

APPOLO



STUDY CENTRE

PALLAVAS

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Unit 4

South Indian Kingdoms

By the early 7th century, synchronising with the Harsha's reign in the north, the far south had come under the control of the Pallava kings of Kanchipuram. Pallava sovereignty included the domains of the Cholas and the Pandyas. The latter were then emerging as ruling dynasties in their respective river valley regions. Much of the central and eastern Deccan was under the Chalukyas of Badami (Vatapi), who were then pushed away by the Rashtrakutas. The medieval period in India was marked by the emergence of regional centres of power. There was no single imperial power like Mauryas or Guptas who exercised control over the greater part of India in this period.

The Pallavas

The Pallava kings ruled around the prosperous agrarian settlement and important trade centre of Kanchipuram on the southeast coast of India. Kanchipuram was well known to Chinese and Roman merchants. From the flourishing trade centre of Kanchipuram, the later Pallavas extended their sovereignty over all the Tamil-speaking regions during the 7th and 8th centuries. The central part of their kingdom, however, was

Thondaimandalam, a large political region comprising northern parts of Tamil Nadu and the adjoining Andhra districts.

Inscriptions	Mandagapattu Cave, Aihole Inscription of Pulakesin II
Copper Plates	Kasakudi Plates
Literature	MattavilasaPrahasana, Avanthi Sundarakatha, Kalingathu Parani, Periya Puranam, Nadi Kalambagam
Foreign Notice	Accounts of Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang

Pallava Genealogy (Prominent Kings)

There were early Pallava rulers who were feudatories of Satavahanas. Simhavishnu, son of Simhavarman II (around 550 AD (CE), created a strong Pallava kingdom after destroying the Kalabhras. He defeated many kings in the south including the Cholas and the Pandyas. His able son was Mahendravarman I. He was succeeded by his son Narasimhavarman I. The other prominent Pallava rulers were Narasimhavarman II or Rajasimha and Nandivarman II. The last Pallava ruler was Aparajita.

Mahendravarman (c.600–630AD (CE)) contributed to the greatness of the Pallava kingdom. Mahendravarman I was a follower of Jainism in the early part of his rule. He was converted to Saivism by the Saivite saint Appar (Tirunavukkarasar). He was a great patron of art and architecture. He is known for introducing a new style to Dravidian architecture, which is referred to as 'Mahendra style'. Mahendravarman also wrote plays, including (c.620) MattavilasaPrahasana. (The Delight of the Drunkards) in Sanskrit, which denigrates Buddhism.

Mahendravarman's reign involved constant battles with the Western Chalukya kingdom of Badami under Pulakesin II. Pulakesin seems to have defeated Mahendravarman in one of the battles and taken over a large part of his territory (Vengi) in the north. His son Narasimavarma I (c. 630–668) avenged the defeat by capturing Vatapi, the capital of Chalukyas. He set Vatapi on fire, killing Pulakesin in the process. Narasimhavarman II (c. 695–722), also known as Rajasimha, was a great military strategist. He exchanged ambassadors with China. His reign was comparatively free from any political disturbance. Therefore, he could concentrate on temple-building activities. During his reign, the famous Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram was built.

Name of the King	Title/s Adopted
Simhavishnu	Avanidimha
Mahendravarma I	Sankirnajati Mattavilasa Gunabhara Chitrakara Vichitra Chitta
Narasimhavarma I	Mamallan, Vatapi Kondan

Pallava's Contribution to Architecture

Pallava period is known for architectural splendour. The Shore Temple and various other temples carved from granite monoliths and the Varaha cave (7th century) at Mamallapuram, are illustrious examples of Pallava architecture. In 1984, Mamallapuram was added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Pallava architecture can be classified as

Rock-Cut temples – Mahendravarman style

Monolithic Rathas and Sculptural Mandapas – Mamallan style

Structural Temples – Rajasimhan style and Nandivarman style

Mahendra Style

The best example of MahendraVarma style monuments are cave temples at Mandagapattu, Mahendravadi, Mamandur, Dalavanur, Tiruchirapalli, Vallam, Tirukazhukkundram and Siyamangalam.

Mamalla Style

The five rathas (chariots), popularly called Panchapandavar rathas, signify five different style of temple architecture. Each ratha has been carved out of a single rock. So they are called monolithic. The popular mandapams (pillared pavilions) they built are Mahishasuramardhini mandapam, Thirumoorthi mandapam and Varaha mandapam. The most important among the Mamalla style of architecture is the open art gallery. Several miniature sculptures such as the figure of lice-picking monkey, elephants of huge size and the figure of the ascetic cat have been sculpted beautifully on the wall of a huge rock. The fall of the River Ganga from the head of Lord Siva and the Arjuna's penance are notable among them. The Great Penance panel is considered to be the world's largest open-air bas relief.

Rajasimha Style

Narasimhavarma II, also known as Rajasimha, constructed structural temples using stone blocks. The best example for the structural temple is Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram. This temple was built by using sand stones. Kailasanatha temple is called Rajasimheswaram.

Nandivarma Style

The last stage of the Pallava architecture is also represented by structural temples built by the later Pallavas. The best example is Vaikunda Perumal temple at Kanchipuram.

Society and Culture

The Pallavas supported Jainism, Buddhism and the Vedic faith. They were great patrons of music, painting and literature. Some of the Pallava kings patronised the Azhwars and Nayanmars. These exponents of Bhakti Cult preached a new form of Vaishnavism and Saivism. Among the Saivites were Appar and Manikkavasakar. Among the Vaishnavites were Nammazhvar and Andal. The Bhakti movement aimed at preaching a popular faith, in which prayers in Tamil were preferred to those in Sanskrit. Women were encouraged to participate in the religious congregations. The Tamil devotional cult was competitive with Buddhism and Jainism. Therefore the latter suffered a gradual decline in most parts of Tamil country.

Education and Literature

Gatika (monastery or centre of learning) at Kanchi was popular during the Pallava times and it attracted students from all parts of India and abroad. Vatsyaya who wrote Nyaya Bhashya was a teacher at Kanchi (Gatika). The treatise on Dakshin Chitram (Paintings of South India) was compiled during the reign of Mahendravarma I.

The great Sanskrit scholar, Dandin, lived in the court of Narasimhavarma I. Dandin composed Dashakumara Charita.

Bharavi, the great Sanskrit scholar, lived in the time of Simhavishnu. Bharavi wrote Kiratarjuniya, an epic in verses.

Tamil literature had also flourished during the Pallava rule. Thevaram composed by Nayanmars and Nalayradivyaprabantham composed by Azhwars, which are still chanted by devout people. Perundevanar, who was patronized by Nandivarman II, translated the Mahabharata into Tamil as Bharathavenba.

Pallava Art

The Pallava kings had also patronised fine arts. The music inscriptions in Kudumianmalai and Thirumayam temples show Pallavas' interest in music. The famous musician Rudracharya lived during Mahendravarma I. The sculptures of this period depict many images in dancing postures.

The Chalukyas

The Chalukyas ruled larger parts of west and centre of South India, consisting of Maratha country with Vatapi (Badami) as their capital. There were three distinct but closely related and independent Chalukya dynasties. They were (1) Chalukyas of Badami, (2) Chalukyas of Vengi (Eastern Chalukyas) and (3) Chalukyas of Kalyani (Western Chalukyas). These Chalukyas held Harsha in the north, the Pallavas in the south and Kalinga (Odisha) in the east.

Sources

Inscriptions	Badami Cave Inscription of Mangalesha Kanchi Kailasanatha Temple Inscription Pattadakal Virupaksha Temple Inscription Aihole Inscription of Pulakesin I
Foreign Notice	Accounts of Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang

The Chalukyas of Vatapi

Pulakesin I, a petty chieftain of Pattadakal in the Bijapur district, took and fortified the hill fort of Vatapi around 543 AD (CE). He soon conquered the territory between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers and the Western Ghats. His son Kirtivarman I (c. 566 to 597) brought the Konkan coast under Chalukya control. Pulakesin II (c.610 to 642) emerged as the most powerful ruler of the dynasty. The Persian (Iran) king Khusru II sent an embassy to the court of Pulakesin II. Pulakesin succeeded in seizing parts of Gujarat and Malwa. He defied the North Indian ruler Harsha and according to an agreed understanding Narmada river was fixed as the boundary between the two. About 624, Pulakesin II conquered the kingdom of Vengi and gave it to his brother Vishnuvardhana, the first Eastern Chalukya ruler.

During 641-647 the Pallavas ravaged the Deccan and captured Vatapi, but the Chalukyas had recaptured it by 655. Vikramaditya I (655 to 680) and Vikramaditya II, the successor of Vikramaditya I captured Kanchipuram but spared the city. Kirtivarman II, the successor of Vikramaditya II was defeated by Dantidurga, the founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty.

Western Chalukyas of Kalyani

They were the descendants of Badami Chalukyas ruled from Kalyani (modern-day Basavakalyan). In 973, Tailapa II, a feudatory of the Rashtrakuta ruling from Bijapur region defeated Parmara of Malwa. Tailapa II occupied Kalyani and his dynasty quickly grew into an empire under

Somesvara I. Somesvara I moved the capital from Manyakheta to Kalyani. For over a century, the two empires of southern India, the Western Chalukyas and the Chola dynasty of Thanjavur, fought many fierce battles to control the fertile region of Vengi. During the rule of Vikramaditya VI in the late 11th century, vast areas between the Narmada River in the north and Kaveri River in the south came under Chalukya control.

Contributions to Art and Architecture

As supporters of both Saivism and Vaishnavism, the Chalukyas contributed richly to art and architecture. A new style of architecture known as Vesara was developed. Vesara is a combination of south Indian (Dravida) and north Indian (Nagara) building styles. They perfected the art of stone building without mortar. They used soft sandstones in construction. They built a number of rock-cut cave-temples and structural temples dedicated to Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. The structural temples of Chalukyas exist at Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal. The important stone temples are the Vishnu temples at Badami and Aihole and the Virupaksha or Siva Temple at Pattadakal in Bijapur district in present-day Karnataka.

The Vishnu temple at Badami was built by Mangalesa of the Chalukya Dynasty and contains the Aihole inscription of Vikramaditya II. Their cave temples are found at Ajanta, Ellora and Nasik. The cave temples at Badami contain fine sculptures of Vishnu reclining on Sesha Nag; Varaha, the Boar; Narasimha or the lion-faced man; and Vamana, the dwarf. The Kasi Vishweshvara Temple at Lakkundi, the Mallikarjuna Temple at Kuruvatti, the Kalleshwara Temple at Bagali and the Mahadeva Temple at Itagi represent well-known examples of the architecture of Western Chalukyas of Kalyani. Chalukyas adopted the Vakataka style in paintings. Some of the frescoes of the caves of Ajantha were created during the reign of Chalukyas. The reception given to the Persian embassy by Pulakesin II is depicted in a painting at Ajanta.

The Rashtrakutas

The Rashtrakutas ruled not only the Deccan but parts of the far south and the Ganges plain as well from 8th to 10th century AD(CE). They were of Kannada origin and their mother tongue was Kannada. Dantidurga was the founder of Rashtrakuta dynasty. He was an official of high rank under the Chalukyas of Badami. Krishna I succeeded Dantidurga. He consolidated and extended the Rashtrakuta power. He was a great patron of art and architecture. The Kailasanatha temple at Ellora was built by him.

Rashtrakuta Kings

The greatest king of the Rashtrakuta dynasty was Amogavarsha. He built a new capital at Manyakheta (now Malkhed in Karnataka) and Broach became the port. Amogavarsha (c. 814–878) was converted to Jainism by Jinasena, a Jain monk. Krishna II, who succeeded his father Amogavarsha, suffered a defeat in the battle of Vallala (modern Tiruvallam, Vellore district) at the hands of Cholas under Parantaka in c. 916. Krishna III (c. 939–967) was the last able ruler of Rashtrakuta dynasty. He defeated the Cholas in the battle of Takkolam (presently in Vellore district) and captured Thanjavur. The Chalukyas under Krishna III contested with other ruling dynasties of north India for the control of Kanauj. He built Krishneshwara temple at Rameshwaram. Govinda III was the last ruler to hold the empire intact. After his death, the Rashtrakuta power declined.

Contribution of Rashtrakutas to literature, art and architecture

Literature

Kannada language became more prominent. Kavirajamarga composed by Amogavarsha was the first poetic work in Kannada language. Court poets produced eminent works in Kannada. The threegems of Kannada literature during the period were Pampa, Sri Ponna and Ranna. Adikavi Pampa was famous for his creative works Adipurana and Vikramarjunavijaya. The life of Rishabadeva, the first Jain Tirthankara is depicted in Adipurana. In Vikramarjunavijaya Pampa's patron, Chalukya Arikesari, is identified with Arjuna, epic hero of Mahabharatha.

Art and architecture

The Rashtrakutas made significant contribution to Indian Art. The art and architecture of the Rashtrakutas can be found at Ellora and Elephanta.

Kailasanatha Temple – Ellora (near Aurangabad, Maharashtra)

Kailasanatha Temple was one of the 30 temples carved out of the hill at Ellora. It was built during the reign of Krishna I. The temple is known for its architectural grandeur and sculptural splendour. The temple covers an area of over 60,000 sq. feet and vimanam (temple tower) rises to a height of 90 feet. This temple has resemblance to the shore temple at Mamallapuram. The Kailasanatha temple portrays typical Dravidian features.

Elephanta Island

Originally known as Sripuri and called Gharapuri by the local people, Elephanta is an island near Mumbai. The Portuguese named it as Elephanta, after seeing the huge image of an elephant. The Trimurthi (three-faced) Siva icon is an illustrative of the sculptural beauty portrayed in the Cave Temple of Elephanta. There are impressive images of dwarapalakas (entrance guards) at the entrance of the Temple.

Pattadakal

Rashtrakutas built temples in the complex of Pattadakal. The Jain Narayana temple and the Kasi Vishwesvara temple were built by Rashtrakutas.

NOTE

Narasimhavarman I's army general was Paranjothi. Popularly known as Siruthondar (one of the 63 Nayanmars), Paranjothi led the Pallava army during the invasion of Vatapi. After the victory he had a change of heart and devoted himself to Lord Siva

-PeriyaPuranam

Aihole Inscription: It is found at Meguti Temple in Aihole (Bagalkot district, Karnataka). It is written in Sanskrit by Ravikirti, a court poet of Chalukya king Pulakesin II. It makes a mention of the defeat of Harsha Vardhana by Pulakesin II.

Pattadakal (UNESCO World Heritage Site) is a small village in Bagalkot district of Karnataka. It has ten temples. Out of them, four were built in northern style (Nagara), while the rest six are in the southern (Dravida) style. Virupaksha Temple and Sangameshwara Temple are in Dravida Style and Papanatha temple is in Nagara style. The Virupaksha temple is built on the model of Kanchi Kailasanatha temple. Sculptors brought from Kanchi were employed in its construction.

Leshan Giant Buddha:(71 metre tall) Built during Tang dynasty in China, (713 and 803 AD (CE)).

Baghdad: The greatest city of Islamic Empire of 8th to 10th centuries AD (CE).

3. Emergence of New Kingdoms in South India: Later Cholas and Pandyas

I. The Later Cholas

Introduction

The Cholas are one among the popular and well-known Tamil monarchs in the history of South India. The elaborate state structure, the extensive irrigation network, the vast number of temples they built, their great contributions to art and architecture and their overseas exploits have given them a pre-eminent position in history.

Revival of the Chola Rule

The ancient Chola kingdom reigned supreme with the Kaveri delta forming the core area of its rule and with Uraiyur (present-day Tiruchirappalli) as its capital. It rose to prominence during the reign of Karikala but gradually declined under his successors. In the 9th century Vijayalaya, ruling over a small territory lying north of the Kaveri, revived the Chola Dynasty. He conquered Thanjavur and made it his capital. Later Rajendra I and his successors ruled the empire from Gangaikonda Cholapuram, the newly built capital. Rajaraja I (A.D. (CE) 985 - 1016) was the most powerful ruler of Chola empire and also grew popular beyond his times. He established Chola authority over large parts of South India. His much-acclaimed naval expeditions led to the expansion of Cholas into the West Coast and Sri Lanka.

He built the famous Rajarajeswaram (Brihadeshwara) Temple in Thanjavur. His son and successor, Rajendra Chola I (A.D. (CE) 1016 - 1044, matched his father in his ability to expand the empire. The Chola empire remained a powerful force in South India during his reign. After his accession in A.D. (CE) 1023, his striking military expedition was to northern India, capturing much territory there. He proclaimed himself the Gangaikondan (conqueror of the Gangai region). The Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple was built to commemorate his victories in North India. The navy of Rajendra Chola enabled him to conquer the kingdom of Srivijaya (southern Sumatra). Cholas' control over the seas facilitated a flourishing overseas trade.

Decline of the Chola Empire

Rajendra Chola's three successors were not capable rulers. The third successor Veerarajendra's son Athirajendra was killed in civil unrest. With his death ended the Vijayalaya line of Chola rule. On hearing the death of Athirajendra, the Eastern Chalukya prince Rajendra Chalukya seized the Chola throne and began the rule of Chalukya-Chola dynasty as Kulothunga I. Kulothunga established himself firmly on the Chola throne soon eliminating all the threats to the Chola Empire. He avoided unnecessary wars and earned the goodwill of his subjects. But Kulothunga lost the territories in Ceylon. The Pandya territory also began to slip out of Chola control. Kanchipuram was lost to the Telugu Cholas. The year 1279 marks the end of Chola dynasty when King Maravarman Kulasekara Pandyan I defeated the last king Rajendra Chola III and established the rule of the Pandyas in present-day Tamil Nadu.

Administration

The central administration was in the hands of king. As the head of the state, the king enjoyed enormous powers. The king's orders were written down in palm leaves by his officials or inscribed on the temple walls. The kingship was hereditary in nature. The ruler selected his eldest son as the heir apparent. He was known as Yuvaraja. The Yuvarajas were appointed as Governors in the provinces mainly for administrative training. The Chola rulers established a well-organised system of administration. The empire, for administrative convenience, was divided into provinces or mandalams. Each mandalam was sub-divided into naadus. Within each naadu, there were many kurrams (groups of villages). The lowest unit was the gramam (village).

Local Governance

Local administration worked through various bodies such as Urar, Sabhaiyar, Nagarattar and Nattar. With the expansion of agriculture, numerous peasant settlements came up on the countryside. They were known as Ur. The Urar, who were landholders acted as spokesmen in the Ur. Sabhaiyar in Brahman villages also functioned in carrying out administrative, financial and judicial functions. Nagarattar administered the settlement of traders. However, skilled artisans like masons, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, weavers and potters also lived in Nagaram. Nattar functioned as an assembly of Nadu and decided all the disputes and issues pertaining to Nadu. The assemblies in Ur, Sabha, Nagaram and Nadu worked through

various committees. The committees took care of irrigation, roads, temples, gardens, collection of revenue and conduct of religious festivals.

Uttiramerur Inscriptions

There is a detailed description of how members were elected to the committees of the village sabha in the inscriptions found there. One member was to be elected from each ward. There were 30 wards in total. The eligibility to contest was to men in the age group of 35-70, well-versed in vedic texts and scriptures, and also owned land and house. The process of election was as follows: The names of qualified candidates from each ward were written on the palm-leaf slips and put into a pot. The eldest of the assembly would engage a boy to pull out one slip and declare his name. Various committees were decided in this way.

Revenue

The revenue of the Chola state came mainly from the land. The land tax was known as Kanikadan. The Chola rulers carried out an elaborate survey of land in order to fix the government's share of the land revenue. One-third of produce was collected as land tax. It was collected mostly in kind. In addition to land tax, there were taxes on profession and tolls on trade.

Social Structure Based on Land Relations

The Chola rulers gifted tax-free lands to royal officials, Brahmins, temples (devadana villages) and religious institutions. Land granted to Jain institutions was called pallichchandam. There were also of vellanvagai land and the holders of this land were called Vellalars. Ulu-kudi, a sub-section of Vellalar, could not own land but had to cultivate Brahmadeya and vellanvagai lands. The holders of vellanvagai land retained melvaram (major share in harvest). The ulu-kudi got kil-varam (lower share). Adimai (slaves) and panicey-makkal (labourers) occupied the lowest rung of society. In the intermediate section came the armed men and traders.

Irrigation

Cholas gave importance to irrigation. The 16-mile long embankment built by Rajendra Chola in Gangaikonda Cholapuram is an illustrious example. Vati-vaykkal, a criss-cross channel, is a traditional type of harnessing rain water in the Cauvery delta. Vati is a drainage channel and a vaykkal is the supply channel. The commonly owned village channel was

called ur-vaykkal. The nadu level vaykkal is referred to as nadu-vaykkal. The turn-system was in practice in distributing the water.

Religion

Chola rulers were ardent Saivites. Hymns, in praise of the deeds of Lord Siva, were composed by the Saiva saints, the Nayanmars. NambiyandarNambi codified them, which came to be known as the Thirumurai.

Temples

The Chola period witnessed an extensive construction of temples. The temples in Thanjavur, Gangaikonda Cholapuram and Darasuram are the repository of architecture, sculpture, paintings and iconography of the Chola art. Temples during the Chola period were not merely places of worship. They were the largest landholders. Temples promoted education, and devotional forms of art such as dance, music and drama. The staff of the temples included temple officials, dancing girls, musicians, singers, players of musical instruments and the priests.

Cholas as Patrons of Learning

Chola kings were great patrons of learning. Rajendra I established a Vedic college at Ennayiram (now in Villupuram District). There were 340 students learning the Vedas, grammar and Upanishads under 14 teachers. This example was later followed by his successors and as a result two more such colleges had been founded, at Tirubuvanai near present-day Puducherry and Tirumukkoodal in present-day Chengalpattu district, in 1048 and 1067 respectively. The great literary works Periyapuramam and Kamba Ramayanam belong to this period.

Trade

There was a flourishing trade during the Chola period. Trade was carried out by two guild-like groups: anju-vannattar and mani-gramattar. Anju-vannattar comprised West Asians, Arabs, Jews, Christians and Muslims. They were maritime traders and settled on the port towns all along the West Coast. It is said that mani-gramattar were the traders engaged in inland trade. In due course, both groups merged under the banner of ai-nutruvar and disai-ayirattu-ai-nutruvar functioning through the head guild in Ayyavole, Karnataka. This ai-nutruvar guild operated the maritime trade

covering South-East Asian countries. Through overseas trade with South-East Asian countries elephant tusks, coral, transparent glass, betel nuts, cardamom, opaque glass, cotton stuff with coloured silk threads were imported. The items exported from here were sandalwood, ebony, condiments, precious gems, pepper, oil, paddy, grains and salt.

II. The Later Pandyas

Introduction

Pandyas were one of the three ancient Tamil dynasties that ruled southern India since the 4th century B.C. (BCE) but intermittently. Korkai, associated with pearl fisheries, is believed to have been their early capital and port. They moved to Madurai later, as many early Tamil inscriptions of Pandyas have been unearthed in Madurai and its surroundings. Under the Pandya kings of the Sangam Age, Madurai was a great centre of culture. Poets and writers of Tamil language gathered there and contributed to the development of Tamil Classics. The Pandyas had re-established their strong position in south Tamil Nadu by the end of the 6th century A.D. (CE), after eliminating the rule of Kalabhras. But they could not resist the rising power of the later Cholas who ruled South India from 9th to 13th century. Thereafter taking advantage of the decline of Chola power, the later Pandyas re-established their authority. Their rule continued until 16th century.

Revival of Pandya Kingdom (A.D. (CE) 600 - 920)

Kadunkon recovered Pandya territory from the Kalabhras towards the close of 6th century. He was succeeded by two others. Arikesari Maravarman was the first strong Pandya ruler who ascended the throne in A.D. (CE) 642. He was a contemporary of Mahendravarman I and Narsimahvarman I. Inscriptions and copper plates praise his victory over his counterparts: Cheras, Cholas, Pallavas and Sinhalese. Arikesari Maravarman is identified with the Kun Pandian, the persecutor of Jains.

After Arikesari, the greatest of the dynasty was Jatila Parantaka Nedunjadayan (Varaguna I) (756-815), the donor of the Velvikkudi plates. Nedunjadayan expanded the Pandya territory to include Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli, Salem and Coimbatore districts. Nedunjadayan's successors Srimara Srivallabha and Varaguna II, were successively defeated by

Pallavas. Later they could not face the rising Chola dynasty under Parantaka I. Parantaka I defeated the Pandya king Rajasimha II who fled the country in 920. Thus ended the Pandya rule revived by Kadungon.

Rise of Later Pandyas (1190 - 1310)

The Chola viceroyalty became weak in Pandya country after the death of Adhirajendra (the last king of Vijayalaya line). Eventually the Pandya kingdom could emerge as the only leading Tamil dynasty in the 13th century. Madurai continued to be their capital. Now Kayal was their great port. Marco Polo, a famous traveller from Venice, visited Kayal twice, in 1288 and 1293. He tells us that this port town was full of ships from Arabia and China and bustling with business activities.

Sadaiyavarman Sundarapandyan

The illustrious ruler of the second Pandya Kingdom was Sadaiyavarman (Jatavarman) Sundarapandyan (1251 to 1268). He brought the entire Tamil Nadu under his rule, which extended up to Nellore in Andhra. He held the Hoysalas in check. The Chera ruler, the chief of *Malanadu*, accepted his feudatory position and paid tribute to Sundarapandyan. Emboldened by the decline of the Chola state, the Boja King of Malwa region Vira Someswara challenged Sundarapandyan. In a war at Kannanur, Sundarapandyan defeated Someswara. Sundarapandyan succeeded in establishing his authority over the chieftains of Cuddalore, Kanchipuram in northern Tamil Nadu, Arcot and Salem in the western region.

There were two or three co-regents who ruled simultaneously along with Sundarapandyan: VikramaPandyan and ViraPandyan. After Sundarapandyan, MaravarmanKulasekaran ruled successfully for a period of 40 years, giving the country peace and prosperity. He had two sons. The king's appointment of ViraPandyan as a co-regent provoked the other son Sundara Pandyan who killed his father Maravarman Kulasekaran.

In the civil war that ensued, ViraPandyan won and became firmly established in his kingdom. The defeated SundaraPandyan fled to Delhi and took refuge under the protection of Ala-ud-din Khalji. This provided the opening for the invasion of Malik Kafur. After Malik Kafur's invasion, the Pandyan Kingdom came to be divided among a number of kings from the

main ruling Pandya's family. In Madurai, a Muslim State subordinate to the Delhi Sultan came to be established.

Polity and Society

State

Pandya kings preferred Madurai as their capital. Madurai has been popularly venerated as Koodal. The kings are traditionally revered as Koodal-kon, Koodal Nagar Kavalan. The Pandyas derived military advantage over their neighbours by means of their horses. They imported these horses through Arabs with whom they had commercial and cultural contact. The king claimed that he was ruling according to Manu Sastra.

This doctrine supported the social hierarchy in the society. Kings and local chiefs created Brahmin settlements called Mangalam or Chatur-vedimangalam with irrigation facilities. The actual landowning groups are described as the Bumiputtirar, otherwise called the vellalar. Historically they were locals and hence they were referred to as nattu-makkal. The communal assembly of this group is Cittira Meli Periyannattar.

Royal Officials

A band of officials executed the royal orders. The prime minister was *uttara-mantri*. The historical personalities like *Manickavasagar*, *Kulaciraiyar* and *Marankari* worked as ministers. The royal secretariat was known as *eluttu-mandapam*. The most respected officials were *maran-eyinan*, *sattan-ganapathy*, *enathi-sattan*, *tira-tiran*, *murthi-eyinan* and others. The titles of military commanders were *palli-velan*, *parantakan-palli-velan*, *maran-adittan* and *tennavan-tamilvel*.

Administrative Divisions

Pandy nadu, as in Chola state, consisted of many provinces known as *vala-nadus*, which, in turn, were divided into many *nadus* and *kurrams*. The administrative authorities of *nadus* were the *nattars*. *Nadu* and *Kurram* contained settlements, viz. *mangalam*, *nagaram*, *ur* and *kudi*, where different social groups inhabited.

Village Administration

An inscription from *Manur* (*Tirunelveli* district) dated A.D. (CE) 800 provides an account of village administration. It looks similar to Chola's local governance that included village assemblies and committees. Both civil and military powers seem to have been vested in the same person.

Irrigation

The *Pandya* rulers created a number of irrigation sources. On either side of the rivers *Vaigai* and *Tamiraparani*, channels leading to the irrigation tanks were built. In southern *Tamilnadu*, like the *Cholas*, *Pandyas* introduced the new irrigation technology. Irrigation works were done by local administrative bodies, local chiefs and officials. Repairs were mostly undertaken by local bodies. Sometimes, traders also dug out tanks for irrigation.

Religion

Pandyas extended patronage to *vedic* practices. *Velvikkudi* copper plates as well as inscriptional sources mention the rituals like *Asvamedha yaga*, *Hiranya garbha* and *Vajapeya yaga*, conducted by every great *Pandya* king. The impartiality of rulers towards both *Saivism* and *Vaishnavism* is also made known in the invocatory portions of the inscriptions. Temples of

both sects were patronised through land grant, tax-exemption and renovation.

The great Saiva and Vaishnava saints (Nayanmaras and Alwars) combined contributed to the growth of Tamil literature and spiritual enlightenment. The period was marked by intense religious conflict. The Bhakti movement of the time prompted the heterodox scholars for a debate. Many instances of the defeat of Buddhists and Jains in such debates are mentioned in Bhakti literature. The Pandya kings of the period supported and promoted Tamil and Sanskrit.

Temples

Medieval Pandyas and later Pandyas did not build any new temples but maintained the existing temples, enlarging them with the addition of gopuras, and mandapas. The monolithic mega size ornamented pillars are the unique feature of the medieval Pandya style. The sculptures of Siva, Vishnu, Kotravai, Ganesa and Subramanyar are the best specimens in these temples. Pandyas specially patronised the historic Meenakshi temple at Madurai and kept expanding its premises by adding gopuras and mandapas.

Trade

Arab settlements on the west coast of southern India, from 7th century, had led to the expansion of their trade connection to the east coast because the governments of the east coast pursued a more liberal and enlightened policy towards overseas traders. Their charters exempted traders from various types of port dues and tolls. In Kayal, there was an agency established by an Arab chieftain by name Malik-ul-Islam Jamal-uddin. This agency facilitated availability of horses to Pandya kings.

In 13th and 14th centuries, horse trade became brisk. Marco Polo and Wassaff state that the kings invested in horses as there was a need of horse for ceremonial purposes as well as for fighting wars. Those who were trading in horses were called kudirai chetties. They were active in maritime trade also. The busiest port town under the Pandyas was Kayal Pattinam (now in Thoothukudi district) on the east coast. Gold coins were in circulation as the trade was carried through the medium of gold. It was variously called kasu, kalanchu and pon.

NOTE

- ❖ Matrimonial alliances between the Cholas and the Eastern Chalukyas began during the reign of Rajaraja I. His daughter Kundavai was married to Chalukya prince Vimaladitya. Their son was Rajaraja Narendra who married the daughter of Rajendra Chola named Ammangadevi. Their son was Kulothunga I.
- ❖ Uttiramerur presently in Kanchipuram district was a Brahmadeya village (land grants given to Brahmins).
- ❖ Saivite saint Thirugnanasambandar converted Arikesari from Jainism to Saivism. On his conversion, Arikesari is alleged to have impaled around 8000 Jains on stakes. Though the number is an exaggerated one, the anti-Jain attitude of Arikesari after his conversion to Saivism cannot be doubted.
- ❖ Marco Polo hailed the Pandyan Kingdom as 'the richest and the most splendid province in the world'. Together with Ceylon, he added, it 'produced most of the gems and pearls that are found in the world'. In his travel account he recorded the incidents of *sati* and the polygamy practiced by the kings.
- ❖ The vast trade in horses of that time has been recorded by Wassaff. He writes: '...as many as 10,000 horses were imported into Kayal and other ports of India of which 1,400 were to be of Jamal-ud-din's own breed. The average cost of each horse was 220 dinars of "red gold".'