chieftains were given titles like Mahadandanayaka, Prachanda Dandanayaka etc., Many inscriptions refer to land grants to mathas. No body could encroach their lands. It was declared it was a great sin (sin of

Brahmicide) as mentioned in the inscriptions. Brahmins performed homas, yagnas and rituals and perpetuated blind beliefs and practice. They systematically exploited the people particularly the female. Vaishyas controlled agriculture, trade and commerce. They made huge profits. They enjoyed high status next only to the Brahmins. Some of them built tanks and wells for the use of people. Such Vaishyas were given village grants and tank grants in recognition of their social services. Among the vaishyas Balligara-setty, Pollikara-setty, Govarasetty (village), Vannekarasetty were prominent communities.

Position of Women:

Women of royal families, land lords, rich merchants were educated to some extent. They were proficient in fine arts like singing, dancing, embroidery etc., Some of the queens were provincial rulers. They were also donors, builders of temples monasteries, choultries. Some widowed queens acted as Regents during the minority of the crown prince. For ex. Devabbarasi, widow of Immadi Polalchora acted as regent on behalf of her young son. She built Shiva and Mukunda temples of Avani. In an inscription of Kolar, Nandiyabbe had a daughter by name Saavinirmadi is praised as a remarkable woman as she was expert in various shastras. However a large number of women of the lower classes remained illiterate and were good at domestic works. Women had no right to landed property. However she could inherit jewels and ornaments of gold, silver and gems. She could also get milking cow from the parents to the husband's house (as Baluvali or gift).

Mahendra-1, Mahendra-II, Aiyappadeva defeated the Banas and Cholas in the battle of Kanakatte, Kolala etc. Nolamba army consisted of infantry, cavalry and elephantry. They did not maintain chariotry. We can see the battle scenes carved on the walls of shiva temple at Begur near Bengaluru. In these areas Nolambas, Gangas and Kalyani Chalukyas can be identified. In these scenes we do not find chariots. Hero-stones and even inscriptions on stone and copper do not mention chariots. Many inscriptions refers to weapons like swords, spears, bows and arrows, shields etc. These weapons can be seen in the temple carvings. Immadi Polalchora was an expert in horse-riding and even medical science of horse. Therefore he was called Thuraga Vidyadhara (Ashwa-shastra). Nanni Nolamba-I was an expert in medical science of elephants (Gajashastra). He had many titles like Gajaraja Malla, Maddanemalla, Kattanemalla etc. In this background the name Nolambas is justified as they were eager to rush into the battle fields. Thus they were not only good farmers but also good soldiers.

Society:

During the Nolambas traditional four castes remained prominent in the society. Brahmins were about 3% of the society. They dominated in the field of education, religion and administration. They enjoyed all high posts and privileges in the society. They lived in Agraharas. They controlled temples.

The Nolambas of Nolambavadi are also known as Nonabas in colloquial language. Nonaba is the corrupt form of Nolamba. The descendents of these Nolambas are found in the present Tumkur and surrounding areas. A large number families were converted by Siddarameshwara of Sonnalige. He travelled in all most all the villages of this area, preaching Veerashaivism as well as the concept of 'Kaayakave Kailasa' or work is worship. He himself took part in the construction of large number of tanks for drinking water and cultivation. As a result these families become ardent followers of Siddarameshwara in the 12th century. Siddarameshwara was a disciple of Channabasaveshwara or Channabasavanna a great philosopher and a nephew of Basaveshwara. In the Nolamba society there were two groups. One group is called 3 days Nolambas and 4 days Nolambas. According to the popular belief, families which worship their family deities 3 days in a week came to be called 3 days Nolambas and those families which worshiped their family deities 4 days in a week came to be called 4 days Nolambas. During marriages and other auspicious occasions Three Days Nolambas keep three Kalasas (sacred pots) and idols and offer blessings by three auspicious women (sumangaelyaru) etc. Usually they observe these practices on special occasions. Where as the Four Days group of Nolambas instead of these three sets of practices observe four sets of rituals. Three days Nolambas perform Naagole Shastra during marriage ceremony. Where as the Four Days Nalambas do not observe. In recent years these differences are vanishing gradually.

Education:

Agrahaaras, Brahmapuries, Ghatiksthaanas, monastories or mathas, big temples served as educational centres in the towns and villages. Puranas, vedas, Upanishads manudharmashastra, Khagolashastra (Astronomy), astrology, mathematics, Kannada, Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil languages were taught. Poor Brahmin students were given free food one day in week by the well to do Brahmin families. This system was called Vaaraanna. This system was followed by Veerashaivas also. Very few girls were given home tuition by private teachers. Shudras were denied education from the ancient times.

Some of the famous Ghatikacharyas were Thribhuvana Bhattaraka of Avani Ghatika, Varuna Shiva Bhattaraka of Nolambeshwara Ghatikasthana, Chilluke Bhattaraka of Hemavati Ghatikasthana, Kanakesena Bhattaraka of Dharmapuri Ghatikasthana etc.

Religion:

King Thrinayana Nolamba was an ardent worshipper of Shiva. He had built Umamaheshwara temple at Henjeru or Hemavathipattana. It has the most beautiful sculptures of Shiva and Parvati. The Nalambas were worshipped Shaiva deities like Rudra veerabhadra, Siddarameshwara, Siddalingeshwara, Channabasaveshwara in linga form as well as human form. In the beginning Nolamba Veerashaivas were devotees of Balehonnuru Matha. In course of time Godekere Matha in Chikkanayakanahalli (Tumkur dist.) became the most important monastery of the Nolamba Veerashaivas. Later Kerekodi Rangapura Matha, Yalanadu Matha and others came to Prominence.

Some of the important Nolamba temples are Shankareshwara temple at Rangapura (Tiptur taluk), Siddarameshwara temple at Godekere etc., Besides they also visit pilgrimage centres of Siddarameshwara. They are locally popular as 'Done-Pooja' worship of sacred-water pond.

The Nolamba Veerashaivas worshipped Vaishnava deities like Ranganathaswamy, Venkateshwara etc., because they were family deities of the Nalambas before conversion to Veerashaivism. The Nolamba rulers built Yoganandishwara and Bhoganandeshwara temples tower at Nandi, Kambadaaru, Mukunda, Bharateshwara, Laxmaneshwara, other temples at Avani (near Mulubagilu), Kamakshi and Mallikarjuna temples at Dharmapuri (old name Thagaduru), Umamaheshwara temple at Penukonda etc., They also patronized Jains to build basadies at Hemavathipattana and Dharmapuri.

Sculpture:

Nolamba temples were decorated with beautiful sculptures. Images or idols, wall carvings, pillar carvings, roof carvings illustrate scenes from Ramayana, Mahabharatha, Bhagavata, Dashavatara and other puranas. There are beautiful carvings of male and female dancers and singers on the walls and pillar of the temples. Idols of Gods and Goddesses are also beautifully carved. For ex. There is another equally beautiful statue of Umamaheshwara, Parvati are carved in the most attractive style. Even the saree foldings are engraved in the most artistic way. These carvings were made under the patronage of queen Pasanabbe. The idol of Parvati is in the Madras museum. There is another statue of Shiva-Parvati in which Shiva is playing veena (violin). This is also preserved in the Madras

museum. Several other sculptures of Surya, Nataraja, Rama, Sita, Kaali are very beautiful. These can be seen in the same museum.

The sculptures of Ashta-dikpalakas namely Indra, Agni, Yama, Niruti, Vayu, Varuna, Kubera and Eshwara Nataraja are beautifully carved in the inner roof of Kalleshwara temple in Aralaguppe near Tiptur. In the middle of these Ashtadikpalakas shiva is shown as performing Thandava murthy. The Nolamba rulers were also devotees of mother goddess and they have carved the figures of Saptha-mathrukas namely Brahmi, Vaishnavi, Maheshwari, Koumari, Indrani, Varaahi, Chamundeshwari (w/o Bhyrava). Along with these sculptures, sculptures of Nandi, garlands of bells, anklet with tiny bells were beautifully carved. The statue of Surya is in a standing pose with richly carved hallow. The sacred thread or Yagnopavita is beautifully carved. It has rich ornamental carvings. The image of Kaali is another remarkable sculpture of the Nolambas. The sitting sculpture of Kaali is proportionate with splendor. Waist and round breasts are very is most remarkable. Its background with flame like hair style with two headed serpent coming out of the mouth of the human skull. Infact skulls along the sacred thread were also carved on the body. Besides garland beads Anklets, bracelets are richly carved on the statue. The breasts are bound by a serpent (naaga kuchabandha). Similar Goddess Kaali sculptures are found near Doddeshwara temple at Henjeru. The Nataraja statue has six arms accompanied by attendants playing different musical instruments, Unfortunately the ends of the three arms broken.

Architecture:

Most of the Nolamba temples were built between the 9th and the 10th centuries. Temples were square shaped in the beginning. For Ex. Bhoganandeeshwara, Yoganandeeshwara, Arunachaleshwara temples are in square shape. Two to four pillars are found in the entrance hall. In front of the hall there is a small square hall. These temples do not have lofty towers in front of the temple. Instead of the tower there is Nandimantapa. There are carvings of birds and animals in the Nandi-mantapa. The central tower on the sanctorium is in Drawidian style and in pyramidal form. Pillars and door frames are richly carved. In the middle of the temple roof Asthadikpaalakas and Shiva are carved.

Some of the important Nolamba temples are found at Henjeru, Nandidurga. Avani near Mulabagalu, Dharmapuri, Aralaguppe etc. There are five temples at Henjeru alone. These are: Umamaaheshwara (Doddeshwara temple). Akka-Thangi temple, Virupaksha temple, Malleshwara temple, Siddeshwara temple. There are richly carved 16 pillars in the Uma-Maaheshwara temple. There are beautiful sculptures of Brahma, Vishnu, Karthikeya,

Rathi-Manmatha etc., in this temple. Less important temples are Gavaganeshwara temple built by Gavaganabbe, Nolamba-Narayaneshwara temple built by Deevabbaras, mother of Mahendra-II, Sidileshwara temple built by Sidilankamalla a potter, Rameshwara temple built by Shivalingaiah a priest. He built this temple with a fund raised by begging. In the Arunachala temple at Nandi there are beautifully carved lattice as well as Nataraja statue. In recent years Kalleshwara temple at Aralaguppe was renovated by ASI (Archaeological Survey of India).

Conclusion

As the power of the larger imperial dynasties waned, their feudatories and vassals gained independence, leading to the formation of smaller, regional kingdoms within the broader Karnataka region. This period was characterized by political decentralization, with numerous smaller entities vying for control and influence, rather than a single dominant empire. Despite the political fragmentation, this era saw a significant advancement in culture and art. The patronage of the arts and literature continued, with the construction of new temples and the promotion of local languages like Kannada.

This period of minor dynasties served as a transitional phase, setting the stage for the emergence of larger, more powerful kingdoms like the Hoysalas and the Vijayanagara Empire that followed.

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