

UNIT 123 – UPSC - Indian History - The Cholas

India History - The Cholas

850: The Cholas gained Importance

The territory south, of rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra extending upto Cape Comorin is known as South India or Carnatic region. South India was divided into three kingdoms namely the Cholas, the Chera and the Pandyas of which Cholas was the most famous kingdom. The Cholas occupied present Tanjore and Trincnopoly districts with some adjoining areas. Till eight century the Chola kingdom was very small but gained importance from the ninth century onwards.

The Chola dynasty rose to prominence when in 850 their ruler Vijayalaya defeated the Pallavas and snatched Tanjore from them. Then Tanjore became the capital of the Chola kingdom. In the ninth century Aditya Chola and Parantaka I were the successors of Vijayalaya.

985-1018: Reign of Rajaraja I

The most important ruler of Chola was Rajaraja I. He was one of the greatest kings of the South India and was known as "Rajaraja the Great". Rajaraja I and his able son Rajendra, conquered nearly the whole of the present Madras Presidency. Rajaraja defeated the eastern Chalukyas of Vegi, the Pandyas of Madurai and the Gangas of Mysore. His kingdom extended from Cape in the north to Comorin in the south. He conquered Sri Lanka, the Maldiv Islands and Sumatra and other places in Malay Peninsula.

He was not only an able administrator but also a great builder. He built a magnificent temple at Tanjore and which is named as Rajarajeshwar after his name.

1018-1048: Reign of Rajendra Chola

Rajendra Chola was also a able ruler like his father. He even went upto Bengal. He was victorious upto the banks of Ganges. He assumed the title of "Gangaikonda" (the victor of Ganges). On his way he built up a new capital called Gangaikondacholapuram. His greatest achievements was the conquest of Andaman and Nicobar islands. During his reign the kingdom was called the "Golden Age of Cholas." After his death the Chola kingdom began to decline. His successors were weak and so the kingdom started disintegrating.