



Post-Mauryan Period

Rise of regional dynasties

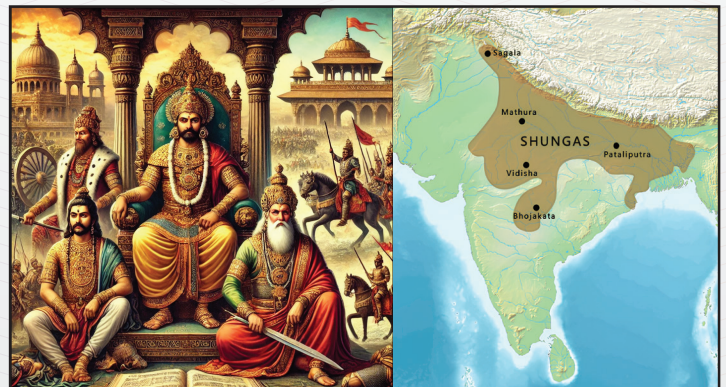
The decline of the Mauryan Empire led to the emergence of several regional dynasties that played a crucial role in shaping the political, social, and cultural landscape of India. Among these, the Shungas, Kanvas, Chedis, and Satavahanas were significant.

The Shunga Dynasty (185 BCE - 73 BCE)

The **Shunga Dynasty** emerged after the fall of the Mauryan Empire, preserving Indian culture, **Brahmanical traditions**, and influencing Buddhist art.

Establishment and Political Expansion

- ◆ **Founder:** *Pushyamitra Shunga*, a Brahmin general, assassinated the last Mauryan ruler *Brihadratha* in 185 BCE.
- ◆ **Capital:** *Pataliputra* (with *Vidisha* as a secondary capital under *Agnimitra*).
- ◆ **Major Rulers:** *Pushyamitra Shunga*, *Agnimitra*, *Vasumitra*, *Devabhuti*.



- ◆ **Territorial Extent:** Covered **Magadha, Ayodhya, Vidisha, Punjab, Bihar, Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh**, extending south to the **Narmada River**.

Military Achievements

- ◆ **Repelled Indo-Greek invasions**, particularly against *Demetrius I* and *Menander (Milinda)*.
- ◆ **Vasumitra**, son of **Agnimitra**, defended against Greek incursions.
- ◆ **Pushyamitra** performed two **Ashvamedha sacrifices** to assert sovereignty.



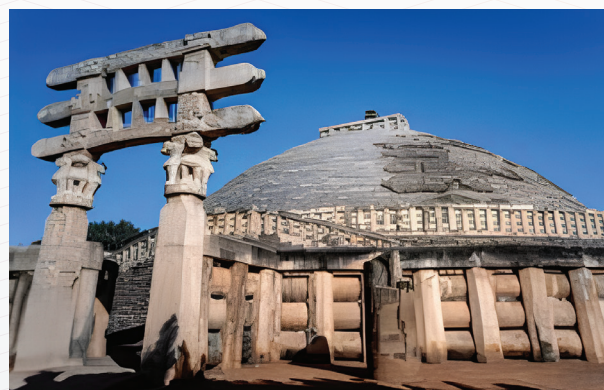
Religious and Cultural Developments

- ◆ **Brahmanical Revival:** Patronized **Hinduism, Vedic traditions, and Sanskrit literature**.
- ◆ **Impact on Buddhism:** Some accounts suggest **Buddhist persecution**, yet **Sanchi and Bharhut stupas** flourished.
- ◆ **Manusmriti** (*Manavadharmashastra*), a major Hindu legal text, was composed.
- ◆ **Heliodorus' Pillar:** A Greek ambassador of Indo-Greek king **Antialcidas**, erected a **Vishnu-devoted pillar** at **Besnagar, Vidisha**.



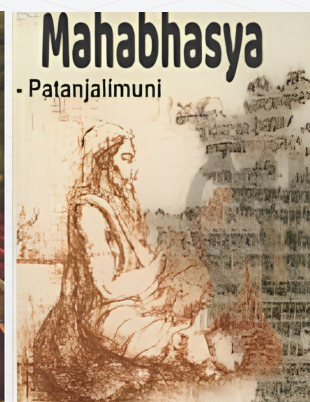
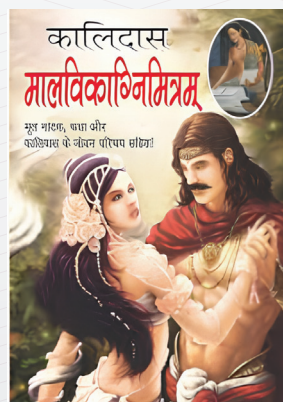
Art and Architecture

- ◆ **Transition from Mauryan to Shunga Art** – Shift from **wooden to stone structures** in Buddhist stupas.
- ◆ **Key Monuments:** **Sanchi and Bharhut Stupas** – Adorned with **Jataka tales, Yakshas, and floral motifs**.



Literature and Intellectual Contributions

- ◆ **Sanskrit Renaissance:** Sanskrit became the **court language**.
- ◆ **Patanjali** wrote **Mahabhasya** (on **Panini's grammar**) and **Yoga Sutras**.
- ◆ **Kalidasa's Malavikagnimitram** (4th-century CE) depicts **Agnimitra Shunga's life**.
- ◆ **Epigraphic References:** *Yavanarajya Inscription, Dhanadeva-Ayodhya Inscription* mention the Shungas.



The Kanva Dynasty (73 BCE - 28 BCE)

The **Kanva Dynasty** succeeded the **Shunga rule** in Magadha, ruling for **45 years** before being overthrown by the **Satavahanas**. Their reign marked **political fragmentation** and the decline of **Magadhan supremacy**.



Key Highlights

- ◆ **Founder:** *Vasudeva Kanva*, a minister of the Shunga dynasty, assassinated Devabhuti and established **Kanva rule in 73 BCE**.
- ◆ **Major Rulers:** *Vasudeva Kanva, Bhumimitra, Narayana, Susharman*.
- ◆ **Capital:** *Pataliputra*, with *Vidisha* as an administrative center.
- ◆ **Extent of Rule:** Limited to Magadha, while Punjab remained under Indo-Greek influence and the Gangetic plains saw increasing fragmentation.
- ◆ **Decline:** The last ruler, Susharman, was overthrown by the Satavahanas (Andhras), marking the end of the Kanva dynasty.
- ◆ **Northern India saw the rise of smaller kingdoms**, such as the **Mitras of Kaushambi**.

Satavahana Dynasty (1st Century BCE – 3rd Century CE)

The **Satavahanas (Andhras)** ruled the Deccan (*Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh*). Emerging after the **Mauryan decline**, they bridged North and South India, fostering **trade, art, and religious tolerance (Buddhism & Brahmanism)**.



Political Setup & Administration

- ◆ **Founder & Capitals**
 - **Founder:** *Simuka Satavahana*
 - **Primary Capital:** *Pratishthana (Paithan, Maharashtra)*
 - **Secondary Capital:** *Amaravati*

◆ Sources of Information

- **Literary Sources:** *Aitreya Brahmana, Puranas, Epics, Brihat Katha (Gunadhya), Kamasutra (Vatsyayana).*
- **Inscriptions:** *Naneghat, Nasik, Hathigumpha (Kharavela), Erragudi.*



Administration

King as the Upholder of Dharma	Followed Dharmashastra principles
Ahara	Administrative district unit
Amatyas & Mahamatras	District officers
Gaulmika	Rural administrator
Military Camps	Katakas & Skandhvaras
Land Grants	Given to Brahmins & officials, leading to feudalism

Prominent Rulers & Achievements

- ◆ **Gautamiputra Satakarni (c. 106–130 CE)**
 - **Defeated Sakas, Greeks, Parthians, and Nahapana (Western Kshatrapa King).**
 - **Revived Vedic traditions, declared himself 'Ekabrahmana' (the sole Brahmin).**
 - **Nasik Inscription (by his mother Gautami Balashri) records his achievements.**



Vashishtiputra Pulumavi

- ◆ **Expanded maritime trade with the Roman Empire.**
- ◆ **Strengthened cultural & economic ties with South India.**



Yajna Sri Satakarni (Last Powerful Ruler)

- ◆ **Reclaimed Gujarat, Malwa, Andhra after earlier losses.**
- ◆ **Continued military expansion but faced growing external threats.**



Decline

- ◆ **Post Yajna Sri Satakarni, dynasty weakened due to internal strife & Western Kshatrapa invasions.**
- ◆ **Replaced by the Vakatakas (Brahmin rulers) in the 3rd century CE.**

Economy & Trade

- ◆ **Flourishing Trade Networks**
 - **Major Ports:** *Sopara, Bharuch* (linked India to the Roman world).
 - **Maritime trade** extended to Southeast Asia & the Mediterranean.

◆ Coinage

- Issued lead, copper, silver, potin coins
- Coins known as **Karshapanas**.

◆ Agriculture & Industry

- Irrigation systems improved agriculture.
- **Paddy transplantation & cotton production** thrived.
- Iron ore mining in *Karimnagar & Warangal*.



Art & Architecture

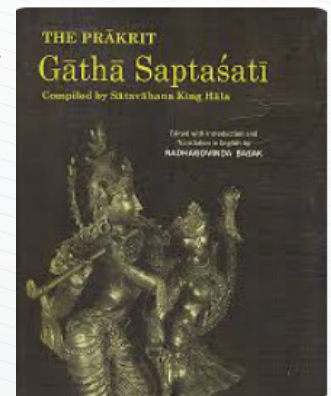
- ◆ **Rock-Cut Buddhist Architecture** in the **Western Ghats** (*Ajanta, Nasik, Karle, Bhaja, Kondane, Kanheri*).
- ◆ **Chaityas (Buddhist temples) & Viharas (monasteries)** built.
- ◆ **Karle Chaitya** – *Largest Buddhist cave temple*.
- ◆ **Stupas & Art Centers**
 - **Amaravati & Nagarjunakonda** – **Centers of Buddhist art & trade**.
 - **First use of white marble** in India for **stupa decorations**.

Society & Religion

- ◆ **Religious Syncretism**
 - **Revival of Brahmanism**, but **coexisted with Buddhism**.
 - **Krishna & Vasudeva worship** alongside **Mahayana Buddhism**.
- ◆ **Matrilineal Influence**
 - Kings **named after their mothers** (*Gautamiputra Satakarni, Vasisthiputra Pulumayi, Yajna Sri Satakarni*).

Literature & Language

- ◆ **Official Language: Prakrit** (Most inscriptions in Prakrit).
- ◆ King Hala composed **Gathasaptasati** (*Prakrit poem collection*).



Mahameghavahana (Chedi) Dynasty of Kalinga (c. 1st Century BCE – 1st Century CE)

Following the decline of **Mauryan control**, **Kalinga (modern-day Odisha)** witnessed the rise of the **Mahameghavahana dynasty**, also known as the **Chedi dynasty**. Established around the **1st century BCE**, this dynasty revived Kalinga's power after its subjugation in the **Kalinga War under Ashoka**. The name "**Mahameghavahana**" means "**Lord of the Great Cloud**," symbolizing divine authority.



Kharavela: The Greatest Ruler

Kharavela, the third and most illustrious ruler, led Kalinga's resurgence through military conquests and economic prosperity.



Political and Military Achievements

- ◆ Launched **military campaigns**, restoring Kalinga's dominance.
- ◆ Extended control from **northwestern India to the deep south**.
- ◆ **Defeated the Satavahanas**, expelled **Indo-Greek** forces, and invaded **Magadha**.
- ◆ Reestablished **Kalinga as a maritime power**, with trade links to **Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Sumatra, and Java**.

Administration and Governance

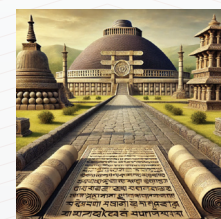
- ◆ Maintained a **centralized monarchy**, strengthening state structures.
- ◆ **Promoted economic growth**, challenging **Magadha's influence** in eastern India.

Religion and Cultural Contributions

- ◆ **Great patron of Jainism**, supporting Jain monks and institutions.
- ◆ **Hathigumpha Inscription: A Historical Record**- One of the **most important sources** about Kharavela, found in the Udayagiri hills (Bhubaneswar, Odisha).
 - Written in **Prakrit using Brahmi script**, detailing his **conquests, administration, and patronage**.

Significance of the Post-Mauryan Period

The post-Mauryan period (c. 200 BCE – 300 CE) marked the transition from a **centralized Mauryan empire** to **regional kingdoms** like the Shungas, Kanvas, Satavahanas, and Chedis of Kalinga.



Conclusion

This period saw **regional dynasties** rise, **political fragmentation**, and increased **Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian, and Indo-Parthian** influences. Trade with the **Mediterranean** flourished, along with **Sanskrit and Prakrit literature**. **Buddhist and Hindu art** advanced, setting the stage for the **Gupta Empire**.



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