

THE PALLAVAS (AD 330-796)

With the decline of the Shathavahanas, **Shivaskandavarma** emerged in the South Indian political scenario. He is supposed to be the founder of the Pallavas. He made Kanchi his capital and extended his kingdom from the Krishna River to the north of the Arabian Sea in the west. However, some Prakrit edicts suggest that **Simhavarman** preceded Shivaskandavarman. The Pallavas are mentioned in Sumudragupta's pillar, where he is said to have defeated a Pallava king Vishnugopa. The chronology of the Pallava kings is sketchy, but texts suggest that they were powerful between AD 330 and 550 and the noteworthy rulers during this period were **Simhavarman I, Sikandavarman I, Veerakurcha, Skandavarman II, Kumaravishnu I, Sinihavarman III** and **Vishnugopa**. After Vishnugopa's defeat to Samudragupta, the Pallavas became weaker and the Cholas and the Kalabhras repeatedly attacked the Pallava kingdom and robbed it of wealth and territories. It was **Simhavishnu**, son of Simhavarman II, who eventually crushed the Kalabhra dominance in AD 575 and re-established his kingdom. Although both the Pallava and Pandya kingdom were enemies, the real struggle for political domination was between the Pallava and Chalukya realms. The Pallava history between AD 600 and 900 is full of accounts of wars between the Pallava and the Chalukya rulers.

Some of the important

Some of the important rulers and their wars with the contemporary Chalukya rulers are: **King Mahendraravarma** (ruled from AD 600-630)—fought the first battle between the Pallavas and the Chalukyas and was defeated by **Pulakesin II**. **Narasimharavarma Mamalla**—son of Mahendraravarma, ruled from AD 630 to 668, remembered as one of the most powerful kings of the Pallava Dynasty, he waged many wars against the Chalukyas and defeated them at Pollahur, Periyala and Surmara. The scene of the battle between the Chalukyas and the Pallavas has been carved on the rocks near the Mallikarjunaswamy temple near Badami. Later, he was defeated by the Chalukyan king Vikramaditya I (son of Pulakesin II).

He was succeeded by Mahendraravarma II who was killed in a battle against Vikramaditya I.

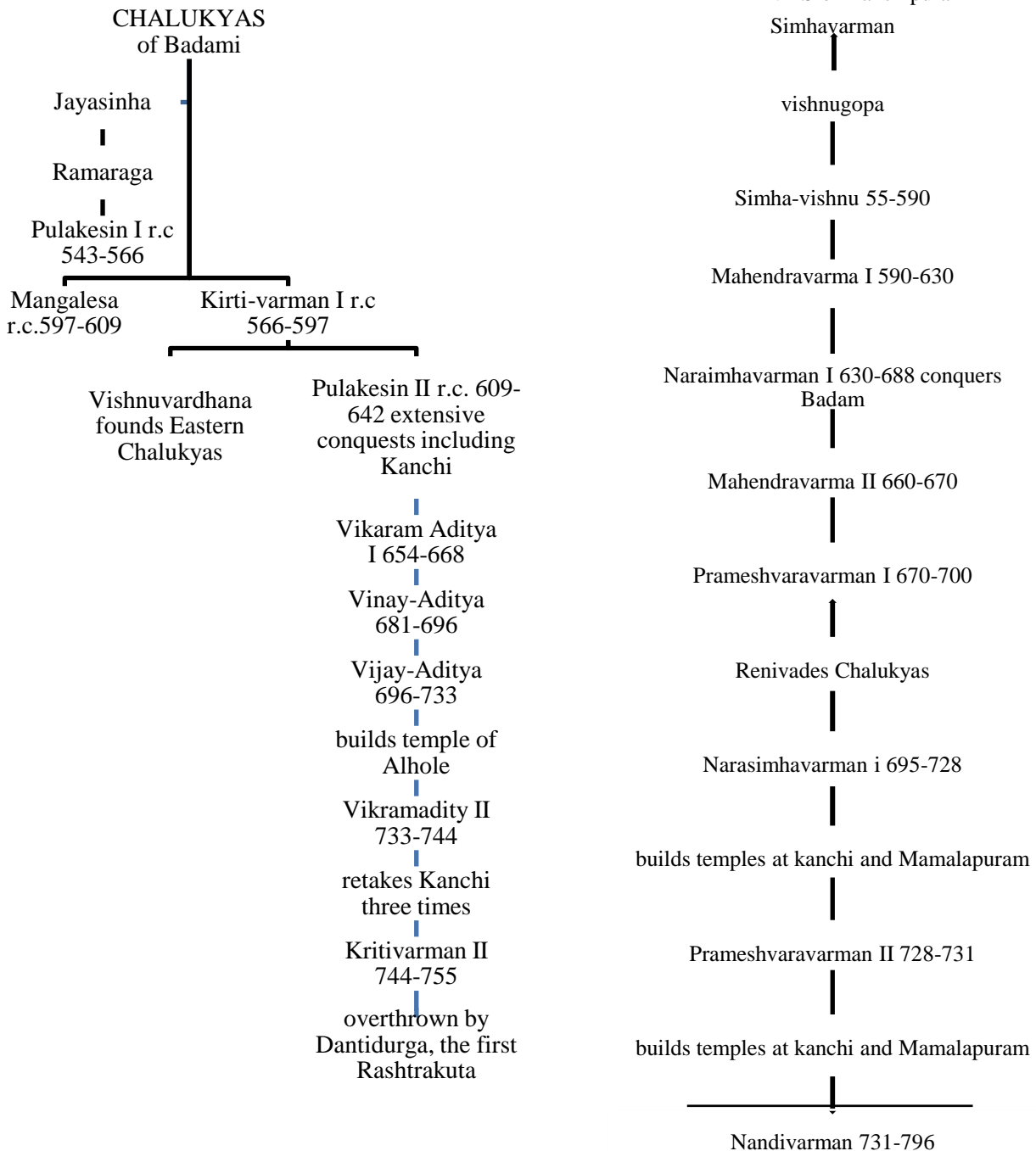
In AD 670, **Prameshwaravarma I** came to the throne and restricted the advance of Vikramaditya I. However, the Chalukyas joined hands with the Pandya king Arikesari Maravarman, another prominent enemy of the Pallavas, and defeated Prameshwaravarma I. Prameshwaravarma I died in AD 695 and was succeeded by **Narasimharavarma II**, a Peace loving ruler. During his reign the clashes between the Pallavas and the Chalukyas were few. He is also remembered for building the famous **Kailashanatha temple** at Kanchi. He died grieving his elder son's accidental death in AD 722. His youngest son, **Prameshwaravarma II**, came to power in AD 722. He was a patron of arts, but had little interest in fighting. He proved a very soft opponent to his contemporary Chalukya king, **Vikramaditya II**, who had the support of the Ganga king, Yereyappa. He died in AD 730 with no heirs to the throne, which left the Pallava kingdom in a state of disarray.

Nandivarman II came to power after some infighting for the throne among relatives and officials of the kingdom. He waged war against the Pandyas and crushed them as they got no support from the Chalukyas during this war. Instead, the Chalukya king Keertivarman (son of Vikramaditya II) waited for the defeat of the Pandyas at the hands of Pallavas, and immediately after waged war against the Pallava army and defeated it. However, Nandivarman married the Rashtrakuta princess Reetadevi and re-established the Pallava kingdom. He was succeeded by **Dantivarman** (AD 796-846) who ruled for 54 long years. Dantivarman was defeated by the Rastravita king, **Dantidurga** and subsequently by the Pandyas. He was succeeded by **Nandivarman III** in AD 846. Accounts in the Tamil book Nandikkalubalakam say that the Pallava kings who followed were powerful. Nandivarman III was succeeded by **Nrupatungavarman**, who had two brothers, Aparajitavarman and Kampavarman. The Chola king provoked Aparajitananda and supported him to wage a civil war in the Pallava kingdom. With the help of the Cholas, **Aprajitananda** captured the throne but had to

pay heavy costs to the Cholas for their help. Later, incompetent kings and political instability reduced the Pallavas to a petty kingdom. This brought the

Cholas to a formidable position in the South Indian political stage.

FIG. 1.5 The chakukya and pallava Dynasties





Rise of Pulakesin II

Mangalesha (ruled 597-610) conquered the Kalachuris and Revatidvipa, but he lost his life in a civil war over the succession with his nephew **Pulakesin II** (ruled 610-642). Starting in darkness enveloped by enemies, this king made Govinda an ally and regained the Chalukya Empire by reducing the Kadamba capital: Vanavasi the Gangas and the Mouryas, marrying a Ganga princess. In the north, Pulakesin II subdued the Latas, Molavas and Gurjarat he even defeated the mighty Harsh of Kanauj at Narmada and won the three kingdoms of Maharashtra, Konkana and Karnata. After conquering the Kosalas and the Kalingas, an eastern Chalukya Dynasty was inaugurated by his brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana and absorbed the Andhra: country when Vishnukundin king Vikramendravarman III was defeated, moving south, he allied himself with the Chalukyas, Keralas and Pandyas invade the powerful Pallavas. By 631, the Chalukya empire extended from sea to sea. **Xuan Zang** described Chalukya people as stern and vindictive towards enemies. Enough they would not kill those who submitted. They and their elephants fought white inebriated, and Chalukya laws did not finish soldiers who killed. However, Pulakesin II was defeated, and probably killed in AD 642, when the Pallavas in retaliation for an attack on their capital captured the Chalukya capital at Badami.)

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