

Ballappadandanayaka: Epigraphical Study

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra occupy an important place in the history of South India for nearly two and a half centuries. South India was divided between the two great empires of the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Cholas at the rise of the Hoysala power in Southern Karnataka and the Hoysalas in the south and the Chalukyas, the Yadavas of Devagiri, the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Kalachuryas and minor dynasties, before the Muslim invasions. The three centuries of Hoysala rule in Karnataka witnessed notable developments in the realm of administration. Members of Hoysala royal family, like the Yuvaraja, queens and rajagurus were empowered to maintain and enjoy fiefs of their own. They also were independently governing various provinces on behalf of reigning monarch.

Basically the central government of the Hoysala Empire had been formed after a successful political expansion. It includes a system of administrative areas called generally as *Nadus* or provinces. Many Hoysala Inscriptions mentions the names with responsibilities tied to such areas as foreign affairs (*Sandhivigrahi*), treasurer (*Mahabhandari* or *Hiranyabhandari*), personal secretary (*Paramavishvasi*), chief master of robes (*Mahapasayita*), justice (*Dharmadhikari*), central register (*Kaditha*), and head of the State Secretariat (*Srikaranadhikari*). Some ministers also oversaw clusters of departments (*Sarvadhikari*). Army commanders were called *Dandanayaka* (or *Senadhipati*).

Governor was also entitled as *Dandanayaka* and was the head of the civil and military departments. They always acted as a link between people and the king. His important duty was to carry the orders of Central Government. He was the head of the revenue administration and revenue settlement of the villages and fields in his jurisdiction was carried out by these officers in conjunction with the local bodies. The provincial governors had large military forces under them and used in times of peace for preserving internal peace and order. Governors also supplied military forces to the king.

Hoysala inscriptions refer to provincial governor as *Dandanayaka* and *Nayaka*. The former was the state official and the later was the hereditary governor. They expected to render military service as well as were in charge of collection of revenue. But they were not in direct charge of collection of revenue, instead collected it through the local bodies.

There were other governors who held appointment only during the pleasure of the king and were liable to be transferred at any time. Every governor was a *Dandanayaka* and as such was the head of the civil and military departments. As a military officer he was responsible for the preservation of peace and order and, if he was a frontier governor, for the protection of the frontier also. This paper attempts to overview the Hoysalas famous commander Ballappa *Dandanayaka* Role and his significant Contributions.

Ballappadandanayaka was one of the distinguish commander or *Dandanayaka* of Hoysala Dynasty. He was also known as *Mahapradana*. He served as a *Dandanayaka* from Hoysala King Ballala-III (1191AD to 1342AD) to Vijayanagara King Bukka-I(1356AD-1377AD). He was a son of *Someyadandanayaka*, who served as a Minister under Hoysala kings Narasimha-III and Ballala-III. He has elder brother named *Singayadandanayaka*. In many Kannada inscriptions refer him as *Ballappadannayaka*, *Ballappadanayaka*, *Ballappadannaayika*, *Ballappadanaayaka*, *Vallapadanayika*. In Tamil Inscriptions he was also refer as a *Vallappadanaayaka*, *Vallappadennakkar*, *Vallappadannayakkar*.

An inscription from Vibhuthipura of 1307AD¹ refer to the existence of Ballappa *Dandanayaka*. According to this inscription 'Mahapasayitha Ninran, (Official of Masandinadu West), Sembadeva, Villgamunda ect build a village called 'Vachhidevapura' (Present Vibuthipura). After they granted fertile land to the 'Vachhidevapura Matapati'. This grant wishes good health and increase wealth for Ballappadandanayaka and Hoysala King Ballala-III.

After this reference, we can't see any other reference of Ballappadandanayaka existence till 1328AD. Because during this time his brother Singaya Dandanayaka took administration in charge of Bangalore, Anekal, Hosakote region. After 1328AD an Inscription of Shankhagiri of Selam District² mentions Ballappadandanayaka. According to this inscription Ballappadandanayaka built one Agrahara in above mentioned place. This is indicating Ballappadandanayaka was most trusted Commander of Ballala-III and had played a major role in the battle between Hoysalas and others with Ballala-III in Tamilnadu.

Two Inscriptions of the Tekal of 1328AD,³ refers Ballappadandanayaka's donations to the Tekal Varadarajaswamy temple. An inscription of chintamani of 1337AD⁴ refers, peoples of Kaivaranadu donated land in the name of Ballappadandanayaka.

An Inscription from Kolara of 1338AD⁵ refers land grant of chokkaperumaladas. According to this inscription, chokkaperumaladas was donated a land in the name of Ballappadandanayaka and also appreciate Ballappadandanayaka's contribution to the Hoysala Dynasty.

According to the Inscription from Hosakote of 1342AD,⁶ Ballappadandanayaka was a distinguished general or '*Mahapradana*' of Ballala-III. One more inscription from Hosakote of 1343AD⁷ clearly mentions Ballappadandanayaka was a Chief Minister of Ballala-III.

After the death of Ballala-III, Ballappadandanayaka served as a general under Veerapirupaksha Ballala(Ballala-IV) son of Ballala-III. An inscription from Halasubalu of 1343AD clearly mention the coronation ceremony of Veerapirupaksha Ballala was held under the guidance of Ballappadandanayaka. The death of Veerapirupaksha Ballala Hoysala dynasty ended their rule.

Later Vijayanagar King Harihara-I was established the Vijayanagara Empire. In this situation he seeks administration support from Ballappadandanayaka. Actually Ballappadandanayaka was a close relative of Ballala-III. In this way he married daughter of Harihara-I. After the establishment of Vijayanagara empire Harihara-I along with his son in law Ballappadandanayaka he visited Sringeri Vidyapeetha. Inscriptions from Sringeri of 1346AD⁸ clearly indicate this visit and mention the grants of some villages to Sringeri Vidyapeetha.

The *Mahapradhana* or *Dandanayaka* was the most influential person who enjoyed a position of pre-eminence. Many *Dandanayakas* of Hoysalas have done a tremendous job to the development of state. They built temples, agraharas and made grants of villages to the temples, Basadi's and other religious shrines. Ballappadandanayaka also did same thing during his reign. Inscription from Tekhal of 1328AD⁹ refers grant of Alambaalu village of Tekhalnadu to the Tekhal Varadarajaswamy temple. One more inscription from Tekhal of 1333AD¹⁰ refers grant of some villages to god of Tekhal shingeeshwara odeva nayanar. This temple priest Palabhata received that grant.

Inscription from Malavalli of 1334AD¹¹ also refer grant of fertile land to maadigowda son of settigowda of Elupura. And also two inscriptions from vaagatha of 1336AD refer Ballappadandanayaka grant of some villages to people of Pulliyuru varadaraja chaturvedimangala.

Finally, inscription from Begur of 1361AD¹² refer the donation of Ballappadandanayaka. According to this inscription Ballappadandanayaka donated some wealth with Mahamandaleshwara Ariyappa. This is the lost inscription refer ballappadandanayaka role and existence. Ballappadandanayaka has a son named Vanan.¹³ According to the Tekhal inscription of 1330AD,¹⁴ he was also donated to Tekhal Varadarajaswamy Temple for daily pooja.

Thus the above study on Hoysala general Ballappadandanayaka, clearly shows that the monarchs depended largely on a number of power centers to maintain political unity within the kingdom. The political groups were Yuvaraja, queens, Dandanayakas, governors and various officers worked under him, mahajanas, Devadanas, Nadalvas, Sthanikas, and so on. In this perspective Ballappadandanayaka played a tremendous role as a general under the Hoysala Rulers.

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