

Chapter – 2: Kings and Kingdoms

- Many new dynasties – after 7th century
- Map 1 – major ruling dynasties – between 7th and 12th



The Emergence of New Dynasties

- 7th century – big landlords and warrior chiefs – different regions
- Existing kings – acknowledged them as assistants – *samantas*
- Expected – bring gifts for kings, be present in courts, provide military support
- *Samantas* – gained power – declared themselves – *maha-samantas*, *maha-madaleshvara*
- Sometimes – showed independence
- One such instance – Rashtrakutas in Deccan
- Initially – subordinate to Chalukyas of Karnataka
- Mid-8th century – Dantidurga – Rashtrakuta chief – overthrew Chalukya king – performed ritual – *hiranya-garbha* (golden womb)
- This ritual – performed with Brahmanas – believed – sacrificer rebirth as ‘Kshatriya’
- Other cases – rich, noble families – used military skills – create kingdoms
- Kadamba Mayurasharnam and Gurjara-Pratihara Harichandra – Brahmanas – took to arms – establishing kingdoms in Karnataka and Rajasthan

Administration in the Kingdoms

- Many new kings – adopted titles - *maharaja-adhiraja*, *tribhuvana-chakravartin*
- Often shared powers with *samantas* – associations of peasants, traders, Brahmanas
- These states – collected resources – obtained from producers – peasants, cattle-keepers, artisans – persuaded or forced
- Sometimes – termed as rent or land revenue
- Inscriptions of Cholas in Tamil Nadu – mention more than 400 taxes

- Most frequently mentioned – *vetti* – forced labour
- *Kadamai* – land revenue
- Taxes – making houses, using ladder to climb palm trees, inheriting property
- Resources – used for king's establishment, construction of temples and forts
- Also used to fight wars – regain wealth and expand – land and trade routes
- Officers – collect revenue – recruited from influential families – hereditary
- Army – close relatives of king – held imp. positions

Prashastis and Land Grants

- *Prashastis* – contain details – may not be true – BUT – tell us – how rulers wanted to depict themselves
- Composed by – learned Brahmanas – helped in the administration
- Kings – rewarded Brahmanas – grants of land – recorded on copper plates
- These lands – used by the receivers – as they wish – collect taxes, fines – construct houses, canals, whatever
- Unusual – 12th century – long Sanskrit poem – history of kings – Kashmir
- Composed by – Kalhana – variety of sources – inscriptions, documents, eye witnesses, earlier histories
- Critical about rulers and policies

Warfare for Wealth

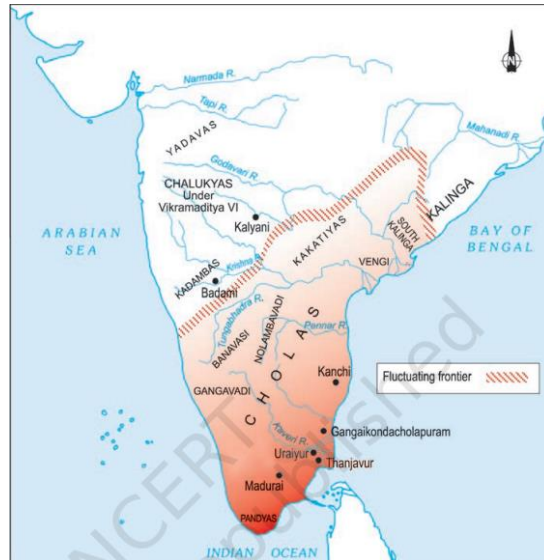
- Each dynasty – based in specific regions – tried to control other areas
- One particular area – city of Kanauj – Ganga valley
- For centuries – Gurjara-Pratihara, Rashtrakuta, Pala dynasties – fought for control over Kanauj
- 3 parties – conflict – historians – describe as 'tripartite'
- Rulers – demonstrate power – building large temples – attack others – target temples – extremely rich
- One such ruler – Mahmud of Ghazni, Afghanistan – raided subcontinent – 17 times (1000-1025) – religious motive
- Targets – wealthy temples – Somnath, Gujarat
- Wealth – carried by Mahmud – build capital city at Ghazni
- Other kings – warfare – Chahamanas – later known as Chauhans – ruled over Delhi and Ajmer
- Attempted to expand over west and east – opposed by Chalukyas of Gujarat and Gahadavalas of Uttar Pradesh
- Chahamanas ruler – Prithviraja III (1168-1192) – defeated Afghan ruler – Sultan Muhammad Ghori – 1191 – lost to him – 1192

A Closer Look: The Cholas

From Uraiyur to Thanjavur

- Minor chief family – Muttaraiyar – held power in Kaveri delta – subordinate to Pallava kings of Kanchipuram
- Vijayalaya – ancient chief family – Cholas of Uraiyur – captured delta – mid-9th century

- Built – town of Thanjavur – temple for goddess Nishumbhasudini



- Successors of Vijayalaya – conquered neighbouring regions – Pandyan and Pallava territory
- Rajaraja I – most powerful Chola ruler – 985 – expanded control over most areas – reorganized administration
- His son – Rajendra I – continued policies – invaded Ganga valley, Sri Lanka, countries of Southeast Asia – developed Navy

Splendid Temples and Bronze Sculpture

- Big temples – Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram – built by Rajendra and Rajaraja – architectural and sculptural marvels
- Chola temple – centres of settlements – grew around them
- Rulers and others – gifted lands to temples
- Produce of lands – used for people – worked in temples and lived around it – priests, garland makers, cooks, sweepers, musicians, dancers, etc.
- Temples – not only places of worship – but also – centres of economic, social and cultural life
- Among the crafts – making of bronze sculptures – most unique
- Chola bronze items – finest – most of deities (gods) – some – devotees

Agriculture and Irrigation

- Many achievements – Cholas – new developments in agriculture
- Kaveri – branches into small channels – before going to Bay of Bengal
- Channels overflow frequently – deposits fertile soil on banks
- Water from channels – necessary moisture for agriculture – specially rice
- Agriculture – developed earlier in Tamil Nadu – 5th / 6th century – area – large-scale cultivation
- Forests cleared – some regions – land levelled – other areas
- Delta region – boundary walls built – prevent flooding – canals created – carry water to fields
- Some areas – 2 crops in a year
- Many cases – water crops – artificially
- Variety of methods – used for irrigation
- Some areas – wells were dug – other places – huge tanks constructed – collect rainwater
- Irrigation requires – planning, organizing, labour, resources
- Most of the rulers and villagers – took interest in these works

The Administration of the Empire

- Settlements of farmers – *ur* – became wealthy – spread of irrigation
- Groups of *ur* – larger units – *nadu*
- Village council and *nadu* – administration – providing justice, collecting taxes
- Rich farmers – control over *nadu* – central government – Cholas
- Chola kings – provided title – rich landowners – *muvedavelan* – serving 3 kings – *araiyar* – chiefs – offices (departments) of state
- Brahmans – received land grants (*brahmadeya*) – lots of Brahman settlement – Kaveri valley and South India
- *Brahmadeya* – looked after by – *sabha* – Brahman landowners
- Decisions – recorded in detail – inscriptions – stones of temples
- Associations of traders – *nagarams* – administration in town
- Inscriptions – Uttaramerur – Chingleput, Tamil Nadu – details – *sabha* organized
- Separate committees – irrigation works, gardens, temples
- Name of members – eligible for committees – written on palm leaves – lottery system by young boy – select head of each committee