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HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL INDIA

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History of Medieval India

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Unit

I

Dawn of Medieval India

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CHAPTER

1

EARLY MEDIEVAL INDIA

1.1 Feudalism

Feudalism was a combination of legal and military systems in medieval Europe that largely flourished between the 9th and 15th centuries A.D. It was a system in which King granted land to nobles who further granted them to their vassals (a holder of land on conditions of homage and allegiance), in return for military and other services on demand.

A similar system evolved in the early medieval period in Indian sub-continent, where the weaker kings engaged in compensating through land grants rather than paying in currency. But, the nature of Indian feudalism was quite different from the European feudalism structure and historians view it as an altogether distinct system.

Feudalism in India

Feudalism began in India with the advent of early medieval period, when the villages became economically self-sufficient due to decline in urban centers and commercial activities during the end of the Gupta period. During the 1st Century AD the kings began to donate land free of cost to the Brahmins (called as Brahmadeya), scholars and other religious institutions, thus conferring the ownership of the land and hence the right to collect revenues thereof. The practice of making land grants to the Brahmanas was a custom, sanctified by the injunctions laid down in the Dharmashastras, Epics and Puranas. The Anusasana Parva of the Mahabharata devotes a whole chapter to the praise of making gifts of land (Bhumidana Prasamsa). This in turn enabled them to make a direct link and control over the peasantry.



Inscription
Record

BRAHMADEYA

Tax free villages given as gifts to the Brahmins or group of Brahmins by Kings in early Medieval India, with the right to collect taxes on the produce of land, exercise control over local resources and management of the villages.

With the growth of feudalism, community right on land diminished. The pasture-lands, marshes and forests were given as gifts by monarch. Thus, a middle order land owner class emerged and the peasant lost his land rights. They were forced to pay heavy taxes and do forced labour. Their status was reduced to slaves. There was the possibility of further transfer of land and in reality that happened too.

Along with the transfer of revenue rights, the system also resulted in the transfer of the administrative rights to the Brahmins in particular. This resulted in mushrooming of Brahmin feudatories. Also, ceding of the revenue and administrative powers resulted in disintegration of state and weakening of King's power. The features of Indian feudalism can be summarized as:

- **Political Decentralization:** The decentralization achieved in the form of Land grants gradually turned into a distinctly branched political organization made up of semi-autonomous rulers such as Samantas, Mahasamantas, etc.
- **Emergence of New Class:** Feudalism resulted in emergence of landholding intermediaries which became a dominant social group. This was absent in the early historical period and was linked to the practice of land grants, which began with the Satavahanas.
- **Changes in Agrarian structure:** With the growth of feudalism, from the sixth Century AD onwards the peasants stuck to the land granted to the beneficiaries. This led to immobility of the population and therefore isolation from the rest of the world. Its profound implication was development of localized customs, languages and rituals.

Changes in Land Grants

From the period of later Mauryas, land grants included the transfer of all sources of revenue, and the surrender of police and administrative functions. The grants of the second century AD mentions that the transfer of the king's control only over salt, which implies that he retained certain other sources of revenue. But in some other grants, it was recorded that the donor (King) gave up his control over almost all sources of revenue, including pastures, mines including hidden treasures and deposits.

Then, the donor not only abandoned his revenues but also the right to govern the inhabitants of the villages that were granted. This practice became more prevalent in the Gupta period. There are many instances of grants of apparently settled villages made to the Brahmanas during the Gupta era. In such grants, the residents, including the cultivators and artisans, were expressly asked by their respective rulers not only to pay the customary taxes to the

donees, but also to obey their commands. All this provides clear evidence of the surrender of the administrative power of the state.

One of the important aspects of the Kings sovereignty was that he used to retain the right of punishing the culprits. In the Post-Gupta times, the king surrendered over to the Brahmanas not only this right, but also his right to punish all offences against family, property, person, etc.

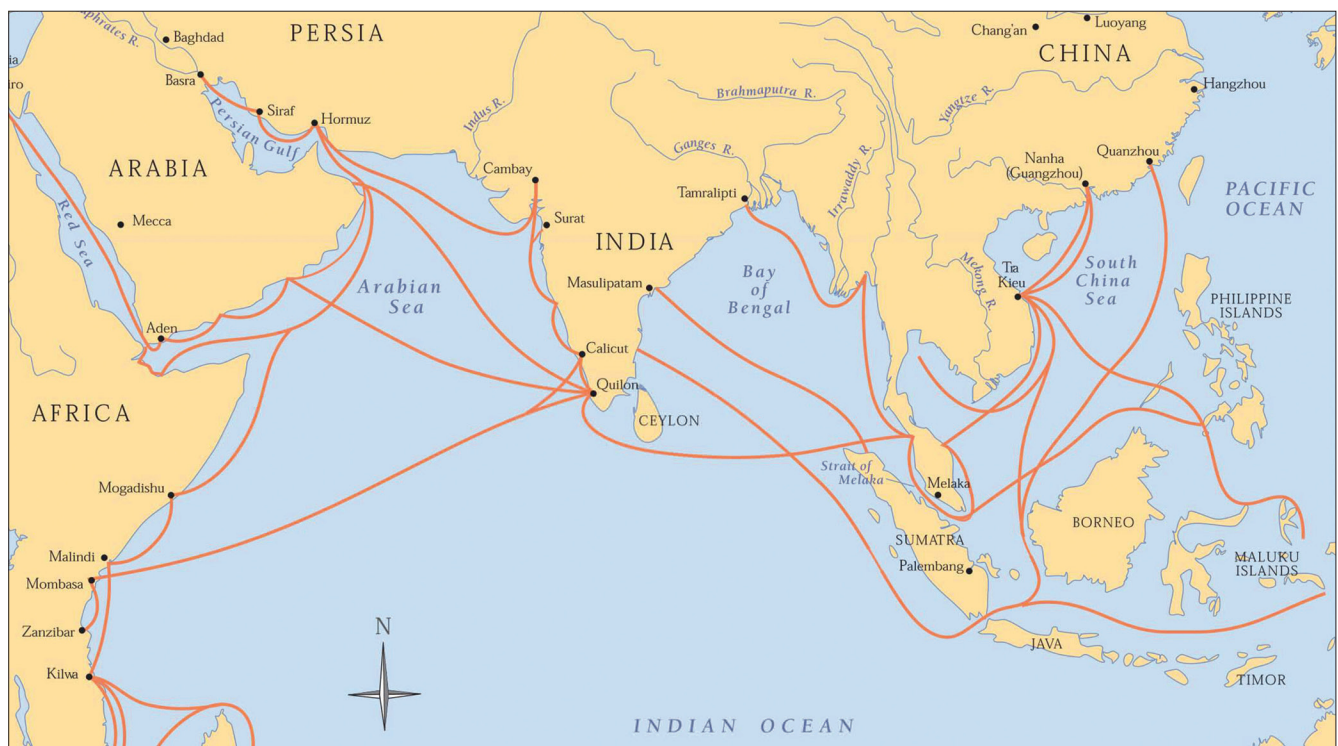
1.2 India and World Relations

Arabs

Arabs are one of the primary population groups of the world. Their primary inhabitation is in the Arab states in Western

Asia, North Africa, the Horn of Africa and western Indian Ocean islands. The Arabs had close cultural and commercial relations with the Indians right from the pre-Islamic period. The links were established through trade and commerce across the Arabian Sea.

The spices and other exotic tropical products formed the mainstay of the trade and commerce between Indian and Arab world. The imports from Arab world constituted coffee, horses and other Mediterranean products. Therefore, to secure trade, the Arab traders built their permanent settlements on the western coast of India. These settlements played an important role in exchanging of Indo-Arab cultural relations.



Trades Routes in Indian Ocean

Arab Contact with India

As aforementioned, in the earlier period, Arabs acted as a conduit for shipment of the Indian goods to the European world. But with the rise of Islam in the Arab world, they started to spread their influence in the neighborhood. After conquering Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Persia, they set their eyes on India which, at that time, was wealthy and prosperous.

The socio-cultural condition was also ripe for Arab invasion of India in 8th century. After the demise of Harshavardhana in north India, the political environment was highly unstable. Islam had already established foot-prints in India, through trade relations in the southern part of the country.

Condition of Sind



Raja Dahir

Long before the Arab invasions, the territory of Sind was contented by both Hindus and Buddhists in struggle for power and influence. Till 622 AD, Sindh was under a Buddhist Rai dynasty. A Brahmin minister of Rai usurped the throne and declared himself the king. He ruled from the capital city of Brahmanabad. His reign was marked by civil unrest which

worsened during rule of his son Dahir. It was Dahir who faced Arab invasion in 712 AD.

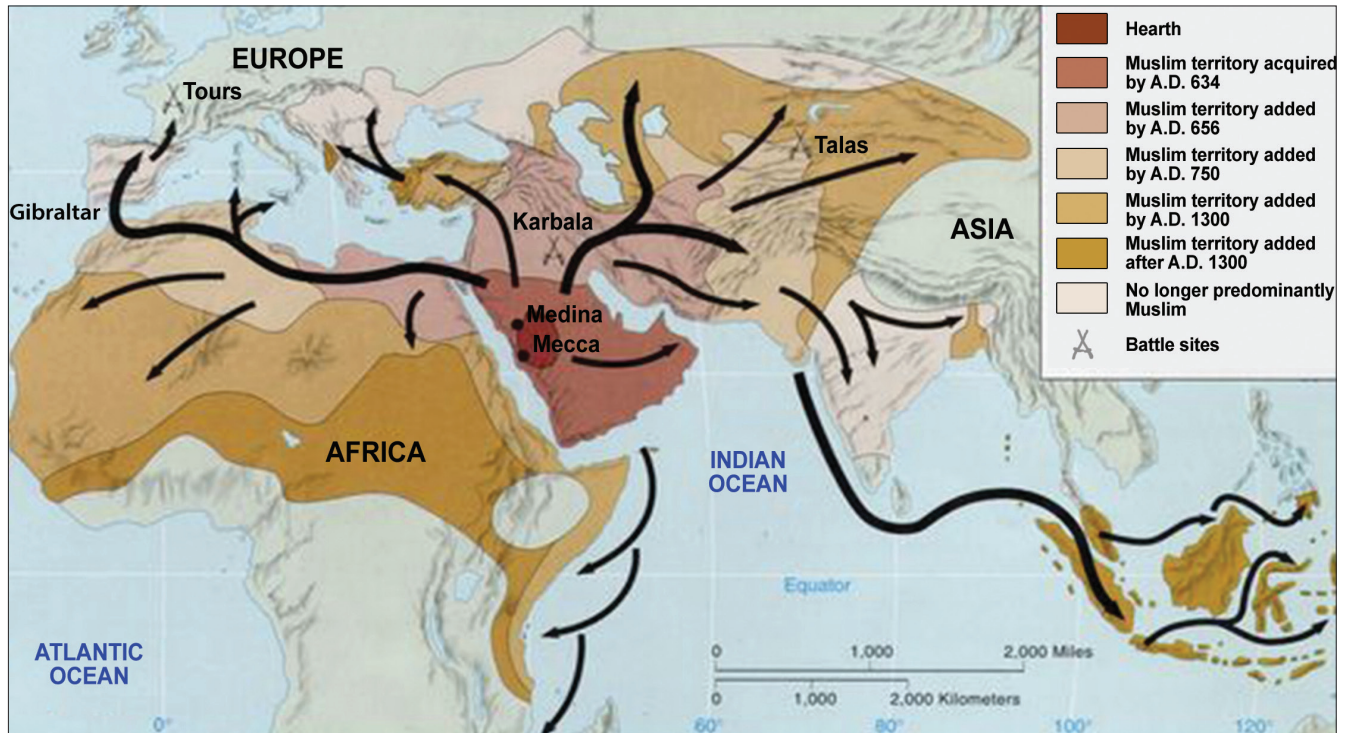
Arab Conquest of Sind

In 8th century, the Arab world was ruled by the Islamic caliphate of Syria. Muhammad Bin Qasim, a general of the Caliphate, was sent by the Caliph-Al-Walid I to conquer India. The chief aim of the fanatic Muslim rulers in Arab was to strengthen Islam and punish those who refused to accept Islam.



Muhammad Bin Qasim

He attacked Debal, an ancient port city (near modern Karachi) and defeated the nephew of Raja Dahir, who was in-charge of the port city. The city was plundered of its wealth and all the people who refused to accept Islam were brutally killed. After Debal, Qasim crossed the river Indus and fought battle with Raja Dahir. Dahir admirably fought but was defeated and killed in the Battle of Aror (712). Enormous wealth was looted from Brahmanabad, and this brought an end to the Hindu Kingdom of Sind.



Arab Conquest of Sind

Significance of Conquest

- After the conquest of Sind, Islam was established in Sind and the Multan region. Though, the influences of Arabs couldn't reach farther east and north due to strong Rajput rulers, this was the first instance of Islamic aggression in India.
- It also led to interaction between two distinct cultures and evolution of Indo-Islamic culture. Thus, Sind was the birth-place of Sufism which in turn was related to the emergence of the bhakti cult in the middle ages.
- Sind province was earlier more of a desert with minimal trade and commerce. Arab occupation resulted in introduction of camels and horses, which began to be used for trade. The investment by Arabs brought development and prosperity to the region.

- The decimal system which is the basis of modern mathematics, and which developed in India in the 5th Century, travelled to the Arab world during this period and later came to be known as Arabic numerals.
- Many Indian works dealing with astronomy and mathematics were also translated to Arabic. The famous work on astronomy, **Surya-Siddhanta** was one of these. Work of Charaka and Sushruta dealing with medicines were also translated. A number of Sanskrit literary works such as Kalila wa-Dimna or Panchatantra were translated into Arabic and formed the basis for Aesop's Fables in the West.

Africa

The Indian subcontinent and Africa are separated by the Indian Ocean. The geographical proximity between the eastern coast of Africa and the Indian subcontinent

has played an important role in the development of the relationship since ancient times. The Indian merchants traded in cotton, glass beads and other goods in exchange for gold and soft-carved ivory from Africa. The significant influence of the Indian art and architecture in ancient African kingdoms shows the level of trade development between the two civilizations. Gradually, the trade routes were established in the Indian Ocean region, and the African ports became the great centers of exchange of Indian and European goods.

East Asia

India and China

From 1st century onwards, many Indian and Chinese scholars and monks travelled between the two countries. The two most famous travelers from China were – Fa-Xian (Fa Hien), a Buddhist monk who traveled in the time of Gupta dynasty in 5th Century AD and Xuanzang, who spent almost 17 years in India during the reign of Harshavardhana.



Spread of Buddhism

The diffusion of Buddhism in China from India was the center-point of the contacts between the two countries in the early medieval period. Tantric Buddhism, also known as Vajrayana branch, still practiced in Tibet Autonomous Region, was the most popular in China. Along with Buddhism, Indian architecture, like pagodas and martial arts also diffused into the Chinese culture.

The southern kingdom of Cholas also maintained good relationship with the Chinese rulers. This is evident from large number of ancient Chinese coins being discovered in the Cholas homeland (i.e. present day Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Pudukkottai districts of Tamil Nadu). Under the reign of Rajaraja Chola and his son Rajendra Chola, the Cholas established strong trading links with Song Dynasty of

China. The Chola navy conquered the Sri Vijaya Empire of Indonesia and Malaysia and thus, secured a sea trading route to China.

India and Japan



Hindu Gods of Japan

As with China, Buddhism has been a cementing factor in the ancient ties between India and Japan. It is still among the dominant religions of Japan. Along with Buddhism, many strands of Indian culture and religion also diffused to Japan. The Indian gods and goddess have been incorporated in different forms in Japanese theology.

The link of Buddhism between India and Japan that monks and scholars often embarked on voyages between the two nations. Ancient records at Nalanda University in India have descriptions about the scholars and pupils who attended the school from Japan. The famous Japanese traveller to the Indian subcontinent was Tenjiku Tokubei.



Tenjiku Tokubei

India and Korea

India and Korea have had historical ties with one another. As with other eastern Asian nations, Buddhism was the bedrock of relationship between Korea and India. It is believed that Buddhism was introduced in Korea in the second half of fourth Century AD. Supposedly, Buddhism reached from India to Korea via China. Various Korean monks visited India, from the eighth century onwards.

There have also been legends of a Korean princess who married the king of India, and thus establishing close relations. There are some archaeological evidences like 'double-fish' pattern discovered inside the tomb of Korean princess which were also prevalent during the same time in central India, which corroborate this legend.

South-East Asia

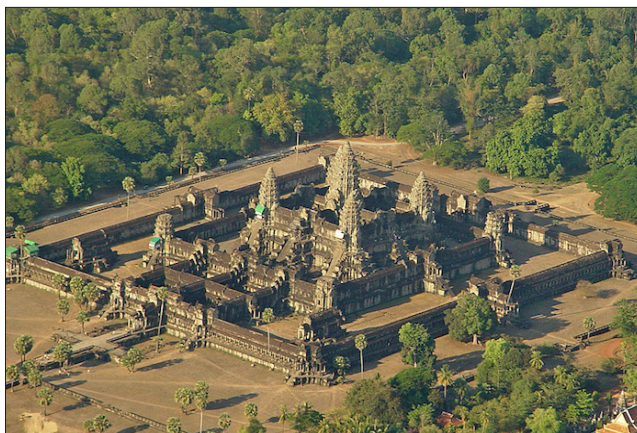
During the medieval period, the south-eastern islands of Sri-Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia came under the Indian

Influence. Cholas were the first to spread their influence through superior naval power. The spread of influence was achieved in 3-fold manner:

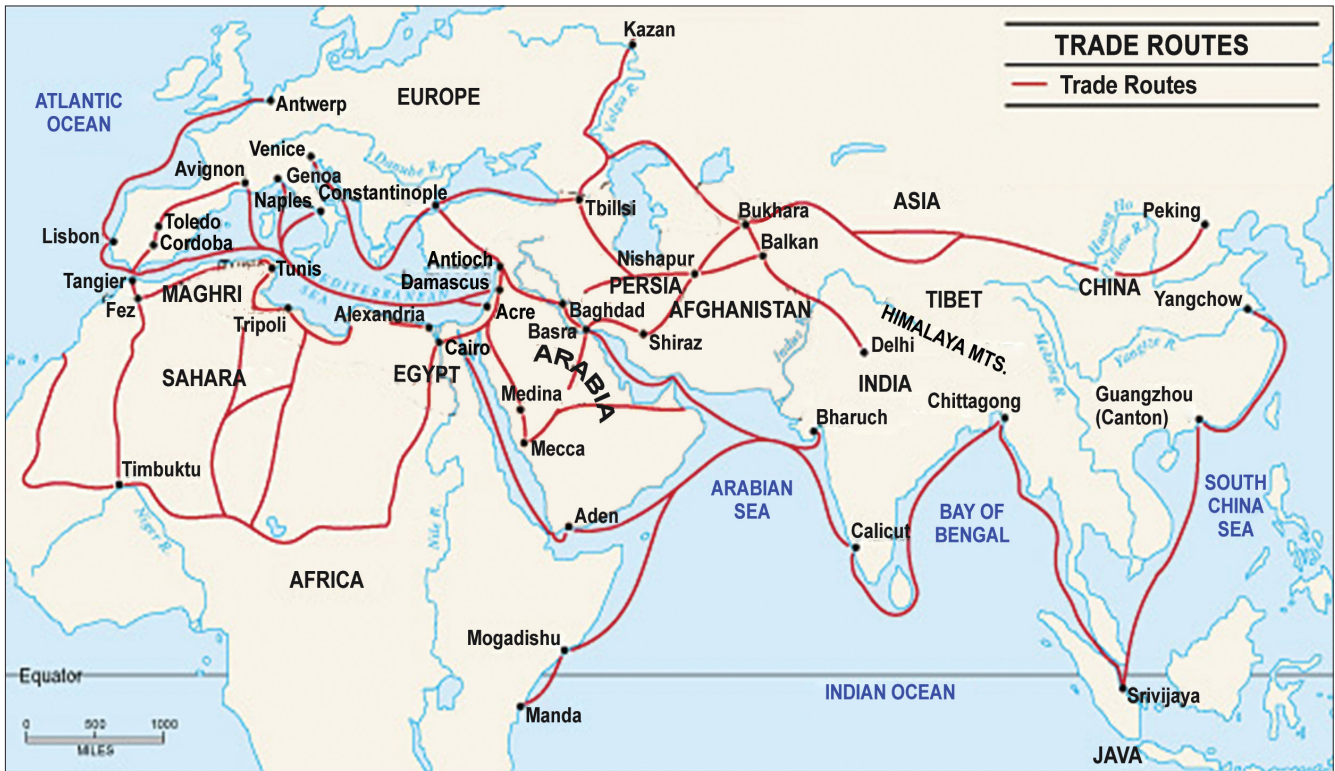
- **Military Factor:** The southern kingdoms of Cholas, Pallavas and Pandyas were militarily superior to the south-east Asian islands. The control of these Islands was essential for these states to thwart any external threat and to further ensure safe trade.
- **Trade Relations:** Due to the development of ports and ship-building industry, the trade between India and these Islands increased manifold. The south-east Asian islands also served as the trade outposts for the Africa-India-China trade routes.
- **Cultural Outspread:** Along with traders, there went the Hindu and Buddhist priests and monks, who propagated their religion and culture in the South-East Asia. This is evident from spread of Buddhism in the region and presence of colossal temples like Angkor-Wat in Cambodia. Another famous temple is temple of Borobudur dedicated to Buddha.
- Indian Epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata continues to provide favourite themes for literature, folk-art, plays etc.

Significance of the Relations

- While Buddhism declined in India it flourished in South-East Asia.
- The inter-mixing of different cultures has resulted in historical bonds between the people of the region, which is helpful in exertion of 'soft power' by India.
- Countries like Indonesia and Thailand had top leaders of Indian origin which helped India during its struggle of freedom as well as in its global agenda.
- South-east Asia has emerged as a significant trading bloc (ASEAN), and India is a key trade partner of ASEAN.



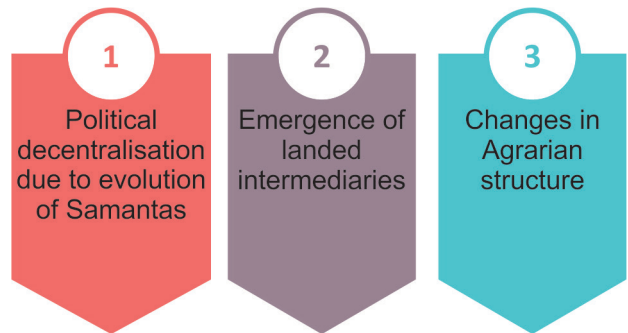
Angkor-Wat and Borobudur Temple



Trade Routes

Early Medieval India: Important Facts

- In 712 AD, Al Hajjaj, the Governor of Basra, led an expedition against Sindh's ruler Dahir, under his nephew and son-in-law, Muhammad-bin-Qasim. This expedition put Sindh under the Arabs.
- The cause of this expedition was neither the desire for territorial expansion nor religious. The king of Ceylon had sent some gifts to the king of Turkey which were looted at Debol in Sindh by the pirates. The ruler of Sindh, Dahir, refused to compensate the loss by showing his ignorance to the incident. This enraged Al Hajjaj and he attacked Sindh.



Features of Indian Feudalism

CHAPTER 2

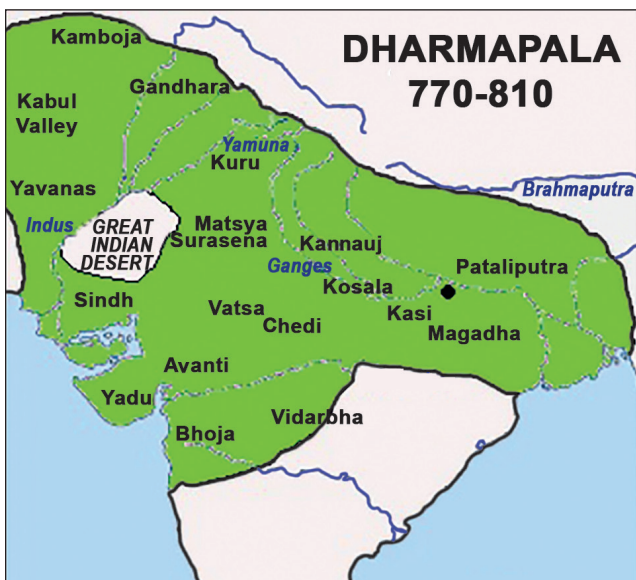
DYNASTIES OF NORTH INDIA

2.1 Palas

Introduction

After the death of the Gauda King Shashanka, Bengal passed through a period of chaos and confusion for almost a century. The internal disorder made Bengal vulnerable to the external invasion. To end the prevailing environment of anarchy, leading members of Gauda met at an assembly and elected Gopala as their king. Thus, Gopala (also Known as Gopala-I) became the founder of the famous Pala dynasty of Bengal around 750 AD.

Political Sphere of Influence



Dharmapala's Empire



Statue of Dharmapala

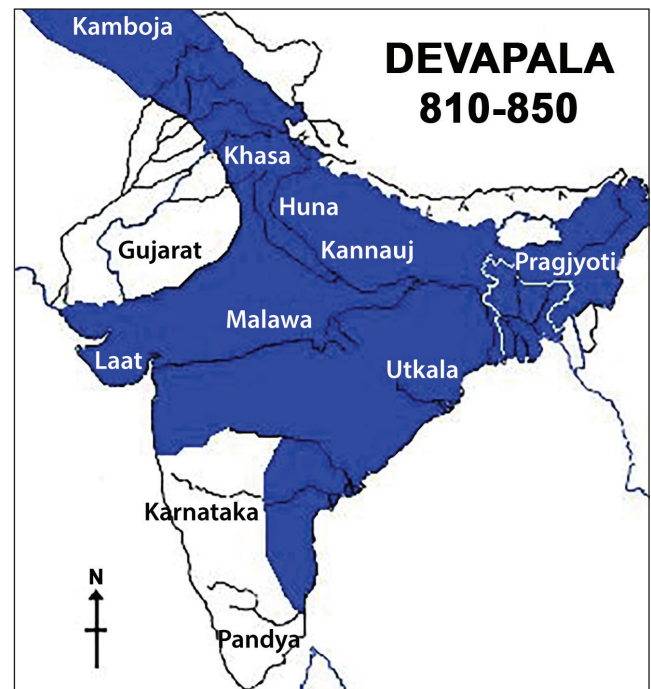
Dharmapala succeeded Gopala-I and was known as the ablest of the Pala rulers. He had a great military brain and conquered many States.

He even dethroned the reigning prince of Kannauj and set up his own nominee. His long and glorious reign lasted for almost 30 years.

Devapala was also a vigorous ruler like his father. He fought

successfully against the Huns and the Gurjara-Pratihara king of Kannauj. His territories included the vast region from Kamboj in the north to the Vindhyas in the south. The king of Sumatra also sent an ambassador to his court.

The death of Devapala, marked the beginning of the end of the Pala dynasty. Though his successor Mahipala tried to maintain the control over the dominions, the successor kings were weak and gradually succumbed to pressure from neighbouring kingdoms.



Devapala's Empire

Administration

The Pala rule was monarchical in nature with the king being the centre of all the power. Pala kings generally adopted imperial titles like Maharajadhiraja, Parameshwara and Paramvattaraka. The Pala kings also appointed Prime Ministers for better administration of the kingdom. Administratively, the Pala Empire was divided into several Bhuktis (Provinces). Bhuktis were further divided into Vishayas (Divisions) and Mandalas (Districts). The Smaller units were known as Khandala, Bhaga, Avritti, Chaturaka, and Pattaka. Thus, it is evident that administration covered widespread area from the grass root level to the imperial court.

Religion



Odantapuri University

The Pala kings were the patrons of Mahayana branch of Buddhism. Gopala-I was a devout Buddhist, and built the famous monastery at Odantapuri. His son, Dharmapala, made the renowned Buddhist philosopher Haribhadra as his spiritual guide.



Haribhadra

He established the famous Vikramashila monastery (located near Bhagalpur, Bihar) and the Somapura Mahavihara in Bangladesh. After his death, Devapala restored and enlarged the architecture at Somapura Mahavihara, which featured several themes from the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. Mahipala I carried on the restoration work and ordered construction and repairs of

several sacred structures at Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Nalanda.



Somapura Mahavira

Apart from Buddhism, the later Palas also supported the Shaiva ascetics. Narayana Pala himself established a temple of Shiva and patronized the Brahmins. Besides the images of the Buddhist deities, the images of Vishnu, Shiva and Sarasvati were also constructed during the later rule of Pala dynasty.

Economy

- The reign of Palas was marked by general economic and material prosperity.
- Agriculture was the main occupation during the Pala period.
- The Pala kings granted land to the farmers for cultivation and the chief source of income of people was derived from agricultural products of the land granted to them.

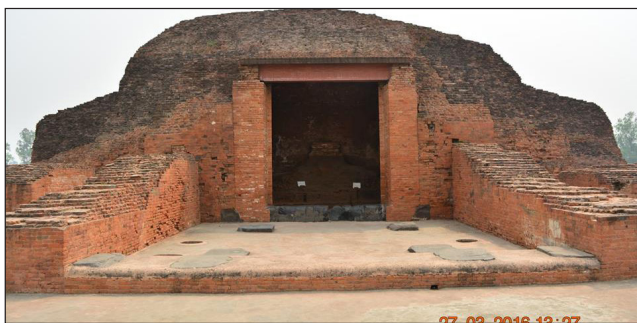
During this period, paddy cultivation had become the chief source of economy in Bengal. This was mentioned in the 'Monghyr (Munger) inscription' of Devapala as well as "Bhagalpur inscription" of Narayanapala.

- Apart from agriculture, mineral resources were also important constituents of the economy during the Pala period. Though the use of iron ore was still not very extensive, yet the process of smelting ore was well known to the people of Bengal.
- Copper deposits and pearls were also found in the various parts of the Pala Empire.
- Agro-based industries thrived during the Palas reign in Bengal. Textile industry was flourishing during the Pala period and cotton textiles were the principal industry in Bengal.
- Silk industry was also very popular in Bengal during this period and it catered not only to the domestic market, but foreign market as well.
- Though economy had flourished during the Pala phase, there was a general decline in trade and commerce. The decline in the standards of trade is evident from the coins of the Pala period.
- The scarcity of gold and the silver coins led to dependence on copper coins. This resulted in drastic decline of the foreign trade.
- Consequently, the economic system became entirely dependent on agriculture and the flourishing agrarian economy gave rise to feudalistic society. Thus, it could be said that the agricultural economy and feudalism developed simultaneously during the Pala's reign.

Literature

- Pala Kings patronized several Sanskrit and Buddhist scholars, some of whom were also appointed as their officials.
- The Gauda riti style of composition was developed during the reign of Palas.
- During their rule, many Buddhist Tantric works were authored and translated. They have a distinct influence even today in the Tibet region.
- Jimutavahana, Sandhyakar Nandi, Madhava-kara, Suresvara and Chakrapani Datta are some of the significant scholars from the Pala period.
- The first signs of the proto-Bengali language can also be seen in the Charyapadas composed during the Pala rule.

Art and Architecture



Vikramshila University

The sculptural art of Pala period is recognized as a distinct phase in Indian art, and is famous for displaying the artistic genius of the Bengal sculptors. It was largely influenced and inspired by the Gupta art. As discussed earlier, the Buddhist Palas built a number of monasteries and other sacred structures. The Somapura Mahavihara in present-day Bangladesh has been given the status of a World Heritage Site. The gigantic structures of other Viharas, including Vikramashila, Odantapuri, and Jagaddala are other masterpieces of the Palas.



Siddheshwara Mahadeva Temple

The temples constructed during the Pala period depicted a distinctive **vanga style**. The Siddheshwara Mahadeva temple at Barakar in Burdwan district is one such fine example of early Pala style. Terracota sculpture was very popular for decorative purposes. In painting, murals were highly popular for wall paintings. Miniature paintings also showed considerable development during this period.

2.2 Pratiharas (8th Century A.D.)

Introduction

The dynasty, also known as Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty ruled over much of northern India from the mid-to the century. It is believed that they ruled first from Ujjain and later established capital at Kannauj.



Gurjara Pratihara Empire India

The founder of this Dynasty was Harichandra in 6th century. Nagabhata-I (730-756 AD) was the first important ruler of this dynasty whose reign from Mandore (Jodhpur) to Malwa, Gwalior and Bharuch. His capital was Avanti in Malwa.

Political Sphere of Influence

The Gurjara-Pratiharas were instrumental in containing the march of Arab armies moving east of the Indus river, after the conquest of Sind by Mohammad Qasim. Nagabhata-I defeated the Arab armies under Junaid and Tamin, who during the Caliphate campaigns in India tried to extend their influence. Nagabhata-I was succeeded



Nagabhata-I

by Vatsaraja who captured Kannauj and thus came in direct conflict with the Palas of Bengal. Although he defeated Dharmapala, in 786 AD, the Rastrakuta King Dhruva defeated him.



Somnath Temple

Vatsaraja was succeeded by Nagabhata-II. Under the rule of Nagabhata II, the Gurjara-Pratiharas became the most powerful dynasty of north India. Nagabhata II is hailed for rebuilding the Somnath Temple, which was destroyed by Caliphate armies under Junaid. The renovated structure was a large structure of Red Sandstone which was again destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni.



Sculpture of Mihir Bhoj

Nagabhata-II was succeeded by his son Ramabhadra, who was succeeded by his son, Mihira Bhoja. Under Bhoja and his successor Mahendrapala-I, the Pratihara Empire reached its zenith of prosperity and power. During the rule of Mahendrapala, the extent of its territory rivaled that of the Gupta Empire. It stretched from the border of Sindh

in the west to Bengal in the east and from the Himalayas in the north to areas past the Narmada in the south.

This expansion of territories triggered a tripartite power struggle with the Pala and Rashtrakutas empires for control of the Indian sub-continent. During this period, Pratihara rulers assumed imperial titles of Maharajadhiraja (Great King of Kings of India).

Administration

- As with other kingdoms, the administration of Pratihara Kings was monarchical in nature.
- The King occupied the highest position in the state and had enormous powers. They adopted big titles such as 'Parmeshwara' and 'Maharajadhiraja'.
- Various samantas were appointed by the Kings. The samantas used to give military help to their Kings when called upon.
- Although, the advice of the high officers was taken in matters of administration but there is no reference of mantriparishad or ministers in the inscriptions of that period.
- The state was divided into many bhuktis or provinces. Each bhukti had several mandalas and each mandala had several cities and many villages.
- Thus, it is evident that the Pratihara rulers organized their empire into different units for administrative convenience.
- The villages in Pratihara kingdom were locally administered.
- The elders of the villages were called as Mahattars and they looked after the administration of the village.
- Gramapati was an officer of the state who advised in matters of village administration.
- It can be observed that the administration of the Pratiharas was quite efficient. It was due to this efficient

administration that the Pratiharas were able to defend India from the attacks of the Arabs.

Religion

- The age of Pratiharas was the age of the progress of the Hindu religion.
- Different sects of Hinduism progressed during their rule. Vaishnava, Shaiva Shakta and Surya were the prominent sects of Hinduism, which were prevalent during this period.
- The people of these sects considered the construction of temples and statues a sacred duty.
- The kings and other rich people donated generously for the construction of temples.
- Buddhism and Jainism were on declined why Brahmanism was progressing during this period.

Economy

- The Economy in Pratihara rule was mainly of agrarian nature.
- The major source of government revenue was the tax levied on the agricultural production.
- The feudal system was highly prevalent and the feudal levies due from subordinate lords or chiefs to the Gurjara king were provided by standing armies garrisoned on the frontiers.
- The Pratihara period was also characterized by the high decentralization of governmental authority, de-urbanization and devolution of economic activity from international to local scale.
- There seems to have been lack of gold coins in the Gurjara-Pratihara dominions.
- The purchases were made with copper coins and it was the major medium of exchange during that period.

Art and Architecture

- The famous groups of architectural works generally credited to the early Pratiharas are present at Osian in the heart of Gurjara, and to the east in the great fort at Chittor.
- In north-central India, Pratiharas built various temples around Gwalior which are comparable to the later work at Osian. The extraordinary Teli-ka-Mandir in Gwalior fort is a majestic example of Pratiharas temple art.



Teli-ka-Mandir

- Pratiharas were great temple makers. In their early works, the various elements of the mature northern style of temple construction appeared, such as Latina, mulaprasadas with varied planes accommodating ambulatories, balconies, open halls with full vedika, and Phamsana roofs.
- In the next phase of their development, the Pratiharas turned their attention to the elaboration of the superstructure of temples.

Importance of Dynasty

Among all the Rajput clans that ruled in India during the medieval period, the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty had the most impressive record. At their zenith, the influence of the Pratiharas extended from Punjab to Central India and from Kathiawar to North Bengal. For three centuries, they were mainstays of India's defense and thwarted the attempts of the Arab invaders. They briefly revived the dream of the political unification of India after the fall of mighty Harsha dynasty.

It is said that the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty was the last great imperial Hindu dynasty of Northern India prior to the Islamic occupation of the country. The empire of the Gurjara-Pratihara was not only the large in territorial extent but also one of the best administered empires as observed above. The kings were not only great warriors, but also liberal patrons of arts and literature.

There was presence of immense political and military genius in the Pratihara Dynasty. The illustrious Pratihara kings Vatsaraja, Nagabhata II, Bhojadeva (Mihira Bhoja I) and Mahendrapala surely deserve special mention in India's history. It is to be specially remembered that the Gurjara-Pratihara had to build their power under the tripartite struggle with the Palas and the Rashtrakutas. They were known fondly for the welfare of the subjects.

2.3 Rashtrakutas

(Read this part from ancient History Book)

2.4 Tripartite Struggle

In 9th Century AD, Tripartite Struggle for control of northern India took place between the Pratihara Empire, the Pala Empire and the Rashtrakuta Empire.

Dharmapala, the Pala King and Vatsaraja, the Parithara King, struggled for supremacy over Kannauj. Vatsaraja emerged victorious but was later defeated by the Rashtrakuta King Dhruva-I.

After the return of Dhruva-I to south, Dharmapala again captured Kannauj, but his occupation was short-lived. For about two centuries, there had been continuous tripartite struggle of kingdoms for the control over Kannauj.

Significance of Kannauj

Kannauj was located on the Ganga trade route and was connected to the 'silk route'. It made Kannauj strategically and commercially very important. It was also the erstwhile capital of Harshvardhana's empire in north India. Thus, the three Kingdoms fought war against each other to take advantage of the immense economic and strategic potentialities of Kannauj.



The Kannauj Triangle

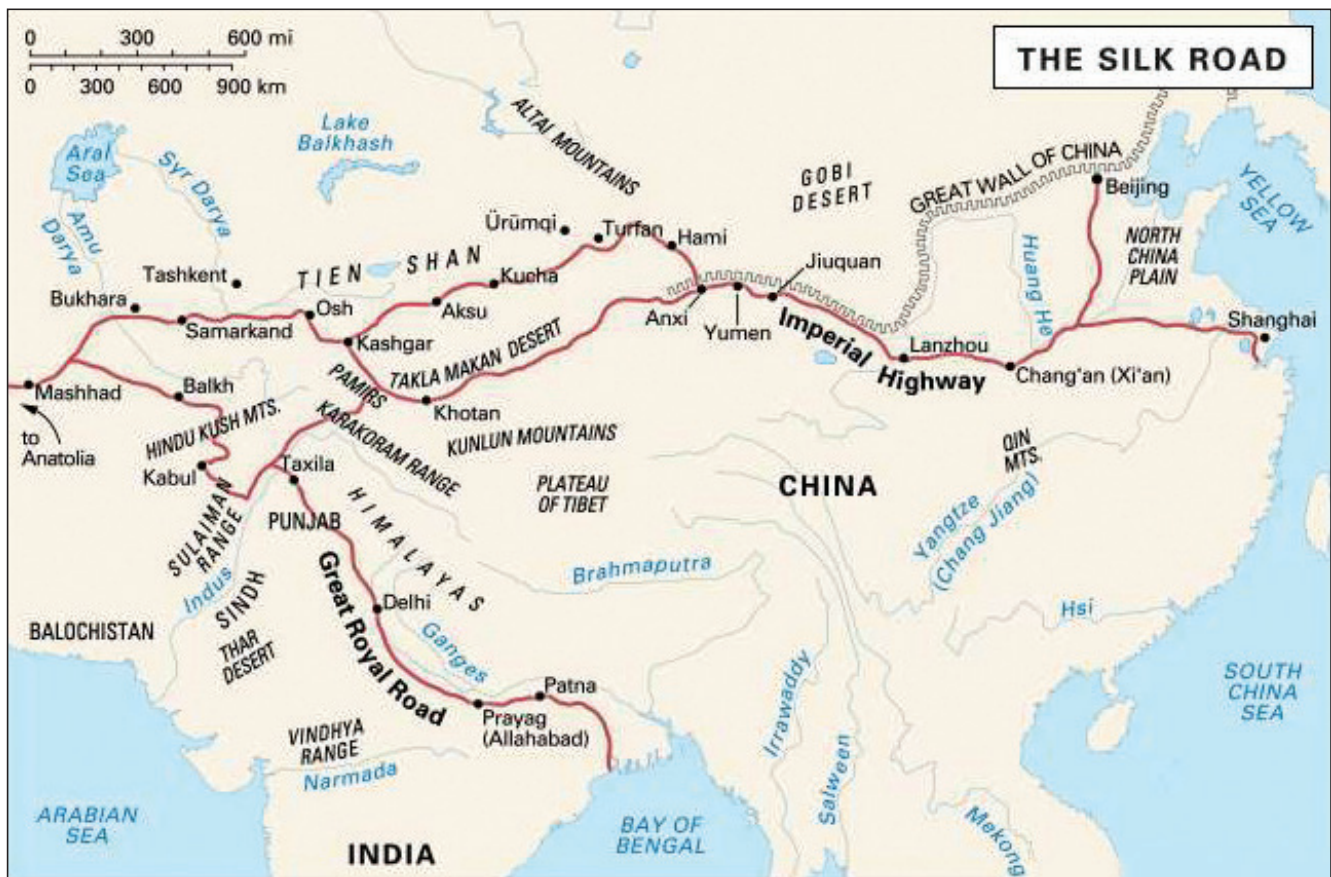
Causes for Tripartite Struggle

- To get control over Gujarat and Malwa, the regions were very important for foreign trade due to their nearness to the coast.
- To acquire supremacy over Kannauj, a symbol of prestige in Indian politics.
- To get control over the vast resources of the Gangetic valley.
- Desire to impress the pretty kingdoms with the sense of their might.
- Lust for war booty, a prominent source for maintaining huge army.

Consequence of Tripartite Struggle

This tripartite struggle for Kannauj continued for almost two hundred years and its result finally ended in favour of the Gurjara-Pratihara ruler Nagabhata II who made Kannauj the capital of the Gurjara-Pratihara kingdom. This kingdom ruled for nearly three centuries.

It eventually made all three dynasties weak in the long run, which resulted into the political disintegration of the country and benefited the Islamic invaders from Middle-east in setting up empire in India.



Dynasties of North India: Important Facts

Palas (750-1150)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gopala founded the Pala empire in 750 AD. Gopala's son Dharmapala (770-810) founded the Vikramshila University and revived Nalanda University.
Senas (1150-1202)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pala dynasty was succeeded by Sena dynasty of Bengal. Jayadeva ('Gita Govinda') was the great court poet of Pala king Luxman Sen.
Pratiharas (730-1036)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pratiharas are also called Gurjara-Pratiharas probably because they originated from Gujarat or South-West Rajasthan. Bhoja/Mihir Bhoja (836-882) was the greatest ruler of this dynasty. He was a devotee of Vishnu and adopted the title of 'Adivarah'.
Rashtra-kutas (752-1073)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dantidurga, who fixed his capital at Manyakheta/Malkheda (Gulbarga district in Karnataka), founded the Kingdom. The greatest Rashtrakuta rulers were Govinda III (793-814) and Amoghvarsha (814-878). Amoghvarsha ruled for 64 years but by temperament he preferred pursuit of religion and literature to war. He was himself an author and wrote Kavirajamarga, the earliest Kannada book on Poetics. The famous rock-cut temple of Kailash (Shiva) at Ellora was built by one of the Rashtrakuta kings Krishna I.