

Chera Dynasty

Origin of Chera Dynasty

The Cheras ruled Parts of Kerala and Tamilnadu, and their kingdom included Cochin and parts of Malabar and Travancore.

- Present-day Kerala, Salem, and Dharmapuri were parts of the Chera Dynasty - Chera Kingdom.
- Their first capital city was Vanchi, and the later rulers moved their capital to Kulasekharapuram.
- The Cheras constantly warred with the Pandyas and Cholas.
- These three kingdoms formed the prominent ruling dynasties of the Iron Age.
- With the wedding of the Chera king Netum Ceralatan with the Chola princess Illanko Venmal, Thiruvvur and Nagapatman came under their reign.
- Most of the population of the Chera Dynasty was agrarian.
- There is evidence of flourishing trade between the Romans, Greeks, and the Cheras for locally grown spices.

The Chera Dynasty - Important Facts

Sangam texts tell us that two lines of rulers ruled the Chera Dynasty - Chera Kingdom. The founder of the first line of rulers was Uthiyan Cheral Athan, and Irumporai founded the second line of rulers.

- The Chera Dynasty and its kings belong to one of the two clans, Irumporai and the Vanavaraman.
- The Cheras ruled the central and northern parts of Kerala and the Kongu region of Tamil Nadu.
- Vanji was Chera Dynasty - Chera Kingdom capital and the ports of the west coast, Musiri and Tondi, were under their control.
- 'Bow and arrow' was the Chera Dynasty symbol.
- The Chera kings were also referred to as "Keralaputas" (sons of Kerala).
- Inscriptions from the Chera Dynasty - Chera Kingdom period show intermarriages between these two clans.
- The Vedic influence started from Brahmanism, and Cheras preceded that period.
- For this reason, the Cheras did not follow any specific religion.
- However, we know that they worshipped their ancestors.
- The Chera country got geographically well recognized to profit from sea trade through the vast Indian Ocean networks.
- Trade of timber, Indian spices, pearls and gems were regular.

List of Chera Dynasty Kings' Names

The first known Chera king is mentioned in the Sangam texts. His name was Uthiyan Cheralathan, and he is widely considered the founder of the Chera Dynasty. Below is the Chera Dynasty kings list.

Chera Dynasty Kings	Reign (AD)	Contribution (s)
Uthiyar Cheralathan	NA	He was the first recorded Chera ruler in ancient South India of the Sangam period.
Nedum Cheralathan	NA	He took the title of Adhiraja.
Senguttuvan Chera	NA	He was popularly known as Senguttavan, Kadalpirakoottiya Vel Kelu Kuttuvan, and Chenkuttuvan.
Mantaran Cheral	NA	He was one of the fearsome kings of the Chera Dynasty period in Tamilakam, during the Sangam period.
Kulashekhar Varma	800–820	He is considered as the author of Sanskrit lyrics Perumal, Mukundamala, Tirumozhi, which are a portion of Nalayira Divya Prabandham.
Rajashekhar Varma	820–844	He is the first known ruler of the Chera of Cranganore.
Sthanu Ravi Varma	844–885	He was a popular astronomer, the author of Sankara Narayaniyam, and was member of the royal palace of Sthanu Ravi at Mahodayapuram.
Rama Varma Kulashekhar	1090–1102	He was the last ruler of the Later Chera dynasty (Kulasekharas of Mahodayapuram) and his reign was known for severe political crisis and instability.

Other Chera Dynasty kings names whose contribution is not known are:

Chera Dynasty Kings List

Selva Kadumko Valiathan	NA	NA
Illam Cheral Irumporai	NA	NA
Rama Varma Kulashekhara	885–917	NA
Goda Ravi Varma	917–944	NA
Indu Kotha Varma	944–962	NA
Bhaskara Ravi Varma I	962–1019	NA
Bhaskara Ravi Varma II	1019–1021	NA
Vira Kerala	1021–1028	NA
Rajasimha	1028–1043	NA
Bhaskara Ravi Varma III	1043–1082	NA
Ravi Rama Varma	1082–1090	NA

- The most famous Chera rulers were Nedunjeral Adan, Senguttuvan, and Kudakko Ilanjeral Irumporai.
- Uthiyan Cheralathan or Perum Chorrui Udiyan Cheralathan is the first documented Chera king of the Sangam era.
- He is known to have ruled during the 2nd Century AD.
- According to the lore, he was responsible for feeding the Pandava and Kaurava armies during the battle of Mahabharata.
- It may be a symbol to depict the prosperity of his kingdom during his rule of the Chera Dynasty - Chera Kingdom.
- Uthiyan Cheralathan ruled with Kuzhumur as his capital city and was a contemporary of the Chola ruler Karikala Chola.

The Dynamics Between the Cheras, Cholas, and Pandyas

The dynamics of the Chera, Chola, and Pandya dynasties are an essential part of south Indian history. For a while, the Cheras and Cholas had friendly relations.

- They were marriages between dynasties and regions given to each other as dowries.
- The Cheras, Pandyas, and the Cholas were constantly warring for dominance in South India.
- Later, the Cheras and Pandyas united to fight against Cholas.