



Early Medieval Important Regional Dynasties

- ◆ Following the decline of the Pushyabhuti Dynasty after Harshavardhana's death (647 CE), northern India witnessed political instability.
- ◆ The Pratiharas, Palas, and Rashtrakutas emerged as dominant powers.

The Gurjara-Pratihara Dynasty (6th-11th Century AD)

- ◆ The **Gurjara-Pratihara** dynasty ruled over much of northern India from the **mid-6th century**. Initially, they ruled from **Ujjain** and later shifted their capital to **Kannauj**.



Emergence and Expansion

- ◆ The Pratiharas gained prominence by repelling Arab invasions.
- ◆ Arab travelers **Suleiman (9th century)** and **Al-Masudi (10th century)** documented their vast empire.

Notable Rulers

- ◆ **Nagabhata I (730-760 CE)**: Defended against Arab invasions; defeated by Rashtrakuta king Dhruva.
- ◆ **Vatsaraja (780-800 CE)**: Made Kannauj his capital; engaged in the Tripartite Struggle; defeated Dharmapala and Dantidurga but later lost to Dhruva.
- ◆ **Nagabhata II (805-833 CE)**: Conquered Kannauj; expanded into Bihar; rebuilt Somnath Temple.
- ◆ **Mihir Bhoja (836-885 CE)**
 - Greatest ruler of the Pratiharas.
 - Strengthened Kannauj (Mahodaya) and expanded the empire.
 - A devotee of Vishnu, he assumed the title **Adivaraha**.
- ◆ **Mahendrapala I (885-910 CE)**: Expanded empire but lost Punjab to Kashmir; succession struggle weakened the empire.
 - Poet Rajashekhara (associated with Mahendrapala and Mahipala).



Administration

- ◆ Monarchical system with titles like **Maharajadhiraja**.
- ◆ Empire divided into **Bhuktis (provinces)**, **Mandalas (districts)**, and **villages**.
- ◆ **Samantas (feudal lords)** played a crucial administrative and military role.

Religion

- ◆ Patronized Hinduism, particularly **Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Shaktism**.
- ◆ Promoted **temple construction and idol worship**.

Economy

- ◆ Agrarian-based, with feudalism being dominant.
- ◆ Trade Decline in trade led to the replacement of gold and silver coins with copper coins.



Art and Architecture

- ◆ **Osian Temples and Teli-ka-Mandir (Gwalior)** are notable examples of Pratihara architecture.
- ◆ Developed distinct temple styles such as **Latina Mulaprasada** and **Phamsana-roofed temples**.



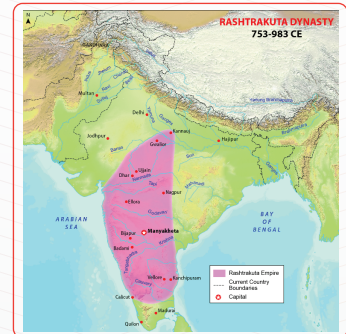
Decline of the Pratiharas

- ◆ Weakened by internal conflicts and external invasions.
- ◆ Overpowered by the Ghaznavids in the 10th century.
- ◆ Their territories were taken over by the **Chauhans (Rajputana), Chalukyas (Gujarat), and Paramaras (Malwa)**.



The Rashtrakuta Dynasty (8th-10th Century AD)

- ◆ The Rashtrakutas means "**chief of a rashtira**" ruled large parts of India and were initially feudatories of the Chalukyas.
- ◆ **Capital:** Manyakheta (Malkhed, near Solapur).
- ◆ Engaged in constant conflicts with Eastern Chalukyas of **Vengi**, Pallavas of **Kanchi** and Pandyas of **Madurai**
- ◆ **Dantidurga** overthrew **Kirtivarman-II** of the Chalukyas and established the Rashtrakuta Empire.



Notable Rulers

- ◆ **Dantidurga (735–756 CE):** Overthrew the Chalukyas, establishing the Rashtrakuta dynasty.
- ◆ **Krishna I (756–774 CE):**
 - Expanded the empire into Karnataka and Konkan.
 - **Constructed the Kailasanath (Shiva) Temple at Ellora Caves.**
- ◆ **Dhruva (780–793 CE):**
 - Led successful campaigns against Kannauj.
 - Defeated Nagabhata II (Pratihara) and Dharmapala (Pala).
- ◆ **Govinda III (793–814 CE):** Extended the empire from Kanyakumari to Kannauj.
- ◆ **Amoghavarsha I (814–878 CE):**
 - Known as the "**Ashoka of the South**", compared to Gupta king Vikramaditya.
 - Shifted capital to **Manyakheta**.
 - **Authored Kavirajamarga (Kannada literature) and Prashnottara Ratnamalika (Sanskrit).**
 - A patron of **Jainism**.



Decline

- ◆ In 972 CE, the Rashtrakutas suffered defeats at the hands of southern states, leading to the burning of their capital and their eventual downfall.



Administration

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Monarchical system with key officials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mahasandhivigrahi (Chief Minister) • Dandanayaka (Commander) • Mahamatya (Prime Minister) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Administrative divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandala (Province) • Vishaya (District) • Grama (Village) |
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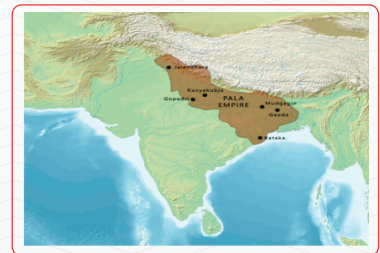
Art and Architecture

- ◆ Constructed **Ellora Kailasanatha Temple** and cave temples in Maharashtra.
- ◆ Patronized **Kannada and Sanskrit literature**.



The Pala Dynasty (750-1150 CE)

- ◆ Founded by **Gopala** in **750 CE** to restore order in Bengal after a century of instability (Matsyanyaya – "law of the fish").
- ◆ **Capital:** Muddagiri (Munger, Bihar).
- ◆ **Territories:** Bengal and Bihar (Pataliputra, Vikrampura, Monghyr, Tamralipti).
- ◆ **Religion:** Mahayana and Tantric Buddhism.



Notable Rulers

- ◆ **Gopala (750 CE):**
 - Elected by local chieftains to establish stability.
 - Built **Odantapuri Monastery** (2nd largest after Nalanda).
- ◆ **Dharmapala (770-810 CE):**
 - Considered the ablest Pala ruler.
 - Defeated by Rashtrakuta **Dhruva** and Pratihara **Nagabhata II**.
 - Conquered northern India and placed his nominee on the Kannauj throne.
 - Founded **Vikramashila University** and **Somapura Mahavihara**.
 - Revived **Nalanda University**.



◆ **Devapala (810–850 CE):**

- Expanded the empire into Assam.
- Defeated the **Hunas, Gurjaras, and Dravidas**.
- Expanded Somapura Mahavihara with **Ramayana and Mahabharata** themes.
- Court poet: **Vajradatta** (author of Lokesvarasataka).

◆ **Mahipala (988–1038 CE):**

- Attempted to revive the declining empire.
- Restored Buddhist structures at Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Nalanda.

Decline

- ◆ Weak successors led to decline; overthrown by the Sena dynasty under Vijayasena.

Administration

- ◆ **Monarchical system:** Kings held titles like **Maharajadhiraja, Parameshwara, and Paramvattaraka**.

◆ **Administrative divisions:**

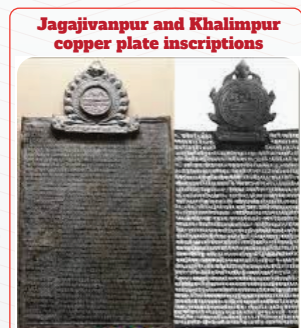
- **Bhukti** (Province) → **Vishaya** (Division) → **Mandalas** (Districts).
- Smaller units: **Khandala, Bhaga, Avritti, Chaturaka, Pattaka**.

Economy

- ◆ **Agriculture:** Paddy cultivation was key.
- ◆ **Natural resources:** Iron ore, copper, pearls.
- ◆ **Trade and commerce declined:** Scarcity of gold and silver coins led to increased reliance on copper currency and feudalism.

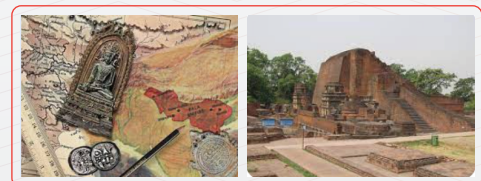
Literature

- ◆ Patronage to **Sanskrit** and **Buddhist scholars**.
- ◆ Development of **Gauda riti** literary style.
- ◆ **Buddhist Tantric texts** influenced **Tibetan Buddhism**.
- ◆ Notable scholars: **Jimutavahana, Sandhyakar Nandi, Madhavakara, Suresvara, Chakrapani Datta**.
- ◆ **Charyapadas:** Earliest proto-Bengali compositions laid the foundation for the Bengali language.



Art and Architecture

- ◆ **Pala sculptures:** Unique and influenced by Gupta art.
- ◆ **Monasteries and temples:**
- **Somapura Mahavihara** (Bangladesh) – UNESCO World Heritage Site.
 - **Vikramashila, Odantapuri, and Jagaddala** monasteries.
 - **Siddheshwara Mahadeva Temple** (Burdwan) – Vanga-style architecture.
- ◆ **Terracotta sculptures, mural paintings, miniature paintings** flourished.

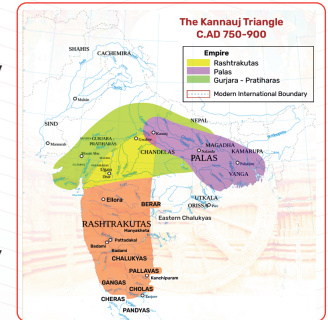


The Tripartite Struggle

The **Tripartite Struggle** was a prolonged conflict among the **Gurjara-Pratiharas, Palas, and Rashtrakutas** for control over **Kannauj**, a key trade, political, and cultural center on the **Ganga trade route**.

Causes

- ◆ **Strategic Location:** Centrally located on the **Ganga trade route**, linking India to the **Silk Road** made it vital for **commerce and military dominance**.
- ◆ **Fall of Harsha's Empire (647 CE):** The power vacuum led to competition among regional dynasties.
- ◆ **Economic Gains:** The decline of the **Silk Route** increased the economic value of controlling **Kannauj**. Control over Kannauj ensured **rich trade revenues**.
- ◆ **Political Ambition:** Each dynasty aimed to dominate **Uttarapatha (North India)** and claim the title "**Sakalottarapathanatha**".



Major Conflicts

- ◆ **Vatsaraja (Pratihara)** was defeated by **Dhruva Dharavarsha (Rashtrakuta)**.
- ◆ **Nagabhata II (Pratihara)** briefly captured **Kannauj** but lost it to **Rashtrakutas**.
- ◆ **Bhoja I (Pratihara)** consolidated power, resisting **Rashtrakuta** threats.



Consequences

- ◆ **Political Fragmentation:** No dynasty gained absolute control, leading to **regional kingdoms**.
- ◆ **Economic Decline:** Continuous wars **weakened trade and drained resources**.
- ◆ **Military Innovations:** Improved **cavalry, fortifications, and naval defenses**.
- ◆ **Decline of Pratiharas:** Briefly ruled **Kannauj** under **Mihir Bhoja**, but declined due to **internal strife and Arab invasions**.
- ◆ In **1019 CE**, **Mahmud of Ghazni** invaded and **plundered Kannauj**, marking the final decline of the **Pratiharas**.



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