

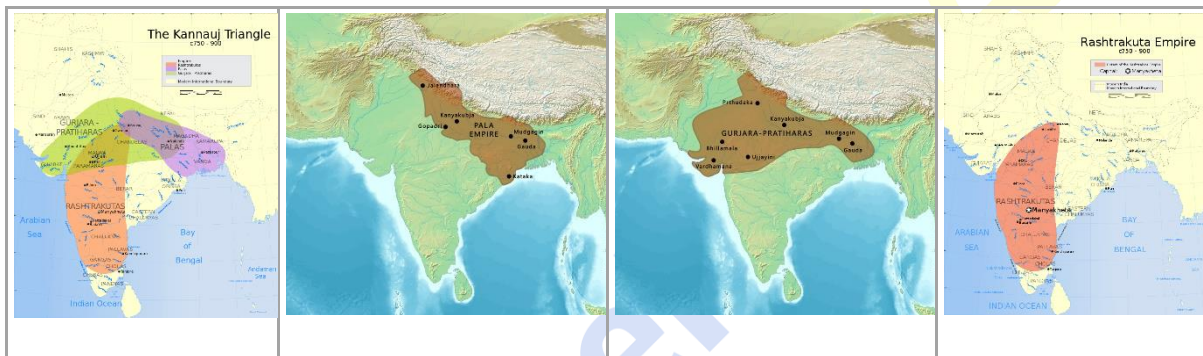
Prelims Master Program (2023-24) – Ancient, Medieval, Art and Culture
Handout 16: Early Medieval Era

Tripartite struggle (8th - 10th C. CE)

It was a struggle for supremacy among **three early medieval empires** - Gurjara-Pratihara, Rashtrakuta, Palas

The major factors for the struggle were as follows:

- To assert supremacy over **Kannauj**, a **symbol of prestige and power** since the period of Harshvardhan.
- To acquire control over the **rich resources of the Ganga Valley**.
- To acquire control over the lucrative **trade routes** of Gujarat and Malwa.
- To **acquire war booty**, which was important for maintaining a large army.



1. The Palas (750-1161)

Notable kings include:

- **Gopala** – he was elected as king in 750 CE.
 - He brought stability to Bengal, which had been facing anarchy since the defeat of Shashanka.
 - He was a patron of Buddhism and established the **Odantapuri Mahavihara** (Bihar Sharif).
- **Dharmapala:**
 - He became **immensely powerful** and established an empire by defeating the powerful Rajput Pratiharas. He temporarily established **control over Kannauj** as well. Finally, he was **defeated by Rashtrakutas**.
 - He consolidated an empire whose wealth lay in a combination of agriculture along the fertile Ganges plain and international trade.
 - He built (contribution to education)
 - **Vikramshila Mahavihara** (Bhagalpur, Bihar), and
 - **Somapura Mahavihara** (Bangladesh)



Gopala elected by the people

- Strong influence over Tibet through Atisha.
- **Devpala** – he conquered Pragjyotishpur and parts of Odisha.
 - Nalanda monastery was expanded through donations made by Balaputradeva (Shailendra king).
- **Mahipala I**
 - Defended Bengal against invasion of Cholas from south India.
- **Mahipala II**
 - Varendra/Kaivarta (north Bengal) rebellion.
- **Rampala** –
 - He established the **Jagaddala** Mahavihara (Bangladesh)
 - **Sandhyakaranandin's Ramacharatiram** - simultaneous narration of Ramayana and Ramapala

5 monasteries patronized by Palas (Bengal)	4 monasteries patronized by Bhauma-Karas (Odisha)	Other centres of learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nalanda • Vikramshila (Dharmapal) • Odantapuri (Gopal I) • Jagaddala (Rampal) • Somapura (Dharmapal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratnagiri • Lalitagiri • Pushpagiri • Udayagiri 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharda Peeth (PoK) - Lalitaditya of the Karkota Dynasty • Vallabhi (Gujarat) - Jain centre of learning patronised by rulers of Maitraka dynasty. • Manyakheta, Nagarjunakonda, Enniyaram, Kanchipuram

Imp: Sulaiman (al-Tajir, c. 850 CE), an Arab merchant visited Pala empire during 9th century. He referred to a kingdom named '**Ruhma**' and attested to their military power. He says that the Palas had an army bigger than those of the **Balhara** (Rashtrakutas) and the king of **Jurz** (Gurjara-Pratiharas).

1,300-year-old Buddhist stupa found in Odisha's Jajpur

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) stumbled upon a 1,300-year-old stupa right in the middle of a mining site in Odisha's Jajpur district from where Khondalite stones were supplied for the beautification project around the 12th century Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri.

"We have managed to unearth a Buddhist stupa at Parabhadi in Sukhuapada hamlet in Jajpur district. Another smaller stupa has been completely destroyed due to mining at the site," said Dibishada Brajasundar Garnayak, Superintendent, Archaeologist of ASI's Puri circle, on Monday.

Mr. Garnayak said the stupa could be 4.5-metre tall and initial assessment showed that it may belong

to the 7th or 8th century.

The archaeological asset was found at Parabhadi, which is situated near Lalitagiri, a major Buddhist complex, having a large number of stupas and monasteries. After discovery of the Buddhist stupa from the mining site, the ASI intervened and asked the Odisha government to stop mining through its Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC). The mining has since stopped.

The newly discovered stupa was possibly disfigured in an earlier period. The ASI would now attempt to fully retrieve the structure's archaeological heritage, restore it to its original form and undertake protection of the site.

"The State government must conduct heritage assessment of a site, particularly when it is situated near any place of archaeological interest, before giving



Initial assessment showed that the stupa could be 4.5-metre tall and may belong to the 7th or 8th century. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

permission for mining. The smaller stupa, which was destroyed, cannot be restored," said Mr. Garanyak.

Local people and Buddhist scholars had warned the State government against mining in the Sukhuapada hamlet as the site was part of the Lalitagiri Buddhist site. Even local artisans expressed con-

cerns that their livelihood would be hit by the mining of Khondalite stones at an industrial scale.

"Those who approved the plan for carrying out quarrying at Sukhuapada should have applied their mind. Knowing well that many massive Buddha statues were discovered from Sukhuapada and preserved in the museum in-

side the Lalitagiri archaeological site, they should not have allowed such big mining machines to be deployed there," said Subhendu Bhuyan, member of the Jajpur Cultural Council.

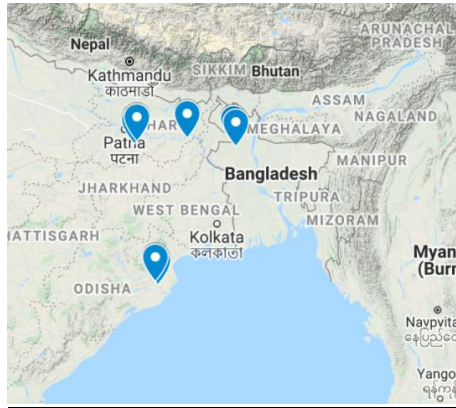
Khondalite stones were widely used in ancient temple complexes. The State government had come up with an ambitious plan to spend ₹3,208 crore under the Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture (ABADHA) scheme in three years to transform Puri into a world heritage city.

Khondalite stones are proposed to be used widely to maintain aesthetic value of some projects such as the heritage security zone, the Jagannath Ballav pilgrim centre, Puri lake development project, the Atharnala heritage project and the Matha Development Initiative.

Sukhuapada was the biggest of six Khondalite stone blocks reserved for the OMC. While Khondalite mining is being undertaken across 78.3 acres at Sukhuapada, other sites include Teligarh (27.5 acres), Gobindpur (20.3 acres), Chandia (4 acres), Kunda-kundi Kunda stone quarry (4.67 acres) and Kurumpada decorative stone quarry (1.67 acres) in Khordha district.

With the ASI taking control of Sukhuapada site, the OMC may find it difficult to supply Khondalite stones for the State government's ambitious temple development programmes. It may trigger another round of confrontation between the Centre and the State government. Violation of the ASI guidelines was a major controversy surrounding the re-development project in Puri.

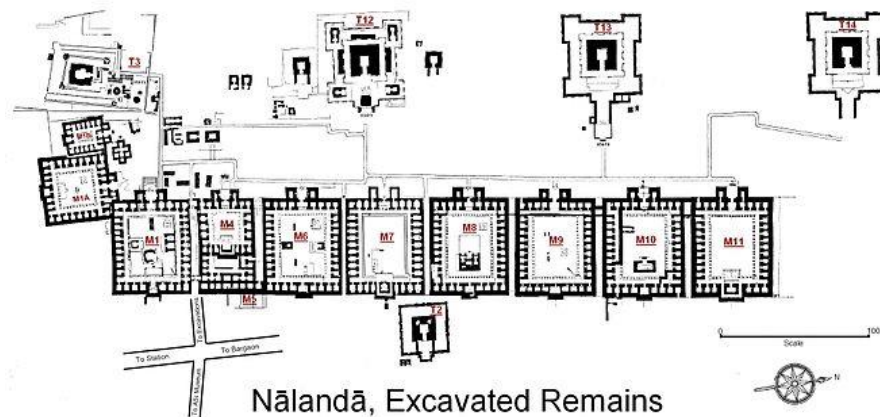
Network of five Buddhist Mahaviharas patronized by Palas



Nalanda (Bihar)	5th century – Guptas founded it. Harsha, Palas patronized. Gradual decline with Tantric developments. Finally destroyed by Bakhtiyar Khilji.	Huen Tsang, Itsing, Dharmakirti, Shantarakshita, Aryadeva, Vasubandhu, Atisha, Chandrakirti, Dignaga, Nagarjuna, Asanga.	Rose to legendary status due to its contribution to the emergence of India as a great power. Highly formalized Buddhist teaching.
Vikramshila (Bihar)	Est. by Dharmapala in 8th-9th c in response to decline in the quality of Nalanda. Destroyed by Bakhtiyar Khilji in 13th c	Atisha Dipankar Srijnana	A more clearly delineated hierarchy than other mahaviharas Centre for Vajrayana learning.
Somapura (Bangladesh)	Est. in 8th century. Advent of the Senas marked the beginning of the end and it was finally abandoned during the 13th c.	Aatish, Ratnakara Shanti Mahapanditacharya Bodhibhadra was a resident monk	It was an important intellectual centre that was occupied by Buddhists, Jains, and Hindus..
Odantapuri (Bihar)	By Gopal I in 8th century to emulate its neighbour Nalanda. Probably perished with arrival of Bakhtiyar Khilji.		Served as a model and inspiration for Tibetan Buddhists. Sam-Ye (Bsam-Yas) monastery was modeled upon it.
Jaggadala (Bangladesh)	By Ramapala in 11th century. Flourished for about 100 years.	Vidyakara (of Subhashita ratnakosha), Shakyashribhadra	Specialised in Vajrayana Buddhism.

Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara – UNESCO Citation

The Nalanda Mahavihara site is in the State of Bihar, in north-eastern India. It comprises the archaeological remains of a monastic and scholastic institution dating from the 3rd century BCE to the 13th century CE. It includes stupas, shrines, viharas (residential and educational buildings) and important art works in stucco, stone and metal. Nalanda stands out as the most ancient university of the Indian Subcontinent. It engaged in the organized transmission of knowledge over an uninterrupted period of 800 years. The historical development of the site testifies to the development of Buddhism into a religion and the flourishing of monastic and educational traditions.



The Chinese scholars Itsing and Huen Tsang visited Nalanda in the 7th century CE. They have given vivid accounts of Nalanda. They have noted that as many as one hundred discourses happened on a daily basis, in a variety of disciplines through the methods of debate and discussions.

- Library
 - Dharmaganja (Piety Mart) which comprised three large multi-storeyed buildings
 - Ratnasagara (Ocean of Jewels)
 - Ratnodadhi (Sea of Jewels)
 - It was nine storeys high and housed the most sacred manuscripts including the Prajnyaparamita Sutra and the Guhyasamaja.
 - Ratnaranjaka (Jewel-adorned).
 - The library not only collected religious manuscripts but also had texts on such subjects as grammar, logic, literature, astrology, astronomy, and medicine.
- Curriculum
 - The courses of study offered by Nalanda University covered a wide range, almost the entire circle of knowledge then available.

- Students of Nalanda studied Mahayana as well as the works of the eighteen (Hinayana) sects of Buddhism. Also studied other subjects such as the Vedas, Hetuvidya (Logic), Shabdavidya (Grammar and Philology), Chikitsavidya (Medicine), the works on magic (the Atharvaveda), and Samkhya.
- Students at Nalanda were also trained in fine arts, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, politics and the art of warfare.
- Huen Tsang himself became a student of Nalanda to study yogashastra. He has mentioned that the Chancellor of Nalanda, Shilabhadra, was the highest living authority in yoga.
- Administration
 - Yijing wrote that matters of discussion and administration at Nalanda would require assembly and consensus on decisions by all those at the assembly, as well as resident monks.

2. The Gurjara-Pratiharas (730-1036)

It is believed that their ancestors belonged to the Gurjara tribe of Central Asia, who settled in south-west Rajasthan and Gujarat. The process of state formation gradually propelled them to power.

They claimed Kshatriya status as Rajputs and also claimed to be the descendants of Lakshman. Their empire included Avanti, Ujjain and Jalore.

They are notable kings were:

- **Nagabhatta I (725-760)**
 - He is the founder of Gurjara Pratihara dynasty.
 - The first ruler who successfully resisted Arab expansion from Sindh by Al Junaid (post-Qasim Umayyad invasions). Gwalior inscription described as Narayana, appearing in the response to the people's prayer.
- **Vatsaraja (775-800)**
 - Vatsaraja defeated Dharmapala (Pala) and Dantidurga (Rashtrakuta). However, a struggle for supremacy over Northern India among Gurjaras, Rashtrakutas and Palas defeated and pushed Vatsaraja into the desert of Rajasthan, which become the center of Pratihara power.
 - Jain temples at **Osian** (Jodhpur district) belonged to his era.
- **Nagabhatta II (800-833)**: he gained control of Kannauj by defeating the Palas but was himself defeated by the Rashtrakutas.
 - Because of him Gurjara-Pratihara emerged as the most powerful dynasty in north India.
 - The disturbed political condition of the Ganga Yamuna valley provided him the required opportunity to invade Kannauj. He dethroned Chakrayudha in 816 A.D. and **made Kannauj his Capital**.

- His most notable achievement was the **defeat of Dharmapala**, King of Bengal. He extended his influence from a Kathiawad in the west to the borders of Bengal in the East.
- He checked invasion of Arab from the west and **rebuilt Somnath temple** (815 CE) which had been destroyed by Al-Junayd, the Arab governor of Sindh (725 CE)
- **Mihir Bhoja** (840-890) – considered to be the greatest Pratihara ruler.
 - Pratihara power recovered under Mihir Bhoja.
 - He established his authority over the Sutlej, the Punjab, Prayag, Kashi and a territory of Gwalior.
 - He assumed the title **Adivaraha**.
 - Praised by Arab traveller **al-Sulaiman** (9th c) for his military prowess and orderly governance.
 - Pratiharas imported horses from Arabia and had the best cavalry in India.
 - He was described as the strongest enemy of Arabs in India.
 - Patronage of the arts and literature: **Gwalior fort: Teli ka Mandir**
- **Mahendrapal** (890-908):
 - He maintained his father's empire and seemed to have **extended it towards the east**.
 - He expanded his empire to Magadha and north Bengal.
 - His inscriptions have been found from Kathiawar, Punjab and Awadh.
 - He also fought against the king of **Kashmir** but had to return empty-handed.
 - He repulsed a **Muslim invasion** either by the Samanids or the Saffarids.
 - He had the title Nirbhag raja (fearless king).
 - He patronised his teacher and the famous Sanskrit/Prakrit poet **Rajashekhara**
 - Karpuramanjari (a play in Maharashtri Prakrit)
 - **Kavyamimanasa** (a Sanskrit book on poetics)
 - Bala-Ramayan
 - Bala-Bharat
 - Rajashekhara has described Mahendrapala as "Maharajadhiraja Aryavarta".
- **Mahipal I:**
 - **Al-Masudi** visited Sindh and Gujarat during his era.
- By the 10th century, it was on the decline.
 1. The feudatories became powerful.
 2. Rashtrakutas sacked Kannauj.
 3. The last king **Rajyapala** was driven out of Kannauj by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1018.

ROW IN HARYANA BJP: WHAT HISTORY SAYS ABOUT KING MIHIR BHOJ'S CASTE

BJP leaders face boycott in Haryana over Samrat Mihir Bhoj statue controversy

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Several villages in Rajasthan dominated by the Rajput community have imposed a ban on the entry of BJP leaders over the unveiling of a statue of Samrat Mihir Bhoj, a 9th-century ruler, with the word 'Gurjar' inscribed on the plaque in Kaithal district.

BJP Kaithal MLA Lila Ram Gurjar had unveiled the statue amid tight security on July 20. Since then, around 40 office-bearers of the BJP State unit from the Rajput community have submitted their resignations to State party chief Om Prakash Dhankar. Mr. Dhankar said efforts are on to resolve the matter amicably, but denied receiving



BJP Kaithal MLA Lila Ram Gurjar had unveiled the statue amid tight security on July 20. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

letters of resignation.

Sanjeev Rana, BJP Kisan Morcha chief, Kaithal, told *The Hindu* over phone that 47 office-bearers from the Rajput community in the district have offered to resign. More resignations are

expected from leaders in Karnal, Yamunanagar, Faridabad, and across the State. "Several villages such as Shahjapur, Sudhpur, Lukhi, Pabana Hasanpur, and Kakheri have banned the entry of BJP leaders. Any BJP leader entering these villages will be shown black flags and denied entry," Mr. Rana said.

List of demands

He said protests would continue till Chief Minister Manohar Lal meets a delegation from the Rajput community and assures action on its demands such as removal of the word 'Gurjar' from the plaque, dismissal of Kaithal BJP president Ashok Gurjar, and action against Mr. Lila Ram Gurjar, the local MLA.

SUKHBIR SIWACH
CHANDIGARH, JULY 24

LAST WEEK, BJP leaders in Haryana's Kaithal protested after the 9th century king Mihir Bhoj was referred to as 'Gurjar Pratihar Samrat Mihir Bhoj' while his statue was being unveiled by district party leaders.

BJP leaders from the Rajput community were unhappy that the king had not been called a "Hindu Samrat", which they said was a more apt title. When the Gurjar community leaders still went ahead with the name, 35 Rajput leaders offered to resign.

The controversy around the lineage of Mihir Bhoj has surfaced earlier too, in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, with both Gurjars and Rajputs claiming he belonged to their community.

Who was Mihir Bhoj?

Mihir Bhoj (reign: 836-885 CE) was a successful and ambitious ruler of ninth century India, said Kurukshetra University Professor SK Chahal. "At that time, the Gurjara-Pratihara were ruling over a vast empire, from Kashmir to Gujarat. Mihir Bhoj successfully conquered areas of Deccan and Malwa too."

Prof. Chahal, chairman of Kurukshetra University's History department and dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, added: "During the ninth century, the major political struggle was for control over Kannauj, as it was considered that whoever conquered Kannauj would be emperor of the country. Hence, the country witnessed a tripartite struggle among three big powers of the times — the Gurjara-Pratihara, the Rashtrakutas of Deccan and the Palas of Bengal. In that struggle, Mihir Bhoj was, by and large, the most success-

ful. He conquered areas of Gujarat and Malwa from the Gujarat-Rashtrakutas. Similarly, the king launched a campaign towards Bengal and conquered territories of Gorakhpur from the Palas of Bengal too."

What do historians say?

M Rajivlochan, a history professor at Chandigarh's Panjab University, said: "Gurjara-Pratihara, the group to which Mihir Bhoj belonged, are often considered both Rajputs and Gurjars. So there is really no conflict between the two identities."

Chahal said: "Gurjars were a nomadic tribe, initially spread in Rajasthan and Gujarat regions. And it is believed that Mihir Bhoj belonged to this tribe. However, it is also believed that he claimed Kshatriya status for himself. The Pratihara branch of the dynasty was linked to Rajputs. It was considered that only a Kshatriya could become a king. In ancient India, all kings claimed Kshatriya status."

Chahal also said caste identities seem to blur as you go deeper into history. "Clear caste lines as we understand them today emerged much later. The recent controversies in the name of ancient rulers' castes are an outcome of modern-day politics and have nothing to do with history," he said.

What are some past controversies?

In Bihar in 2022, a "research and advocacy group" called the Kshatriya Parishad had started a campaign to "reclaim" king Mihir Bhoj into the Rajput fold.

Before that in 2021, the Gurjars had held a mahapanchayat in Uttar Pradesh's Dadri to protest the removal of the word 'Gurjar' from the plaque of a statue of the king unveiled by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at Mihir Bhoj Inter College.

 **The Indian EXPRESS**
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

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<https://epaper.indianexp>



3. The Rashtrakutas (735-982)

Feudatories of Chalukyas of Badami. They were of Kannada origin and hailed from Lattaluru/Latur (Maharashtra).

Their important Kings included:

- **Dantidurga** (753-758) – he began his career as a feudatory of the Chalukyas of Badami.
 - Danti Durga destroyed the power of Chalukyas of Badami and laid the foundation of the empire of Rashtrakutas in the Deccan. He is thus regarded as the real founder the Rashtrakutas Empire.
 - He assumed imperial **titles**: Maharajadhiraja, Parameswara, Paramabhataraka.
 - Danti Durga performed '**Hiranyagarbha**' ceremony at Ujjain. Thus, Danti Durga had patronized Hinduism.
- **Krishna I**
 - He was Dantidurga's uncle.
 - He constructed monolithic **Kailashnath Temple** (Ellora cave complex) - a milestone in Dravidian style.
- **Dhruva III** –
 - Under him, the power, prestige and glory of the Rashtrakuta reached its zenith. His conquest made him the **undisputed overlords of the entire Deccan**. He expanded into an empire that encompassed all of the territory between the Kaveri River and Central India.
 - He was the first known Indian king south of Narmada to **successfully invade north India**. He defeated the Palas and Pratiharas to establish his **supremacy over Kannauj**.
 - There was no power in India to challenge the Rashtrakuta supremacy. Unfortunately, he could not consolidate his conquest of the north due to internal rivalries in his family.
- **Amoghvarsha** (814-877 CE)
 - Considered to be the greatest of the Rashtrakutas.
 - Known as Ashoka of South India for his peaceful nature.
 - He founded a new capital city **Manyakheta**
 - He preferred literature over warfare. Three important works are attributed to him.
 - **Kavirajmarga**: first book of Kannada poetry and ethics.
 - **Prasnottara Ratnamalika**: moral/religious treatise in Sanskrit.
 - Scholars
 - Jain Acharya **Jinasena**: Harivamsha Purana
 - **Virasena**: Jain Mathematician.
 - **Mahaviracharya**: Ganita-Sara-Sangraha
 - **Sankatayan**
 - He **became Jain** and liberally patronized the Digambara sect.
 - **Architecture**
 - Various Jain basadis, Jain temple in Pattadkal
 - **Al-Sulaiman** called him one of the great kings in India.
- **Krishna II**

- Appointed Madhumati Sugatipa (an Arab Muslim) as governor of the province of Sanjan.
- **Indra III** –
 - He established Rashtrakuta power in North India and **acquired control of Kannauj** and Gujarat.
- **Krishna III** –
 - Last great warrior
 - He defeated the Pratiharas.
 - **Battle of Takkolam:** Parantaka I (Chola ruler), thus annexing the northern part of the Chola empire. Then, he erected a victory pillar and constructed a temple at **Rameswaram**. Title of *Tanjore-konda*.
 - **Three gems of Kannada literature** (10th c)
 - Adikavi **Pampa** in the court of Telengana feudatory Arikesari II
 - Vikramarjuna Vijaya (Pampa Bharati)
 - Pampa Purana (Adi Purana)
 - **Ponna** in the court of Krishna III
 - Shantipurana, Bhuvanaika, Rambhyudaya, Jinakshasamale, Gatapratigata
 - **Ranna** in the court of Western Gangas.

Religious Policy

- Many Rashtrakuta king were worshipper of **Shiva** and **Vishnu**. Their inscription begins invocation to these Gods.
- **Jainsim** seems to have enjoyed royal patronage liberally. During their rule, Jain mathematicians and scholars contributed important works in Kannada and Sanskrit. Many Jain temple were constructed.
- The decline of **Buddhism** in Karnataka began in the 8th century. There also the spread of Adi Shankara's Advaita philosophy.
- **Islamic** contact with South India began as early as the 7th century, a result of trade
 - Islam started to spread along the Konkan coast. Rashtrakuta had permitted Arabs to construct their mosques. Jumma Masjids existed in the Rashtrakuta empire by the 10th century.

Education and Learning:

- The Rashtrakuta were great patrons of education and learning.
 - In those days education was imparted through Mathas and Agrahara.
 - They encouraged the education by giving liberal grants to educational institutions.
 - The Puranas, Philosophy, literature and works on polity were taught.
 - **Malkhed, Paithan, Nasik and Karhad** were the main center of higher education.
- Rashtrakuta period had witnessed the excellent literary works both in Sanskrit as well as in Kanada. The Rashtrakuta were great patron of Hindu and Jains scholar.

Outcome of the Tripartite struggle:

- The tripartite struggle continued for almost 2 centuries with shifting fortunes. However, no single power could emerge as the clear winner.

- The intense warfare sapped the strength and vitality of the contenders, exhausting their human and economic resources. Although the Pratiharas finally established control over Kannauj, this was a **pyrrhic victory**.
- The three powers disintegrated almost simultaneously towards the end of the 10th century CE. This left India without a dominant central authority. As a result, India was unable to resist the Turkish invasions from the 10th century onwards.



Rajput Era (10th-12th century)

Due to their persistent mutual conflict, both Pala and Pratihara powers declined, and they were supplanted by smaller states that have been identified as Rajput states

Some of the important Rajput dynasties were as following:



Dynasty	Founder	Region	Capital
Chauhans	Vasudev Chauhan	Delhi-Ajmer region	Ajmer
Gahadavalas	Chandradeva	UP	Kannauj
Solankis	Mularaja	Gujarat	Anhilwada
Paramaras	Upendra Krishnraja	Western MP (Malwa)	Dhar, Mandu
Later Kalachuris	Kokalla I	Eastern MP	Tripuri
Chandelas	Nannuka	Khajuraho-Kalinjar-Mahoba (MP)	Khajuraho
Bhauma-Karas		Odisha	
Somvamshi	Janmejaya I	Odisha	Yayatinagar (Jajpur)
Eastern Gangas		Odisha	

Political system of the Rajputs:

- **Multi-state system** was a feature of the Rajput polity.
 - Some old states had fragmented.
 - Due to the expansion of agrarian economy and land grants, some new states had emerged.
- **Kingship**
 - There was theoretically an **absolute monarchy**. In reality, sharing of power with many other political elements - **feudal lords**.
 - The **deification of kingship** continued. Rajput rulers also adopted pompous titles like Parmeshwara, Bhateshwara, Gopal etc.

Administration:

- Rajput states were divided into **Bhuktis**, which in turn, were divided into **Mandalas** and **Vishayas**, in that order. **Grama** (Village) was the smallest unit of administration.
- In the Rajput states, land was divided between '**home provinces**' and '**jagirs**'.
 - In the home province, the king enjoyed direct rule and appointed officials.
 - But jagirs were divided among his Samantas. Villages were grouped together in the multiples of 10, 12 and 16 and allotted to the feudatories.
 - In return, these feudatories paid military service.
- **Feudalisation of bureaucracy** took place.
 - A whole **chain of subordinate rulers and feudatories** had developed under them viz. Mandlik, Mandaleshwar, Mahamandaleshwar, Samanta, Mahasamanta, etc.
 - Some important feudatories were given royal offices.
 - Some royal officials were given status of a feudatory.

Military and Warfare:

- Rajput armies were made up of **feudal levies**.
- Rajputs had deep attachment to their area, their lineage and their blood relations.
 - Due to this, they could not establish an all-Indian alliance, even in the face of repeated Turkish invasions.
- Neighbouring kingdoms were treated as obvious enemies, and this resulted in the emergence of a **ritualised martial tradition**.
 - As a result, war was treated **as a sport**.
 - Several rules of war were observed such as
 - not fighting after dusk,
 - not attacking an unarmed enemy,
 - not retreating even in the face of certain death and
 - not attacking a surrendered enemy.
- The notion of a **glorious death** was popularised.
 - Martyrdom (**Veergati**) was coveted and **Veergathas** (eulogies) were written in honour of martyrs.

Social system of the Rajputs:

- **Caste system:** The Rajput society was **extremely hierarchical** and the **Varnashrama Dharma** system was rigidly observed.
 - **Brahmin-Kshatriya Alliance**
 - The right to rule was strictly in the hands of the Kshatriyas. Further, only Kshatriyas had the right to take up arms.
 - Brahmins received lavish gifts in the form of precious metals, cattle and land from both the state and lay people. The ruling class depended upon the priests to legitimise their rule.
 - In his book 'Kitab ul Hind', Al-Biruni observes that there was no discernible difference between the condition of the **shudras and the Vaishyas**.
 - This was due to the decline of trade and the increasing importance of agriculture.
 - Al-Biruni says that neither of them had the right to recite or to listen to the Vedas.

- **Proliferation of castes** and emergence of **sub-jatis** due to the following reasons:
 - **Peasantization** of various tribal groups due to the expansion of agrarian economy.
 - **Occupational groups** turned into caste groups.
- **Untouchability**
 - It was practiced widely, and outcasts were heavily ostracised against.
 - The number of untouchables consistently increased.
 - Al-Biruni mentions the presence of 8 antyaja castes (outcasts).
- **Women's condition**
 - Theoretically, some improvement in **women's social status** is visible.
 - But, in practice, their social status declined further.
 - According to Al-Biruni, the condition of women was extremely poor. They had to face several social evils.
 - Purdah
 - Female infanticide
 - Denial of education
 - Child marriage
 - Denial of inheritance
 - Sati
 - Jauhar
- **Lower Class**
 - Both Vaishyas and shudras were engaged in cultivation. Peasants formed the bulk of the population and bore the maximum burden of taxation.
 - Al-Biruni further informs that **common masses lived in extreme poverty** and were heavily taxed.
- **Other comments**
 - Al-Biruni talks in detail about **fasting** and **pilgrimage** in India.
 - Kannauj, Kurukshetra and Benaras were important pilgrim centres.
 - Al-Biruni mentions some **peculiar habits** of Indians viz.
 - No shaving of hair and not trimming nails,
 - drinking alcohol before eating,
 - eating betel leaves and
 - riding horses without a saddle.
- **Temple construction**
 - It was an era of feverish temple construction.
 - Many temples had become fabulously rich due to large donations and tax-free land grants.
 - Temple had emerged as soft targets for invaders.

Dawoodi Bohras

The Dawoodi Bohras are Shia Muslim sect. They adhere to the Fatimi Ismaili school of thought. They are known to have originated from Egypt (Fatimid dynasty) and later shifted to Yemen, before establishing a presence in India in the 11th century. After 1539, by which time the Indian community had grown quite large, the headquarter seat of the sect was moved from Yemen to Sidhpur, (Patan district, Gujarat).

Scientific Attitude and Education:

- **Al-Beruni's criticism**
 - He mentions that Indians had advanced knowledge of **mathematics** and **astronomy**.
 - Al-Biruni reports that the right to receive education was **exclusive** to upper caste males.
 - He further blames Brahmins as being insulators of knowledge.
 - As per him, **Education** was entirely controlled by the temples and the priestly class.
 - However, Indian learning had stagnated due to the superiority complex and **inward-looking attitude** of Indians.
 - He says that the Hindus (people of India) believe that their country is the best of all countries; their king is the best of all kings, and their science is the best of all sciences.
 - But he clarifies that their ancestors were not so narrow minded.
- **Raja Bhoj** of Malwa wrote:
 - **Yukti Kalpataru**: About politics, architecture, war animals, boat building, weapons etc.
 - **Samarangana Sutradhara**
 - A treatise on architecture.
 - Describes various automata/yantras: including mechanical bees and birds, fountains shaped like humans and animals, and male and female dolls that refilled oil lamps, danced, played instruments etc.
- **Yashodhar**, in the 13th century wrote **Rasprakash Sudhakar**
 - "Whatever I have heard from scholars and read in the Shastras, but have not proved myself, have not been included in this book. On the contrary, I have written only what I have proved by experimenting, with my own hands under the able guidance of my teachers?"

Some important sources/literature for the era:

- **Nava-sahasanka-charita** (10th c): by Paramara court poet Padma Gupta, is the fantasy re-telling of Sindhuraja (uncle of Raja Bhoj Paramara).
- **Mushika-Vamsha** (11th c): Sanskrit chronicle by poet Atula. It narrates the legendary history of the Mushika dynasty of Kerala.
- **Naishadha Charita** (12th c): Sanskrit Mahakavya by Sri Harsha, a court poet of Jaichandra Gahadwala.
- **Shuka-Saptati** (12th c): Sanskrit kathas by Chintamani.
- **Manasollasa** (12th c): Composed by Someshwara III, a Kalyani Chalukya king. It is an encyclopedic work covering topics such as polity, governance, ethics, economics, astronomy, astrology, rhetoric, veterinary medicine, horticulture, perfumes, food, architecture, games, painting, poetry, dance and music. The text is a valuable source of socio-cultural information on 11th- and 12th-century India.
- **Vikramankadevacharita** (11th c): by Bilhana. Composed on Vikramaditya IV of Western Chalukya.

- **Chaurapanchasika** (11th c): by Bilhana. A love poem.
- **Kathasaritsagar** (11th c): by Somadeva in Kashmir.
- **Kavya Prakasha** (11th c): by Acharya Mammata in Kashmir.
- **Rajatarangini** (12th c): by Kalhana. He was a historian of Kashmir in the court of king Harsha of Lohara dynasty.
- **Bhojprabandha** (16th c): by Ballal Dev. Has legendary entertaining accounts of Raja Bhoj of Dhar. Kalidasa figures prominently in this work.



Imperial Chola (848-1279)

It emerged as the most dominant power after Pallavas in south India. They created a huge empire covering Sri Lanka, South East Asia and parts of North India with the Tamil country as its core (9th-12th C). This dynasty ruled for about 400-year, from Vijayalaya the founding monarch to Rajendra III and the disintegration and absorption of the dynasty into the Pandya kingdom.

- **Founder: Vijayalaya**
 - Around 850 CE, Vijayalaya, an ambitious chieftain from Uraiyur, defeated the influential Muttaraiyar chieftains and founded the second Chola dynasty.
- **Capital: Tanjore and later Gangaikondacholapuram**
- **Parantaka I (837-955)**
 - He was a great builder.
 - Battle of Takkolam (948) with Rashtrakutas
 - It was the climax of Rashtrakuta-Chola struggle in which Cholas were defeated.
 - Rashtrakutas advanced up to Rameshwaram and erected victory pillar.
 - Krishna III title Tanjorekonda.
 - The two famous Uttaramerur inscriptions.
- **Sundar Chola**
 - Sati Practice: Vanavanmadevi, mother of Rajaraja and chief queen of Sundara Chola, committed sati on her husband's funeral pyre. (Thiruvallangadu Copper plates of Rajendra I)
- **Raja Raja I (985-1014)**
 - Also known as Arulmozhi Varman
 - Real founder of the Chola Empire.
 - Conquered the deep South by defeating the Cheras and the Pandyas
 - Conquered Northern Sri Lanka (Prince Rajendra's lead)
 - Conquered the Maldives
 - His elder brother was Aditya Karikala
 - Title: Veera Pandiyan thalai konda Koparakesari (who beheaded Veera Pandiyan)
 - The Brihadeshwara temple
 - It is an architectural and cultural marvel as well as an ode to his devotion.
 - Rajaraja established the cult of the God-King.
 - The temple became a unifying symbol for a populace worshipping different gods.
 - Buddhist Monastery Chudamanivihara at Nagapattinam
- **Rajendra Chola I (1012-1044)**
 - Extended the empire upto the Tungabhadra by defeating the Chalukyas of Kalyani.
 - Completely annexed Sri Lanka.
 - **Southeast Asian Campaign:**
 - Invaded several regions of Srivijaya/Kadaram after a successful naval expedition.
 - Today's Malaysia and Indonesia

- **Diplomacy with China:** He sent trade mission. (thriving maritime trade)
- **North Indian Campaign:**
 - Crossed Andhra, Odisha and reached Bengal.
 - Defeated the Palas of Bengal (**Mahipala I**) after crossing the Ganga.
 - Title: Gangainkonda Chola
 - New Capital – Gangaikondacholapuram
- **Kulotunga I (1070-1122)**
 - Beginning of Later Cholas (aka Chalukya-Chola dynasty)
 - Persecution of Vaishnavites, and Ramanujacharya was exiled into Chalukya country.



PEEK INTO HISTORY: Remnants of the Chola-era palace identified in Gangaikonda Cholapuram in Ariyalur district; (below) antiquities unearthed from the site

Remains of Chola-era palace amid artefacts at Ariyalur excavation site

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Burned bricks with mud mortar, iron nails and Chinese celadon ware were unearthed from the site that once served as the capital of Chola kingdom and as a mercantile hub in the regime of Rajendra Chola I (1012-1044).

The discovery during the ongoing excavation by the state archaeology department near Gangaikonda Cholapuram in Ariyalur district revealed the remains of a Chola-era royal palace.

Since the beginning of the excavation in February, the state archaeology department has identified 758 antiquities in the Malikaimeedu excavation site. The study to explore and record the architectural style of the Chola dynasty has found 22 courses of bricks in one of the four trenches.

In another spot, burned bricks in three courses were spotted during the excavation, mud mortar of 2cm thickness binds the bricks. Asserting the remains were that of a residential area, possibly a palace, officials said. The structures were square or rectangular. Lime mortar was also found to be used as binding material. Ash patches with charcoal and burned bones (animals) suggest that the bricks used were burned like contemporary red bricks made in kilns.

At present, the state archaeology department is exploring a 2,500sqm area in Malikaimeedu, a village that was historically known for accommodating the pal-

aces of the Chola kings who once dominated southeast Asia.

R Sivanantham, commissioner (FAC), state archaeology department said: "We have planned to study the water management practice and drainage infrastructure in the Chola palaces. The antiquities we unearthed from the site were moved to the state museum in Gangaikonda Cholapuram.

There are proposals to develop the excavation site and museum."

Gangaikonda Cholapuram that served as the capital of the Cholas for 250 years had trade links with China and several present-day Asian countries. Historians said the Kollidam river was used as a maritime route to connect the landlocked town to the ports on the east coast.

Gangaikonda Cholapuram development council chairman R Komagan believes the archaeology department must explore the habitation sites too to get a clear picture of the Chola capital. "MGNREGA workers can be involved to reduce the expenses of excavation," he said. The state archaeology department has permission from the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology (CABA) to conduct excavation till September 1. Kollankuzhi, a place near Sambaodai village near the excavation site is identified by historians as the hub of pottery and foundry activities for the erstwhile Chola capital. Pointing out the presence of pottery fragments frequently recovered from the surface, historians pitched for excavation to expand further.



ANTIQUITIES IDENTIFIED

Iron nails	565
Bangle fragments	93
Celadon ware (Chinese)	44
Glass beads	36
Copper objects	9

King and central government

- Absolute monarch
 - Divine origin of kingship
- Hereditary monarchy
 - Planned succession
- Prashasti-Meykkirti inscriptions
 - Plentiful inscriptions on temple walls and copper plate grants are of historical value.



Tier	Governing Authority
Empire	King
Mandalam	Royal Princes or senior officials (Rajyapal)
Velanadus (artificial)	Periya-Nattar
Nadus	Nattar dominated by Vellalas (rich peasants, mostly non-Brahmins)
Gram	General Assemblies of elected members - Ur/Sabha
Separately - Nagar	Nagaram

Degree of centralization

- Initially it was limited but in later stages it increased.
 - Velanadu creation
 - Temple construction
 - Land-grants to Brahmins and Temples
 - Brahmadeya - land grants to Brahmins/Temples
 - Agraharas - settlements of Brahmins (Brahmin villages)
- While there is no doubt that the Cholas were Shaivites, the Chola government was not a partisan Shaivite government.
 - Although Cholas mostly funded Shaivite temples, they also erected some Vaishnava temples; King Rajaraja Chola funded Choodamani Vihara, a Buddhist monastery in Nagapattinam; several Jain schools were established by Chola patronage, such as Rajaraja Perumpalli and Rajendra Perumpalli.



Chola Self Government

- 3 Types of General Assemblies

Ur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A general assembly of the village consisting of the taxpaying residents.
Sabha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its membership was restricted to the Brahmins of the village. • Found in Brahmadeya and Agrahara villages. • Uttaramerur inscriptions Parantaka I (Sabha) of 920 CE
Nagaram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found more commonly in trade centres such as cities and towns.

- Sabha Village: Election and Governance

Delimitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each village was divided into 30 wards, to ensure fair representation. • Each ward was to nominate its members to the village council.
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Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualifications: Age 35 to 70, educated, property-owner, male, minimum amount of tax Disqualifications: No criminal record, no past conviction for a crime, loanee/defaulters. Relatives of serving members were excluded.
Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the temple premise From the persons duly nominated, one was to be chosen for each ward by the 'Kudava ollai' (palm leaf) in full public sight. Tenure of 1 year, and 3 years cooling-off period.
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolios under different committees (Variyams) These village committees handled all matters related to land, irrigation, taxation and gold, with another committee that met annually overseeing administration. Committee members were called 'Variya Perumakkal'. They usually met in the temple halls or under a tree and passed resolution. The number of committees and ward members varied from village to village.



Some more Aspects

- The **weaving** industry, particularly the silk- weaving at **Kanchi** flourished.
- Commercial contacts** between the Chola Empire and China, Sumatra, Java and Arabia were extensively prevalent
- Arabian horses** were imported in large numbers to strengthen the cavalry.

Some important Chola temples:

Dravidian Style of Temples reached a new peak and emerged in its full glory with all essential elements fully developed:

Chola King	Temple	Place
Vijayalaya	Vijaya-Choleshwaram	Narttamalai
Parantaka I (837-955)	Nataraja Temple (enlarged with golden roof)	Chidambaram
Rajaraja I (985-1014)	Rajarajeswara Brihadishwara	Tanjore
Rajendra Chola I (1012-44)	Gangaikondacholapuram Temple	Gangaikondacholapuram
Rajaraja II (1150-1173)	Airavateswarar Temple	Darasuram, Kumbakonam

Kulottunga III (1178-1218)

Kampahareswar Temple

Tribhuvanam

Metal sculpture:

- Fine figures of Shiva in various forms, Vishnu, Lakshmi, and the Alwar/Nayanar saints.
 - The best example of this can be seen in the form of Nataraja the Divine Dancer.
- Technology: To master the medium of Bronze.
 - Alloying technology
 - Casting technology (lost wax)
- Usage
 - Ritual worship of Hindu, Buddhist, Jains
 - Daily usage articles
 - Even tribal usage of Lost-wax
- Aesthetics
 - Though conforming generally to the iconographic conventions established by long tradition, the sculptors worked with great freedom in the 11th and the 12th centuries to achieve a classic grace and grandeur.



Created at the behest of Sembiyan Mahadevi, the Chola queen, in Konerirajapuram temple.



At CERN

Literature

- Jivaka Chintamani (one of 5 great Tamil Epics) by Tirutakkadevar (a Jain ascetic) in 10th c
- Tirumurai:
 - Arrangement of Shaiva canon into 11 books by Nambi Andar Nambi during Rajaraja Chola
 - 12th Tirumurai - Periyapuram or Thiruthondar Puranam by Sekkilar
- Ramayana composed by Kampan during Kulottunga III, a masterpiece
- Kalingattuparani by Jaykondar

- Celebrating the victory of Kulottunga Chola I over the Kalinga king, Anantavarman Chodaganga in the Chola-Kalinga war
- Kulothunga Solan Ula (a poem extolling the virtues of the king) by Ottakoothar

EXPLAINED HISTORY

LORD OF DANCE: HISTORY, SYMBOLISM OF SHIVA'S NATARAJA FORM

ARJUN SENGUPTA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 7

GREETING G20 leaders in front of Bharat Mandapam this weekend will be a magnificent 27-foot, 18-tonne Nataraja, the tallest statue of Lord Shiva's dancing form in the world. Srikanda Sthapathy, a sculptor from Swamimalai in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu who, along with his brothers crafted the *ashtadhatu* statue, told *The Indian Express* that the design draws inspiration from three revered Nataraja idols at the Thillai Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram, the Uma Maheswarar Temple in Konerirajapuram, and the Brihadeeswara Temple in Thanjavur.

Cholas and Nataraja

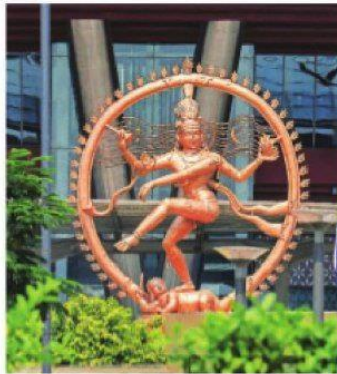
All three temples were built by the Cholas, who at their peak from the 9th-11th centuries AD, ruled over much of peninsular India. "Among icons which form the most important part of Chola sculpture, Shaiva figures predominate... although very fine Vaishnava and Jain images are not unknown," K A Nilakanta Sastri, the pioneering historian of South India, wrote in *The Cholas* (1937).

Although Shiva was first portrayed in sculpture as Nataraja in the fifth century AD, its present, world-famous form evolved under the Cholas. "The Nataraja image in its various forms... holds the first place among Chola bronzes," Sastri wrote.

The Lord of Dance

Shiva "is death and time (Mahakala) which destroys all things", the Indologist A L Basham wrote in his classic *The Wonder that was India* (1954). "But he is also a great ascetic and the patron of ascetics generally." He is the Lord of Dance — Nataraja — who is said to have "invented no less than 108 different dances, some calm and gentle, others fierce, orgiastic and terrible," Basham wrote.

In a typical portrayal, Nataraja is encompassed by flaming aureole or halo, which



The Nataraja at Bharat Mandapam, venue of the G20 Summit. PTI

Sastri interpreted as "the circle of the world which he [Nataraja] both fills and oversteps". The Lord's long dreadlocks flare out due to the energy of his dance, and he strikes a rhythmic pose with his four arms.

In his upper right hand He holds a *damru*, whose sounds "draw all creatures into his rhythmic motion", and in his upper left arm, he holds *agni*, which he can wield to destroy the universe, Sastri wrote. Beneath one of Nataraja's feet lies crushed a dwarf-like figure, representing illusion, which leads mankind astray.

Yet, amidst all the destructive symbolism, Nataraja also reassures, and shows Shiva as the Protector. With his front right hand, he makes the *abhaya-mudra* (a gesture that allays fear), and with his raised feet, and with his front left arm he points to his raised feet, asking his devotees to seek refuge at his feet. Strikingly, Nataraja almost always wears a broad smile.

"He smiles at death and at life, at pain and at joy alike, or rather... his smile is both death and life, both joy and pain," the French historian Renee Grousset wrote describing Nataraja (quoted by Sastri in *A History of South India*, 1955).