

New Kings and Kingdoms

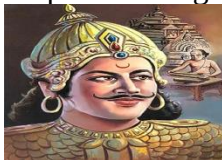
Introduction

Between the 7th and 12th centuries many new dynasties, like, Gurjara-Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas, Palas, Cholas, and Chahamanas, emerged.

The Emergence of New Dynasties

- Rich landlords or warrior chiefs became subordinates of kings and were given title of *samantas*, and were expected to bring gifts for their kings or overlords, had to be present at their courts and would provide them military support. With more power and wealth, *samantas* became *maha-samantas* or *maha-mandaleshvara*, and some of them became free from their overlords.
- Dantidurga, who was a Rashtrakuta chief, performed *hiranya-garbha* ritual to become a Kshatriya and then he overthrew his Chalukya overlord.

In spite of being Brahmins, Kadamba Mayurasharman and Gurjara-Pratihara



Kadamba Mayurasharman

Harichandra built their kingdoms in Karnataka and Rajasthan.

Administration in the Kingdoms

- Kings shared their administrative power with *samantas*, Brahmins, traders, and associations of peasants.
- Peasants, cattle-keepers, artisans, and all those who produced something, had to pay taxes or rents, and traders had to pay revenue.
- Under the Chola dynasty, there were around 400 different types of taxes, from which *vetti* (forced labour), and *kadamai* (land revenue) were the most common.
- The reasons of collecting taxes were; to fulfil the finance of the king's establishments, to build temples and forts, and to fight wars.
- The high positions at kingdoms including the army, were appointed either by hereditary or through influential families.

Prashastis and Land Grants

- *Prashastis* are a special kind of inscription, meaning “in praise of”. They were composed by learned Brahmins in praise of the rulers, which may not be literally true; but, they tell us how rulers of that time wanted to illustrate themselves.



If the kings liked the *prashastis*, they gave land as gift to the Brahmins, with records of it on copper plates.

- Kalhansa was a famous writer who wrote a long Sanskrit poem (Rajatarangini - "The River of Kings") on kings of Kashmir by using variety of sources, such as inscriptions, documents, eyewitness accounts, and earlier histories. He was usually critical about rulers and their policies.

Warfare for Wealth

- Ruling dynasties were based in specific regions; but, they tried to control others areas. Kanauj in Ganga valley was an area the Gurjara-Pratihara, the Rashtrakuta, and the Pala dynasties tried to control for centuries; historians describe it as the "tripartite struggle".
- Rich temples were targeted first when one ruler attacked another's kingdom, because large temples were built to demonstrate power and resources.



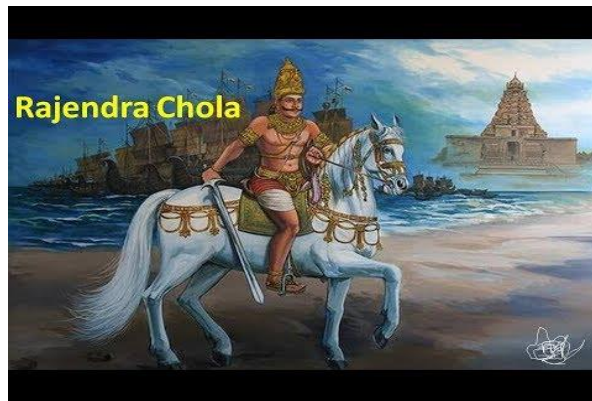
Sultan Muhamud Gazni, from Afghanistan, ruled for 33 years and extended his control over parts of Central Asia, Iran, and north-western part of the subcontinent; his main strategy was to attack and loot wealthy temples, like the Somnath temple in Gujarat.

- Mahmud used all this wealth to built his splendid city of Ghazni but he also wanted to know more about the people he conquered and so he appointed a scholar named al-Beruni to write an account of the sub-continent.
 - His book the Kitab-al-Hind is regarded as one of the foremost sources of the history of India.
 - The Chahamanas later known as the Chauhans ruled in areas around Ajmer and Delhi and tried to extend their rule but were defeated by the eastern Chalukyas of Gujarat and the Gahadvalas of western Uttar Pradesh.
 - Their greatest ruler was Prithviraj Chauhan II who defeated the Afghan Muhammad Ghori in 1191 but lost to him in 1192.
-

A Closer Look - The Cholas

From Uraiyur to Thanjavur

- Vijayalaya, one of the Cholas from Uraiyur, captured the Kaveri delta which was under control of the Muttaraiyar (subordinate to the Pallava kings of Kanchipuram), in the middle of 9th century. He built the town of Thanjavur and a temple for goddess Nishumbhasudeni there.
- His successors extended the empire and included the regions under the Pallavas and the Pandyas too.
- Rajaraja Chola is considered the greatest Chola ruler and ascended the throne in 985 CE and reorganised the administration.



- Rajaraja's son Rajendra I continued his father's policies and extended his empire up to the Ganga valley, Sri Lanka and south-east Asia.

Splendid Temples and Bronze Sculpture



- The splendid temples at Thanjavur and Gangaikondalcholapuram built by Rajaraja and Rajendra I are architectural marvels of medieval India.
 - The temples under the Cholas were the nuclei of the villages, the centre of crafts and were well endowed with land from the king and other rich people.
 - The produce of the land helped maintain the people working in the temple such as priest, garland-makers, sweepers, cooks, musicians, dancers, etc.
 - The bronze art of sculpture that was born in the Chola temples is considered to be as the finest bronze works in the world.
-

Agriculture and Irrigation

- The Kaveri breaks into many channels before emptying itself in the Bay of Bengal. These branches were flooded by rains and deposited fertile soil on the banks which in turn helped the agriculture in this region.
 - By the 5th and 6th century large scale cultivation started in the Kaveri valley as forests were cleared and levelled for creating more cultivable land.
 - In the delta region embankments were built to prevent flooding and canals were constructed to carry water to the fields.
 - Artificial irrigation took place with the construction of wells and water tanks.
-

The Administration of the Empire

- Peasant settlements known as *ur* became prosperous with the advent of artificial irrigation.
- Groups of such villages formed a group called *nadu* and with the village council they administered the villages by collecting tax and maintaining justice.
- Rich peasants of the *Vellala* dynasty controlled the functioning of the *nadus* under the watchful eye of the Chola emperor.
- The Chola kings also gave titles such as *muvedavelan* (peasant serving three kings) and *araiyar* (chief) to rich people as marks of respect.
- Brahmanas were given land grants known as *brahmadeya* which resulted in more and more brahmanas settling in the Kaveri valley.
- Each brahmadeya was looked after by a *sabha* or assemble of Brahmana landholders and were highly efficient.
- Trader association called *nagarams* also helped in the town administration.
- Inscription in Uttaramerur in Chingleput district in Tamil Nadu shows how sabhas functioned and the committees that looked after irrigation works, gardens, temples, etc.
- Members of these committees were chosen by lottery.