

Post-Maurya-Pre-Gupta Period (185 BC-319 AD)

I. Native Successors of Mauryas

Sunga Dynasty : 185 BC - 73 BC

[Capital-Vidisha (M.P.)]

1. Sunga Dynasty was established by Pushymitra Sunga, a Brahmin Commander-in-Chief of last Mauryan ruler named Brihadratha in 185 BC.
2. Pushyamitra was a staunch adherent of orthodox Hinduism. However, the great Buddhist stupa at Bharhut (in M.P.) was built during the reign of Sungas.
3. Pushyamitra was succeeded by his son Agnimitra, the hero of Kalidasa's drama 'Malvikagnimitra'.
4. After Agnimitra, a series of weak rulers such as Vasumitra, Vajramitra, Bhagabhadra, Devabhuti, followed, leading to the decline of the dynasty.
5. During their rule there was a revival of Brahminical influence. The Bhagavata religion became important.
6. Patanjali, author of the 'Mahabhasya', was born at Gonarda in Central India. Patanjali was the priest of 2 Asvamedha Yajnas, performed by Pushymitra Sunga.
7. In arts, the Bharhut Stupa is the most famous monument of the Sunga period.
8. The fine gateway railing which surrounds the Sanchi stupa, built by Ashoka, constructed during the Sunga period.
9. Other examples of Sunga Art : Vihar, Chaitya and Stupa of Bhaja (Poona), Amaravati Stupa, Nasika Chaitya etc.

Kanva Dynasty : 73 BC - 28 BC

[Capital - Patliputra]

1. In 73 BC, Devabhuti, the last ruler of the Sunga dynasty, was murdered by his minister Vasudeva, who usurped the throne and founded the Kanva dynasty.
2. The period of Kanva rule came to an end in 28 BC.

Satavahana Dynasty : 60 BC - 225 AD

[Capital - Pratishthana/Paithan (Maharashtra)]

1. The most important of the native successors of the Mauryas in the Deccan and Central India were the Satvahanas.

2. The Satvahanas are considered to be identical with the Andhras who were mentioned in the Puranas.
3. The early Satvahana kings appeared not in Andhra but in Maharashtra where most of their early inscriptions have been found.
4. Simuka (60 BC - 37 BC) was the founder of the Satvahana dynasty.
5. Satakarni I, its 3rd ruler, raised its power and prestige by conquests.
6. Hala, its 17th ruler, was the author of 'Gathasaptasati' or, 'Sattasai' in Prakrit. Gunadhya, the author of 'Vrihat Katha' (in Prakrit), was the contemporary of Hala.
7. It was Gautamiputra Satakarni (106 -130 AD) who revived the Satavahana power and defeated the Saka Ksatrap Nahapana. He was the greatest Satavahan ruler (23rd Satavahana ruler).
8. Vasishthiputra Sri Satakarni, its 24th ruler, was married to the daughter of Saka Ksatrapa Rudradaman, but defeated by him twice.
9. Yajna Sri Satakarni, its 27th ruler, was the dynasty's last great ruler.
10. Pulamavi III, its 30th ruler, was the last Satavahana ruler.
11. Satavahanas were finally succeeded by the Ikshvakus in 3rd Century AD.
12. Satavahanas started the practice of donating land with fiscal and administrative immunities to Brahmanas and Buddhist monks, which eventually weakened their authority. The earliest inscriptional evidence of land grant in India belongs to 1st century BC.
13. Under the Satavahanas, many Chaityas (worship halls) and Viharas (monasteries) were cut out from rocks mainly in North-West Deccan or Maharashtra. The famous examples were Nasik, Kanheri and Karle.
14. Stupas (large round structure erected over a sacred relic) were seen scattered all around Ellora. The most famous of these attributed to the Satavahana period are Amravati, a sculptural treasure house, and Nagarjunakonda.
15. The official language of the Satavahanas was Prakrit
16. The Satavahanas issued their coins in lead (mainly), copper, bronze and potin.

Cheti / Chedi Dynasty of Kalinga

1. The history of Kalinga after the death of Ashoka is shrouded in obscurity. A new dynasty, known as the Cheti or Chedi dynasty, rose in the region probably in the 1st century BC.

2. Our information about this dynasty is derived solely from the Hathigumpha inscription (near Bhubaneswar, Orissa) of Kharavela, the 3rd ruler of dynasty.
3. A follower of Jainism, Kharavela was liberal patron of Jain monks for whose residence he constructed caves on the Udayagiri hill, near Bhubaneswar in Orissa.

II. Foreign Successors of Mauryas

The Indo-Greeks : 2nd Century BC

1. Indo-Greeks (Bactrian Greeks) were the first foreign rulers of North-Western India in the Post-Maurya period.
2. The most famous Indo-Greek ruler was Menander (165 BC-145 BC), also known as Milinda. He was converted to Buddhism by Nagasena or Nagarjuna.
3. The Indo-Greek rule is important in the history of India because of the large number of coins which they issued.
4. The Indo-Greeks were the first rulers in India to issue coins which can definitely be attributed to the kings.
5. They were the first to issue gold coins.
6. They introduced Hellenic i.e. Greek features in art giving rise to Gandhar school in the North-Western India.

The Sakas : 1st Century BC - 4th Century AD

1. The Sakas, also known as Scythians, replaced the Indo-Greeks in India.
2. Among the five branches of Sakas with their seats of power in different parts of India, the most important was the one which ruled in Western India till the 4th Century AD.
3. The most famous Saka ruler in India was Rudradaman (130 AD-150 AD). He is famous not only for his military conquests (particularly against the Satavahanas) but also for his public works (he repaired the famous Sudarsan lake of the Mauryan period) and his patronage of Sanskrit (he issued the first-ever long inscription in chaste Sanskrit).
4. Other important Saka ruler in India were Nahapana, Ushavadeva, Ghamatika, Chashtana etc.
5. In about 58 BC a king of Ujjain - Vikramaditya - is supposed to have fought effectively against the Sakas. An era called Vikrama Samvat is reckoned from 58 BC.

The Parthians : 1st Century BC -1st Century AD

1. Originally the Parthians (Pahlavas) lived in Iran, they replaced the Sakas in North-Western India, but controlled an area much smaller than the Sakas.
2. The most famous Parthian king was Gondaphernes in whose reign St. Thomas is said to have come to India for the propagation of Christianity.

The Kushans : 1st Century AD - 3rd Century AD

1. The Kushans were one of the five Yeuchi clans of Central Asia.
2. They replaced the Parthians in North-Western India and then expanded to the lower Indus basin and the upper and middle Gangetic basin. The first Kushan dynasty was founded by Kadphises I / Kujul Kadphises. The second king was Kadphises II / Vema Kadphises who issued gold coins.
3. The second Kushan dynasty was founded by Kanishka. Its kings extended the Kushan power over upper India. Their capitals were at Peshawar (Purushapura) and Mathura.
4. The most famous Kushan ruler was Kanishka (78 AD - 101 AD), also known as 'Second Ashoka'. He started an era in 78 AD which is now known as the Saka era and is used by the Government of India.
5. Kanishka was a great patron of Mahayana Buddhism. In his reign 4th Buddhist council was held in Kundalavana, Kashmir where the doctrines of the Mahayana form of Buddhism were finalised.
6. The last great Kushan ruler was Vasudeva I.
7. The Kushans controlled famous silk route starting from China, passing through their empire on to Iran and Western Asia. This route was a source of great income to the Kushans.
8. The Kushans were the first rulers in India to issue gold coins on a wide scale.
9. In the royal court of Kanishka a host of scholars found patronage. Parsva, Vasumitra, Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Charak and Mathara were some of them.

Facts About Post-Mauryas

Three school of Sculpture :

1. Amaravati School (150 BC - 400 AD) - Satvahanas
2. Gandhar School (50 BC - 5th Century AD) - Saka - Kushans
3. Mathura School (150 AD - 300 AD) — Saka-Kushans.

Note : The influence of Greek sculpture is very evident in the Gandhar school, while Mathura school, evolved an indigenous form.

1. In 46-47 AD, Hippalus, a Greek sailor, discovered the monsoon sea-route to India from West Asia.

2. Important ports : Barygaza (Bharoch) and Barbaricum (Western Coast); Aricamedu (Poduku—according to 'Periplus')—near Pandicheri—Eastern Coast.

3. 'Bullion was flowing out of Rome to India'—Pliny.

4. 'Geographica'—Strabo 'Geography'—Ptolemy, 'Natural History'—Pliny, 'Periplus of the Erythrian Sea'—Unknown.

5. India had contacts with Central Asia, China, Graeco-Roman World and South-East Asia.

5.II. The Sangam Period (1st-3rd Century AD)

Three Early Kingdoms

1. Kingdom -----> The Chera Bow

2. Emblem Capital---> Vanji / Karayur; Main Ports : Muzris and Tondi

3. First Ruler -----> Udiyangeral

4. Famous Ruler-----> Senguttuvan (Red Chera)

1. Kingdom -----> The Chola Tiger

2. Emblem Capital---> Uraiaur—Inland capital- famous centre for cotton trade; Puhar/Kaveripattanam—coastal capital—main port

3. First Ruler -----> Elara

4. Famous Ruler-----> Karikala

1. Kingdom -----> The Pandya Fish

2. Emblem Capital---> Madurai—Inland capital- venue of 1st and 3rd sangam; Korkai / Colchoi—coastal capital—famous for pearls.

3. First Ruler -----> Mudukudumi

4. Famous Ruler-----> Nendujelidan

The Cheras

1. The Chera country occupied the portion of both Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
2. The capital of Cheras was Vanji
3. Its main ports were Muzris and Tondi
4. The Romans set up two regiment at Muzris (identical with Cranganore) in Chera country. They also built a temple of Augustus at Muzris.
5. One of the earliest and better known among Chera rulers was Udiyangeral. It is said that he fed both the armies of Kurukshetra war and so earned the title Udiyangeral.
6. The greatest of Chera king, however, was Senguttuvan or Red Chera. It is said that he invaded the North and even crossed the Ganges.
7. He was also the founder of the famous Pattini cult related to worship of goddess of chastity—Kannagi.

The Cholas

1. The Chola kingdom called as Cholamandalam was situated to the North-East of Pandya kingdom between Pennar and Vellar rivers.
2. The Chola kingdom corresponded to the modern Tanjore and Tiruchchirap-palli districts.
3. Its inland capital was Uraiyaar, a place famous for cotton trade. One of the main sources of wealth for Cholas was trade in cotton cloth.
4. Puhar identical with Kaveripattanam was the main port of Cholas and served as alternative capital of Cholas.
5. The earliest known Chola king was Elara who conquered Sri Lanka and ruled over it for nearly 50 years.
6. Their greatest king was Karikala (man with charred leg) who founded Puhar (Kaveripattanam) and constructed 160 km of embankment along the Kaveri river with the help of 12,000 Sri Lankan slaves.
7. They maintained an efficient navy.
8. The Cholas were wiped out in the attack of Pallavas from the North.

The Pandyas

1. The Pandyas were first mentioned by Megasthenese, who said their Kingdom was famous for pearls.

2. The Pandya territory included modern districts of Tirunelveli, Ramand and Madurai in Tamil Nadu. It had its capital at Madurai, situated on the banks of Vaigai river.

3. The Pandya king profited from trade with Roman Empire and sent emissaries to Roman emperor Augustus and Trojan.

4. The Pandyas find mention in the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

5. The earliest known Pandyan ruler was Mudukudumi.

6. The greatest Pandya king, Nendujelian, accused Kovalan of theft. As a result, the city of Madurai was laid under a curse by Kannagi (Kovalan's wife).

Sangam Administration

1. The king was the centre of administration. He was called Ko, Mannam, Vendan Korraivan or Iraivan.

2. Avai was the court of the crowned monarch.

3. **Important officials (Panchmahasabha)** : 1. Amaichchar (Ministers) 2. Purohitar (Priests) 3. Dutar (Envoys) 4. Senapatiyar (Commander) 5. Orar (Spies).

4. The kingdom was divided into Mandalam / Nadu (Province), Ur (town), Perur (Big village), Sirur (Small village).

5. Pattinam (Name of coastal town), Puhar (Harbour areas), Cheri (Suburb of town).

6. **Revenue Administration** : Karai (Land Tax), Irai (Tribute paid by feudatories and booty collected in war), Ulgu (Custom duties), Iravu (Extra demand or forced gift), Variyam (A well known unit of territory yielding tax), Variyar (Tax collector).

7. It is said that in Chola territory, watered by Kaveri, the space in which an elephant could lie down produced enough to feed seven persons. It implies the lands were very fertile with irrigation facilities.

Sangam Literature

1. Sangam was an assembly of Tamil poets held under royal patronage of Pandyan kings in Madurai. According to tradition, the assembly lasted for 9,990 years and was attended by 8,598 poets and 197 Pandyan kings.

2. The first Sangam was attended by Gods and legendary sages All its works have perished.

3. Of the second Sangam, the only surviving work is Tolkappiyam, an early work on Tamil grammar written by Tolakapiyyar.

4. Of the third Sangam, the mostly works are surviving. These are Ettutogai (i.e. 8 anthologies), Pattupattu (i.e. 10 idylls), Patinenkilakanakku (i.e. 18 didactical texts) etc.

5. Ettutogai and Pattupattu are called Melakanakku (18 major works) and narrative, in form. Patinenkanakku is called Kilakanakku (18 minor works) and didactive in form.

6. Kural or Muppai, a part of Patinenkilakanakku and written by Tiruvalluvar is called 'The Bible of Tamil Land'. It is treatise on polity, ethics and social norms.

The Epics : Silappadikaram, Manimekalai, Sivaga Sindamani etc.

1. Silappadikaram (the story of the Anklet): Written by Ilango Adigal, it deals with the story of Kovalan and Madhavi of Kaveripattinam. It is called Illiyad of Tamil poetry'.

2. Manimekalai: Written by Sittalai Sattanar, it deals with the adventures of Manimekalai, the daughter bom of Kovalan and Madhavi. It is a sequel of Silappadikaram and strongly tinged with Buddhism.

3. Sivaga Sindamani (Jivaka Chintamani) : Written by Jain Tiruttakrdevas and strongly tinged with Jainism.

4. **Bharatam** : Written by Perudevanar.

1. Panchtinai (five Tamil regions) -----> Kurinji (hilly backwoods or montane)

2. Occupation -----> Hunting, Gathering

3. Inhabitants-----> Kurvar, Vetar

1. Panchtinai (five Tamil regions) -----> Palai (Parched or arid zone)

2. Occupation -----> Cattle lifting, Highway robbery

3. Inhabitants-----> Eyinar, Maravar

1. Panchtinai (five Tamil regions) -----> Mullai (Pastoral tract)

2. Occupation -----> Shifting Agriculture, Animal husbandry

3. Inhabitants-----> Ayar, Idaiyar

1. Panchtinai (five Tamil regions) -----> Marutam (Wetland)

2. Occupation -----> Plough Agriculture

3. Inhabitants-----> Ulavar, Vellalar

1. Panchtinai (five Tamil regions) -----> Neital (littoral / coastal)

2. Occupation-----> Fishing, Salt extraction

3. Inhabitants-----> Paratavar, Valayar