

NCERT - CLASS 6 - CHAPTER 10: NEW EMPIRES AND KINGDOMS

PRASHASTI

- Sanskrit word → meaning - 'in praise of'
- About Samudragupta (the king who plays the veena) of the Gupta dynasty → from Ashokan pillar inscription, Prayagraj (Allahabad) composed by Harishena → a poet, minister at Samudragupta's court

SAMUDRAGUPTA'S PRASHASTI BY HARISHENA

- Poet praised the king as:
 - a warrior
 - a king who won victories in battle
 - learned
 - best of poets
 - equal to gods
- **4 kinds of rulers** and Samudragupta's policy towards them:
 1. Aryavarta - nine rulers
 - defeated and their kingdoms annexed
 2. Dakshinapatha - twelve rulers
 - surrendered after defeat
 - allowed them to rule again
 3. Neighbour states - Assam, coastal Bengal, Nepal, gana sanghas in North-west
 - brought tribute
 - followed Samudragupta's orders
 - attended his court
 4. Outlying areas
 - descendants of Kushanas, Shakas
 - ruler of Sri Lanka → submitted, offered daughters in marriage

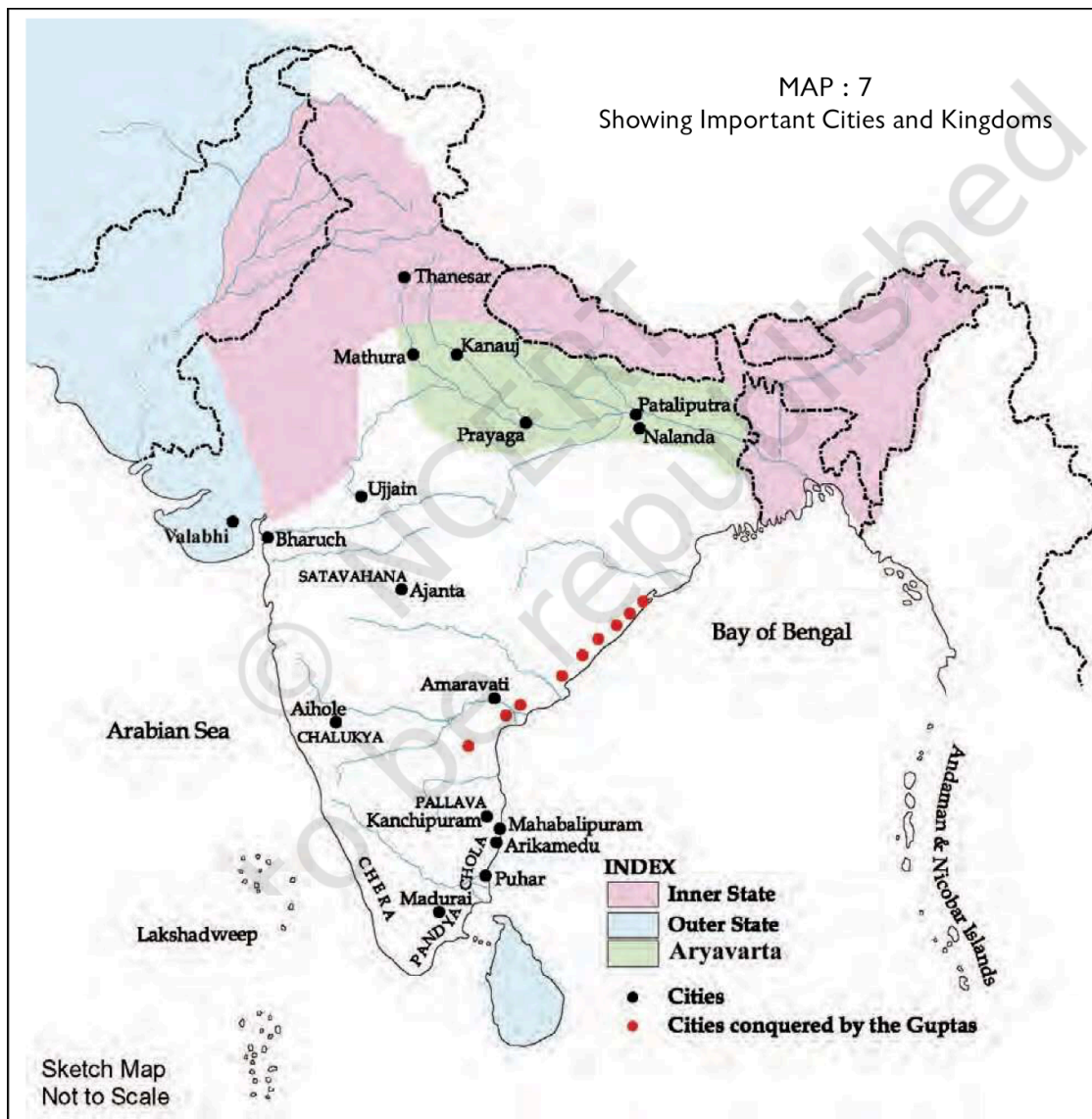


GENEALOGIES

- Mentions in most prashastis
- Ancestors of Samudragupta
- Mother - Kumara Devi → Lichhavi gana
- Father - Chandragupta → First ruler of Gupta dynasty → title of maharaj-adhiraja (used by Samudragupta also)
- Great Grandfather, Grandfather mentioned as Maha-raja
- Samudragupta mentioned in his son's (Chandragupta II) genealogy

VIKRAMADITYA (CHANDRAGUPTA II)

- Vikram Samvat → era beginning 58 BCE → mark of Victory over Shakas
- Know about him from inscriptions & coins
- Led an expedition to western India → defeated the last of Shakas
- learned people in his court → Kalidasa - poet; Aryabhata - astronomer



HARSHAVARDHANA

- Ruled 1400 years ago
- Banabatta - court poet → wrote the biography of Harshavardhana → Harshacharita (Sanskrit) → contains - Harsha's genealogy till becoming King
- Xuang Zang was at Harsha's court and wrote a detailed account
- Harsha → after his Father and elder Brother died → became King of Thanesar
- Brother-in-law was king of Kannauj → killed by the king of Bengal → then Harsha took over
- Successful against East - probably conquered Magadha, Bengal
- Unsuccessful → South of Narmada (Deccan) → stopped by Pulakeshin II (Chalukya)

PALLAVAS & CHALUKYAS

- Pallavas → from region around Kanchipuram (Capital) to Kaveri delta
- Chalukyas → around Raichur Doab, between Krishna & Tungabhadra → Aihole (capital) - Trading & Religious centre with a number of temples
- Pallavas & Chalukyas frequently fought against each other's capital cities

- Pulakeshin II (Chalukya ruler) got his kingdom from his uncle → written in Prashasti (talks about his ancestors up to four generations) by Ravikirti (his court poet)
- According to Ravikirti, Pulikeshin II marched the west & east coast, stopped Harsha, and attacked the Pallava king who hid behind the Kanchipuram walls
- Next came Rashtrakuta and Chola dynasties

ADMINISTRATION

- land revenue important
- village - the basic unit of administration
- Steps used by kings to win the support of powerful (economically, socially, politically and militarily) men:
 1. Administrative posts were hereditary → Eg: Both poet Harishena and his father were Maha-danda-nayaka or chief judicial officer
 2. One person many posts → Eg: Harishena was maha-danda-nayaka (chief judicial officer) & kumar-amatya (important minister) & sandhi-vigrahika (Minister of War & Peace)
 3. Important men had control in local administration → Eg: nagara-shreshthi (Chief banker or Merchant of city), sarthavaha (leader of merchant caravans), Prathama-Kulika (Chief craftsmen) and head of Kayasthas or Scribes
- These steps were effective but turned against → some men set up independent kingdoms

ARMY

- well-organised with elephants, chariots, cavalry, foot soldiers
- Samantas
 - were military leaders
 - provided troops to the king
 - no regular salary but given grants of land → collected revenue from the land → to maintain soldiers, horses and buy war equipment
 - tried to become independent when the ruler was weak

ASSEMBLIES OF SOUTH

- Pallava inscriptions → mentions local assemblies → Sabha → assembly of brahmin land owners → functioned through sub-committees that looked after:
 - irrigation
 - agricultural operations
 - making roads
 - local temples
- Ur → village assembly → found in places where land owners, not brahmins
- Nagaram → organisations of merchants → controlled by rich and powerful landowners & merchants
- Many local assemblies → continued to function for centuries

ORDINARY PEOPLE

- Sources → plays, other accounts
- Kalidasa → Plays
 - life in the king's court
 - King, most brahmins → speak Sanskrit
 - Women, all other men → speak Prakrit
- Abijnana Shakuntalam (by Kalidasa) - a love story between King Dushyanta and Shakuntala → mentions the plight of a poor fisherman
- Fa-Xian - Chinese pilgrim → wrote about the plight of untouchables, who lived on the outskirts of the city - an untouchable strikes a wood to inform his arrival in a market - for people to avoid touching him
- Banabhatta wrote about King's army
 - travelled with things such as pots, pans, furniture, golden footstools, food, animals (goat, deer, rabbit), vegetables, spices → carried on carts → loaded on camels and elephants
 - accompanied by musicians beating drums, others playing horns and trumpets
 - Villagers → gave gifts (curd, gur, flowers), fodder for animals → tried to meet the king to give petitions and complaints
 - Army created destruction on its way → Elephants - trampled huts → merchant oxen ran away scared

ELSEWHERE - ARABIA

- Desert - the hub of communication
- Arab merchants → sea trade between India & Europe
- Bedouins → pastoral tribes depending on camels
- Prophet Muhammad → introduced new religion → Islam - 1400 years ago → Equality and unity of all before Allah
- 1300 years ago → Islam religion spread to Africa, Spain, Iran, India
- Arab sailors familiar with Indian coastal region → brought Islam
- Arab soldiers conquered Sind about 1300 years ago