

Tri Partie Struggle for Kannauj(in Hindi)

LESSON 20 OF 21



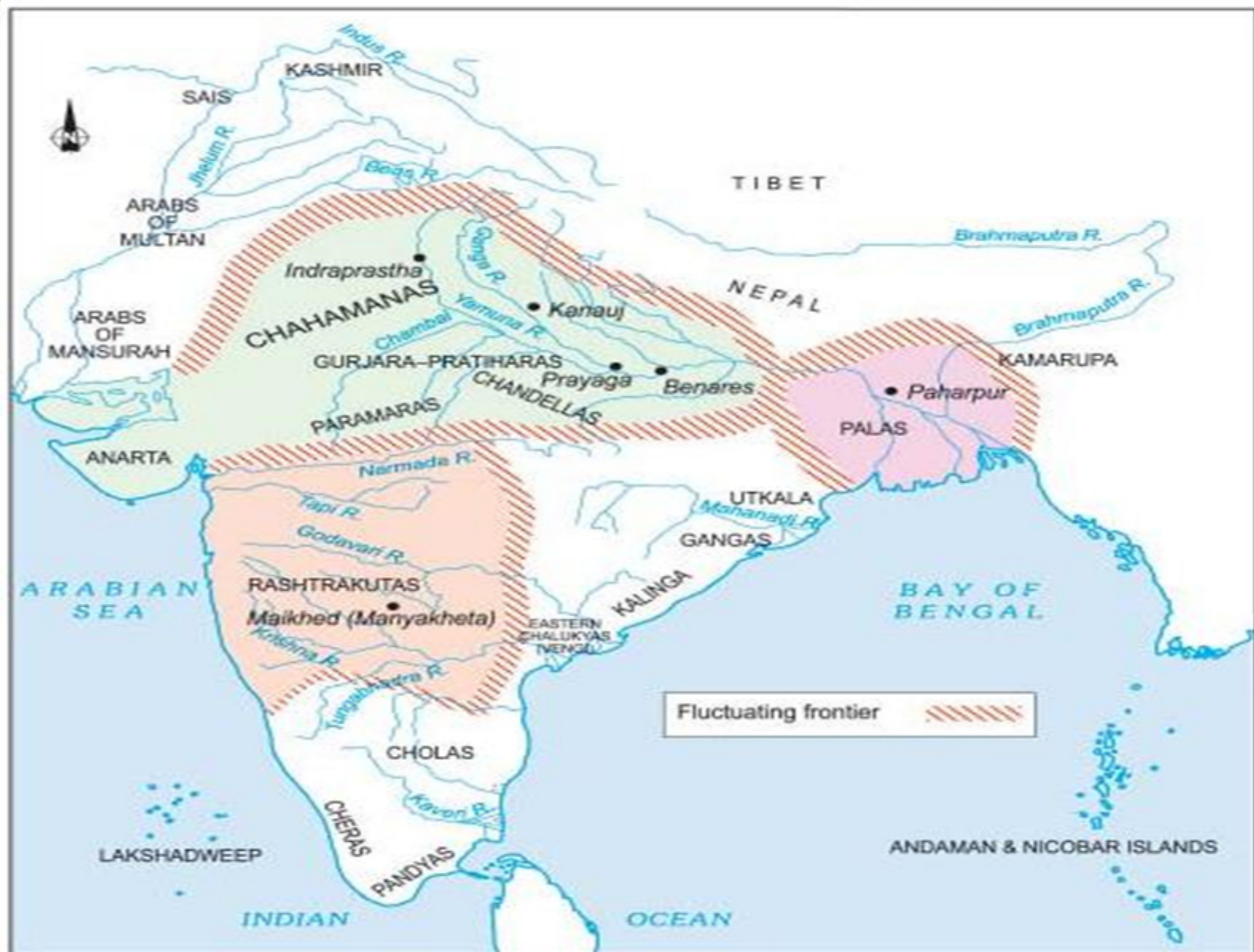
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Tri Partie Struggle

PRESENTED BY – SAKSHI MITTAL

- During the 8th century AD, a struggle for control over the Kannauj took place among three major empires of India namely :
- The Palas,
- The Pratiharas
- The Rastrakutas.
- The struggle for control over Kannauj among these three dynasties is known as the tripartite struggle in Indian history



The Palas

- Pala dynasty was founded by Gopala in 750 AD
- who was a chieftain earlier but later became the king of Bengal. In fact, he was the first Buddhist king of Bengal.
- He had established his dominance after Gauda dynasty lost their stronghold in Kamarupa.
- When he died, Bengal and most of the part of Bihar was under his control.
- Gopala is credited with constructing a monastery at the Odantapuri in Bihar

- Dharmapala succeeded Gopala. He ruled for a period of 770-810 AD.
- The Palas became the most powerful kingdom in the Northern and Eastern India during his reign.
- He fought a prolonged war against the Gurjar Pratihara and Rashtrakutas.
- Despite his humiliating defeat against the Gurajara Pratihara King Nagabhatta II, he managed to salvage the pride of Pala Empire and extended his kingdom to entire Bengal and Bihar.

- Dharmapala, a pious Buddhist king founded Vikramshila University, which was a renowned centre of Buddhism studies in India.
- The university is located at Kahalgaon in Bhagalpur, Bihar.
- Dharmapala was succeeded by Devapala. He extended his kingdom to Assam, Odisha and Kamarupa.
- During his reign, Pala armies carried out a very successful campaign.

- After Devapala, many lesser known kings sat on the throne.
- Then Mahipala became the king of Pala kingdom.
- He ruled the kingdom from 995 AD to 1043 AD.
- Known as the second founder of the Pala Dynasty, he recovered all the lost territories of the Pala Empire.
- The successors of Mahipala were weak and couldn't hold the empire intact.

The Pratiharas

- The Pratiharas were also called Gurjara-Pratiharas, probably because they originated from Gurjaratra or South-Western Rajasthan
- The dynasty of Gurjar Pratiharas was founded by Harichandra in 6th century AD.
- They remained influential till 11th century AD. It is said that they originated from Ujjain or Mandsaur.

- Nagabhatta-I was the first important ruler of this dynasty. He ruled from 730 AD to 756 AD.
- He defeated the Arab Muslim rulers of Sind and prevented them from capturing the central India.
- He was succeeded by Devaraja, Vatsaraja and Nagabhata II.
- At its peak, the Gurjara-Pratihara empire included parts of eastern Punjab, awadh, Agra, gwalior, and Rajasthan
- Awani was the capital of his kingdom.

- **Nagbhata I's achievement:**
- He defeated Junaid, the Arab commander *Junaid* and his successor Tamin in the battle of Rajasthan.
- This he successfully defended the western frontiers against Arab invasion.
- Vastaraja succeeded Nagbhata I as the new king and captured Kannauj following his victory over Dharmapala, the king of Pala.

- Nagabhatta II succeeded Vatsaraja around 805 AD.
- In fact, he was the most illustrious king of Gurjara Pratihara dynasty.
- He is best known for rebuilding the Somnath Temple in 815 AD.
- The temple was destroyed by Arab Armies of Junayad in 725 AD.

- Mihirbhoja was the other important king of the dynasty. His reign lasted till 885 AD.
- He was a great empire builder.
- He annexed the territories of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan after fighting a series of victorious battles.
- He assumed the title of Adivaraha and built the Teli Mandir at the Gwalior

- However, the power of Gurjara Pratihara declined in 10th century and their King Bhoja II was over thrown by Mahipala-I, a Pala King.
- Soon the empire disintegrated and the feudatories declared themselves independent.

Causes for struggle for Kannauj

- a) To get control over the rich resources of the Gangetic valley.
- b) To acquire supremacy over Kanauj, as symbol of prestige.
- c) Lust for war booty, and important source for maintaining a huge army
- d) To get control over Gujarat and Malwa whose nearness to the coast was very important for forging trade.
- e) Desire to impress the smaller kingdoms with the sense of their power and demand respect

- Kannauj was located on the Ganga trade route and was connected to the Silk route.
- It made Kannauj strategically and commercially very important. It was also the erstwhile capital of Harshvardhana's empire in north India.
- Yashovarman setup a kingdom at Kannauj around 730 AD.
- He was followed by three kings namely Indrayudha , Vijrayudha, and Chakrayudha who ruled over Kannauj between the end of the 8th century and first quarter of 9th century.

- The Pratihara ruler, Vatsraja wanted to capture Kannauj. Indrayudha was the ruler of Kannauj at that time. He accepted Vatsraja's supremacy.
- At that time, the Pala ruler, Dharmapala and the Rashtrakuta ruler, Dhruva equally wanted to capture Kannauj.
- Vatsraja defeated Dharmapala in a battle. Simultaneously, Dhruva entered North India and attacked Vatsraja and conquered him.
- Besides he also attacked the Pala ruler, Dharmapala and incarcerated Kannauj. Since he was unable to stay for long in North he went back to south.
- Dharmapala placed his brother, Chakrayudh on the throne of Kannauj under his domination

- Nagbhata son of Vatsaraja defeated Chakrayudh and captured Kannauj.
- The then Rashtrakuta ruler, Govinda III was also an ambitious ruler. He with the help of Chakrayudh and Dharmapala defeated Nagabhata II. Chakrayudh and Dharmapala accepted his suzerainty and Kannauj was taken over by Govinda III.
- Govinda III soon retired to the South which again created a ground for the Pratiharas and the Palas to fight against each other for capturing Kannauj. Probably, thereafter Kannauj was occupied by Nagabhata II
- The Pratihara ruler Mihirbhoja succeeded in capturing Kannauj

- The Rashtrakuta ruler, Indra III defeated the Pratihara ruler Mahipala and looted Kannauj
- The Rashtrakutas departed to South India.
- The Pratiharas yet again recaptured their lost position in north India.
- Therefore in this tripartite contest between the Pratiharas, Palas and Rashtrakutas, the Pratiharas enjoyed undisputed victory

- This tripartite struggle for Kannauj continued for almost two hundred years
- its result finally ended in favour of the Gurjara-Pratihara ruler Nagabhata II who made Kannauj the capital of the Gurjara-Pratihara kingdom.
- This kingdom ruled for nearly three centuries.