

Class VII  
History chapter 2  
New Kings And Kingdoms  
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### Key Objectives of the Chapter

1. Make the students enlighten about the major changes that took place in the country after the seventh century.
2. To relate the present society with that of the seventh century and more, as discussed in the chapter.
3. To learn how the administrative system in the Indian Monarchy came into being
4. And to get a basic idea about the land, wealth and granting system of the Indian society.

### Expected Learning Outcome

Ancient Indian Society was a masterpiece, ruled by many great rulers who came up with genius ideas to rule and administer the country. At the end of the chapter, the student will get a basic but detailed idea about the new kingdoms that emerged in the scene after the seventh century, and how their subordinates overthrew them to establish their own kingdoms. The chapter will lead the student on a journey of taxes, land grants, Prashasthi and will learn about the Cholas.

### FOCUS POINT

The major focus point is the ancient administrative system and the trend of taxes that started in ancient India.

### Key terms

1. **Dynasty:** A dynasty is the succession of rulers from one generation to another, i.e. the kingdom ruled by the king is inherited by his offspring. For example, The Mughal dynasty, The Chola dynasty, The rashtrakuta dynasty.
2. **Samantas:** The warrior chiefs who were the king's advisors or also acknowledged as the king's subordinates.
3. **Tribhuvan Chakravarti:** This literally translates to the king of the 3 worlds. A king could gain this title by doing the Ashwamedha yagna.
4. **Ashwamedh yagya:** A havan ceremony done by kings wherein a horse is sent around the world. If in case, any king dares to stop the horse on its way, then he must have to fight the king who sent the horse. If no one stops the horse and it completes its journey, then the king is accepted as the Chakravarti raja.

What you will learn after reading the context?

- How was the political status in the past?
- How your life would have been if you were born back in the 7th century?
- What were the new communities coming up in the 7th century?

### **A Change in the Political Status of the Country**

By the 7th century, more and more dynasties started emerging. Many dynasties were interested in ruling India because of its richness. This led to frequent battles for obvious reasons of conquests. India hence had several rulers in different parts of the country leading to unrest and political instability. During this period, Samantas also began to gain excessive power. They were respected in the society and treated as the subordinates of the king. They often brought gifts for the king. This increasing power led them to become egoists and thinking of themselves as being higher than their king as well. For instance, the Rashtrakutas in the southern part of the country were the subordinates to the Chalukya dynasty. However, in the 8th century, a Rashtrakuta chief, Dantidurga overpowered his king and hence overthrew the Chalukyas dynasty.

Dantidurga is an important name in history not only because he overthrew the Chalukyas, but also because of the ritual of “Hiranyagarbha” which means the “Golden Womb”. It was a kind of ritual, a rebirth ritual performed by Dantidurga, which signified his rebirth as a Kshatriya, and gave him the right to wage a war against the Chalukyas. Do you see how people took vows and rituals to grab the power. With the ritual thing that Dantidurga performed to be reborn as Kshatriya, this gives us an insight that the caste system was not that rigid at that time. The other instance is that the Brahmanas, Kadamba Mayurasharma and the Gurjara Pratihara Harichandra were people who took swords and established successful empires in Karnataka and Rajasthan.

- We pay taxes now, did people pay taxes then?
- How did the king earn money to run the kingdom?
- Why do you think that the taxes were necessary?
- Define Vetti and Kadamai.
- Did the ancient tax system impress you? Find out more about the tax system in our country.

### **Grants and the Finance System**

India has always been the land of givers. The Brahmins in the court of the king, who helped the King with the administration system, were pleased by land grants, which were ensured by their names written on copper plates. Many people in the court wrote “Prashasti” which means “in the praise of”, and since it contains nothing but only praises for the king, they cannot be completely relied on as sources. But we have an ancient poet called Kalhana, who is known for his critical writings on the kings.

Money was vital then and is vital even now. Your parents must be going to work and earning to manage expenses. Similarly, even a king needs to manage the expenses of his kingdom. For this reason, the peasants, cattle keepers, artisans were all forced to give the king a part of their produce as “rent”. Revenue was collected from the businessmen. All the collected revenue and rent were used by the king to run the expenses of his kingdom. The common expenditures was the money spent to build palaces and forts and to buy artillery.

### **Wars and India: Plundering and Looting of India and the Sultans**

Have you ever fought with a friend? Why did you fight? Why do fights even happen? Fights happen when one person wants something from another. Similarly, the kings wanted more land to be under their control and wanted more wealth. The northern plains were one of the most wanted regions due to the quality of the land and the vastness of regions. Due to this, wars often happened as kings wanted to expand their territory and pile up their treasury. Kings demonstrated the strength of their kingdom by constructing temples and archeological structures. Sultan Mahmud the ruler of Ghazni Afghanistan often attacked India intending to loot the extensive wealth found in Hindu temples such as the Somnath Mandir. The looted wealth was used to build mosques and monuments in his kingdom. Other kings who fought wars during this period include the Chauhans who ruled the present-day Delhi regions, the Chalukyas who ruled Saurashtra(Present-day Gujrat) and the gahadavalas who ruled the Uttar Pradesh region. A long conflict occurred in the Northern part of the country, it was coined as the tripartite struggle since it involved 3 kingdoms. Namely the Rashtrakutas, the Gurjara Pratihara dynasty, and the Pala dynasty.

- Who were the Cholas?
- How did the rise to power?
- Which region did they rule?

### **The Mighty Cholas of the South**

Early on, the Cholas were the subordinates to the Pallava kingdom. In the 9th century, Vijayalaya, a member of the chiefly family of Cholas belonging to the uraiyur district captured the Mutharaiyar region. He then constructed the city of Thanjavur and built a famous temple as well. The next few generations of the Chola dynasty expanded their kingdom by conquering the neighboring regions. With time the conquests kept increasing and the kingdom grew larger and larger. RajaRaja 1 the most powerful Chola king brought in new administration policies for the well-being of the people. RajaRaja 1's son Rajendra further continued to conquer new lands. The Chola kingdom even conquered Sri Lanka and other southeast Asian countries. Cholas built several great temples in and around Thanjavur. The Chola kingdom was a flourishing one, the peasants used modern methods of irrigation, trade flourished like never before. River Kaveri was channelized and several branches of Kaveri helped irrigate the land. Canals were built in the arid regions and forests were cut off and converted to agricultural land. Due to the flourishing agriculture, urs(a settlement of peasants) were set up around the delta region. Overall the kingdom flourished with gardens and avenues, it was prosperous like never before.

As we see, India had several kingdoms and kings. Kingdoms rose from nowhere and emerged to become prosperous and wealthy, whereas some fell due to their political instability.

Frequent wars happened for the expansion and often caused unrest.

India, as you might now know after a close reading of the chapter, was not an unwise country, but was a land of legends who protected and nurtured India.

If we were this great as a kingdom, and if our culture and heritage was this rich and strong, how could the British rule over the mighty Bharatvarsha? What do you think are the most prominent reasons that India fell into the hands of the British?

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