

THE CHALUKYAS (AD 536-1190)

The history of Chalukyas, the Karnataka rulers can be classified into three eras: (i) Early Western Era (sixth to eighth century AD) known as the Chalukyas of **Badami**; (ii) Later Western Era (seventh to twelfth century AD) the Chalukyas of **Kalyani**; (iii) Eastern Chalukya era seventh to twelfth century AD), the Chalukyas of Vengi. The Chinese traveller, Hieun Tsang, gives an elaborate account of Karnataka's Chalukyas in his travelogue. The famous rulers of this dynasty were **Pulkeshin I** (AD 543- 567), who was the first independent ruler of Badami with Vatapi in Bijapur as his capital. **Kirthivarma I** (AD 566- 596) succeeded him at the throne. When he died, the heir to the throne Prince **Pulakesin II** was just a baby and so the king's brother Mangalesha (AD 597-610) was crowned as the caretaker ruler. Over the year's, he made many attempts to kill the prince, but was ultimately killed by the prince and his friends. Pulakesin II (AD 610-642), the grandson of Pulakesin I, was a Contemporary of Harshavardhana and the most famous of the Chalukyan kings. He increased his kingdom by annexing the entire Andhra kingdom. His reign is remembered as the greatest period of the history of Karnataka. He defeated Harshavardhana on the banks of the Narmada. However, later the Pallava king Narsimhavarrpan attacked Pulakesin II in AD 642 and captured his capital city Vatapi. Later, the Chalukya rulers succumbed to attacks by the neighbouring kingdoms. The kingdom rose to power again under the leadership of **Vikramaditya I** (AD 655-681), who defeated his contemporary Pandya, Pallava, Chola and Kerala kings to establish the supremacy of the Chalukyan Empire in the region. He was succeeded by his son Vinayaditya (AD 681-696) who was an able administrator. He had many

victories to his account, prominent among them were those against Yashovarman king of Kanauj). He was succeeded by his son Vijayaditya (AD 696-733), who was in time succeeded by his son Vikramaditya II (AD 733-745) who came to the throne and defeated the Pallava king Nandivarma II to capture a major portion of the Pallava kingdom. However, Vikramaditya II's son Kirtivarma II (AD 745) was disposed by the Rastrakuta ruler, Danti Durga, to establish the Rashtrakuta Dynasty as a force to reckon within Karnataka's political scenario. About 200 years later, the Chalukya Dynasty was revived in 973. During this period Vikramaditya VI (AD 1076-1189) arose as the greatest king. Bhilhana and Vijnaneswara were important writers during his period.

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