

# HISTORY

## Chapter 2: New Kings and Kingdoms



## New Kings and Kingdoms

### Emergence of New Kingdoms

Many new kingdoms arose during the beginning of the medieval period in the Indian subcontinent. At this time, the powers of the big landlords or warrior chiefs tremendously increased. They came to be known as the *samanthas* and provided military support to the kings. Gradually they became powerful and claimed themselves to be maha-samanthas or maha-mandalshwara. Some of them became so powerful that they defeated their king and established their own kingdoms.

While some kings were feudatories who captured power from the existing kings and established their own kingdoms, others who did not belong to the Kshatriya clan performed rituals in order to gain legitimacy. For example the King Dantidurga of Rashtrakuta, a subordinate of the Chalukyas, performed a ritual called *hiranya-garbha* to claim legitimacy to the crown as he was not a Kshatriya by birth. Similarly, Harishchandra, a king of the Gurjara-Pratihara kingdom was a Brahmin by birth who established his kingdom in Karnataka and Rajasthan.



In the medieval period, many kings who did not belong to the Kshatriya clan performed yajnas with the help of the Brahmins in order to gain legitimacy

### Administration

Some main features of the administration of the kingdoms at this time were:

- Though many kings took the titles of *maharaja-adhiraja* or *tribhuvana-chakravartin*, they often shared power with the powerful samanthas, rich traders and Brahmanas.

- Revenues were collected from peasants, cattle keepers, artisans and traders.
- The revenues were used to fulfill the needs of the kings, for constructing forts and temples and to maintain a large army.
- The revenue collectors at the highest levels belonged either to the noble families or those families which enjoyed the confidence of the king.
- These positions were generally hereditary.
- According to an inscription of the Cholas in Tamil Nadu, more than 400 taxes were collected. *Kadamai* was collected as land revenue and *vetti* was a tax which had to be paid to the king in the form of forced labour.

### Land Grants

Prashasti is a long poem which narrates about victories, bravery and the greatness of a king. It is an important source of history. However, not all prashastis are considered to be accurate. It was generally written by learned Brahmins or court poets of a king. Since the kings required the constant support of the brahmins in order to legitimise their rule, they often granted them with land grants. These were recorded on copper plates.

One of the very reliable sources of history of this period was a long poem called '*Rajtarangini*' written by *Kalhan*. He used various sources such as inscriptions and documents to write his account about the history of kings who ruled Kashmir. He was sometimes very critical of certain policies of the kings.

### Wars Due to Wealth

#### North and North Western India

- Many new kingdoms which emerged during this period were regional, but they continuously fought for controlling other areas as well.
- The city of Kanauj located in the Ganga valley was a centre of struggle between the Gujara-Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas and the Pala dynasties. As three 'parties' (kingdoms) were involved in the control of this territory, it has been described as the 'tripartite struggle' by the historians.
- The Chauhans ruling over Delhi and Ajmer were trying to expand their rule in the western

and the eastern parts. They were however confronted with the Chalukyas of Gujarat and the Gahadavalas of Western Uttar Pradesh.

- Prithviraj Chauhan, a famous ruler of the Chauhan dynasty defeated Muhammad Ghori in 1191. But he was defeated by Ghori in 1192.



Statue of Prithvi Raj  
Chauhan at Ajmer

- At this time, the temples in India were known for their riches. Often they symbolised the wealth and power of the ruler.
- Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni who ruled over Central Asia, Iran and the north western part of the Indian subcontinent, targeted wealthy temples which brought him immense wealth. The Somnath temple of Gujarat was raided several times. With the plundered money, he built the magnificent capital city at Ghazni.



Mahmud of Ghazni raided  
the Indian temples which  
were centres of wealth.  
With the plundered  
money, he built the  
splendid city of Ghazni in  
Central Asia.

## South India

- The Kaveri Delta was occupied by the small chiefly family known as Muttaraiyar. They were subordinate to the Pallava kings of Kanchipuram.
- King Vijayalaya belonging to one of the chiefly families of the Cholas captured the Kaveri Delta from the Muttaraiyars and built the splendid town of Thanjavur.
- Gradually the size of the kingdom of Vijayalaya increased. He added the Pandyan and the Pallava territories to his kingdom.
- Rajaraja I was the most powerful Chola ruler. He became the king in 985 C.E. He further expanded his kingdom and reorganised his administration.
- His son, Rajendra I was equally brave. He raided the Ganga valley and Sri Lanka. He developed naval force for these expeditions.

## The Cholas

---

The Cholas in the medieval were a powerful kingdom at this time. They not only expanded the boundaries of their kingdom but also made efforts to increase the agricultural production. Some of the steps taken by them are:

- They started large scale cultivation in and around the regions of the River Kaveri. Several streams branched out from the river which helped to increase the production.
- Forests were cleared in many areas and land was leveled in order to grow crops.
- Two crops were grown in a year.
- In the deltaic regions, canals were constructed and embankments were built in order to prevent the flooding of rivers.
- Various tanks were constructed for storing rainwater and wells were dug to provide irrigational facilities to the people.
- Not only the rulers but also the local people took an active part in the water administration.

## Agriculture and Irrigation

- Many of the accomplishments of the Cholas have been enabled by new developments in

agriculture.

- The Kaveri River branched out into several small channels and drained into the Bay of Bengal. These canals often overflow, laying fertile soils on their shores. The water in the canals also provides the moisture needed for agriculture, including rice production.
- Although agriculture developed earlier in other parts of Tamil Nadu, it was only in the fifth or sixth century that the area was opened up to large-scale cultivation. Forests needed to be deforested in some areas; lands needed to be cleared in other areas.
- Various methods were used for irrigation purposes. There are some areas where wells have been drilled. In other areas enormous reservoirs were built to collect rainwater.

### **Administration**

Good and sound administration is the foundation for developing a strong and powerful kingdom. Following were some important features of the Chola administration:

- Communities and settlements of cultivators known as *ur* became prosperous due to the expansion of cultivation and irrigational facilities.
- Groups of villages were called *nadu*. The *nadu* and the council in villages performed various functions such as providing justice and collection of taxes.
- The rich peasants of the *Vellala* caste became powerful and exercised control over the affairs of the *nadu*.
- Some rich landowners received titles from the kings such as *araiyar* and were appointed to important state positions.
- Since the Brahmins received land grants also known as *Brahmadeya* from the king, the settlement of large Brahmins emerged in the Kaveri valley.
- Each land grant was efficiently managed by an assembly or the *sabha* of the Brahmins landowners.
- The association of traders also known as *nagaram* sometimes performed the administrative functions in the towns.
- Many inscriptions from the Chingleput district of Tamil Nadu have proved to be valuable sources of how the *sabha* discharged its functions.

- Various committees were formed which looked after the irrigational works, maintenance of gardens etc.

### Architecture

- The kings of the Chola dynasty built splendid and magnificent temples especially in the cities of Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram. The temples were largely built by Rajaraja and Rajendra Chola.
- Often settlements grew around the temples built by the Cholas.
- The temples became a centre of wealth. Apart from money donated by various people, lands were also granted to the temples.
- The produce of the land was spent in paying skilled workers and priests of the temple. These mostly lived near the temples. The workers included the garland makers, cooks, musicians and dancers etc.
- In course of time, the temples also became the centres of social, economic and cultural life.



A famous temple built by the Cholas in Gangaikondacholapuram

### Sculpture

Various images were made out of bronze during the rule of the Chola dynasty. They are regarded amongst the finest in the world. Bronze images not only of the deities but also of the devotees were made.



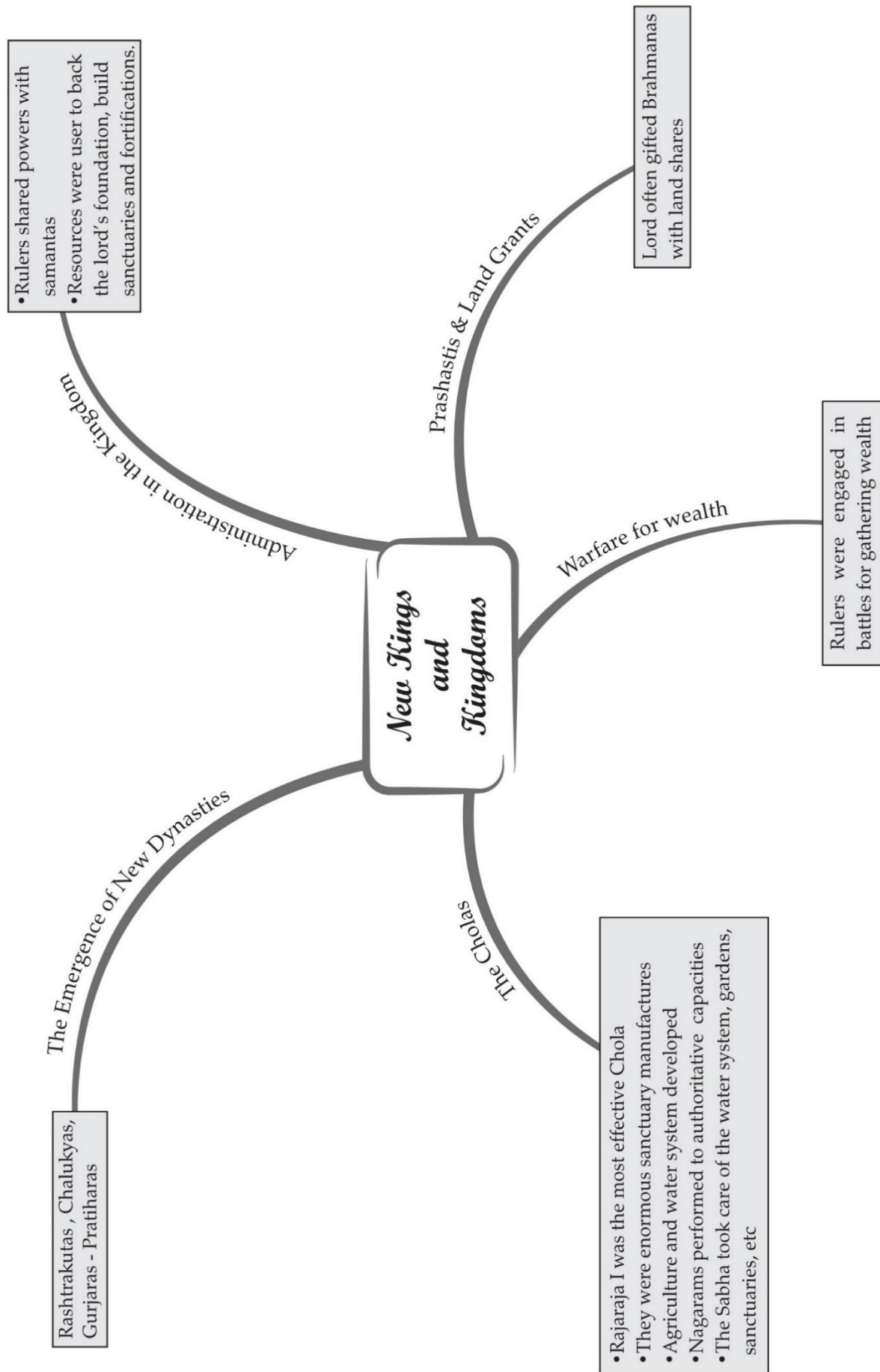


A deity made up of  
bronze during the  
Chola dynasty



# MIND MAP : LEARNING MADE SIMPLE

## CHAPTER-14



## Important Questions

### ➤ Multiple Choice Questions :

Question 1. Sultan Mahmud Ghazni was from:

- (a) Afghanistan
- (b) Iran
- (c) Tanzania
- (d) Iraq

Question 2. Who was the first emperor of the Cholas?

- (a) Vijayalaya Chola,
- (b) Rajendra Chola
- (c) Aditya Chola
- (d) Uttam Chola

Question 3. Cholas mainly ruled in the State:

- (a) Madhya Pradesh
- (b) Kashmir
- (c) Tamil Nadu
- (d) Andhra Pradesh

Question 4. Who Built Thanjavur?

- (a) Vijayalaya Chola
- (b) Sultan Mahmud Ghazni
- (c) Rajendra
- (d) None of these

Question 5. Which one was not in 'tripartite struggle' dynasties?

- (a) Gurjara-Pratihara
- (b) Rashtrakuta and
- (c) Pala dynasties
- (d) The Cholas

Question 6. Chalukyas were concerned to the state:

- (a) Karnataka
- (b) Tamil Nadu

(c) Kashmir

(d) Andhra Pradesh

Question 7. Temple of Cholapuram 'Gangaikonda' was built in the year:

(a) 1000 AD

(b) 1035 AD

(c) 1050 AD

(d) 1100 AD

Question 8. Which river was used for the agriculture purpose by the Cholas?

(a) Sindh

(b) Ganga

(c) Kaveri

(d) Yamuna

Question 9. During the period temples were also hub of:

(a) Economic life

(b) Social life

(c) Cultural life

(d) All the above.

Question 10. What is 'brahmadeya'?

(a) Lands grants to Brahmanas;

(b) Lands grants to peasants;

(c) Lands grant to warriors;

(d) Lands grant to poets;

Question 11. When did the first battle of Tarain fought?

(a) 1191

(b) 1195

(c) 1193

(d) 1194

Question 12. Who was considered as the most powerful chola ruler?

(a) Babur

(b) Rajendra

(c) Rajaraja

(d) Prithviraj Chauhan

Question 13. Land granted to Brahmins was recorded on what?

(a) Silver plates

(b) Betel leaves

(c) Iron plates

(d) Copper plates

Question 14. Rashtrakutas were subordinate to what?

(a) Cheras

(b) Cholas

(c) Chalukyas

(d) None of the

Question 15. Many new dynasties emerged after which century?

(a) Fifteenth century

(b) Seventh century

(c) Twelfth century

(d) Eleventh century

➤ **Fill in the blanks :**

1. As samantas gained \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, they declared themselves to be \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The best-known Chahamanas ruler was Prithviraja III, who defeated an Afghan ruler named \_\_\_\_\_ in 1191.
3. Many of these new kings adopted high-sounding titles such as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ were composed by learned Brahmanas.
5. Tang dynasty remained in power between the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ century.
6. The evidence of the land grants were found to be recorded on \_\_\_\_\_ plate.

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F) :**

1. Prashastis were composed by learned Brahmanas.
2. Initially Cholas were subordinate to the Chalukyas of Karnataka.
3. Revenue was also collected from traders.
4. Prashastis contain details that may not be literally true.
5. One prashasti found in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, describes the exploits of Nagabhata, a

Pratihara king.

### ➤ Very Short Questions :

1. Who was Dantidurga?
2. What was called 'rent'?
3. Who paid revenue?
4. What were 'prashastis'?
5. Who were the writers of Prashastis?
6. Who was Kalhana?
7. What was 'tripartite struggle'?
8. Who wrote Kitab al-Hind?
9. Who was Prithviraja in?
10. Who destroyed the temple of Somnath?

### ➤ Short Questions :

1. Trace out the emergence of the new class of rulers.
2. Who was Dantidurga? How did he become a kshatriya?
3. How was the financial position controlled in these states?
4. Write a note on 'Prashastis'.
5. Who was Kalhana? Why was he famous for?

### ➤ Long Questions :

1. Write a note on Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni.
2. How did the Cholas rise to power? Trace out the role of Rajaraja I in this rise.
3. Why were the temples first targets of the conquerors?
4. What were the qualifications necessary to become a member of a committee of the sabha in the Chola Empire?
5. Trace out the emergence of new dynasties.

### ANSWER KEY –

### ➤ Multiple Choice Answer :

1. (a) Afghanistan
2. (a) Vijayalaya Chola,
3. (c) Tamil Nadu

4. (a) Vijayalaya Chola
5. (d) The Cholas
6. (a) Karnataka
7. (b) 1035 AD
8. (c) Kaveri
9. (d) All the above.
10. (a) Lands grants to Brahmanas;
11. (a) 1191
12. (c) Rajaraja
13. (d) Copper plates
14. (c) Chalukyas
15. (b) Seventh century

➤ **Fill in the blanks :**

1. Power, wealth, maha-samanta, mahamandaleshvara.
2. Sultan Muhammad Ghori
3. maharaja-adhiraja, tribhuvana-chakravartin.
4. Prashastis
5. Seventh, tenth
6. copper

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F) :**

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. True

➤ **Very Short Answer :**

1. Dantidurga was a Rashtrakuta chief who turned to be a kshatriya after performing a ritual known as hiranya-garbha.
2. Resources obtained from the producers were called 'rent'.
3. The traders paid revenue.
4. Prashastis were the details depicting the rule and personality of the rulers.

5. The learned brahmanas were the writers of the Prashastis.
6. Kalhana was a great Sanskrit poet from Kashmir.
7. The tripartite struggle was a long drawn conflict among the rulers of Gurjara- Pratihara, Rashtrakuta and Pala dynasties for control over Kanauj.
8. A great Arab poet al-Baruni wrote Kitab al-Hind.
9. Prithviraja III was a famous Chauhan ruler of Delhi and surrounding regions during 1168-1192.
10. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, a ruler of Afghanistan, destroyed the temple of Somnath.

### ➤ Short Answer :

1. During seventh century a new class of rulers emerged. They were the subordinates or samantas under the influence of big landlords or warriors. Later they themselves gained power and wealth and declared themselves to be maha- samantas, maha-mandaleshvara (the great lord of a circle or region).
2. Dantidurga was a Rashtrakuta chief in Deccan. Initially Rashtrakutas were the subordinate to the Chalukyas of Karnataka. Dantidurga, in the mid-eighth century overthrew his Chalukya overlord and performed a ritual known as 'hiranya-garbha'. It was thought to lead to the rebirth of the sacrificer as a kshatriya, even if he was not one by birth.
3. These states were closely associated with peasants, traders and Brahmanas. The resources were obtained from peasants, cattle-keepers, and artisans who were the producers. They were compelled to surrender part of what they produced. The traders had to pay revenue. The functionaries for collecting revenue were generally from influential families or from the close relatives of the kings.
4. Prashastis, often written by learned Brahmanas, were details of the functioning of a king. They may not be literally true. They tell us how rulers wanted to depict themselves—as valiant, victorious warriors etc. Brahmanas were rewarded by grants of land which were recorded on copper plates.
5. Kalhana was a great Sanskrit poet who wrote a long Sanskrit poem depicting the ruler of Kashmir. He used a variety of sources, including inscription, documents, eyewitness account. He was different from the writers of Prashastis for he was often critical about rulers and their policies.

### ➤ Long Answer :

1. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni was a ruler of Afghanistan from 997 to 1030. He was an ambitious king and so made all efforts to extend his control over far off regions. He extended his control over parts of Central Asia, Iran and north-western part of the subcontinent. Almost every year he raided the subcontinent targeting wealthy temples.



The temple of Somnath in Gujarat was the worst victim of his raids. Much of the wealth he carried away was used to create a splendid capital city at Ghazni. Ghazni was fond of knowing more about the people he conquered. He entrusted a scholar named al-Biruni to write an account of the subcontinent. The al-Biruni's account, an Arabic work titled as Kitab al-Hind, is still an important source for historians.

2. Cholas belonged to a minor chiefly family known as Muttaraiyar that held power in the Kaveri delta. They worked as subordinate to the Pallava kings of Kanchipuram. Vijayalaya, a member of the ancient chiefly family of the Cholas from Uraiyur, captured the delta from the Muttaraiyar in the middle of the ninth century. 'His town of Thanjavur and the temple for goddess Nishambhasudini are some of his great creations. Vijayalaya's successors conquered neighboring regions and the kingdom grew in size and power. The Pandyan and the Pallava territories to the south and north were made part of this kingdom.

Rajaraja I was the most powerful Chola ruler. He became king in 985 and expanded control over most of these areas. He was well known for the reorganization of the administration of his empire. His son Rajendra I continued his policies and even raided the Ganga valley, Sri Lanka and countries of Southeast Asia, developing a navy for these expeditions. The big temples of Thanjavur and Gangaikonda-cholapuram built by them are architectural marvels.

3. It was the trend to demonstrate power and resources by building large temples. The rulers often invested a lot in the decoration and maintenance of the temples. So the foreign conquerors made them target first. The most prominent example of it was the temple of Somnath in Gujarat looted several times by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni who came from Afghanistan. Much of the wealth he carried away was used to create a splendid capital city at Ghazni.

4. **The qualifications necessary to become a member of a committee of the sabha in the Chola Empire were:**

- i. They should be owners of land from which land revenue is collected.
- ii. They should have their own homes.
- iii. They should be between 35 and 70 years of age.
- iv. They should have knowledge of the Vedas.
- v. They should be well-versed in administrative matters and honest.

5. **Emergence of new dynasties:**

- i. By the seventh century there were big landlords or warrior chiefs in different regions of the subcontinent. Existing kings often acknowledged them as their subordinates or samantas.

- ii. As samantas gained power and wealth, they declared themselves to be maha-samanta, mahamandaleshvara and so on. Sometimes they asserted their independence from their overlords.
- iii. In other cases, men from enterprising families used their military skills to carve out kingdoms.