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PG SEM-1 PAPER- CC:3 UNIT-3

**POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE PALLAVAS, THE
RASHTRAKUTAS AND THE CHOLAS
PART-2**

IMPERIAL PALLAVAS

Simhavishnu (575 – 590 AD) :

- ❖ The first ruler of imperial Pallavas.
- ❖ Defeated the Kalabhras and laid foundation for the establishment of the “Age of the Imperial Pallavas”.
- ❖ Also defeated the rulers of Chola, Pandya and Chera kingdoms.
- ❖ Master of the entire region between the Krishna and the Kaveri.
- ❖ Worshiper of Vishnu and had the title *Avanishimha (lion of the earth)*.
- ❖ According to a literary tradition, great poet Bharavi visited his court.

IMPERIAL PALLAVAS

Mahendravarman I (590 – 630 AD) :

- ❖ Simhavishnu was succeeded by his son Mahendravarman I.
- ❖ A versatile genius. He was not only a soldier and statesman, but also a religious reformer, an architect, a poet and a musician.
- ❖ Assumed the title of *Mattavilasa, Chitrakarapuli, Vichitrachitta, Gundabhara and Lalitankura*
- ❖ The long drawn *Pallava-Chalukya conflict* began during this period.
- ❖ Mahendravarman I was *defeated by Pulakesin II* at a place called Pullalur near Kanchi. Pulakesin II almost reached the Pallava capital, but Mahendravarman purchased peace by ceding their Northern provinces to the Pulakesin II.

IMPERIAL PALLAVAS

- ❖ Mahendravarman I was a follower of Jainism but converted to Saivism under the influence of Tirunavukkarasu or Appar.
- ❖ He studied music under Rudracharya and composed exercises for the practice of students on a variety of Vina known as Parivadini.
- ❖ He has authored the Sanskrit work '*Mastavilasa Prahasanam*'.
- ❖ He was a great builder of cave temples. The rock cut caves at Mandagapattu, Dalavanur and Tiruchirapalli were excavated during his time.
- ✘ The Jain paintings found in the rock cut caves at Sittannavasal located in the present Pudukkottai region are attributed to him. His title Chitrakarapuli reveals his talents in music.

IMPERIAL PALLAVAS

Narasimhavarman I (630 – 668 AD):

- ❖ Narasimhavarman I was the greatest of the Pallavas who raised the power and prestige of the dynasty to an amazing height.
- ❖ Assumed the title *Mahamalla* or *Mamalla* which means ‘great wrestler’.
- ❖ The Pallava-Chalukya conflict that was started by his father was successfully continued by him. He wanted to take revenge the defeat of his father at the hands of Chalukyan ruler Pulakesin II. He defeated Pulakesin II, in three battles including that at Manimangalam near Kanchi in 642 AD. Pulakesin II lost his life and hence Narasimhavarman assumed the title *Vatapikonda* (*the conqueror of Vatapi*).

IMPERIAL PALLAVAS

- ❖ Another notable achievement of Narasimhanvarman I was his novel expedition to Srilanka, to reinstate the Sinhalese princes Manavarman.
- ❖ During his reign *Hiuen Tsang* visited the Pallava capital Kanchi and noted that Buddhism and Jainism flourished in the city besides Hinduism. He also noted that it was the birth place of the celebrated Dharmapala, who became the abbot of the great Vihara of Nalanda. According to his account the people of Kanchi esteemed great learning and Ghatika of Kanchi served as a prominent centre of learning.
- ❖ He was a great builder having constructed *Mamallapuram* and created the Monolithic Rathas (Rock-cut Rathas) during his reign.

IMPERIAL PALLAVAS

Mahendravarman II (668 – 670 AD) :

- ❖ Mahendravarman II ruled for a very short period of two years, since he was killed by Chalukya king Vikramaditya I.
- ❖ He also captured Kanchi, the capital of Pallavas and ruled over it for a short period.

Paramesvaravarman I (670 – 695 AD) :

- ❖ The Pallava, Chalukya conflict continued during the reign of Paramesvaravarman I. After many reverses Paramesvaravarman I finally won a decisive victory over the Chalukyas and their ally, the Gangas. Paramesvaravarman I was called Ugradanda and ‘destroyer of the city of Ranarasika’ in an inscription of his son, Ranarasika was a title of Vikramaditya I.

IMPERIAL PALLAVAS

Narasimhavarman II (695 – 722 AD) :

- ❖ Paramesvaravarman I was succeeded by his son Narasimhavarman II.
- ❖ He had the title '*Rajasimha*'. He enjoyed a peaceful reign and credited with the construction of large and beautiful temples like the Shore temple at Mamallapuram and the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi.
- ❖ He had the titles like *Shankara Bhakta* and *Agamapriya*. He was also a great patron of Art and letters. The famous Sanskrit scholar *Dandin* is said to have adorned his court.
- ❖ He sent embassies to China and the maritime trade flourished during his reign.

IMPERIAL PALLAVAS

Paramesvaravarman II (728-731 AD) :

- ❖ Narasimhavarman II was succeeded by his son Paramesvaravarman II. The Pallava kingdom again had to face defeat and humiliation during his reign.
- ❖ The Chalukya, Vikramaditya II attacked Kanchipuram and the Pallava king had to buy peace at a heavy price. However, he was killed in a war with the Ganga king, an ally of the Chalukyas.

IMPERIAL PALLAVAS

Nandivarman II (731 – 795 AD) :

- ❖ Paramesvaravarman II died without any heir to the throne. After the death of Paramesvaravarman II the Simhavishnu line of Pallava kings came to an end. A mild war of succession was started in between the various branches of Pallavas. But the Samantas and the learned people of the Ghatika of Kanchi selected Nandivarman Pallavamalla, who belonged to a collateral branch of the Pallavas, as the king.
- ❖ Renewal of conflict between the Pallavas and Chalukyas. Vikramaditya II invaded the Pallava kingdom, defeated Nandivarman and captured Kanchi.

IMPERIAL PALLAVAS

- ❖ The Chaluykan king, the Vikramaditya II, after scoring victory over the Pallava king, entered Kanchi – the city of Temples. He was wonderstruck by seeing the architectural grandeur of the *Kailsanatha temple*, the gem of the Dravidian style of Architecture.
- ❖ Nandivarman was a *worshipper of Vishnu* and a great patron of learning. During his reign, several old temples were renovated and new ones like the *Vaikuntaperumal temple at Kanchi* were constructed. The celebrated Vaishnava saint Tirumangai Alvar was his contemporary.

END OF PALLAVAS RULE

End of the Pallava Rule:

- ❖ Vikramaditya II 's attack and the temporary occupation of Kanchi may be regarded as the beginning of the end of the Pallava supremacy over South India. The Pandyas, the western Gangas and the Rashtrakutas attacked the Pallava kingdom. Dantidurga, the founder of the Rashtrakuta Kingdom, defeated Nandivarman, but the latter offered his daughter Reva in marriage to former and saved temporarily the collapse of the Pallava Kingdom.
- ❖ The Pallava rule lasted till the end of the 9th Century AD. Dantivarman (795 – 846 AD), Nandivarman III (846 – 869 AD), Nripatunga (869 – 899 CE) were the other rulers.

END OF PALLAVAS RULE

Aparajitavarman (903 AD), was the last Pallava king. The Chola king Aditya I defeated the Aparjitavarman and seized the Kanchi region. With this, the Pallava domination over South India came to an end.

(To be continued)