

## **CHOLAS (IMPERIAL CHOLAS) AND PANDYAS**

The Tamil Chola dynasty ruled in southern India and is considered one of the longest-ruling dynasties in history. The earliest datable references to it are in Ashoka inscriptions from the third century B.C. The dynasty ruled over various sized territories until the 13th century AD. The Cholas were based in the fertile valley of the Kaveri River, but at their peak from the late 9th century to the early 13th century, they ruled over a much larger area. The Cholas left behind a legacy that includes Tamil literature and the great living Chola Temples.

### Origin of the Cholas

Records available after the Sangam Age show that the Cholas remained in the Kaveri region as subordinates to the Pallavas.

The resurgence of the Cholas began with the conquest of the Kaveri delta from Muttaraiyar by Vijayalaya (850–871 CE).

In 850, he founded the Chola kingdom and built the city of Thanjavur. As a result, historians refer to them as the Later Cholas or Imperial Cholas.

The Cholas trace their ancestry to the Karikala, the most well-known of the Cholas of the Sangam age, according to copper plate documents of his successors.

The progenitor of their lineage is an eponymous king named 'Chola,' according to their genealogy.

In these copper plates, the names Killi, Kochenganan, and Karikalan are mentioned as members of the line.

From Parantaka I (907–955) to Kulothunga III (1163–1216), Vijayalaya's illustrious successors brought the Cholas glory and fame.

Parantaka Chola set the tone for territorial expansion and broadened the base of governance.

rajaraja I (985–1014), the builder of the most beautiful Brihadishvara temple at Thanjavur, and his son Rajendra I (1014–1044), whose naval operation extended as far as Sri Vijaya, consolidated the advances made by their predecessors and went on to establish Chola

# Administration of Cholas

Tanjore was the Chola capital. The Chola Empire was divided into three major administrative units: the Central Government, the Provincial Government, and the Local Government. The Uttaramerur inscriptions shed light on the Chola administration.

The king was in charge of the administration. The Chola kingship was hereditary. According to Chola royal family tradition, the eldest son succeeded the king to the Chola throne. Yuvaraja was the name of the heir apparent.

The tiger was the royal emblem of Chola kings. A council of ministers aided the king in his work. Lower-level officials were referred to as Siruntaram, while higher-level officials were referred to as Peruntaram.

The Chola government relied heavily on land revenue as its primary source of revenue. As a tax, one-sixth of the land's produce was collected.

Customs and tolls were the empire's other source of revenue, in addition to land revenue. Furthermore, taxes on ports, forests, and mines aided the king's coffers.

The Cholas had a strong army and navy. The army was made up of 70 regiments. The Chola kings paid a high price to import highly efficient Arabian horses.

The Chola king served as chief justice, as major cases were tried by the king himself. Minor village disputes were heard by the village assembly.

## The Pandyas

The Pandyas established their dynastic rule in southern Tamil Nadu by the end of the sixth century CE after Kalabhras

Pandyas were one of the Muvendaras that ruled the southern part of India, though intermittently, until the pre-modern times

*The term Muvendar refers to a Tamil word meaning three chiefs, used for the heads of three ruling families, the Cholas, Cheras, and Pandyas*

The history of the Pandyas of the Sangam period, circa third century BCE to third century CE, has been reconstructed from various sources such as megalithic burials, inscriptions in Tamil Brahmi, and the Tamil poems of the [Sangam literature](#)

Accounts of travellers such as [Marco Polo](#), Wassaff and [Ibn-Battuta](#) are useful to know about political and socio-cultural developments of this period

Another major source of information about the Pandyas comes from the copper plates that inform the essence of royal orders, genealogical list of the kings, their victory over the enemies

## **Nalanda University and Its Architecture**

Founded in 427 C.E., Nalanda Mahavihara, or Nalanda University, lasted for over 700 hundred years. It survived political waves, the rise and fall of civilizations, religious wars, and the birth of intellectual greats for almost a millennium before the Turks destroyed it. In a 1917 notice by the *Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, archeologist David Spooner detailed the discovery of a 24-feet high wall, 600 clay tables, and 211 uniquely carved stone panels surrounding the Baladitya temple, situated in modern-day Bihar. The digging performed around a kilometer square of Nalanda district was counted as one of the most beautiful marvels of its time.

Nalanda was regarded as an architectural masterpiece. Enveloped by a lofty wall and a huge gate, the institution comprised of several temples, viharas (educational and residential buildings), compounds, stupas, classrooms and meditation halls. Parks and lakes also adorned the institution's grounds. The excavated ruins of the institution indicate that bright red bricks were used in its construction.

One of the highlights of Nalanda was its well-equipped and colossal library housed in three large multi-storied buildings called the Ratnasagara (Ocean of Jewels), the Ratnaranjaka (Jewel-adorned), and the Ratnodadhi (Sea of Jewels). Ratnodadhi was

where the most sacred manuscripts of the institution were kept and this building was nine stories high.

The Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara is located in the North-eastern state of Bihar, India. Spread over an area of 23 hectares the Archaeological site of Nalanda Mahavihara presents remains dating from circa. 3rd Cen BCE with one of the earliest, the largest of its time and longest serving monastic cum scholastic establishment in Indian Subcontinent from 5th Cen CE - 13th Cen CE before the sack and abandonment of Nalanda in the 13th Century. It includes stupas, chaityas, viharas, shrines, many votive structures and important art works in stucco, stone and metal. The layout of the buildings testifies to the change from grouping around the stupa-chaitya to a formal linear alignment flanking an axis from south to north. The historic development of the property testifies to the development of Buddhism into a religion and the flourishing of monastic and educational tradition

Each monastery and temple of Nalanda University was assigned different purposes and had ranging religious affiliations, namely [Buddhism](#) and [Hinduism](#). They were designed with towers, panels, and votive *stupas*. The decorative art on the towers, depicting figures of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and characters from Jataka tales, can be dated back to the Gupta dynasty. The panels of another temple illustrated motifs of Hindu gods and goddesses.

In the 3rd century, Ashoka, the propagator of Buddhism in India, constructed a *stupa* to honor Lord Buddha's second disciple, Sariputta, the native of Nalanda. An Emperor from the Gupta Dynasty ordered the construction of a six-level pavilion and installation of a twenty-four-meter high copper Buddha. The 12th descendant of the Guptas, Narasimha Gupta Baladitya (470-535 AD) erected a ninety-one-meter *vihara* around the statue of Buddha. In the 7th century, Emperor Harshavardhana of Kannauj built a brass monastery inside the area.

The historical narrative, propagated by the colonial historians, recounts that the decline of Nalanda University was caused by a petty plunderer, overzealous in forwarding Islamic interests in the Indian subcontinent. Bakhtiyar Khalji, a native of Afghanistan, repeatedly plundered Magadha and the neighboring villages for gold, food supplies, and horses. The gold found during his loots and raids of the Buddhist monasteries made him a hundred times richer. The invasions of the Turks forced the monks to flee and a century later, scholars described Nalanda to be completely deserted and empty. Out of the eight temples and 98 *viharas* (fourteen large and 84 small) of the entire architecture, two *viharas* (monasteries) survived the brutality of the Turks; also, only the bordering walls with eastern and western gates were left intact.

## The Gandhara School of Art

During the Kushana Empire's rule, the Gandhara art prospered in India. Above all, Kanishka, the greatest of the Kushanas was a famous backer of art and architecture. The Gandhara School of art flourished in his reign. Gandhara School was profoundly influenced by Greek methodologies.

The figures of Buddha were more spiritual and carved mainly in grey and bluish-grey colour with the finest details.

## The Mathura School of Art

The Mathura School of Art was entirely influenced by Indianism. The stone used in the Mathura school of arts was red sandstone. The sculptures were less spiritual.

They mostly used the spotted red sandstone for making sculptures and statues. The initial images of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva are happy and fleshy figures with little spirituality about them. The Mathura School of arts prided themselves on creating images of Buddha and they also made statues of many gods and goddesses such as Jain Tirthankaras.

## Difference between Mathura and Gandhara School of Art

Although both the Mathura and Gandhara schools of Art share some rudimentary similarities between themselves, there are some fundamental differences between the two: which is highlighted in the table given below:

Areas of differences	Gandhara School of art	Mathura School of Art
<b>Reign</b>	Kushana Dynasty	Kushana Dynasty
<b>Area</b>	Gandhara (Now located in the Peshawar Valley of Modern-day Pakistan)	Mathura
<b>Outside influences</b>	Greek and possibly Macedonian influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Entirely indigenous</li><li>• No external influence</li></ul>
<b>Religious influence</b>	Buddhism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hinduism</li><li>• Buddhism</li><li>• Jainism</li></ul>

<b>Material Used</b>	Bluish- Grey sandstone Grey sandstone	Spotted red sandstone
<b>Features of Buddha sculptures</b>	Spiritual Buddha Sad Buddha Bearded Buddha Less ornamentation Great detailing Buddha in Yogi postures Greek factors like wavy hair, large forehead, long ears	Smiling Buddha Less emphasis on spiritual aspects Shaven head and face Muscular Physique Graceful posture of Buddha Seated in Padmasana Buddha surrounded by two monks: Padmapani (holding Lotus) and Vajrapani (Holding Vajra) Halo around the head of Buddha decorated with geometrical motifs The Standing Buddhas of the Sravasti, Sarnath, and Kausambhi
<b>Various Mudras of Buddha in Gandhara Art</b>	Abhayamudra- Don't fear Bhumisparsamudra -Touching the earth Dhyana mudra- Meditation Dharmachakramudra- A preaching mudra	—

## ROCK ARTS

**Rock art** is human-made markings placed on natural surfaces, typically vertical stone surfaces. A high proportion of surviving historic and prehistoric rock art is found in caves or partly enclosed **rock shelters**; this type also may be called **cave art** or **parietal art**. A global phenomenon, rock art is found in many culturally diverse regions of the world. It has been produced in many contexts throughout human history. In terms of technique, the four main groups are:

- cave paintings,
- petroglyphs, which are carved or scratched into the rock surface,
- sculpted rock reliefs, and
- geoglyphs, which are formed on the ground.

The oldest known rock art dates from the Upper Palaeolithic period, having been found in Europe, Australia, Asia, and Africa. Anthropologists studying these artworks believe that they likely had magico-religious significance.

The archaeological sub-discipline of rock art studies first developed in the late-19th century among Francophone scholars studying the rock art of the Upper Palaeolithic found in the cave systems of parts of Western Europe. Rock art continues to be of importance to indigenous peoples in various parts of the world, who view them as both sacred items and significant components of their cultural heritage.<sup>[1]</sup> Such archaeological sites may become significant sources of cultural tourism and have been used in popular culture for their aesthetic qualities.<sup>[</sup>