SOUTHERN ANDHRA UP TO THE RISE OF THE TELUGU CHÓLAS

Six families of the Chola origin flourished in southern Andhra from the sixth to the end of the seventeenth century A.D. The Cholas of Renâdu in modern Cudâpah district are considered to be the earliest whereas the Natli chiefs of the same area to be the latest among them. The latter, however, do not come under the scope of this study as they belonged to the late medieval times. The rest of the families had their sphere of political activity in the area lying south of the Krishna, particularly on either side of the Pennâr river. Hence, all these Chola families are called the Telugu Chólas. The purpose of the present study is to give as cogent an account as possible of these families which played a prominent role in the political destinies of the major dynasties of medieval Deccan and Andhra in particular. It is, therefore, necessary, before taking up the study of the subject proper, to have a bird's-eye view of the political conditions of Andhradâsa under which these families emerged.
Southern Andhra is the findspot of some edicts of Asoka, the great Maurya emperor. They are found at Yerragudi in Gooty taluk of Anantapur district, Rajulamandagiri in Pattikonda taluk of Kurnool district, and Amaravati in Guntur district. It is also believed that he constructed a stupa at Amaravati. All these clearly show that southern Andhra passed under the benign rule of Asoka. Further Andhra is shown as part of his empire in his thirteenth rock edict. He constituted the land of the Vadugar into a separate viceroyalty with its headquarters at Suvamagiri which is identified, among others, with Jonnagiri in Pattikonda taluk of Kurnool district.

The Sātavāhanas, also known as the Andhras, were the successors of the Mauryas in this part of the country. Scholars are at variance on the name, origin and date, homeland, extent of the kingdom and number of rulers of this dynasty. They are said to have settled down in the lower valley of the river Krishna and their territory extended along the southern bank of the Krishna from the frontier of Mysore to the Bay of Bengal. This territory came to be known as the Andhrapatha early in the Christian era, for it finds mention in the Mayidavolu plates of Pallava
Sivaskandavarman, dated in the tenth regnal year of his father Bappa Maharaja. Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, in his peregrination of the south in 639-46 A.D., refers to the country around Dhānysakaṭa as Andhra. There was a district of the name Sātavāhanihāra to the south of the Krishna in the early centuries of the Christian era which is also referred to as Sātahanirattha in the Hirehadagali plates of Pallava Sivaskandavarman. It appears to have extended eastwards along the Krishna as far as Nandikotkur taluk in Kurnool district where there is a village of the name Sātānikōṭa. Recent excavations at this place revealed the vestiges of a submerged and deserted city which seems to have been connected with Sātavāhanihāra and associated with the Sātavāhanas.

There were thirty rulers in the Sātavāhana dynasty. They held sway for more than four and a half centuries from about the last quarter of the 3rd century B.C., to the first quarter of the 3rd century A.D. Some of them bore the epithet Lord of Dakshināpatha. Not much is known about the rule of the early Sātavāhanas in southern Andhra. Among the later Sātavāhanas, the rule of Gautamiputra Satakarni, Vasishthiputra Pulumāyi, Yajnaśri Satakarni and
a Pulumāyi of the Jungligundu inscription has come to light in this region.

After the downfall of the Sātavāhana empire, the Abhiras, the Chutus, the Ikshvakus and the Pallavas came to power in the north-west, south, coastal Andhra and south-east respectively. The Chutus, who ruled in Mahārāṣṭra and Kuntala, are represented by led coins with horse device and the name Hariti (a part of the name of the Chutus) found in Anantapur and Cuddapah districts. Some historians consider the Chutus as a branch of the Sātavāhanas. They were, however, supplanted by the Kadambas.

The Ikshvakus, who rose to power in coastal Andhra with their capital at Śrīparvata Vijayapuri, were prominent rulers. They probably entered into matrimonial alliance with the aboriginal tribes of the country, and, in their search for power, migrated to the south, settled as the vassals of the Sātavāhanas and later ruled the Krishna valley region in the early third century A.D. R. Subrahmanyan thinks that the Śrīparvatīya Andhras, referred to in the Matsya Purāṇa, are identical with the Ikshvakus.
Chantamula, the first Ikshvaku ruler, came to power after 227 A.D. Two records of his have come to light so far. Much about him is known only from the inscriptions of his son and grandson. According to them, he had a son named Virapurisadatta and a daughter Chantisiri. He wielded some influence in the western and southern regions of the Satavahana kingdom before he overthrew them. He followed a policy of friendship with the neighbouring chiefs and entered into marital alliances with the Pukiya and Dhanaka families. With their help, he dislodged the Satavahanas from Dhanyakataka. He performed Agnivhoma, Vajapeya and Asvamedha sacrifices which a sovereign king alone could perform. Coins bearing an elephant with uplifted trunk found at Nagarjunakonda (Guntur), Ongole (Prakasam) and Nalgonda lend credence to his aravabhuma. He was succeeded by his son Virapurisadatta, whose rule is known to us from the inscriptions found at Nagarjunakonda, Uppugundur (Prakasam) and Jagayajyeta (Krishna). The inscriptions are dated till his twentieth regnal year indicating that he ruled for at least twenty years. During this period, his kingdom did not record any expansion. The silence on the military front was more than compensated by his activity on the religious side. He was
a great devotee of Buddha and was associated with the
benefactions of Buddhism such as erection of edifices
which glorified Vijayapuri as a centre of Buddhism and
attracted Buddhists from far and wide.

Virapurisadatta was succeeded by his son Eshvala
Chantamula born of his queen Mahadevi Bhattideva. He
inherited a kingdom comprising Guntur and Krishna
districts, and portions of Nellore and Nalgonda districts.
He was an able ruler and nine inscriptions of his are found
at Nagarjunakonda. An inscription dated in his 11th
regnal year refers to a victory won by his commander-in-chief
Elari over an unknown enemy. Virapurisadatta’s last
known inscription is dated in his 24th regnal year and
he appears to have died some time in 297 A.D.

With the accession of his son Rudrapurisadatta, the
Ikshvaku kingdom weakened considerably. He had no
supporters and it seems, the erstwhile subordinates,
especially the Pallava chief Simhavaraman I, extended his
influence to this area. A major portion of the Ikshvaku
kingdom was overrun and annexed to the Pallava kingdom by
Yuvamaharaja Sivaskandavarman, and Rudrapurisadatta had to
be contented with only a semblance of power. The latter
consecrated a Śivalinga and named it as Bhavalesvara after his father. In course of time, it attained religious importance and became popular as Bhavalesvara.

Rudrapurisadatta had a brother called Haritiputra Kśmēra Vīrapurisadatta. Though no mention of his succession to the throne is made, R.Subrahmanyan presumes that he was ousted by the Kadambas.¹⁶

The circumstances in which the Pallavas came to southern Āndhra are not clear. A study of the early Pallava inscriptions shows that by the beginning of the 4th century A.D., they became masters of the territory held by the Ikshvakus. The Pallavas, who were ruling in the south-east of the Satavahana empire, made Kanohi in Chingleput district as their capital. Their history opens with the Prakrit stone inscription of Pallava Simhavarman¹⁷ at Manchkallu in Palnad taluk of Guntur district and three Prakrit charters. As the former closely resembles the Ikshvāku inscriptions at Nāgārjunakonda it is naturally the earliest, and Simhavarman of this epigraph was probably the father of Śivaskandavarman referred to in the three Prakrit charters assigned to the beginning of the 4th century A.D. In the time of Śivaskandavarman, the Pallava kingdom
extended up to the Krishna in the north and the Arabian Sea in the west. It cannot now be explained satisfactorily as to how he came to possess such a vast kingdom. But a ninth century tradition affirms that an early Pallava king of great fame ViśakūỀha seized the royal insignia together with the daughter of a Nāga king. The latter is identified with Mahāśeṇāpati Skandaṇāga. He was the commander-in-chief of the Saṭavahana ruler and he held sway over a janaṇapada which included Saṭavahānāhāra. After the death of his master, Skandaṇāga is believed to have declared his independence and established himself at Vanavasi in North Kanara district of Karnataka State. The kingdom of Vanavasi covered a vast area and it extended from Aparanta (Thana district in Maharashtra) in the north to Mysore in the south, and probably included Bellary, Anantapur, Chittoor and Chingleput districts. Skandaṇāga had no male issue and his only daughter was either taken captive or given in marriage to ViśakūEmoji. On Skandaṇāga's death, ViśakūEmoji inherited his kingdom and founded the Pallava dynasty which controlled the destinies of South India for several centuries. Having come to possess Saṭavāhānāhāra, the Pallavas perhaps found it easy
to attack the Ikshvakus from the west. Simhavarman of
the Manchikallu epigraph referred to above is supposed to
have been responsible for the overthrow of the Ikshvāku
power.

The Pallava records are, however, silent about
the subsequent period, and the darkness is dispelled to
an extent by the Allahabad pillar inscription of the
Gupta emperor Samudragupta which mentions a Pallava
Vishnugopa of Kāñchī.

The next stage in the annals of the Pallava rule
is represented by a dozen Sanskrit copperplate charters
dated in the regnal years of Pallava kings. In the
south-west of the Deccan the Kadambas rose to power.
Kadamba Mayūraśarma, from whom the Kadambas trace their
genealogy, was studying the Vēdas in a ghatika at Kāñchī.
He came into a conflict with the mounted Pallava guard
there and left for Śrīparvata. He entrenched himself in
the dense forests of the area and successfully resisted the
armies sent by the Pallavas. He also levied tribute on the
Brihad Bāna and other feudatories of the Pallavas. Peace
was, however, concluded between the two, which recognised
Kadamba Mayūraśarma's sway over all the land between the
western Sea and Prâhâra. The Kadamba authority thus came to be recognised in Chitradurga and Bellary districts from the early days of their rule. The Pallavas, who were far from the Kadamba territory, wanted to check the expansion of the Kadamba and transplanted the Western Gangas from their original home in Kongu country to Paruvi vishaya within a striking distance of the Kadamba territory. Paruvi vishaya with its headquarters at Parigi in Hindupur taluk extended over a major portion of Anantapur district. The Western Gangas later on established themselves at Talakâdu in Mysore district and ruled over Gangavâdi-96000.

Though the Pallavas re-established their hegemony, they once again lost their kingdom to Karikâla Chôla in the time of Trilâchana Pallava. There were two rulers of the name Karikâla, one the son of a Jaṭâ Chôla and the other the son of a Mahîmaṇa Chôla. An epigraph of a Telugu Chôla ruler of Konidena, Mahîmaṇiâlîśvâra Nâmi Câôa, traces the genealogy of the early Chôlas from Jaṭâ Chôla who ruled Drâviḍa Panchaka from the renowned city of Uraiyûr. His son Karikâla, who proclaimed his prowess to the world by planting pillars of victory all over the earth,
who filled the earth and the sky with his glory by 
building the embankments of the Kaveri and who was death 
to the Sankyasahasras, ruled all countries from Kanci.
To Mahimana of this dynasty, three sons, namely, Karikala 
Dasavarman and Tondamani, were born. The inscription 
however, does not specify the relationship between 
Mahimana and Karikala, the son of Jata Chola. But an 
epigraph of another Telugu Chola ruler,\textsuperscript{23} Opilisidhi II, 
makes good the gap between Mahimana and Karikala. According 
to this record, the solar dynasty was known as the dynasty 
of Karikala after his birth. To him was born a son called 
Mahimana Chola who, in turn, had three sons by name 
Karikala, Tondamana and Dasavarma. If the information 
contained in both the records is true, the following 
genealogy can be arrived at.
Thus, of the two Karikālas, the progenitor of the Telugu Chōlas seems to be Jatā Chōla's son Karikāla.

The reference to Drāvida Panchaka, Uraiyūr, flood-banks of the Kāvēri and Kāndhi in Nanni Chōla's inscription makes one to understand that Karikāla's place of origin was not southern Āndhra but elsewhere. The Drāvida Panchaka may mean the Drāvidas of five regions, and the Brāhmaṇas of Gujarāt, Mahārāṣṭra, Karnataca, Āndhra Pradeśa and Tamil Nādu used to be called Paieha Drāvidas. These areas were also sometimes referred to as Drāvida Panchaka. If it were to be accepted, then Jatā Chōla must have conquered a major portion of the Deccan and South India. It is, however, difficult to sustain this argument on the slender evidence of this lone inscription but one can confine his sway to the Tamil country for which the central position of Uraiyūr was best suited to serve as a capital. Uraiyūr is now a suburb of Tiruchirapalli, and the Kāvēri is one of the three great rivers of the Deccan plateau that flows through Coimbatore, Tiruchirapalli and Tanjore districts of Tamil Nādu.

Karikāla Chōla is said to have made Drāvida Panchaka a nādi-mātriṇaka by diverting the waters of the Kāvēri through hundreds of channels. Kāndhi in Chingleput district was
the capital of the Pallavas. Being the son of Jata Chola of Uraiyur, Karikala should be traced to the Cholas of Uraiyur in Tamil Nadu.

The Cholas of the Tamil country were a very ancient royal family and, even during the Sangam age of the first few centuries of the Christian era, they were looked upon as having descended from the Sun, a fact on which much emphasis was laid in later times. According to Nanni Choda's inscription, referred to above, Jata Chola immigrated to South India from Ayodhya, the cradle of the kings of the solar race. This is corroborated by several other inscriptions and Tamil classics. But the immigration, if there had been one, appears to have taken place long before Jata Chola, for there is a reference to the presence of the Cholas in South India as far back as the 3rd century B.C. The Tamils possess a very ancient literature and, from the mention of the Chola kings in it, the following genealogical table can be drawn.
If a comparison of the first table with this is made, Karikala (II) and Daśavarma of the Telugu records do not find mention in Tamil literature and Udayakumāra of the Tamil literature in Telugu records. N.Venkataramanaya identifies the rulers mentioned in both the Telugu and Tamil records. Chenni and Killi in Tamil are proved as synonyms of Chōla in Telugu. He concludes similarly that both terms 'Māvan and Mahimāna' mean 'the powerful'.

If both the sources are compared with, excluding the names which do not find mention in either, four generations common to both are arrived at. They are
The Tamil literature thus corroborates and confirms the genuineness of the genealogy contained in the Telugu Chola inscriptions.

The Telugu Chola inscriptions are very sparing in their reference to the early history of Karikala Chōla, who, however, stands out prominently among the Chōla kings known to Sangam literature. He was not only the greatest and illustrious but also the most cherished in song and legend by a living posterity. He appears to have met with a fire accident early in his life as his name indicates. Karikāla means a man with a charred leg. But subsequently a new meaning was given to it, i.e., kāla means death and kari means elephant (death to elephants, i.e., enemies). He was, no doubt, a powerful ruler of his times and his forces carried fire and sword into the enemy kingdoms. But he could also be a destroyer of wild elephants in the real sense of the term. As the records show that he cleared forests and
founded villages in them, it is quite possible that he might have killed several wild elephants in the course of his forest clearing activity. Evidences are not wanting to show that forests in those days were replete with wild life. Just as the forest clearing activity earned the title 'Kāduvetti' for Trilōchana Pallava, so also the destruction of elephants in large numbers could have brought him the name 'Karikāla' subsequently and called as such ever since.

Karikāla ruled from Puhār or Kēvīripūmpattīram. A Tamil work, Silappadikāram, refers to his expedition to the north which took him as far as the Himalayas. It is in this context that his struggle with Trilōchana Pallava has to be looked into for more than one reason, because his northern expedition not only brought the territories south of the Krishna under his control but also paved the way for some scions of his family to go to the Telugu country in the wake of his expedition, settle there and start ruling.

A lot of controversy is raging round Trilōchana. H.Krishna Sastry holds him to be a mythical figure, while N.Venkataramanayya views him as a historical figure.
As could be gleaned from the Local Records and the Nava Chōla Charitra, Trilōchana was the son of a Brahmana virgin (of Srīkālahasti in Chittoor district). He had other names such as Triṇayana, Triṇētra, Mukkaṇṭi, Kāḷuveṭṭi and Mukāri. He was ruling Tondaimandalam forty-eight thousand country with Kāṇchī as his capital.

His name is said to have been omitted in the imperial Pallava genealogy because of his illegitimate birth and subsequent usurpation of the throne of Kāṇchī. He led an expedition to the north and conquered a number of local chieftains on the other side of the Krishna. The most important principality which he subdued was Viraja, a stronghold of the Durjayas. He defeated three Durjaya princes and carried them to Kāṇchī as prisoners of war. He, however, set them at liberty. According to the Kaifiyat of Anantavaraṇa (Guntur), his dominions extended up to Warangal which served as his second capital. The newly acquired territory was far from Kāṇchī and he must have found it difficult to govern it from there. It was probably the reason why he set the three Durjaya princes at liberty and parcelled out the conquered territory among them and a number of other chiefs, which enabled him to retain his hold permanently in that direction. Trilōchana, Triṇayana and Triṇētra are all
Sanskrit forms and Mukkanti is a Telugu word. All these mean three-eyed. The name of the river Swarnamukhi or Swarnamukhari near Šrīkālahasti makes one doubt whether it is reminiscent of Mukāri, another name in Tamil for Trilōchana.

The Chōlas regarded the Pallavas as intruders and wanted to expel them from there. In attacking Trilōchana, Karikāla had only followed the policy his predecessors had laid down before. The Pallavas had suffered much from these Chōla attacks, the earliest of which seems to have taken place in time of Buddhyanaka (identified with Vishṇugopā). The earliest glimpse of the Chōla military activity, which Karikāla carried further, can be had in this event.

In the course of his northern expedition Karikāla came into conflict with Trilōchana. The struggle was at first confined to Topālam and he wrested Kāchī from him. This is borne out by a Telugu Chōla inscription which says that he 'governed the whole earth from Kāchī'. Trilōchana appears to have retired to Ārīkālahasti. Linga or Lingana Kavi, a poet who lived probably in the 14th century A.D., refers to the visit of Karikāla's envoys...
to Trilōchana's court at Śrīkālahasti in his work Java Chōla Charitra. Karikāla, not being satisfied with this simple success over Trilōchana, commanded him to render personal service in the construction of the flood-banks of the Kāvēri. Disregard of his command seems to have enraged Karikāla to decide on another invasion of Trilōchana's kingdom.

Stories were woven around this invasion and told that Karikāla put out the third eye of Trilōchana. Although Trilōchana is believed to have had three eyes, N. Venkataramanayya presumes that the 'third eye' was thrust on him by the engravers whom the Telugu Chōla rulers employed in their service. Here, attention has to be paid to the historical introduction of the Telugu Chōla inscriptions, i.e., charana-saroruha-vihita-trilōchana-trilōchana, which means 'the eyes of Trilōchana are set on the lotus-feet' (of Karikāla). In many inscriptions, the word vihita is substituted by vihata, and this slight modification altered the meaning of the entire eulogy. It means (after effecting this change) that the eyes of Trilōchana were put out by the lotus-feet (of Karikāla). What must have originally been a simple mistake of the scribe appears to have been
eagerly seized upon by the court poets of the Telugu Chōlas to enhance the glory of Karikāla. The words Trilōchana and vihata suggest the form of punishment. The poets must have been well aware of the fact that Trilōchana was not blinded by Karikāla and that it would be improper for them to deprive him of his eyes. So the name Trilōchana came in handy and was interpreted to mean that Trilōchana had three eyes and that his third eye was put out by Karikāla who was incensed at his refusal to comply with his orders. Trilōchana thus appears to have got his third eye.

Karikāla's conquest of Kānchi and his coming into conflict with Trilōchana is not supported by the earliest authorities on his reign. It has to be borne in mind in this connection that the Telugu Chōlas, who extolled the activities of Karikāla, would not have perpetuated the memory of Trilōchana Pallava had he been a mythical figure and that the myth would have died down gradually instead of appearing repeatedly in traditional, literary and epigraphical accounts for over a period of six to seven centuries. To cherish the memory of a ruler for such a long period is itself proof positive of the historicity of the fact.
Many Kaifiyat of the villages in Cuddapah district provide an insight into the activities of Karikāla Chōla. According to them, he was a great builder and an administrator. He built temples, cleared forests, reclaimed the forest land for cultivation and set up new villages. The forests between the Pennār and the Tirumala were among those cleared by him. He fixed the amount of tax which the ryots of Brāhmaṇapalle had to pay annually to the government on their lands. He excavated a tank at this place, to feed which he also built a dam across a rivulet in its neighbourhood. He granted agrahāras to Brahmans and planted trees on vacant sites in some villages. The Kaifiyat of Chitvēl narrates that Karikāla came conquering soon after his accession and annexed this part of the country. He cleared forests, and in the neighbourhood of Karigiri, to the south of a hill, he founded, among others, the village of Pottapi. Pottapi was the most important village in Pottapinādu which Karikāla constituted along with Pulugalādu. Karikāla also allotted lands lying at the foot of the Śrīparvata to the immigrants of North India.

In spite of all the foregoing discussion about
Trilochana Pallava and his contemporaneity with Karikala Chōla, the longstanding riddle regarding the historicity of the legend remains where it was.

What happened afterwards in the Pallava history is by no means clear. But there appears to have been a break in the well established rule of the kingdoms of the south. It is termed as an interregnum popularly known as the Kaḷabhra interregnum. There is no definite information on the Kaḷabhras. All that we know about them is from the Veḻyikatṉi grant of Parantaka Neḍunjaḍayan which says that a Kali king named Kaḷabhraṇ seized the earth by driving away numberless great kings (aḍhirajaṇa). The Kaḷabhras were called differently by different scholars as Kaḷappāḷar, Kalvaṉ, and Kaḷavar. It is said that they were in occupation of the territory along the northern border of Toṇḍaṁandalam, i.e., the region around Vēngalām in the east to the north-west frontier of Karnataka State in the west. The mention of the Kaḷabhras in the plural seems to point to them as a military tribe rather than a dynasty of rulers. The southward expansion of the Sāṭavāḥana seems to have facilitated their movement to the south. The political revolution they brought about is said to have been provoked
by religious antagonism and it completely upset the
governments of the south and ushered in a period of
anarchy. Consequently, there was something like an upsetting
of the established order and a complete change in the
accepted traditions. Many adhira\'as were uprooted and
brahmad\'yas were abrogated. A certain Achutavikrama of
the Kalabhrakula extended patronage to Buddhist monasteries
and authors in the Ch\'eda country. They were denounced as
evil kings and enemies of the civilisation.

When the curtain rises again towards the close of
the sixth century A.D., the Kalabhras were in occupation of
the major kingdoms of the south. As it threatened the
independence of almost all the South Indian kingdoms Pallava
Simhavishnu and P\'andiya Ka\'unganon concerted measures either
independently or in co-operation with each other, to
throw off this incubus before they consolidated their hold
on these kingdoms.
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11. FA, I, Kesanapalli inscription and Rentala inscription.
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25. *RA*, IV; No. 8, p. 55.
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