

Vidya Bhawan Balika Vidyapith, LKR.

Class-6th, Sub. -Social Science(History)

Date-11-01-2022, by-Punit Kumar

Ch12-The Period After Gupta

After the decline of the Gupta Empire, some smaller kingdoms arose in North and South India. Among them, the prominent ones were the kingdom of Harsha in the North and that of the Chalukyas in the Deccan and Pallavas in South India.

HARSHAVARDHAN

The first ruler of Vardhana dynasty was Prabhakar Vardhana. His capital was Thaneshwar(Thanesar). He was succeeded by Rajyavardhana who was cunningly murdered by the ruler of Bengal Shashank. After his death, at the age of 16 years, he ascended the throne in 606 AD and ruled till 647 AD. Harshavardhan is often described as the last greatest Hindu emperor of northern India who expanded his empire over the last region of Punjab, UP, Bengal, Bihar, Odisha & parts of the Himalayas in North and upto Narmada river in the Deccan.

Sources

We get information about Harsha's reign from the account of Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited India in the 7th century AD & stayed in the country for 15 years. His account shed light on economic & social life of the period. Another important literary source is the biography of Harsha, named Harshacharita, written by Banabhatta the court poet of Harsha.

Harsha's military Achievement

His rule began in 606 AD. Soon he shifted his capital from Thaneshwar to Kannauj which was situated on an elevated area and could be easily fortified. Harsha governed his empire in the same way as the Guptas, except that his administration had become more decentralised. The political unification of a large part of northern India was his greatest political achievement. For example, he gave land grants to the priests & officers who were given the responsibility of managing them & collecting land revenue.

Social Condition

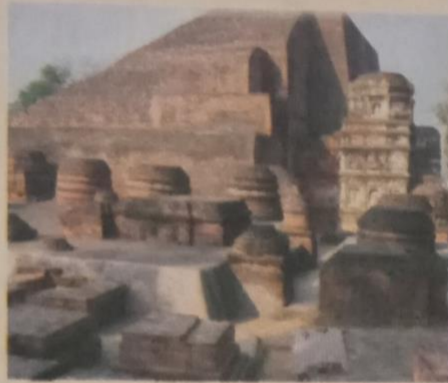
From Hiuen Tsang's account of the social life of the people, we come to know that nobles and priests led a luxurious life. Hiuen Tsang noticed that untouchability existed. They lived outside the villages and ate garlic and onion. The untouchables would announce their entry into the town by shouting loudly so that the other people might keep away from them.

Education and Culture

During this time, Nalanda was a famous Buddhist University. According to Hiuen Tsang, who had also studied here, the university was supported with the revenue of hundred villages.

Insight

Nalanda has been rightly called as one of the first few great universities of the world. It was in Bihar-located about



55 miles north-east of Patna. It was one of the first residential universities. It attracted scholars and students from Korea, Japan, China, Tibet, Indonesia, Persian and Turkey.

Harshavardhana followed a tolerant religious policy. In his early years, he worshipped Shiva, but later he became a great follower of Buddhism. He was also very charitable. According to Hiuen Tsang, Harsha built numerous stupas in the name of the Buddha. He made many donations to

the University of Nalanda. After organising a grand assembly at Prayag, Harsha gave huge donations and gave away everything, except his personal clothing. Hiuen Tsang speaks very highly of Harsha. He wrote that the king was kind, courteous and helpful.

After the death of Harsha in 647 AD, northern India was again thrown into a state of confusion. Small regional kingdoms continued to fight with one-another. Meanwhile, the Deccan and south India emerged as promising powers.

THE CHALUKYAS

In the Deccan, after the decline of the Satavahanas, the Chalukyas played an important role for about two centuries until 757 AD. They set up their kingdom in western Deccan towards the beginning of the sixth century AD. They established their capital at Vatapi, (Badami), in Karnataka.

Political Achievements of the Chalukyas

The most powerful and famous Chalukya king was Pulakeshin-II. We come to know about him in a Prashasti written by his court poet Ravi Kirti. He defeated Harsha's

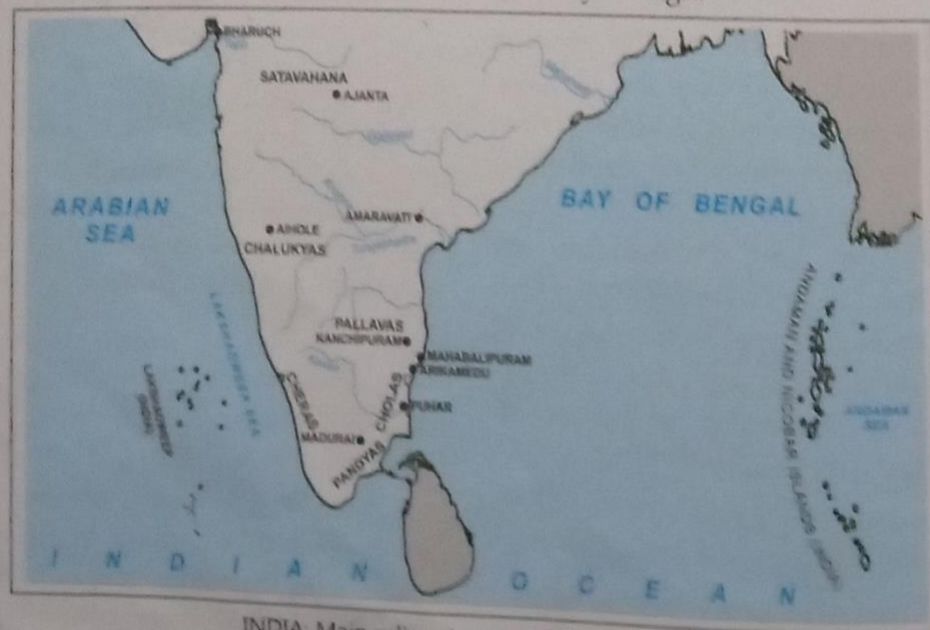
army and checked his advance towards the Deccan. He fought successfully against the other Deccan kingdoms of Rashtrakuta and Pallava dynasties. He also conquered the area lying between the river Krishna and Godavari. The downfall of the Chalukyas began after the death of Pulakeshin-II.

Trade

The Chalukyas developed trade relation with Iran, Arabia and South-East Asia. Envoys were sent by Pulakeshin-II to the Persian ruler Khusrao-II. As a result strong ties of friendship developed between the two empires.

Religious life

The Chalukyas erected a number of Vishnu and Shiva temples. A large number of Buddhist monasteries were also built. Temples of deities Shiva and Vishnu were built by the Chalukyas. They also gave funds to build Buddhist monasteries. This showed that they practiced the policy of religious tolerance. The Chalukyas also patronised, cave paintings. The excellent Ajanta paintings were mostly completed during the Chalukyas reign.



INDIA: Main ruling dynasties of South India

THE PALLAVAS

In the sixth century AD, arose another powerful dynasty called the Pallavas. They controlled both southern Andhra and northern Tamil Nadu. They set up their capital at Kanchi or present day Kanchipuram in the Kaveri delta which became town of temples and Vedic learning. The two great rulers of Pallava dynasty were Mahendravarman and Narasimhavarman-I. Although both the Pallavas and the Chalukyas supported Hinduism, and performed Vedic sacrifices and gave donations to the *Brahmanas*, they quarrelled with each other for wealth, territory and prestige. Both tried to establish supremacy over the land lying between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra. Their struggle for political power continued till the middle of eighth century AD, after that both the power declined.

Key Question 3

Where was the capital of the Pallavas?

The Pallavas Administration

In the Pallava kingdom, power and responsibility was given to the local people to manage their own affairs and problems. From the inscriptions of the Pallava period, we come to know that there were a number of local assemblies in the kingdom. *Sabha* was an assembly of the Brahmana landowners. Ur

was a village assembly of the non-brahman landowners. *Nagaram* was an exclusive association of the merchants.

In the village these local assemblies were divided into sub-committees which looked after important activities like irrigation, agriculture, roads, temples, etc. This participation of the local people was a unique democratic feature of these assemblies.

Art and Architecture

The Pallava kings constructed a number of stone temples of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu.

The most famous of them are the Seven Ratha Temples found at Mahabalipuram about a distance of 65 km from Chennai. These were built in the seventh century by Narasimhavarman, Who founded the port city of Mahabalipuram. This city is also famous for the Shore temple. The Rathas of Mahabalipuram are in the form of chariots cut out of blocks of stone. There are Nine Rathas, five such Rathas of which are named after the Pandavas and Draupadi. The Pallavas also constructed the famous Kailashnath temple at Kanchi.

Insight

The Shore temple of Mahabalipuram depicts the day to day life of the people through the sculptures. The temple has the shrines of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu.