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Magadha Empire under Asoka was extended from the foot of the Hindu Kush to the borders of the Tamil country. After the Kalinga war, Asoka became a monk and expansion of Buddhism in other countries took place during his time. None of the later Mauryas was efficient to keep such a vast empire intact.

**The Last Maurya: Brihadratha**

- ✓ The sources of history after Mauryas are scant. There was no account left by Kautilya and Megasthenes about the later Mauryas.
- ✓ Our knowledge about the later Mauryas is based upon **Puranas, Jain and Buddhism texts**.
- ✓ Different Puranas give different accounts of Asoka’s successors.
- ✓ The account given by Vayu Purana says that *Asoka was succeeded by Kunala* while the Matsya Purana says that *Asoka was succeeded by Suyasas*.
- ✓ But all Purana accounts as well as *Harchacharita* of Banabhatta says- that the last Mauryan ruler was Brihadratha.

**Pushymitra Shunga founds Shunga dynasty**

- ✓ Brihadratha was a weak ruler and his Senapati Pushymitra Shunga while a parading the entire Mauryan army before Brihadratha to show him the strength of the army assassinated him and this was the end of the Mauryas.
- ✓ Pushyamitra Shunga founded the Shunga dynasty in around 185-183 BC.
- ✓ Capital of Shunga Dynasty Was Pataliputra and its major centers were Ujjain, Mathura, Saket, Sanchi, and Kapilvastu. Vidisha was capital of later Shunga rulers.
- ✓ West Bengal and parts of Bangladesh, some parts of northern Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh .
- ✓ In South India, the contemporary of Mauryas & Shungas were Saatvahanas, Pandyas, Cheras and Cholas.

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- ✓ The extent of Saatvahana was modern Andhra Pradesh, Pandyas was Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and Cheras was Kerala (Cheras derived from Keralaputra).

### Pushyamitra Sunga (185 BC TO 151 BC)

- ✓ Pushyamitra Shunga the founder and hero of the Shunga dynasty.
- ✓ He was viceroy of the Mauryas at Ujjain and was a real war hero.
- ✓ He was not happy with his king Brihadratha, who failed in containing the Yavanas and attacks from the western sides.
- ✓ He is credited to repulse the two attacks of Greeks and also conquest over Vidarbha.
- ✓ The first of these attacks from Greeks, which were repulsed by Pushyamitra Shunga, was under Demetrius and another was under Meander.
- ✓ Pushyamitra is also known to have repelled the Kalinga's king Kharvela conquest.
- ✓ He performed Ashvamedha Yagna.
- ✓ The Ayodhya Inscription of Dhandeva mentions that he performed two Ashwamedha Yagyas (Horse Sacrifices).
- ✓ As per the Puranas, Pushyamitra Shunga reigned for 36 years.
- ✓ Some evidences say that Pushyamitra Shunga destroyed many stupas of Asoka. But there are also evidences that Barhut Stupa was built during the Shunga Empire only.
- ✓ Pushyamitra was succeeded by his son Agnimitra.

### Agnimitra : (149 BC -141 BC)

- ✓ Agnimitra was the second king of Shunga dynasty, who succeeded his father Pushyamitra Shunga.
- ✓ He had a short reign of 8 years.
- ✓ He is the hero of *Malvikagnimitram* of Kalidasa in which he has been referred to as Raja.
- ✓ By the times of Agnimitra, Vidarbha had become independent of the Mauryas.
- ✓ Agnimitra was succeeded by Vasumitra around 131 BC.

Who succeeded Vasumitra , not much details are available. Different accounts mention the name of different kings such as Andhraka, Pulindaka, Ghosha or Vajramitra. The last rulers of Shunga dynasty were Bhagabhadra and Devabhuti, about whom we have some details

#### -: About this document:-

**Bhagabhadra (114 BC -83 BC)**

- ✓ We know about the king Bhagabhadra by a Heliodorus pillar, which has been found in Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh near modern Besnagar.
- ✓ Heliodorus was a Greek ambassador and he dedicated this pillar to God Vasudeva (Vishnu).
- ✓ The Heliodorus pillar has a surmounted figure of a Garuda.

**Devabhuti (87-73 BC)**

- ✓ Devabhuti was the last Shunga Ruler who was killed by his own minister Vasudeva Kanva in around 73 BC.
- ✓ Vasudeva Kanva thus assassinated the last ruler of Shunga Dynasty and founded the Kanva Dynasty.

**Kanva dynasty**

The last ruler of the Shunga Dynasty was killed by Vasudeva Kanva.

- ✓ The Kanvas were Brahmins and considered themselves as descendents from Rishi Kanva.
- ✓ Vasudeva killed Devabhuti in around 72 BC and this is also testified by Harchacharita.
- ✓ At the time of Vasudeva Kanva's accession, the Shunga kingdom was already finished as the Punjab region was under the Greeks and most parts of the Gangetic planes was under different rulers.
- ✓ One of the Shunga rulers named Sumitra who rules around 133 BC was killed by Muladeva who founded the independent Kosala Kingdom.
- ✓ Vasudeva was succeeded by Bhumimitra.
- ✓ Bhumimitra after reigning for 14 years was succeeded by his son Narayana, who was succeeded by Susharman.
- ✓ Much detail about these kings has been ascertained *only on the basis of Numismatics.*
- ✓ Only these 4 kings of the Kanva dynasty are known.
- ✓ This dynasty is said to have been overthrown by the Satavahana dynasty.

**Mahameghavahans of Kalinga**

- ✓ After the decline of Mauryas, Kalinga rose to power around 1<sup>st</sup> century BC in the area of modern Odisha. We best know about the Third ruler of this dynasty, named " Kharvela". Kharvela is known to have revived the past glory of Kalinga.

**Kharvela (209-170 BC)**

- ✓ King Kharvela belonged to the epic time Chedi dynasty.
- ✓ His capital was Kalinganagara.
- ✓ We know about Kharvela from **Hathigumpha inscription**, found in a cave in Udayagiri near Bhubaneswar.
- ✓ The army and military of Kalinga was reinstated by Kharvela.
- ✓ Kharvela led successful campaigns against the kingdoms of Magadha, Anga, and Satavahana.
- ✓ The Kalinga Kingdom was expanded till Ganga to Kaveri from north to south by Kharvela.
- ✓ Kharvela was a **Jain follower**, but despite being a Jain follower he never hesitated in warfare.
- ✓ He patronized the Jaina ascetics by making provision for their maintenance, constructing the house/dwellings.

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**Hathigumpha inscription**

Hathigumpha inscription is ascribed to Kharvela, and belongs to 2nd century BC. It is a **17 lines inscription** in Brahmi found at Udayagiri hills, Bhubneshwar, Orissa, 6 miles away from the place where Dhauli edit of Asoka was located. The inscription says that it is dated 165th year of Maurya kings and 13th year Kharvela reign, and gives a biographical sketch of the king. It says.

1. In the first year the king rebuilt the capital of Kalinga.
2. In the second year, he destroyed the capital of Musikas, a tribe of Hindus of Indus river area.
3. In 4th year he subdued the Rastrakas and Bhijakas, the tribes near modern berar area.
4. In the 5th year he extended a canal built by the Mauryas.
5. In the 8th year, he advanced till Barabar hills and defeated the king of Rajgriha.
6. In the 9th year he built the "Mahavijayaprasad" place of great on both the banks of the river Pranchi.
7. In the 12th year he subdued the Brihaspatimitra of Magadha.
8. He built magnificent temple at Bhubneshwar.

**Indo-Greek rulers**

We should know that during the last two centuries of BC era, Northwest and northern Indian subcontinent was ruled by more than 30 Hellenistic kings. The knowledge about these has been attained via the coins issued by them. The areas under these Hellenistic Kings were Taxila, Pakistan's, Punjab Pushkalavati (Peshavar) & Sagala.

- ✓ Indo-Greek rulers have been mentioned "Yavanas" in the Indian literature.

Some of the kings of indo-Greek dynasties are briefed here.

**Antiochus II**

- ✓ Approximately in 250 BC, Diodotus, who was a governor of Bactria, proclaimed his independence. He was one of the first such independent rulers.
- ✓ Antiochus II, who was a king of the Hellenistic Seleucid kingdom, marched towards India and defeated the India king Subhagsena in Kabul in around 206 BC.

**Demetrius I of the Bactria (200-180 BC)**

- ✓ Demetrius I of Bactria was son of Euthydemus and conquered the extensive areas in Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- ✓ He is credited with real indo-Greek expansion in India and has also been referred in Greek Sources as "King of Indians".
- ✓ His coins bear legends in Greek and Prakrit written in Greek and Kharoshthi script. The coins were issued in silver and one of the coins was known as "Heracles".
- ✓ His capital was Sakala (Sialkot Pakistan) which he named Euthydemia in memory of his father.
- ✓ His coins have been found in several parts of modern Pakistan, Afghanistan and central Asia.

**Apollodotus I**

- ✓ Apollodotus I was the indo Greek ruler who ruled around 174-165 BC in the western and southern parts of the indo-Greek Kingdoms covering the area from Taxila in Punjab to Sindh.

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- ✓ Apollodotus I was the first king who ruled in India only and this is said to be real founder of the Indo-Greek kingdom of India and known as first “Real Indo Greek”.
- ✓ He was one of the generals of the Demetrius I of Bactria.
- ✓ We come to know about Apollodotus I through the bilingual Indian standard square coins by him.
- ✓ The animals such as elephant and bull are depicted in his coins.

### Apollodotus II

- ✓ Apollodotus II ruled in Punjab 80-65 BC and was an important ruler.
- ✓ He is said to have re-conquered the Taxila. He seems to be of same dynasty of which Meander belonged to.

### Menander II

- ✓ Menander II reigned around 90-85 BC in Gandhara, north of modern Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan.
- ✓ It was Meander who has been mentioned as the **mighty Yavana King of Sakala**.
- ✓ His capital Sakala was located in modern Punjab and refers to Sialkot, Pakistan
- ✓ In the “*Milindapanho*” dialogues between the Meander II and **Nagasena** have been recorded.
- ✓ He was Buddhist Indo-Greek ruler and is the only Indo-Greek ruler who is greatly respected in India.
- ✓ The coins of Meander have been engraved with “Dhammachakka” of Buddhism.
- ✓ He issued Gold Coins also and one of the coins are known as “Athene Promachus”.

### Shakas

The Indo-Greek rule in India was primarily destroyed by the Shakas.

- ✓ Shakas were the Scythians, which refer to ancient Iranian people of horse-riding nomadic pastoralists.
- ✓ In Sanskrit they are referred as Shakas.
- ✓ The 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC saw an upheaval in the Central Asia. The invasion by the Central Asian nomadic tribes and tribes from the Chinese region was responsible for the migration of the Shakas towards India.

#### Great Wall of China and migration of tribes

**Qin Shi Huang** was the first emperor of United China who sat on throne in 221 BC. He is remembered for two gigantic projects viz.

1. Great Wall of China and
2. Massive road system in China.

Though, some of the walls were built in 5th century BC, but major works including the terracotta army was built in the Qin Shi Huang times.

The construction of Great wall of China partially contributed to migration of the Hiung-chi, Wu-san Yueh-chi tribes from that region. These tribes migrated westwards and southwards. The first tribe to migrate was **Yeuh-chi**, which displaced the Scythians. Some sources say that the Scythians attacked Bactria and they entered the Indian subcontinent through the **Bolan Pass**. This was the foundation of Shaka rule in India.

### Maues (80-65 BC)

- ✓ **Maues or Moga** was the earliest Shaka ruler.
- ✓ He established Shaka power in Gandhara and ruled around 80-60BC.

-: About this document:-

- ✓ His capital was "Sirkap" and he issued a **large number of copper coins** and few silver coins.
- ✓ Some sources indicate that he assumed the title of " *maharaja mahatma* " and his coins are bearing the images of Indian deities' viz. Shiva, and Buddha.
- ✓ He used Greek and Kharoshthi in coin legends.

**Moga inscription**

Moga inscription refers to the Taxila copper plate. Taxila copper plate was found in area of Taxila in modern Pakistan. Taxila copper plate bears a precise data and it is written in Kharoshthi.

This inscription is ascribed to Shaka king Moga.

- ✓ It was the Taxila Copper Plate which has mentioned about the dedication of a relic of the Buddha Shakyamuni to a Buddhist monastery by the Shaka ruler **Patika Kusulaka**.
- ✓ Patika Kusulaka is also mentioned in Mathura lion capital.

**Azes-I & Azes II**

- ✓ Maues and his successors were able to conquer large the areas of Gandhara, they were unsuccessful against the indo-Greek kings remaining behind the Jhelum river in eastern Punjab.
- ✓ But it was Azes-I who put an end to the remnant of the Greek rule in India.
- ✓ Azes-I annexed the kingdom of the Indo-Greek Hippostratos after a long resistance.
- ✓ In 58 BC, Azes-I founded the Azes Era, which coincides with the Vikram Era in India.
- ✓ Azes-I was succeeded by Azilises, who was succeeded by Azes II.
- ✓ There are some coins issued jointly by Azes-I and Azilises and jointly issued by Azilises and Azes II.
- ✓ Azes II reigned between the 35 and 12 BC and he is considered to be the last Shaka ruler and was lost to Kushanas.
- ✓ Kushanas led to the foundation of Kushana Empire in North West India.

**Bimaran casket**

Bimaran casket was found in Jalalabad, Pakistan between 1833 to 1838. This casket is important because it was found having the coins of Azes II.

- ✓ It features the representations of Buddha surrounded by India deities Brahma and Indra as bodhisattvas.
- ✓ The Buddha is standing posture with bundled hair and wears a dhoti.
- ✓ It was found in a steatite which was having some inscriptions.
- ✓ The Bimaran casket is the First & Earliest known image of the **Standing Buddha**.

**Satrap system**

The pressure from the Parthians (Iranians) and later from Kushanas, the Shakas got divided into 5 branches with their different seats of power at different places in modern Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan. These rulers were known as satraps and Mahasatraps. Thus Shakas are known to have proliferated the Satrpa system, which was directly influenced by the Achaemenid and Seleucid administrations. The satraps were in Kapisa in Afghanistan. Taxila in western Punjab, Mathura, Ujjaini and upper deccan.

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**Kapisa satraps**

- ✓ The Moga inscription or copper plate mentions two names **Liaka Kusulaka** and his son **Patika Kusulaka**.
- ✓ They ruled Chuksha and Pusha Pura.
- ✓ Patika Kusulaka had adopted the title of "*Mahadandapati*".
- ✓ Both of them were satraps under Moga.

**Mathura satraps**

- ✓ First known satraps of Mathura are **Hagana** and **Hagamasa**.
- ✓ One of their successor named "Rajuvula" has been mentioned as Mahasatrapa in the **Mora inscription**, that was found near Mathura.
- ✓ Other satrapas are Sodasha, Sivadatta, Sivaghosha.
- ✓ Please note that it were the coins of the Mathura Satraps which have been engraved with Standing image which resembled Laxmi and Three Elephants.

**Satrapas of Western India**

- ✓ First known satrapa in the Western India was **Bhumaka**, who ruled in Saurashtra.
- ✓ Bhumaka's successor **Nahapana** was an important ruler of the Western satrapas. Some sources say that Nahapana was son of Bhumaka, yet the actual relationship between two is not verified.
- ✓ The coins of Bhumaka mention him as a *Kshakarata Kshatrapa*.
- ✓ The coins show the symbol of the lion-capital.
- ✓ These coins were found in Gujarat and rarely in Malwa which might indicate the area of rule of the Mathura satrapas. It is also known that some of the inscriptions of the Mathura satrapas.
- ✓ Kshatrapas were incised on a lion capital. These show that the two families were alike.
- ✓ Please note that it was Bhumaka, who has been discussed in the Periplus of Erythraean Sea.

**Ujjain Satrapas**

- ✓ Founder of the Ujjaini Satrapa is considered Chastana or Shastana or Chastana.
- ✓ Chastana is considered to have won a battle against Satavahanas.
- ✓ Chastana used 3 scripts viz. Greek, Kharoshthi and Brahmi, in his coin legends.
- ✓ He has been mentioned as **Tiastenes of Ozene (Chastana of Ujjain)** in Ptolemy's Geography.

**Rudradaman-I**

Chastana's son was Jayadaman and grandson was Rudradaman, who was a real hero.

- ✓ Rudradaman was a great figure.
- ✓ His exploits are described in the **Junagarh Rock inscription** dated Shaka Year 72, which means 72+78 = 150 AD. (Christian era +78 = Shaka Era).
- ✓ He represents himself as a Mahasatrapa. The **Junagarh rock inscription** says that he was chosen as a protector by all castes and thus adopted the "Mahasatrapa" title.
- ✓ He defeated Satavahana king "Saatkarni" for two times and thus is considered to be the greatest of the Shaka rulers.

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- ✓ The long rivalry between Rudradaman and Saatkarni was tried to be done away with the family relations (probably rudraman's daughter was given in marriage to the Satavahanas), but this could not stop the enmity between them.
- ✓ In one of the wars, Saatkarni's life was spared because of the family relations.
- ✓ Rudradaman conquered Malwa, Saurashtra, Gujarat, Konkan and Yudehas of Rajputana.
- ✓ Rudradamana is known to be good in knowledge of Grammar.
- ✓ The successors of Rudradaman ruled till the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD and finally lost their power to the Arab Chieftains.

**Yavanesvara** was a Greek writer who translated the Yavanajataka from Greek to Sanskrit. It had influenced astrology in India. This work was done in the times of Rudradaman.

#### Junagarh Rock Inscription

The Junagarh rock inscription is in Sanskrit. It is dated 72 Shaka Era or 150 AD. It credits Rudradaman I with supporting the cultural arts and Sanskrit literature and repairing the dam built by the Mauryans. This refers to the repair of Lake Sudarshana, which was constructed by Mauryas probably to contain the floods.

#### Indo-Parthian Kingdom

Indo-parthian kingdom is also known as **Gondoparid Dynasty**. This dynasty ruled Afghanistan, Pakistan and northern India, during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Parthians were some Iranian tribes and in this tribe, the kings assumed the title **Gondophares**.

#### Gondophares-I

- ✓ Gondophares-I seems to be the first rulers.
- ✓ Since the Parthians lived with Scythians for quite a long time, the features on coins mix up a lot.

#### Gondophares-I and St. Thomas

Some historians have linked Gondophares-I to St. Thomas, also known as *doubting Thomas*, and who was one of the 12 apostles of Jesus.

However, the recent research connects 4th ruler of the Indo-Parthians called Gondophares-sases, with St. Thomas. The church of Kerala has a tradition that St. Thomas came to India to spread the Christianity and established the Ezharappallikal, or "**seven and half churches in India**". Acts of Thomas identifies his second mission in India with a kingdom ruled by King Mahadwa, one of the rulers of a first-century dynasty in southern India. Marco Polo has written that St. Thomas was buried in India.

- ✓ After the Gondophares, the Indo-Parthian rule in India ended and soon Kushanas overpowered them.

### Kushana Empire

As per the Chinese sources, the Kushanas (mentioned in Chinese texts as *Guishuang*) were one of the 5 tribes of Yueh-Chi or Yuezhi.

- ✓ Kushanas were also known as **Tocharians**.
- ✓ They were nomadic tribes and **easternmost speakers of the Indo-European Languages** which were called "Tocharian languages".

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- ✓ Their origin is connected to China and also Central Asia. The modern Xiniang and Gansu of China are places where these tribes thrived before 2nd century AD.
- ✓ They were driven out by **Xiongnu** in around 170 BC.
- ✓ The Construction of the Chinese wall was a big factor of their moving away from the Chinese regions and they moved towards west and south.

### Kujula Kadphises (AD 30-AD 80)

- ✓ Kujula Kadphises was the first Yueh Chi chief who crossed the Hindukush Mountains and laid down the foundation of the Kushana Empire.
- ✓ He established himself in Kabul and Kashmir and is credited for defeat of Last Greek Kings.
- ✓ He adopted the epithet of Dharma-thida.
- ✓ Another epithet adopted by Kujala Kadphises was *Sachdharmathida* which is coterminous with SatyaDharma Sthitha.
- ✓ Both of the above epithets show that he was interested in both Buddhism as well as Shivaite.

### Vima Taktu or Sadashkana (AD 80 -AD 95)

- ✓ Vima Taktu or Sadashkana was / were son/ sons of Kujula Kadphises and it is not sure who among them ruled after Kujula Kadphises or whether this referred to a single person.
- ✓ He is considered to be the predecessor of Vima Kadphises as well as Kanishka-I.
- ✓ He is credited for expansion of Kushana Power into the North West of India.

### Vima Kadphises: (AD 95-AD 127)

- ✓ The Rabatak inscription is written on a rock in the Bactrian language and the Greek script. It was found in 1993 at Rabatak, in Afghanistan.
- ✓ This inscription mentions that Vima Kadphises was son of Vima Takto and the father of Kanishka.
- ✓ He was one of the most important kings of the Kushana Empire who is **best known for issuing large number of Gold Coins.**
- ✓ Vima Kadphises was probably the **first to introduce the Gold Coins in India** in addition to the Copper and Silver coins.
- ✓ **This testifies the prosperity of the Kushana Empire.**
- ✓ Vima is also known to have maintained the Silk Route and trade with all sides including the China, Alexandria, and Roman Empire.

### Kanishka I

Kanishka-I was the most power ruler of the Kushana Empire and is known for his military prowess.

- ✓ His **main capital was Purushpura (Peshawar)** and regional capitals were **Taxila (Pakistan) , Begram (Afghanistan) and Mathura (India).**
- ✓ His date of accession is disputed. However, most sources agree that Kanishka was the founder of the Shaka Era of AD 78.
- ✓ This has been mentioned as Saka kala or *Saka Nripa kala*, probably because he was thought to be a Shaka.
- ✓ Under Kanishka, Kushana Empire reached its climax and it extended from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan to Mathura and Kashmir.
- ✓ As per the Tibetan Sources, Kanishka is considered to have conflicted with the Pataliputra and Saket and **had taken Aśvaghosa, the Buddhist Monk to Purushpura.**

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- ✓ A city Kanishkpur in **Kashmir** is also connected to Kanishka.
- ✓ Kanishka conflicted with Chinese general of King Han Ho-ti, the emperor of Han Dynasty and defeated him in second attempt.
- ✓ He is also known to have subjugated the rulers of Khotan, Yarkand etc. and is considered to have established a great kingdom only after the Mauryas in India.
- ✓ He was a patron of Buddhism and convened the **4th Buddhist council** in the Kundalvana of Kashmir (or may be in Jalandhar) in 78 AD.
- ✓ This council was headed by Vasumitra and it marked the collection of Buddhist texts and engraving of the commentaries on **Copper sheets**.
- ✓ Some scholars are of the view that the **Abhidhama Mahavishasa** was prepared in the 4th Buddhist council.
- ✓ Some of the scholars in the Court of Kanishka were Parsva, Vasumitra, Asvaghosa, Nagarjuna, **Charaka** and Mathara.
- ✓ Charaka has been **called the Court Physician of Kanishka**, though it is very much disputed.
- ✓ Sushruta who wrote Sushruta Samhita has also been connected to Kanishka.
- ✓ It was Kanishka's time when Buddhism got divided between the Hinayana and Mahayana. \

*We know Sushruta, who had written Sushruta Samhita and Charak who had written Charak Samhita. However, both of them were from the **Kushan period**, earlier than the Guptas.*

### Vāsishka

- ✓ Kanishka-I was succeeded by Vāsishka, who had a short reign who is identified with the Vaskushana, Vajheska, Jushka in different sources. Jushkapura near modern Zugar was a city founded by him.

### Kanishka II

✍ Kanishka II was a successor of Vāsishka and is known to have assumed the title of *Kaisar*.

### Kushana Administration and Life

- ✓ The Kings of the Kushana Empire had assumed eloquent titles such as Maharaj, Rajatiraj (King of Kings) etc.
- ✓ One of the successors of Kanishka was Vasudeva who is considered to be a Shiva worshipper and the figures of Shiva is found on his coins had assumed the title *Shaono Shao Vasudeo Kushano*.
- ✓ These titles were adopted from their predecessors Shakas and appeared later in coins of all Kushana Kings and inscriptions.

### Impact of Kushanas on Art and Culture

- ✓ Kushanas are considered to be the great patrons of art.
- ✓ Two schools, viz. Mathura School of Art and Gandhara School of Art flourished in the Kushana Era.
- ✓ Kushana had a cultural influence of the Hellenistic Greeks and this impact is seen these schools of arts as well.

### Mathura School of Art:

- ✓ Mathura School of art is purely **indigenous style**.
- ✓ **Spotted red sandstone** has been used in this school.

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- ✓ In these sculptures, Buddha was depicted as Human and the main theme was Buddha and Bodhisattavas.
- ✓ Both sitting and standing posture of Buddha's statues were carved out in the Mathura school.
- ✓ The Mathura School of Art, noted for its vitality and assimilative character, was a result of the religious zeal of Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism.
- ✓ Mathura art, however, reached its peak during the Gupta period (AD 325 to 600).
- ✓ The **Jina Image** and Indigenous style of Buddhas image was a remarkable features of Mathura art.
- ✓ The Sarvatobhadrika image of 4 Jain Jinas standing back to back belongs to the Mathura school.
- ✓ The Standing Buddhas of the Sravasthi Sarnath and Kausambhi belong to the Mathura School.
- ✓ The sitting Buddha of Mathura School is in padmasana and soles of the feet have been decorated with Tri ratna and Dharmachakra signs.
- ✓ The presences of the **two attendants** by the side of Buddha who hold **Chanwars** is a feature of the **Mathura school and this figure has been later inspired the images of Indian Deities.**

### Gandhara School of Art:

- ✓ Gandhara School was based on Greco-Roman norms encapsulating foreign techniques and an alien spirit. It is also known as **Graeco-Buddhist School of art.**
- ✓ The foreign influence is evident from the sculptures of Buddha in which they bear resemblance to the Greek sculptures.
- ✓ **Grey sandstone** (Blue-grey Mica schist to be precise) is used in Gandhara School of Art. The Bamyam Buddha of Afghanistan were the example of the Gandhara School. The other materials used were Mud, Lime, Stucco. However, Marble was NOT used in Gandhara art. Terracotta was used rarely.
- ✓ **Bimaran Casket has yielded the earliest specimen of the Gandhara Art.**
  - ✓ The Buddha depicted in the Gandhara Art is shown making 4 types of hand gestures and this is a remarkable feature in this art. The gestures are as follows:
    - ✓ Abahaya : Don't fear
    - ✓ Dhyana : meditation
    - ✓ Dharmachakra: a preaching mudra
    - ✓ Bhumispara: Touching the earth.
- ✍ Jalalabad, Hadda, Bamaran, begram & Taxila are the main centers where art pieces of Gandhara School have been found.
- ✍ Both Shakas and Kushanas were patrons of Gandhara School.
- ✍ The head of the Buddha matched very much with Greek God Apollo.

### Amravati School of Art:

- ✓ The third type of sculpture art that Flourished during the Kushana time was Amaravati School of art in the Andhra Pradesh.
- ✓ **White Marble** was used in this art and the themes were Buddha's life and Jatakas tales. The curly hairs of Buddha is a feature that is influenced by the Greeks.
- ✓ In this school, the **Kings, Princes, Palaces** etc. have got prominence.

### Kushana Empire : Some Important Points

- ✓ The great stupa of the Purushpura was not built on direction of the above mentioned kings but was built on direction of Agesilaos.
- ✓ The Cap, Boot and helmet was introduced in India by the central Asian Tribes.

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- ✓ Kushanas (Yueh Chi Tribe) is considered to have conducted the Horse trade by sea with the Koying kingdom of modern Malaysia.
- ✓ Largest number of copper coins was issued by the Kushanas.
- ✓ Charsada and Taxila were the karvan cities in Post Maurya Era.
- ✓ Asvaghosa was the first Dramatist who used Sanskrit in composing the plays.
- ✓ Sindoor (Vermillion) and Bamboo was introduced in India by Chinese traders.
- ✓ India was known as Shen-tu in the early Chinese texts.
- ✓ The works of Aśvaghosa were Buddhacharita, Mahalankara, Saundaranandakavya (Saudarananda), Chandistrottra, Vajrasuchi.
- ✓ Sun God has been depicted on the coins of **Kanishka-1** and **Vāsishka**
- ✓ Kujala Kadphises and Kanishka-I adopted and patronized the Buddhism, but Vima Kadphises adopted Shaivism and was a Shiva Devotee.
- ✓ The 4 important schools of Jainism viz. Kottaka, Varana, Aryayudikiya and vesavadiya have been mentioned in the Epigraphic Records of the Kushana Period.

### Satavahana Empire

Satavahana followed the Mauryas in Deccan. Satavahana dynasty ruled from Pune in Maharashtra to Coastal Andhra Pradesh in the second century BC onwards. This dynasty was built up on the ruins of the Maurya Empire and around 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, they were the most prominent in the Modern Andhra Pradesh Region.

- ✓ They have been mentioned as Sātavāhanas, Sātakarnīs, Andhras and Andhrabhṛityas in the Puranas and Coins.
- ✓ Most of the information about the Satavahana kings is interwoven with myths and the information has been collected by a large number of coins minted in **Lead, Silver and an alloy of copper**.
- ✓ The origin of Satavahanas is a mystery but they are considered to be Brahmins and most kings use the names of their mothers with their names.
- ✓ The coins issued by Satavahanas **had Bilingual legends**. The name of the Kings was mentioned in Prakrit as well as some south Indian Language.
- ✓ Satavahana Kings promoted Buddhism. Nagarjunkonda and Amaravati I became important Buddhist centers during the Satavahana Era.

#### Simuka

- ✓ Simuka was the founder of the Satavahana Dynasty and he is believed to have destroyed the Shunga Power.
- ✓ He did so with the aid of the **Rathikas and Bhojakas**.
- ✓ He reigned for around 23 years and was beheaded by his brother Kanha, who succeeded him.

#### Kanha:

- ✓ Kanha was the second ruler of the Satavahana Dynasty. He extended the empire to further south. He was succeeded by Simuka's son Satkarni-I.

#### Satkarni-I

- ✓ Satkarni-I or **Sri Satkarni** was son of Simuka and was a great ruler among the Early Satavahanas.
- ✓ **Naganika** was the name of his queen and he has been described as the **Lord of Dakshinpatha**.
- ✓ Kanha extended the empire to further south, Malwa and Narmada valley.

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- ✓ He performed Ashvamedha Yajna and Rajsuya Yajna.

### Satkarni II:

- ✓ Satkarni II was the longest ruling king of the Satavahana Dynasty and date of his accession is considered to be 166 BC.
- ✓ He has been mentioned in the **Hathigumpha inscription of the Kharvela**, in which he is depicted as enemy of Kharvela.
- ✓ In this inscription, it is mentioned that Kharvela disregarded Satkarni and dispatched to the western regions an army of strong cavalry.
- ✓ Satkarni II was succeeded by Lamobodara followed by Apilaka and some other rulers like Hala.

### Hala:

- ✓ Hala was one more great king of the Satavahanas who was **17th King** of the Satavahana line.
- ✓ He had compiled the "**Gatha saptasati**" or **Gaha Sattasai** which mainly a text on love theme. **Gatha saptasati** is in Prakrit.
- ✓ He is also mentioned in another text Lilavati.
- ✓ These rulers were small rulers only and are considered to be under the suzerainty of Kanva. The expansion of the Satavahanas was checked just after Satkarni II. The Shakas pushed them southwards and the western Deccan was occupied by the **Shaka King Nahapana**.

### Gautamiputra Satkarni (Reign 78-102 AD)

- ✓ The lost power of Satavahana was revived by Gautamiputra Satkarni who is described as the **Destroyer of the Shaka, Pahalava and Yavana Power**.
- ✓ Gautamiputra Satkarni is known to have made a total and sharp recovery of the Satavahanas.
- ✓ His achievements have been mentioned in the Nasik Inscription, by his mother Gautami.
- ✓ His empire extended from Eastern Malwa, Western Malwa, Narmada Valley, Vidarbha, Western Rajputana, Saurashtra and even Kalinga.
- ✓ **Nasik Prasasti** describes Gautamiputra as the ruler of the *Aparanta, Anupa, Saurashtra, Kukura, Akara, and Avanti*.
- ✓ In south his reign was up to Kanchi in South.
- ✓ He assumed the title of raja-raja and Maharaja.

After Gautamiputra Satkarni, the Puranic inscription name other Satavahanas such as Pulumayi, Sri Satkarni, Siva Sri, Sivaskanda Satkarni, Madhariputra Sakasena, Sri Yajna Satkarni. One more important is Vasithiputra Pulumayi-II.

### Pulumayi-II

- ✓ Pulumayi-II is known as Vasithiputra or Vashishthi Putra Satkarni.
- ✓ He was son of Gautamiputra Satkarni and was an efficient king like his father.
- ✓ He extended the power of Satavahanas to further south and it was now extended up to Bellary district of Modern Karnataka.
- ✓ The Girnar Inscription of Rudradaman mentions that Rudradaman defeated the Dakshinapathpati Satkarni twice, but did not kill him because of the close family relationship. This has been corroborated as "that Pulumayi-II was married to daughter of Rudradaman. (However, there is confusion in this)
- ✓ Pulumayi-II has been described in largest number of inscription and this proves that he had a vast empire.

-: About this document:-

- ✓ In the evening of Pulumayi-II 's life, the **Shakas revived under Chastana.**

The last Satavahana Ruler was Pulumayi-IV. Not many details have been found about him except that he built a tank in Vepura.

### The Legacy of Satavahana Kings

- ✓ Satavahanas are considered to be the **flag bearers of Aryanism to Deccan.**
- ✓ They were the **first Native Indians** who had issued the coins with portraits of their kings.
- ✓ All the coins of Satavahanas used **Prakrit dialect** and also on backside the southern language (Telugu or Kannada). Prakrit seems to be the official language of Satavahanas.
- ✓ The Satavahanas worshipped the Hindu Deities such as Rama, Krishna, Vasudeva etc. but they also patronized the Buddhism. The Nagarjunkonda and Amaravati in Maharashtra became the important centers of Buddhism during the reign of Satavahanas and their successors.
- ✓ Satavahana Built many Chaitya and Viharas. Most of them were rock cut from the solid rock in North Western Deccan and Maharashtra. The Karle Chaitya of 1<sup>st</sup> century BC is one of the most important Chaitya. The Viharas of the 1 century AD at Nasik bear the inscription of the Gautami Putra Satkarni and Nahapana.
- ✓ The Amaravati Stupa was built in the reign of Satavahanas.

### Satavahanas: Administration, Economy and Life

Satavahanas administration was simple and inspired by the Mauryas. The King was the protector of the religion and had divine attributes. He possessed the qualities of ancient Gods. The Kingdom was divided into the Janpadas and subdivided into Aharas.

- ✓ The ruler of each Ahara was an Amatya.

Ahara was divided into Grama which was under the headmen called Gamika.

- ✎ Two feudatories viz. *Mahasenapati* and *Mahataravalara* were created in the Satavahana Dynasty.
- ✎ King was called Rajan or Raja and he had the right to mint the coins.
- ✎ A Senapati was appointed as the provincial governor.
- ✎ **Gandhika** have been mentioned as the traders of perfume and they were prosperous.
- ✎ **Gautamiputra Satkarni is claimed to have re-established the four fold Varna System and this**
- ✎ The most important features of the state formation under Satavahanas were:
  - It was a result of a continuous process.
  - It was influenced by Mauryan Administration
  - It was influenced by North India
- ✎ **Uddiyan was an important wool making center.**
- ✎ Gaulmikas were administrators of the rural areas under the Satavahanas.

### Some More Memorable Points about Satavahana:

- ✎ Satavahanas ruled in Modern Andhra Pradesh , but most of the inscriptions of Satavahanas have been found in Maharashtra.
- ✎ **Nanaghat Inscription of Naganika** (wife of Satkarni-I) has been found near Pune (District).
- ✎ The Two cave inscriptions found at Nasik are of Gautamiputra Satkarni. At Nasik, Inscription of Pulumayi II has been found.

-: About this document:-

- ✍ The Karle cave inscription is of Vashishtiputra Pulumayi II.
- ✍ The office of the **Amatya** appears or the first time in the Satavahana inscriptions.

### **Gupta Empire**

The one century gap between the extinction of Kushana & Satavahanas (around 220-230 AD), till the rise of the Imperial Gupta Dynasty a century later, is known to be one of the darkest in the whole of history of India as

After the disintegration of the Mauryas, the Kushanas kept the North united and Satavahanas kept the Deccan united. Further south there were three Cheras, Pandyas and Cholas.

- ✓ In north, the Malvas, Yaudheyas, Kunidas etc. contributed to the extinction of Kushanas and in Deccan, the Vakatas and Ikshwaku contributed to the death of Satavahana dynasty.

This dark period of one century was followed by a dawn of classical age which is also known as the Golden Age of Indian History.

✓ The classical age refers to the period between 320 AD to 550 AD when India was united again under the Gupta Dynasty. This period marks the crystallization of Hindu Culture and known for developments in all walks of life including the science, technology, engineering, art, dialectic, literature, logic, mathematics, astronomy, religion and philosophy.

- ✓ **The founder of this dynasty was Sri Gupta.** But there were other early Guptas mentioned in many inscriptions such as **Shiva Gupta in Nasik Inscription** and **Puru Gupta in Karle Inscription**. The origin of Gupta is shrouded in mystery.

#### **Origin of Guptas:**

Though, the earlier origins of the family of the Guptas are not traceable, yet it is now almost accepted that the Gupta Kings were of a Gotra known as **Dharana**. It is stated in the **Poona Copper Plate Inscription of Prabhavtigpta**. Prabhavtigpta was a Vaktaka queen who was daughter of Chandra Gupta II and his wife Kubernaga, who was from the Naga family. The views of the different scholars regarding the origin of the Guptas have been summarized in the following table:

| Scholar                          | View   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| A.S. Altekar                     | Gupta were vaishyas as the ancient texts mention that the surname ending with Gupta were Vaishyas. |
| Dr. H C Raichaudhury             | Guptas were Brahmins   |
| R C Tripathi                     | Guptas were Brahmins   |
| Dr. V Upadhyaya, Hira Chand Ojha | Guptas were Kshatriyas   |
| K P Jayaswal & Dasharatha Sharma | Guptas were Jats and same Gotra still exists in Rajasthan  |
| R C Mazumdar                     | Guptas were from Ikshwaku Clan   |
| D. R. Regmi                      | They are closely related to the Abhira Kings of Nepal.   |

- ✓ The Kshatriya Origin of the Guptas has been maintained on the account that **Chandragupta II wedded to a princess named Kumara Devi, who belonged to an ancient Licchhavi clan.**
- ✓ The Licchhavi clan was celebrated during the period of Bimbisara and Ajatshatru but for next 9 centuries the history is lost.
- ✓ So, it is the marriage of Kumaradevi with the Chandragupta II, which has been the basis of arguments that Guptas were Kshatriyas.

#### **Sri Gupta (240-280 AD)**

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- ✓ Sri Gupta was the founder of the Gupta dynasty.
- ✓ The details about the Sri-Gupta, the first ruler of the Gupta Dynasty come from the accounts of ITsing who came to India in around 690 AD.
- ✓ Sri Gupta has been identified with **Che-li-ki-to** of ITsing, who as per his details, had built a temple 500 years back from his visit for Chinese Pilgrims.
- ✓ Some of the scholars are of the view that Sri-Gupta was a feudatory of the Kushanas.

**Ghatotkacha: (c. 280-319 A.D.)**

- ✓ Ghatotkacha was son of Sri Gupta and he succeeded him after his death.
- ✓ Not many details are available about Ghatotkacha.

**Chandragupta I (c. 319-335 AD)**

- ✓ Chandragupta-I was son of Ghatotkacha and is considered to be the real founder of Gupta Empire.
- ✓ He was most powerful monarch and assumed the title of *Maharajadhiraj*. The earlier kings were given the titles Maharaja only.
- ✓ Chandragupta –I can be called the first independent ruler of the Gupta Dynasty.
- ✓ He was married to Licchhavi princess Kumara Devi and this helped him to get influence and extend the dominion. Samudragupta was born of this dominion.
- ✓ This is proved by the inscriptions of Samudragupta, in which he proudly described himself as Licchavidauhitra, but not as Guptaputra.

**Gupta Era**

**Chandragupta-I** ascended to the throne in 319-320 AD. The Valabhi Era of Gujarat has been identified coterminous with the Gupta Era. The Valabhi kings were feudatories of the Guptas and they might have used it as era of their overlords. Dr. Fleet has treated with this at length and has established that beginning of this era is Saka era 242, which means  $242 + 78 = 320$  AD. This coincides with the Nepal Era of Jaydev-I that is 320 AD.

The first year of the Gupta Era may be taken as **February 26, 320 AD to March 13, 321 AD**, of which the first date is coronation of Chandragupta.

**Samudragupta: (335-380 AD)**

- ✓ Samudragupta was son of Chandragupta –I and Kumaradevi and he ascended the throne in 335 AD.
- ✓ Before his death, probably 4 or 5 years back, Chandragupta-I had publicly announced that Samudragupta would be his heir apparent and thus abdicated the throne in his favor. This was justified by the killer instincts of Samudragupta who displayed a greater degree of skill in the arts of both peace and war.
- ✓ But this nomination was perhaps not liked by many and coins of an obscure prince **Kacha** say that there was some trouble over the succession.
- ✓ Samudragupta was the greatest ruler of the Gupta Dynasty and ruled till around 380 AD.
- ✓ The western scholars equate him with Napoleon and call him **Indian Napoleon** due to the extensive military conquests.
- ✓ The **Allahabad pillar Inscription of Samudra Gupta (Prayag Prasasti)** was composed by his court poet and minister **Harisena**. **The Pillar was an Asokan Pillar erected by Asoka 6 century before him.**
- ✓ This Inscription is a eulogy of Samudragupta and mentions about the conquests of Samudragupta and boundaries of the Gupta Empire.
- ✓ As per this inscription, Samudragupta defeated 9 kings in North, 12 Kings in South, reduced all the **Atavika states** to vassalage. It also mentions that more than five states in the frontier states surrendered and accepted his suzerainty.

-: About this document:-

- ✓ He had close contact with the kingdom of Ceylon and South East Asian colonies.
- ✓ The eulogy of Harisena describes him as hero of 100 battles.
- ✓ He performed Ashvamedha Yajna, this has been testified by a seal of Samudragupta bearing a Horse. **This was probably first Ashvamedha after Pushyamitra Shunga.**
- ✓ **He is depicted in his coins playing Veena.**
- ✓ He allowed the king of Ceylon to build a monastery at Bodhgaya.
- ✓ Another term used by Harisena for him is **Kaviraja**, which testified him as a patron of poetic arts and a poet himself.
- ✓ The **title of Vikramanka** was assumed by Samudragupta.
- ✓ The reign of Samudragupta was from Brahmaputra to Chambal and from Himalaya to Narmada in south and he subdued the Shakas and Kushanas.
- ✓ The dominion under the direct government of Samudragupta in the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century was thus comprised of all the populous and fertile areas of the Northern India.
- ✓ He established diplomatic relations with the Kushana Kings of Gandhar and Kabul and also the Buddhist king of Ceylon.
- ✓ In 330 AD, **Meghavarna, the Buddhist King of Ceylon** had sent two monks, one of whose was his brother to visit a monastery built by Asoka. But they got scant hospitality and returned with complaints. Later, Meghavarna sent a mission laden with gems and gifts to Samudragupta with a request to built a monastery on the Indian Soil. The flattered Samudragupta gave permission.
- ✓ This monastery was built near the Bodhi Tree at Bodh Gaya. The purpose was recorded in a copper plate and it described the monastery with a height of 3 stories and containing 6 halls.
- ✓ **When Huen Tsang visited it he saw it occupied by Thousands of Monks** and it extended ample hospitality to visiting monks.

### Shaka embassy to Samudragupta:

The Saka dynasty which was overthrown in 395 had been originally founded in the first century by a chief named **Bhumaka**. Bhumaka was followed by Nahapana and Nahapana was destroyed by an Andhra King **Gautamiputra Satkarni in 125 AD**. However, the local government fell into the hands of **Chastana and his descendants**. In the Middle of the second century, Satrap Rudradaman who was grandson of Chastana defeated his Andhra Rival **Vashishtiputra Satakarni**, who was eventually married to his daughter. Rudradaman firmly established his power in west (Malwa, Kutch, Sindh, Konkan and other parts). The capital of Chastana and his descendants was **Ujjain**, which was one of the important commercial centers. Samudragupta was not able to undertake the conquest of the west and had received an embassy from Rudrasena, descendant of Rudradaman. But the rivalry did not ended and Chandragupta II, son of Samudragupta finally crushed his western rivals.

### Chandragupta-II (Chandragupta Vikramaditya)

**Chandragupta II, the great** was son of Samudragupta and Datta Devi. Not much is known about the character but the corroborated facts about his life prove that he was a strong, vigorous ruler and was well qualified to govern and extend his empire.

- ✓ Before Chandragupta II, his elder brother Ramagupta ascended the throne after death of Samudragupta. Through, not many details about Ramagupta are available; the drama **Devichandraguptam of Vishakhadatta** gives an account that at Shringararupakam, Ramagupta was badly defeated by a Saka chieftain.
- ✓ To secure the people, he agreed to surrender his queen Druvadevi to the Sakas.

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- ✓ This was objected by Chandragupta II and, Chandragupta-II in disguise of queen Druvadevi entered enemy's camp and killed the Saka king to restore the huge empire, queen and the dynasty.
- ✓ Ramagupta is portrayed in this drama as a Coward king and also impotent.
- ✓ Chandragupta II killed his brother and also married to his widow, Druvadevi.

#### Chandragupta II and Mahrauli Inscription.

The Mahrauli Iron Pillar was originally placed on a hill near the Beas and was brought to Delhi by a King of Delhi <sup>the Gupta</sup> Empire by Radhakumud Mookerji. This pillar credits Chandragupta with the following:

1. Conquest of the Vanga Countries by his battling alone against the confederacy of the enemies united against him.
2. Conquest of Vahlakas in a fight that ran across **seven mouths of Sindhu**.
3. Spread his fame to southern seas.
4. Attained *Ekadhirajyam* (United Kingdom) by prowess of his arms.

This pillar was established by Chandragupta as *Vishnupada* in the honor of Lord Vishnu.

- ✓ The above description in the text box makes it clear that the Chandragupta reign covered a wide territory whose northern limit was Vahlakas Country, Southern Limit was the Ocean, Western Limit was the Mouth of Indus and Eastern Limit was Vanga.
- ✓ Marriage alliances and conquests were one of the ways of Chandragupta II to extend his power and kingdom.
- ✓ His daughter Prabhavati was married to a Vaktaka prince. The prince died in due course and his young son became the ruler but the virtual ruler was Prabhavati.
- ✓ This helped Chandragupta II to exercise indirect rule over the Vaktataka Kingdom also.
- ✓ **The most important event of Chandragupta II's reign was conquest of Sakas. The Saka chieftain Rudrasena III was destroyed by him and his kingdom was annexed by Chandragupta.**
- ✓ His victory over Malwa helped in prosperity of the Malwa region and Ujjain became a commercial hub. Some scholars call Ujjain his second capital.
- ✓ Chinese traveler Fa Hien had visited India during the time of Chandragupta II
- ✓ The court of Chandragupta was adorned by numerous scholars and artists.

#### Fa Hien's visit during Vikramaditya reign

Pataliputra was considerably neglected by the warrior kings like Samudragupta and Vikramaditya, but it continued to be a magnificent and populous city though out the reign of Chandragupta II.

- ✓ Later Patliputra was reduced to reigns in the wake of the Hun invasions in the 6th century.
- ✓ However, Pataliputra was rebuilt and revived by **Shershah Suri** as today's Patna.

The accounts of Fa Hien give a contemporary account of the administration of Chandragupta Vikramaditya. Fa Hien (337 – ca. 422 AD) was so much absorbed in his quest for Buddhist books and legends and miracles that he could not mention the name of the mighty monarch in whose rule he lived for 6 years. The picture he depicted cannot solve all the queries of the historians of today yet, they give a vivid picture of the state of the country.

- 👉 At Pataliputra he saw and was impressed by Asoka's palace so it is sure that Asoka's palace was in existence even in the Gupta Era.
- 👉 He also describes about 1 stupa and 2 monasteries nearby, also ascribed to Asoka.

#### -: About this document:-

- 👉 He mentioned about 600-700 monks living there and learning their lectures from teachers from all quarters.
- 👉 He mentions that towns of Magadha were largest in the area of Gangetic Plains and he calls it central India.
- 👉 He mentions that there were a lot of charitable institutions, rest houses, and there was an excellent Free Hospital in the Capital which was endowed by benevolent citizens. The poor and helpless patients suffering from all kinds of illnesses were taken care of and doctors attended them and they were given food and medicine as per their wants.
- 👉 This depiction proves **the earliest foundation of Charity and this charity was first of its kind in the word which spoke of characters of the citizens of the Gupta Era.**
- 👉 India's is Great as far as Charity was concerned and as we are told, **earliest charitable hospital in Europe or anywhere else in the word was opened in 10th century.**
- 👉 Fa Hien further explains that the population of the western part (Malwa) lived happily and did not worry. He mentions that they don't have to register their household and not to have attend any magistrate. People did not lock their houses.
- 👉 They were not bound by the passports and those who were willing to say may stay and those willing to go may go...
- 👉 Fa Hien further mentions that no one kills the living things, or drinks wine or eats Onion or garlic. They don't keep pigs and fowls and there is no dealing of cattle and there are no butchers. All these were done only by *Chandals*.
- 👉 Fa Hien mentions about the *Chandala*, who dwelt apart and they were required to keep a piece of wood as a warning of their approach so that other folk might not get polluted. Chandals were the only offenders of Dharma, as per Fa Hien.
- 👉 About administration, Fa Hien mentions that the authorities interfered as little as possible with the subject and they were left free to prosper and grow rich in their own way.
- 👉 Fa Hien studied Sanskrit for 3 years at Pataliputra and two years at the **Port of Tamralipti** without let or hindrance. The Roads were clear and safe for the passengers.
- 👉 The accounts of Fa Hien give a clear indication that India was probably never governed better than the era of Chandragupta Vikramaditya.
- 👉 The prosperity of the Indians and tranquility of the empire have been testified by the account of Fa-Hien and his unobstructed itinerary all around gives the details about the **Golden Era of Mother India.**

### 9 Gems (Navratnas) of Chandragupta Vikramaditya

Chandragupta II was known for his deep interest in art and culture and his court was adorned by 9 gems or **Navratna**. The various fields of these 9 gems prove that Chandragupta gave patronage to arts and literature. Brief description about the 9 Ratnas is as follows

1. **Amarsimha:** Amarsimha was a Sanskrit lexicographer and a poet and his **Amarkosha** is a vocabulary of Sanskrit roots, homonyms and synonyms. It is also called Trikanda as it has 3 parts viz. Kanda 1, Kanda 2 and Kanda 3. It has 10 thousand words in it.
2. **Dhanvantri:** Dhanvantri was a great Physician.
3. **Harisena:** Harisena is known to have composed the Prayag Prasasti or **Allahabad Pillar Inscription**. The title of this inscription of Kavya, but it has both prose and verse. The whole poem is in one sentence including first 8 stanzas of poetry and a long sentence and a concluding stanza. Harisena in his old age was in the court of Chandragupta and describes him as Noble, and asks him "You Protect all this earth".

-: About this document:-

*āryo hīty upaguhya bhāvapiçunair utkarnitai romabhih  
sabhyeşucchvasiteşu tulyakulajamlānānanodvikşitah  
snehavyālulitena bāşpagurunā tattvekşinā cakşuşā  
yah pitrābhīhito nirīkşya nikhilām pāhy evam urvīm iti.*

4. **Kalidasa:** Kalidasa is the immortal poet and playwright of India and a peerless genius whose works became famous worldwide in modern world. Translation of Kalidasa's works in numerous Indian and Foreign Languages have spread his fame all of the word and now he ranks among the top poets of all times.
  - ✓ It was the German translation of his famous Play *Abhijanan-Shakuntalam*, by **Gothe**, based upon the English translation of William Jones that inspired him to write a verse in German.
  - ✓ Rabindranath Tagore, not only propagated the works of Kalidasa but also expounded their meanings and philosophy that made him an immortal poet dramatists.
5. **Kahapanaka:** Kahapanaka was an astrologer. Not many details about him are found.
6. **Sanku:** Sanku was in the field of Architecture.
7. **Varahamihira:** Varahamihira was an astronomer, mathematician and astrologer and he lived in Ujjain. His main work is Panchasiddhantaka which is now lost. Another work is **Brihat-Samhita** which is an encyclopedia of astrology, planetary movements, eclipses, rainfall, clouds, architecture, growth of crops, manufacture of perfume, matrimony, domestic relations, gems, pearls, and rituals in 106 chapters
8. **Vararuchi:** Vararuchi is the name of another gem of Chandragupta Vikramaditya who was a grammarian and Sanskrit scholar. **Some historians have identified him with Katyayana.** Vararuchi is said to be the author of **Prakrit Prakasha** which is first Grammar of Prakrit Language.
9. **Vetalbhatta:** Vetalbhatta was a magician.

### Kumaragupta –I (415-455 AD)

Chandragupta II was succeeded by his son Kumaragupta I or **Mahendraditya**. The period assigned to him is 415-455 AD and his reign spanned for a long period of 40 years. He was an able ruler and there is no doubt that his empire suffered no diminution but extended.

Like his grandfather, he celebrated the horse sacrifice (Ashvamedha) as an assertion to his paramount supremacy.

The records furnish that at the close of his reign, Kumaragupta's dominion suffered severely from the invasion of Huna Hordes, all over North India. He was also disturbed by the invaders from South India.

- ☞ He issued coins with images of killing a lion
- ☞ He also issued a coin which bear the picture of Kartikeya.

### Skandagupta: (455-467 AD)

Kumaragupta –I was succeeded by Skandagupta.

- ☞ Skandagupta was the last powerful king of the Gupta Empire.

He assumed the title of Vikramaditya, Devraj and Sakapan and subdued the invaders (Pushyamitras and Hunas) and brought back the peace and glory of his father. He faced invasion of White Huns, the central Asian tribes. He issued 4 types of Gold coins and 4 types of Silver coin.

- ☞ **Bhitari Inscription** details about the prowess of Skandagupta.
- ☞ After his death in 467 AD, the Gupta empire declined rapidly.

-: About this document:-

## Gupta Life

### Caste System:

- ✓ As Fa Hien mentions that Chandals lived at the outskirts of the society in miserable conditions and were segregated from the society proved that in Gupta Era the caste system had crystalized and became very rigid with Brahmins getting the top position in the society.

### International Trade:

- ✓ Gupta has a flourishing Roman Trade. The Trade contacts developed during the Kushana Period continued and Chandragupta II's conquest in western India further added to this trade. The people were prosperous and they were free to grow and flourish.
- ✓ The important port towns were **Brigukachchaha, Kalyana & Sind**, which were bulk trade centers with Romans.
- ✓ Ujjain had become a major commercial center and it was linked to southern and northern India. Nasik, Paithan, Pataliputra, Benares were other major trade centers.
- ✓ Trade was badly affected by the Huna Invasions. Silk, Leather goods, Fur, Iron Products, Ivory, pearl, Spices and Indigo were major export items. The Port of Tamralipti was a good source of Trade with East Asia. Most of the commodities were taxed One Fifth of the value as a toll in international Trade.

### Agriculture:

- ✓ Agriculture was the main occupation in Gupta empire and there was no governmental interference. The land was fertile and means of irrigation were simple.

### Occupation:

- ✓ Gupta period had many cloth centers and silk industry witnessed a significant development during this period.
- ✓ The Mandsoor Inscriptions gives account that Gupta people were helped to a great extent for the growth of Silk Industry.
- ✓ Gold, silver and Copper was used in making ornaments and issuing coins. The Gold coins show the pomp, power and prosperity of the empire.
- ✓ The Coins of Samudragupta and Kumaragupta issued after the Ashvamedha depict the horse tied to a Yupa-stambha.
- ✓ The coins of Chandragupta bear Garuda preying asnake.

### Guild System:

- ✓ In ancient history, the glimpses of guild systems are seen in **Jatakas Tales** which refer to organizations of artisans and trader's which have high place in the society.
- ✓ In Gupta Era, the activities of Guilds were increased and these activities are recorded in various literature, inscription, clay seals etc.
- ✓ There is a mention of **Guild of architects in Raghuvamsa.**
- ✓ The **Indore Copper plate** inscription mentions about a **guild of oilmen.**
- ✓ The **Mandsoor Inscription** mentions the guild of silk weavers.
- ✓ The guild system declined after the Gupta Period.

-: About this document:-

**Gupta Administration**

- ✓ There was an efficient administration established in the Gupta Empire. All powers were centered in the Kings but, the rulers did not interfere in the administrations of those regions which accepted their suzerainty. Elaborate administration system was evolved in the regions which were under the direct control of the Gupta Kings.
- ✓ The element of divinity was attached to the kings and they were looked as Gods and God's representatives.
- ✓ The Kings adopted high sounding titles such as Maharajadhiraj, Paramabhattacharaka, Chakravarti, Paramesvara etc. The King was assisted by a council of Ministers. The minister's office was almost hereditary. The supreme judicial power was invested in the King but the judicial functions were carried out by the *Mahadandnayaka*.
- ✓ Two new classes **Sandhivigrahika (Minister of War and Peace)** and **Kumaramatyas (Offices of the crown Prince)** were created by the Gupta Kings.
- ✓ For the first time, Civil and criminal crimes were demarcated in Gupta Era.

The following table presents the list of important officials:

| Official                                      | Functions                                  |
|---|--|
| <i>Mahabaladhikrita</i>                       | Commander in Chief                         |
| <i>Mahadandnayaka</i>                         | Chief Justice                              |
| <i>Mahapratihar</i>                           | Maintainance of Royal Palaces              |
| <i>Mahasandhivigrahika or Sandhivigrahaka</i> | War and Peace                              |
| <i>Dandpashika</i>                            | Head of Police department                  |
| <i>Bhadagaradhikreta</i>                      | Royal Treasury                             |
| <i>Vinaysthitisansthapaka</i>                 | Education Department                       |
| <i>Sarvadyaksha</i>                           | Inspector of all central departments       |
| <i>Mahashwapati</i>                           | Cavalary                                   |
| <i>Mahamahipalapati</i>                       | Elephants                                  |
| <i>Vinayapura</i>                             | One who represented guests to King's court |
| <i>Yuktapurusha</i>                           | Accounts of war booty                      |
| <i>Khadyapakika</i>                           | Royal Kitchen                              |
| <i>Ranbhandagarika</i>                        | Arms and ammunitions stores                |
| <i>Mahanarpati</i>                            | Infantry                                   |

- ✓ The empire was divided into a number of provinces which were called **Bhuktis**.
- ✓ Each **Bhukti** was further divided into **Vishaya** or **Bhoga** which was also known as **Adhithana or Pattana**.
- ✓ The smaller level was *Vithi* which referred to a Tehsil.
- ✓ A Bhukti was placed under Uparaka and Vishaya under **Vishayapati**.
- ✓ The village level disputes were solved by the village headmen called *gramapati* or *gramadyaksha* and this was the smallest administration unit. **Kutumbis** and **Mahattaras** are other words used for similar village level officers.
- ✓ Chiefs of the Guilds were called **Nagarseths** who represented the Guild in the urban trading circles.
- ✓ Communities of the Traders were represented by the
- ✓ The trading communities were also represented by the **Sarthavaha**. The crafting communities (artisans) were represented by the **Prathamakulika** and Government official community was represented by **Prathamakayastha**.

-: About this document:-

- ✓ **Pustapala** were junior (district level) record officers.
- ✓ The terms **Nivartana, Kulyavapa and Dronavapa** were used for Land measurements.
- ✓ The **Araghatta or Ghati Yantras** were the instruments of irrigation which were known earlier and now became more popular in Gupta Era.

### The Later Guptas

Skandagupta Vikramaditya is considered to be the last **great** Gupta Ruler. He ascended to the throne on 455 AD and is known to have crushed the White Huna Invasion in the first or early years of his reign itself.

- ✓ 12 year reign till his death in 467 AD was filled with wars with Hunas and this led to weakening the economy of his empire which is evident from the **low quality of Coins issued during his** and his successor's reigns.
- ✓ The white Hunas invaded from the north western sides in around 455 AD. Skandagupta was the mature years and ripe experience and inflicted upon those barbarians and gave them such as decisive defeat that India was saved for some two decades.
- ✓ However, in 465 a fresh swarm of nomads again poured across the frontiers and is known to have occupied the Gandhara. After death of Skandagupta in 467 AD there were repeated attacks on the heart of the dominions and the empire succumbed to the repeated attacks of the foreigners.

### Successors of Skandagupta

Who was successor of Skandagupta is a mystery. The genealogy has been corroborated from four royal seals from Nalanda and one from Bhitari that Purugupta succeeded Skandagupta. When Skandagupta passed away, the empire perished but the dynasty remained. It is thought the Skandagupta could not leave any male capable heir and was succeeded by his half brother Purugupta, who was son of Kumaragupta I and Queen Ananda. The later kings / princes were Kumaragupta III, Buddhagupta and Narsihmgupta.

- ✓ In the western provinces of Malwa, the names of rajas Buddhagupta and Bhanugupta are found. They cover the period of around 484 to 510 AD. The death of Buddhagupta is thought to have occurred in around 495 AD.
- ✓ It was followed by the accelerated feudalization of the state structure, and the later of these two princes (or Kings) occupy a dependent position probably subordinate to the Huna Chieftains.

### The Huna Invasions

The Hunas had poured down from the steppes of Central Asia through the Northwestern passes and devastated the smiling cities of India. These central Asian hordes were in 4 cardinal directions they were known as follows:

1. Northern Huna - **Black Huna**
2. Southern Huna - **Red Huna**
3. Eastern Huna - **Celestial Hunas**
4. Western Hunas - **White Hunas.**

The nomad Mongol tribes known as Huns have found first mention in the Bhishma parva of Mahabhart. As per Dr V. A. Smith, the sholkas that mention the Hunas must have been placed after editing in 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. In Mahabhart these tribes have been mentioned as *Malechhas* and *Malechhas* included several tribes such as *Sakas, Yavanas, Savaras, Paundras and Kiratas, Khasas, Chivukas, Pulindas, Chinas etc.*

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- ✓ The Hunas moved westwards and divided into two major streams. One directed towards the valley of Oxus (today known as Amu Darya, a boundary between Iran and Central Asia and in Indian texts known as Vaksu) and another towards Volga River (Westwards towards Europe).
- ✓ The latter are thought to have poured into Eastern Europe and forced the Goths to the south and causing the Gothic wars, indirectly.
- ✓ The land between Volga and Danube was filled by Hunas but they could not make full use of their advantageous position. The Hunic Empire in Europe was finished within 20 years by a fresh swarm of barbarians from Northern Asia.

However, the Asiatic domain of the Hunas lasted a bit longer. In Persia (Iran), the former are known to have attacked the Sassanid King of Persia, **Peroz I** and captured him. **Peroz I** was killed in the hands of Hunas and these Hunas assailed the Kushan Kingdom of Kabul and then from there poured into India.

- ✓ Around 500 AD, Hunas under a chieftain **Ramanila** is known to have conquered Gandhara. About **Ramanila**, we know only through his coins.
- ✓ Later, the Huna Power in Punjab regions is known to have consolidated under **Toramana**.

#### Toramana : The early white Huna King

- ✓ We know about the 6th century **White Huna King Toramana** from **Kura Inscription** in which his name is mentioned as **Rajadhiraja Maharaja Toramana Shahi Jaula**.
- ✓ He has also been referred in Rajtarangini.
- ✓ The silver coins of Toramana are very much similar to the Gupta Kings.

It is thought that Toramana invaded the Gupta Empire with the help of a scion of the Gupta family called Harigupta. Moreover, the feudal structure of the administration was a facilitating factor for Huna's conquest. Toramana acquired the Malwa region by 510 AD and the local prince Bhanugupta was unable check him.

- ✓ Toramana was succeeded by Mihirkula, his son.

#### Mihirkula: The Huna Tyrant

- ✓ Mihirkula means "one from the Sun Clan", In Persian Mihirkula refers to *Mehr Gul* that also refers to Sun Flower.
- ✓ Mihirkula came to power in 510 AD and was an **antibuddhist**, known for his cruelty against the Buddhists.
- ✓ He destroyed the temples and monasteries and was tyrannical to the Buddhists.
- ✓ His reign extended up to Gwalior.
- ✓ His contemporary Gupta King was Narsimhgupta Baladityaraja II.

Narsimhgupta Baladityaraja II is known to have a devout Buddhist. He fought with Mihirkula and was supported by **Yasodharman of Malwa** in this fight. Mihirkula was defeated, captured by Yasodharman but was allowed to take refuge in Kashmir where he died shortly afterwards, probably due to a fatal attack by a King of Kashmir. This was the end of White Hunas in India. **The year was 528 AD**

✍ **Thus, Yashidharman is credited to check the Huna expansion in India.**

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### Yasodharman

- ✓ We know about Yasodharman from the **Mandsor Inscription** and **Bijaygarh Inscription of Bayana** near Bharatpur, in Rajasthan, which was erected / created by **Vishnuvarhana, son of Yasodharman**.
- ✓ He initially is thought to have been friendly with the Guptas but later turns their enemy and carried his victorious arms. However, not many details are known about Yasodharman.
- ✓ He appeared and disappeared quickly, most probably by 540 AD.

After the Hunas were checked, the Gupta Empire completely destroyed into many parts and several kings appeared in the scene all over north India. By the mid of the 6th century Guptas lost the control over the Magadha also. There were many contemporary dynasties of the Guptas and probably most ancient of them is **Maukharis**.

## Contemporaries of Guptas

### Maukharis Dynasty

Maukharis or Mokharis or Mukharas is an ancient family, which seems to be the vassals of Guptas earlier.

- ✓ This dynasty was concentrated around modern Uttar Pradesh and a portion of Southern Bihar.
- ✓ It is assumed that *Kanyakubja* or modern Kannauj was capital of Maukharis.
- ✓ The dynasty was founded by **Yajnavarman** (probably) but got significance in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century when **Ishnavarman** of this dynasty fought with Hunas and defeated them. This was the time when they supported the Guptas in the battle against the Hunas.
- ✓ Ishavarman was followed by Sharvavarman, Avantivarman and Grahavarman.
- ✓ About Grahavarman we know from the Harshacharita of Banabhatta. Grahavarman was married to Rajyashri, sister of Harshavardhan.
- ✓ Grahavarman was killed by Malwa king Devagupta and thus Maukhari Dynasty came to an end.

### Naga Dynasty

Naga family became prominent in Modern Uttar Pradesh and Gwalior by third century AD and remained in existence till end of 4<sup>th</sup> century.

- ✓ The prominent rulers of this dynasty are Nagadatta and Achyuta.
- ✓ As per the puranic records 7 Naga rulers ruled Mathura prior to Guptas.
- ✓ Ganapatinaga was the last ruler of the Naga Dynasty who was overthrown by Samudragupta.
- ✓ The coins of Achyuta and Ganapatinaga are found in abundance in Mathura area.

Apart from the Mathura, Nagas ruled Padmavati near Gwalior. The ruler was Bhavnaga in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Bhavanaga is also identified with Bhavashiva (his coins bear a trishul mark, seems to be shiva devotee). His daughter was married to Gutamiputra Satkarni.

The Mathura and Gwalior dominions of the Nagas was annexed to Gupta Kingdom by Samudragupta.

### Magha Dynasty

- ✓ Magha dynasty ruled around Kaushambi and they were contemporary of Guptas. The rulers such as Nava is known by coins only.

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### Vaktataka Dynasty

Vaktaka dynasty was the most important follow up dynasty of the Satavahanas and they ruled in modern Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. They were contemporary of Guptas.

- ✓ Vaktaka dynasty was founded by **Vindhyashakti**, whose name is derived from the Vidhya Mountains.
- ✓ We know about Vindhyashakti from Puranas and an inscription at Ajanta.
- ✓ As per Puranas, he lived a long life of 96 years.
- ✓ His capital was either Purika or Chanaka (Canaka) somewhere in central Andhra.
- ✓ He was succeeded by his son Pravira or **Pravarasena I**.
- ✓ **Pravarasena** was an able ruler who is also known to be the real founder of this dynasty.
- ✓ After Pravarasena, the kingdom was divided into 4 parts among the 4 sons.

This led to 4 branches of the Vaktataka dynasty out of which, only 2 are known.

✍ The Samudragupta campaign confined them to Vidarbha only but Samudragupta did not campaign against them.

One of the important ruler of this dynasty was **Rudrasena I** who is mentioned in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription. Rudrasena I was followed by Prathivisena I. During the campaign of Chandragupta II against the western Satraps, Chandragupta II is considered to have alliance of Prathivisena I and later cemented this tie with a marital alliance giving his daughter Prabhavatigupta to Rudrasena II, the prince of Vaktaka Family.

The capital of Vaktataka during the reign of Prathivisena and Rudrasena II was Nandivardhana which is near modern Nagpur.

✍ Rudrasena, under the influence of his wife Prabhavatigupta became a Vishnu devotee (his ancestors were shiva Devotee).

✍ He died after a short reign of 5 years and thus Prabhavatigupta ruled the kingdom. This made his brother Chandragupta II the indirect ruler of the Vaktataka Kingdom.

### Religion in Gupta Era

- ✍ Buddhism was generally prevalent in Northern India including Kashmir, Afghanistan and Swat Valley two centuries prior to Christian era and 2 centuries after it.
- ✍ Jainism was prevailing but did not attain much popularity. Hinduism never ceased to exist and retained the large share of both the popular as well as Royal Favor.
- ✍ It is evident from the coins of Kadphises II, the Kushana emperor who adopted Hinduism with such a great deal that he repeatedly put images of Shiva on his coins and described himself as a devotee of Shiva.
- ✍ The development of the Mahayana School of Buddhism from the time of Kanishka, was in itself a testimony to the reviving power of Brahminical Hinduism. This newer Buddhism was very much common to the Hinduism.
- ✍ The revival of the Sanskrit was first made possible by the western Satraps as evident from the Girnar inscription of Rudradaman, the Saka King who registered his achievements in elaborate Sanskrit. The Sanskrit fostered by the Satraps was made a success by the Gupta Emperors in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.
- ✍ In Gupta empire both Buddhism and Hinduism received support and the Gupta Kings were perfectly tolerant about the three religions prevalent at that time, but they were beyond doubt zealous Hindus who were guided by the Brahmin advisors and skilled in the Sanskrit language.

-: About this document:-

- ✍ The Jainism remained confined to the merchant communities of western India.
- ✍ Christianity had also arrived in India but it was confined to the Malabar Region.

However, Hinduism also underwent some important changes during these times. The sacrifice was replaced by Worship and mediation of the Brahmins was somewhat replaced by Devotion and Bhakti.

- ✍ The Shakti cult emerged in the Gupta era which was based upon the fact that the male can be activated only through union with females. So this was the beginning of worship of wives / consorts of Indian Gods such as Lakshmi, Parvati, Durga, Kali and other goddesses.
- ✍ The worship of Mother Goddess which was prevalent in the Harappan India finally got incorporated in the Hinduism by Guptas times.
- ✍ By the end of 5<sup>th</sup> century, Tantrism had also become prominent.
- ✍ The emergence of Tantrism and worship of female deities also led to occult practices which kept sexual union in the center. The sexual rites started becoming prominent and now they started taking shape of religious sexuality, which reached its zenith in India by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century, as evident from numerous temple arts centered on the religious sexuality in that era.

The six schools of Hindu Philosophy viz. *Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankya, Yoga, Mimansa and Vedanta* started taking definitive shape as a result of the philosophical debates between the Hindu and Buddhists on the question of presence of God, attaining salvation, karma, fate, Birth and Death and rebirth.

### Art in the Gupta Era

Gupta Period is called the "Golden age of India" or the "Classical Age of India" partially due to the unprecedented activities and development in the arts, architecture, sculpture, painting and literature.

### Temple art

- ✍ The rock cut architecture reached its zenith in the Gupta Era and this era also marked the beginning of the Free Standing temple Architecture.
- ✍ Most of the temples built in the Gupta era were carved with representation of Gods (mainly avatars of Vishnu and Lingams) and Goddesses.
- ✍ The most important temple of Gupta era is Dasavatar Temple of Deogarh, Uttar Pradesh.

Following is a brief description of the temples & Stupas of the Gupta Era:

### Dasavatara temple, Deogarh Uttar Pradesh:

- ✓ Dasavatara temple is located in Deogarh Village in Lalitpur town in Uttar Pradesh. The temple was discovered by **Captain Charles Strahan** and was **named so by Alexander Cunningham**.
- ✓ It depicts the 10 avatars of Vishnu. It is a large and elaborate edifice with typical temple art of Guptas (without Shikhara) and cubical Garbhagriha.
- ✓ This temple has also been linked to the "**Sarvatobhadra temple**" mentioned in the Vishnudharmottara Purana by several scholars.

### Bhitargaon Temple

- ✓ Bhitargaon Temple is located in Kanpur District of Uttar Pradesh. It is the oldest remaining Hindu temple, and was built in the Gupta Era in 6th century.

### Dhamekha Stupa:

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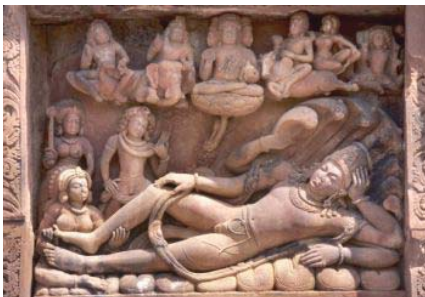
- ✓ The Dhamekha stupa is located at Sarnath, 13 km away from Varanasi. It marks the deer park or **Rishipattana** where Buddha gave his first sermon.
- ✓ As per an inscription dated 1026 AD, recovered from the site, its older name is Dharmachakra Stupa. Archeologist, Alexander Cunningham in search of a relic casket bored a vertical shaft through its center down to the foundation and at a depth of around 91 centimeter he found a slab with an inscription.....*Ye Dharma Hetu Prabhava Hetu.....* written in Brahmi script.
- ✓ This inscription is of 6th or 7th century. Below this, one more stupa made of Mauryan bricks has been found which gives an indication that it might have been commissioned by Asoka.

**Other Temples: Other temples of the Gupta Era are as follows:**

1. Vishnu Temple of Tigawa Jabalpur
2. Shiva Temple of Bhumara
3. Parvati Temple of Nachria Kathura
4. Mukund Darra Temple of Kota
5. Lakshaman Temple of Raipur
6. Shiva Temple of Koh.
7. Bhitari Temple at Ghazipur

**The main properties of these temples were as follows:**

- ✍ In Gupta period the basic, characteristic elements of the Indian temple consisting of a **square** sanctum sanctorum and a pillared porch had emerged.
- ✍ The Shikhara was **not** much prominent in the early Gupta temples but was prominent in later Gupta era.
- ✍ There was a single entrance or mandapa or Porch.



- ✍ Gupta style temple was modeled on the architectural norms of the Mathura school.

**Some Important Points about the Gupta Temples:**

- ✍ Sanchi temple at Tigawa has a flat roof.
- ✍ Dasavatar Temple at Deogarh, Bhitargaon temple and Mahadev Temple at Nachna Kuthar have a square tower of Shikhara.
- ✍ Many Math at Rajgriha is a circular temple of Gupta Era.
- ✍ Main style of temple architecture in i.e. Nagara style and Dravida style actually began from the Gupta era. Anantashayana Vishnu at Deogarh 500AD
- ✍ The earliest stone temple with Shikhara is Dasavatar Temple at Deogarh.
- ✍ The Bhitargaon temple at Kanpur is entirely made up of Bricks.

**Cave Architecture of Gupta Era: Ajanta Caves**

- ✓ Out of the 31 rock cut cave monuments at Ajanta, 5 are Chaitya Grihas viz. cave 9, 10, 19, 26 and 29.
- ✓ Cave 26, 27 and 29 are most important as far as development in the Buddhist art is concerned.
- ✓ Cave 26 is a Chaitya Griha which is perhaps the last excavation. It is an elaborate cave. The grandest depiction in all Buddha arts is Mahaparinirvana of Buddha (22 ft).
- ✓ The Ajanta caves are divided into 2 groups.
- ✓ The first group of caves which were great shrines and monasteries was carved out in the second century BC, at the magnificent site of Ajanta, which is located in the horse shoe shaped gorge of Waghora river, in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra.

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- ✓ The second group of caves was created in 5th and 6th century AD during Gupta and Post Gupta periods under the rule of the Vaktaka Kings (Gupta Era), with a renewed activity that was richer and more ample.
- ✓ The Buddha was represented in Human and these representations are found both on the facades and in the interior.
- ✓ Finally, the wall painting, profuse and sensitive, constitutes, no doubt, the most striking artistic achievement of Ajanta.
- ✓ One of the most prominent and outstanding figures are of humanized serpents, a **Nagaraja and Nagini** with an attendant figure as finest sculptures in human forms.
- ✓ The Mahaparinirvana of the Buddha, when he finally achieves release from the mortal world, is a profoundly moving scene.
- ✓ The Gupta Period, grand Viharas were excavated which were considerably larger than the earlier Viharas.
- ✓ Every inch of the wall and ceiling space was originally covered with fine paintings, the mural paintings are greatest treasure of the entire heritage of Indian Art.

### Inscriptions of Gupta Era

Gupta era is known for a large number of pillars erected at a number of places. Out of them two most important are

#### Prayag Prasasti :

- ✓ Also known as (Allahabad Pillar Inscription) of Samudragupta
- ✓ Composed by Harisena.
- ✓ Very simple and refined Sanskrit in **Champu kavya style**.

#### Garuda Pillar:

- ✓ Garuda Pillar refers to the Mahrauli Pillar Inscription/ (Mahrauli Iron Pillar) of Chandragupta II.

#### Other important inscriptions

- ✓ **Mandsaur Inscription:** It is ascribed to Vattasbhatta.
- ✓ **Eran Stone Inscription** of Samudra Gupta.
- ✓ **Sanchi stone inscription** and Mathura stone inscription.
- ✓ **Nalanda Inscription**
- ✓ **Gaya Copper Plate** (Speaks of Samudra Gupta)
- ✓ **Udayagiri Cave Inscription** (Speaks of Chandragupta II & Kumaragupta)
- ✓ **Junagarh Rock inscription** speaks of Skandagupta.

### Literature in Gupta Era

Sanskrit literature reached its climax in the Gupta period. This era is known for equal writing of prose and poetry. Sanskrit became the *Ligua franca* of India in that era.

#### Epics and Smritis:

- ✍ The final editing of the Ramayana and Mahabharata took place in Gupta Period.
- ✍ Puranas, Smritis and Dharmashashtra literature was developed in the Gupta period.
- ✍ Yajnavalkyasmriti is almost regarded as the **official law book of Guptas**.
- ✍ Naradasmriti was also written during the Gupta period.

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✍ All the successive redactions in the Manu's Dharmashastras were carried out in Gupta Period.

#### Some Smriti works of Gupta Era:

- ✍ Parashara (100-500 CE)
- ✍ Katyanayan (400-600 CE)
- ✍ Pitamaha (400-700 CE)
- ✍ Pulatsya (300-700 CE)
- ✍ Vyasa (200-500 CE)
- ✍ Harita (400-700 CE)

#### Kalidasa

There are several stories about life of Kalidasa, though none of them seems to be authentic. However, the most famous story about life of Kalidasa says that Kalidasa was an illiterate idiot and was a dumb fool to start with. A king's daughter was a very learned lady and the story goes as she wanted to marry only a person who will defeat her in "**Shastarthaa**" (scriptural debate). However, if anyone is not able to defeat her, would be black faced and kicked out of the country.

The idea was enough to irk the Pundits. Nobody wanted to get his face blackened and sent out of the country, so these witty people took Kalidasa to her. Kalidasa was spotted by these Pundits cutting a branch of a tree on which he was sitting himself.

They told the princess that Kalidasa does only mute or symbolic debates. The debate started and the princess showed him one finger, which she meant that "**Shakti is One**". However, Kalidasa took its meaning that she will poke his one eye and he showed him two fingers. The princess took this answer to be a valid one manifesting that **Shakti is in duality (Shiva and Shakti)**.

Continuing the debate, princess showed her five fingers manifesting that there are 5 elements earth, water, fire, air, and void. Kalidasa manifested it as that she will slap him. So, in answer he showed her his Fist. The princess again took this as a valid answer as she manifested that all five elements combine and make the body or srusti.

Thus, she married with Kalidasa. But after marriage she came to know that it was a fraudulent marriage and thus kicked him out of the house. After this humiliation, Kalidasa straightaway went to Kali's temple and dedicated himself to Kali. Goddess Kali was appeased and granted him profound wisdom and art and speaking ability. He returned home and his wife spoke these words:

***asti kashchit vaag-vishesha***

Which literally mean **you are an expert now in speaking?**

**These three words spoken by his wife are the opening words of his three great works as follows:**

- ✓ **Asti** : Kumarasambhavam starts with *asti-uttarasyaam dishi*
- ✓ **kashchit** : Meghdoot starts with *kashchit kaantaa*
- ✓ **Vaag** : Raghuvamsha starts with *vaagarthaaviva*

Please note that the above story may be neither historically correct nor there are any evidences to prove it. It goes as it is 😊, so no need to prove it.

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## Works of Kalidasa

**Mālavikāgnimitram:** *Mālavikāgnimitram* is the Sanskrit play which depicts Agnimitra as its hero. Malvika is a maid servant whom Agnimitra falls in love. This was known to his chief queen, who imprisons her. Later it was known that Malvika was of a royal birth and she was accepted as queen of Agnimitra.

- ✓ *Mālavikāgnimitram* gives account of **Rajsuya Yajna of Pushyamitra Shunga**, father of Agnimitra.

**Abhijñānaśākuntalam:** *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* is a Sanskrit play which depicts the story of Dushyanta, king of Hastinapur, and Shakuntala, daughter of the sage Vishwamitra and the apsara Menaka.

**Vikramōrvaśīyam:** *Vikramōrvaśīyam* is a Sanskrit Drama which depicts the love story of Puruvas a Vedic King and Urvashi. Puruvas is chosen to reflect the qualities of Chandragupta Vikramaditya. Pururavas is a mythological entity representing Sun and Vikramaditya means the "Glory of Sun".

**Raghuvamśa:** *Raghuvamśa* is a Sanskrit epic poem that is a long (19 Sargas) narration of genealogy of Lord Rama's Raghu Vamsa beginning with King Dileep up to Agnivarna.

☞ Sanjivani a commentary on Kalidasa's *Raghuvamśa*, *Kumarasambhava* and *Meghaduta* was written by **Mallinath in 14th century**. Mallinath had also written commentary on commentary on Bharavi's *Kiratarjuniya* (*Ghaṇṭāpatha*), on Magha's *Sisupalavadha* (*Sarvaṅkaṣa*), on Sriharsa's *Naisadhiyacarita* (*Jivātu*) and commentary on Bhaṭṭikāvya (*Sarvathānā*).

**Kumārasambhava:** *Kumārasambhava* is an epic poem which has 17 sargas, out of which only 8 are accepted as his authorship. Kumara or prince is Kartikeya and it refers to birth of Kartikeya, son of Shiva and Parvati after a lot of Tapasya to win Shiva who had already won Kamdeva (God of Love). Kartikeya later killed Tarakasur demon who was blessed that he would not be killed by any other than son of Shiva and Parvati.

**Ritusamhara :** *Ritusamhara* is again a mini epic poem in Sanskrit which has 6 Sargas. These Sargas refer to 6 seasons (Ritu) viz, Grisma (Summer) , varsha (Rains), Sharad (Autumn), Hemanta (Cool), Sisira (Winter) and Vasantha (Spring). It mentions the feelings, emotions and experiences of lovers in 6 seasons.

- ✓ **Ritusamhara is considered to be the earliest work of Kalidasa.**

**Meghaduta:** *Meghaduta* means a messenger of Clouds. It's a poem with 11 stanzas. The theme of *Meghaduta* is a Yaksha, who is subject of Lord Kubera (King of Wealth). His wife is waiting for him at Mount Kalidasa. The Yaksha was exiled by Kubera at some place in central India and he wishes to send his message to his wife. For that he convinces a cloud to take his message and pass it on to his wife. The poem narrates about the beautiful sights and visual perceptions he would come across while going northwards to take this message to his wife.

The true beauty and grandeur of the literature in Gupta Era can be seen in the kavyas. The greatest among all the names is Kalidasa who lived in 4<sup>th</sup> century CE and was contemporary of Chandragupta II.

- ✍ His earliest production was *Ritusamhara*. But earliest drama was *Malvikagnimitram*.
- ✍ *Meghaduta* is pioneer *Dutakavya* in Sanskrit literature.
- ✍ *Kumarasambhava* and *Raghuvamśa* have the epic grandeur.
- ✍ *Kumarasambhava* deals with the union of Shiva and Parvati and birth of their son Kartikeya who destroyed Tarakasur.
- ✍ *Raghuvamśa* described the life and career of 28 kings of Raghu Dynasty which included Rama.

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- ✍ The **Prakrit Poem Setubandha** is believed to have been written/ revised by **Kalidasa** for king Pravarsena.
- ✍ *Malvikagnimitra*, *Vikramovarshiyam* and *Abhijanan-Shakuntalam* are three plays penned by Kalidasa.
- ✍ Please note that Kalidasa's style was imitated by Ceylon King Kumaradasa who has written *Janakiharana*.
- ✍ *Malvikagnimitra* was written by Kalidasa in celebration of **Vasantotsava** (Spring festival).

### Bhāravi

- ✓ Bhāravi is best known for **Kiratarjuniya**, written around 550 CE. Kirat is Shiva who speaks to arjuna in form of a mountain dwelling hunter.
- ✓ This epic style Kavya is considered to be among the greatest works in Sanskrit which is known for complexity of the Sanskrit.

### Bhatti

- ✓ Bhatti or Batsabhatti is best known for **Bhaṭṭikāvya** which is also known as **Rāvaṇavadha** and was written in the 7th century CE.

### Magha:

- ✓ **Śiśupāla-vadha** was written by **Magha** in 7th century AD and is one of the 6 Sanskrit Mahakavyas. It was inspired by the works of Kalidasa, Bharavi and Dandin, all of them, as the author says but surpasses Bharavi in his style and wordplay.

### Sudraka

**Mrichakatika** means a "little clay cart". It is a Sanskrit play written by Shudraka in the 2nd century AD.

- ✍ Arthur W. Ryder translated it in 1905 as *The Little Clay Cart*.

It's a play full with romance, sex, court politics and comedy.

- ✍ It depicts the story of a poor man Charudatta with a nagarvadhu *Vasantsena*.
- ✍ The play seems to be a reworked version of *Daridracharudatta*, another play.

Śudraka seems to be an Abhira King Indranigupta who used Shudraka as his pen name.

### Vishakhadatta:

We know about only two plays of Vishakhadatta viz. *Mudrārākṣasa* and the *Devichandraguptam*. Out of them *Mudrārākṣasa* is the only surviving play. *Devichandraguptam* is survived in fragments only.

*Mudrarakshasha* means "Ring of the Demon". It narrates the ascent of Chandragupta Maurya to throne. *Rakshasha* is the last Minister of Nandas who is lured in Chandragupta's side, by Chanakya.

Other literary works of the Gupta Era are as follows:

### Dandin

Dandin had written *Kavyadarshana* and *Dasakumarcharita*. He lived in Kanchi and is best known for *Dasakumarcharita* "The Tale of the Ten Princes" which depicts the adventures of 10 princes.

*Dasakumarcharita* was first translated in 1927 as **Hindoo Tales** and *The Adventures of the Ten Princes*

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**Bhatrhari:**

Bhatrhari was a fifth century Sanskrit author who wrote *Vakyapadiya*, a treatise on Sanskrit Grammar and *Sataktraya* which is also known as *Nitishatak* and has 100 verses on philosophy. Batrihari seems to be a King but many scholars say that he was not a king but a courtier serving the king.

**Ishwar Krishna:**

His main work is Sankyakarika. It was a commentary on Sankya Philosophy.

**Vyasa**

Vyasa has written *Vyasabhasya*, it was a commentary on Yoga philosophy

**Vatsyayana**

Please note that Vatsyayana was the author of **Nyaya Sutra Bhashya** which was the first commentary on **Gautama's Nyaya Sutras**.

Kamasutra is a treatise on Human Sexual behavior and makes the part of the Kamashashtra.

The first transmission of the Kama Shashtra is attributed to Nandi, the bull of Shiva, as per the traditions. The Nandi bull is Shiva's doorkeeper and he overheard the lovemaking of the Gods and recorded his utterances, for benefit of mankind.

However, Kama sutra seems to be the first treatise on the principles / advices in sexuality.

**Science and Technology in Gupta Era**

The Gupta era is known for tremendous development in the development of astronomy, astrology, mathematics and metallurgy.

The 230 foot high Mahrauli pillar speaks of the well developed metallurgy in that era which has not rusted in last 15 centuries. The coins of Gupta era were finely struck and engraved.

**Aryabhata:**

Aryabhata was the legendary mathematician of the Gupta Era. He wrote *Aryabhattiya* at the age of 23 years and later, *Arya-Siddhanta*. He worked on the approximation for pi to 3.1416. In trigonometry, he concluded for a triangle, the result of a perpendicular with the half-side is the area. He also worked on the motions of the solar system and calculated the length of the solar year to 365.8586805 days.

Aryabhata lived in Kusumpur in Pataliputra.

**Varahamihira:**

Varahamihira lived in Ujjain and was one of the nine jewels (Navaratnas) of the court of Chandragupta II. He wrote *Panchasiddhantaka*, the five treatises on astronomy (NOT astrology). It summarises five earlier astronomical treatises, namely the *Surya Siddhanta*, *Romaka Siddhanta*, *Paulisa Siddhanta*, *Vasishtha Siddhanta* and *Paitamaha Siddhantas*.

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**Types of Taxes in Gupta Era**

- ✓ **Bali:** The Bali which was voluntary in Maurya era and was given to the King became **compulsory in Gupta Era.**
- ✓ **Bhaga:** King's share in all produce of the cultivators. It was 1/6<sup>th</sup> part of produce.
- ✓ **Bhoga:** Bhoga refers to the tax in kind of gifts, flowers, woods, fruits etc.
- ✓ **Hiranya:** This was the tax paid in cash (Gold) Hiranya means Gold.
- ✓ **Halivakara:** Hal means a Plough, so Halivakra was a kind of tax slab, those who owned a plough used to pay tax.
- ✓ **Kara:** It might have been some irregular tax charged from villagers.
- ✓ **Shulka:** It was custom or toll tax very much similar to Chungi in modern times.
- ✓ **Udinanga:** It might be a social security kind of tax.
- ✓ **Klipta:** It was related to sale and purchase of lands.

**Gupta Era: Important Points**

- ✓ The Mathura school of sculpture has represented the phases of transition from the Kushan period to Gupta Period.
- ✓ **Most of the earliest Gupta sculptures are from Mathura school.**
- ✓ The **Panchayatan** style of Temple, in which the temple had four subordinate shrines on four corners is seen in its earliest (primitive) form in Dasavatara temple of Deogarh, Lalitpur.
- ✓ **Temple number 17 at Sanchi is considered to be the earliest structural temple.**
- ✓ Office of Sandhivigrahaka, process of Devolution and systematic provincial administration were some of the features of Gupta administration.
- ✓ The Vakataka dynasty never struck their own coins and they used coins of the other contemporaries.
- ✓ **Practice of Polyandry was common in Hunas (several husbands one wife).**
- ✓ The Nandivardhana, Chanaka, and Purika are considered to be capitals of Vaktakas.
- ✓ The Maitrakas of Vallabhi are known to have 5 successor kings of the same name.
- ✓ The republics got extinct in the Gupta Period.
- ✓ Kayastha as a new caste of officials emerged in the Gupta age.
- ✓ Chandragupta II was the first Gupta king who assumed the grandiloquent title of Maharajadhiraja.
- ✓ The Krishna Charitam, a poetic work is attributed to Kumaragupta.
- ✓ Pragma, Ayodhya and Ujjain became capitals of Guptas at one time or another apart from Patliputra.
- ✓ The unique title of "Samrat" was assumed by Pravarsena I of the Vakataka Dynasty.
- ✓ There are no records of Gupta dynasty after 543 AD.
- ✓ The later Guptas were feudatories of the imperial Guptas.
- ✓ 320 AD marks the beginning of the Gupta Era.
- ✓ Dharnibandha or Digvijay was the title used for the first time by Samudragupta.
- ✓ The coins of Kumaragupta depict him as Mahedraditya (on the silver coins), Ajit Mahendra (on the archer coins).
- ✓ On the Kumaragupta coins in which he is mentioned as Lion Slayer his name is engraved as Sri Mahendra Simha.
- ✓ In Kumarasambhava, Kalidasa has mentioned about the Sati System.

**Founders of Contemporary dynasties of Gupta Empire**

1. Ishwarasena – Abhira Dynasty
2. Kandara – Ananda Dynasty

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3. Jayasimha – Chalukyas of Badami
4. Mayursharman : Kadam Dynasty
5. Krishanraja – Kalachuris
6. Shashanka – Kingdom of Gaud
7. Pushyavarman – Kingdom of Kamrupa
8. Gopachandra – Kindom of Samatata
9. Bhattarika – Maitrakas of Vallabhi
10. Yajnavarman – Maukharis
11. Simhavarman – Pallava Dynasty
12. Manaka – Rashtrakuta Dynasty
13. Vindhyashakti – Vakataka Dynasty

### From Gupta till Harsha

After Gupta Era, India was again in a dark period and the deficiency of the material is embarrassing for the historians to corroborate the history from the latter half of the sixth century (end of Guptas) to first half of the Seventh Century (the reign of Harsha). The period assigned to Harsha's reign is 606AD till 648 AD. Some most important events from this time onwards are as follows:

- ✓ From around AD 543 till 755 **Chalukyas of Vatapi** rose
- ✓ From 606 AD to 648 AD is the reign of **Harsha**
- ✓ During 630 AD -643 AD **Huen Tsang remained in India.** (During Harsha's reign)
- ✓ The period between 609AD till 642 AD is assigned to **Pulkesin II, the Chalukya King.**
- ✓ 712 AD is known for **Arab Conquest of Sindh.**
- ✓ In 750 AD **Pala Dynasty was founded by Gopala** in Eastern India.
- ✓ The period from 753 AD onwards is assigned to rise of **Rastrakuta Empire.**
- ✓ **In 840 AD Pratiharas rose under Bhoja.**
- ✓ In 907 AD Parantaka I established Chola Power in South India.

### The Reign of Harsha

For Harsha's period, though the historians have the ordinary numismatics and epigraphic sources, there are two most important sources (literary Works), which shed light on this era's political and social conditions.

- ✓ The first is a book of travels compiled by Chinese Pilgrim **Huen Tsang**, who visited almost all parts of India from 630 AD till 643-644 AD. Apart from the narrative, the work is supplemented by biographies of the pilgrim which is **written by his friend Hwui-li** and this provides some additional information.
- ✓ The second is *Harshacharita* authored by **Banabhatta**. Banabhatta was a Brahmin who stayed in the court of Harsha and enjoyed his patronage.

Apart from that the official Chinese history documents also provide some details about the reign of Harsha.

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**Fact Box: Huen Tsang**

*Huen Tsang or Xuanzang* was a Chinese Buddhist Traveler who belongs to **early Tang period of China**. He was born in **Henan province**.

- ✍ He was basically interested in the improving the incomplete & misinterpreted information provided by the earlier Chinese monks, particularly Fa Hien.
- ✍ The title his work is "Journey to the West" (*Si-Yu-Ki*)
- ✍ Huen Tsang followed the **Central Asian Route** and visited from Kashmir in North to Saurashtra and Vallabhi in west, Kamarupa in East and Malakotta in South.
- ✍ He stayed in various monasteries and came in touch with the scholars of that time.
- ✍ His association with Harshavardhana and **Bhaskarvarmana of Kamarupa** adds special value to his work.
- ✍ His observations are related to not only the life of the Kings and nobles but also the ordinary people. He writes about the way of life, doing agriculture, food habits, dress senses, jewellery, and types of taxes. Degraded position of the Chandals, elaborate description of the Nalanda monastery etc.
- ✍ He was attacked by robbers on the way, something which we don't find in the narrations of Fa Hien who travelled in the Gupta Period. It shows that the administrative machinery deteriorated.

**Prabhakarvardhana**

From the ancient times, the area surrounding the city of Thaneshwar (Modern Thanesar, District Kurukshetra, Haryana) has been an holy ground which is known as the Land of Kuru and was a famous battle of Mahabharata.

- ✓ The family of Harsha is linked to Pushyabhuti of Thenshwar.

In the later part of the 6th century, the Raja of Thaneshwar, **Prabhakarvardhana** raised himself against the neighbors including the Hunas settled in the North Western Punjab and also the clans of the Gurjaras. He assumed the title of *Maharajadhiraj* and *Parama Bhattaraka*.

- ✓ The Mother of Prabhakarvardhana was a princess of the Gupta lineage and this probably stimulated his ambitions.

**Rajyavardhana**

In 604 AD, Prabhakarvardhana had sent a large army led by his son Rajyavardhana to attack the Huns at the North Western frontiers and also sent his younger son Harsha with a cavalry. While Rajyavardhana advanced into the Hills, Harsha lingered in the forests of the foothills of the mountains.

While he was employed in the forests, he got the news of the illness of his father. He returned and was favored by the court men to be the next King, but Rajya Vardhana returned and took place of his father.

**Rajyashri**

**Rajyashri**, the daughter of Prabhakarvardhana (i.e. sister of Harsha) was married to the Maukhari King **Grahavarmana of Kannauj**. Since, at the time of the death of Prabhakarvardhana Rajya vardhana was engaged in the battle against the Hunas, a king of Gupta lineage Devagupta of Malwa attacked the Maukharis and killed Grahavarmana. The windowed Rajyashri was confined in jail and probably misused by the attacker. The young King Rajyavardhana, resolute to seek avenges led a 10 thousand cavalry and attacked the Malwa King. The King of Malwa was defeated without much effort, but the victory became sad soon after as a **Gaur King Shashanka** who had come to help **Devagupta** killed Rajyavardhana.

- ☞ Rajyavardhana was killed by deceit by Shashanka who inveigled Rajyavardhana to a conference by fair promises and assassinated him.

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### Coronation of Harsha

The son of Rajyavardhana was too young to leave a son capable of assuming cares of the government and the court men, did not hesitate to offer the crown to Harsha. When Harsha became the king, the tasks before him were to:

1. Take avenge of his brother's killing
2. Free Rajyashri from prison.

The assassins were able to escape and Rajyashri was about to burn herself alive with her attendants. But Harsha chased them, guided by the tribals and was able to trace her in the Vindhya Jungles. Shashanka escaped, though his kingdom was later annexed to that of Harsha's. But Shashanka remained an headache for Harsha for a longer period of time. In this venture Bhaskarvarman of Assam helped him.

- ✓ Son of Rajyashri was also an infant and this was the reason that Kannauj was also annexed with the kingdom of Harshavardhana.

### Conquests of Harsha

In Harsha we find a learned king who was well versed in the doctrine of **Sammitiya School**, an offshoot of the Vatsiputriya school of Early Buddhism. He was a brave king who had the desired ability and energy to bring all India "under an umbrella". He overran the northern India and went from east to west and subdued all who were not obedient. In around 5 years he had conquered the north western regions as well as a large part of Bengal. This was enough to raise his army strength from 5 thousand war elephants to 50 thousand war elephants and 20 thousand cavalry to 1 lakh cavalry. His great career of victory continued till 643 AD and the last attack was on the inhabitants of Ganjam on the Coast of Bay of Bengal.

But his Long career of victory was eclipsed by one great failure. **Pulkesin II**, the greatest of the Chalukya dynasty vied with Harsha and was able to stop the ambitions of Harsha towards south.

### Conflict with Pulkesin II

If Harsha was **Uttarpathapati**, Pulkesin II, the Chalukya King of Vatapi was able to raise himself to the rank of lord paramount of the South and called himself **Dakshinapathapati**. Harsha, unable to endure the existence of such a powerful rival in south, planned to overthrow Pulkesin II and advanced towards south with troops from all parts of his reign. But his effort got failed. The passes on the Narmada River were guarded so efficiently that Harsha accepted that river as his southern frontier. This was sometime in 620 AD (some sources say 635AD).

### Conquest of Ganjam:

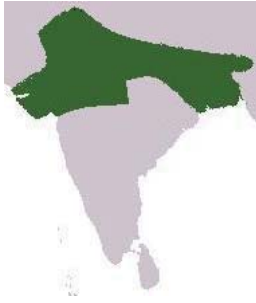
The last conquest of Harsha was the Ganjam in modern Orissa. Harsha was not able to annexe initially on account of his enmity with Shashanka. However, Ganjam was conquered in 642-643 AD and after that Harsha became content to sheathe the sword. The later part of Harsha's life is almost an imitation to the Great Asoka Maurya, but it took 37 years and numerous conquests to Harsha to adopt the Asoka route.

### Territories of Harsha:

The reign of Harsha was from whole of basin of Ganga including Nepal, to the Narmada in South.

-: About this document:-

☞ Harsha ruled on the pattern of the Gupta Kings and the local administration remained in the hands of the local Kings.



☞ From King of Kamarupa in Assam to King of Vallabhi in Gujarat attended the courts of Harsha.

☞ Harsha was **the last true Hindu King of Northern India**.

#### Administration of Harsha:

- ✓ We know about the administration of Harsha mostly from the accounts of Huen Tsang.
- ✓ Huen Tsang, like his predecessor Fa Hien, who came to India two centuries earlier was impressed by the Civil Administration. The principal source of revenue was the rent of the crown lands which was 1/6th of the produce. The officials were remunerated by land grants and the tax administration was not so rigid.
- ✓ The crime was rare though unlike the narrations of Fa Hien, the routes were less safe.
- ✓ This evident from the fact that Huen Tsang was stopped and looted by the robbers. The punishments were severe than the Gupta rulers. The nose, ears, hands, feet of the criminals were mutilated and death sentence prevailed.

#### Interest in Literature:

Harsha was a great patron of the literature and was an accomplished calligraphist and author of reputation. He has written three extant Sanskrit Plays viz. *Nagananda*, *Ratnavali* and *Priyadarsika* and one grammatical work. His plays are as follows:

- ✓ **Nagananda:** *Nagananda* has an enlightening Buddhist legend for its subject and is one of the best works of the Indian Drama.
  - It describes the story of the Jimutavahana's self-sacrifice to save the Nagas.
- ✓ **Ratnavali:** *Ratnavali* is a great drama which narrates the story of a princess called *Ratnavali* and a king called *Udayana*.
  - ➡ ○ **Ratnavali is probably the earliest textual references to the celebration of Holi, the festival of colors.**
- ✓ *Priyadarsika:* *Priyadarsika* is another great play by Harsha.

#### Banabhatta:

Banabhatta is considered to be the greatest ornament in the literary circle of Harsha.

- ✓ Bana's **Kadambari** is not only the most celebrated prose romance in Sanskrit, but it is also the best work with universal appeal.
- ✓ Similarly *Harshacharita*, which is probably first work of its kind is the biography of his great hero Harsha. The work is not only **the first attempt of Biography Indian literature** but also an authentic work.
- ✓ There are two more works attributed to Banabhatta viz. *Chhandakasthaka* and *Parvatiparinaya*.
- ✓ Please note that *Kadambari* was *not* completed by the Banabhatta. His work was later finished by his son *Bhushanbhatta* (or maybe *Pulindabhata*) and thus *Kadambari* is divided into two parts viz. *Purvabhaga* and *Uttarbhaga*.

-: About this document:-

### Legacy, Empire and Pomp of Harsha

✍ We find King Harsha's autograph in **Baanskhera inscription of Haryana**.

After the Ganjam conquest, Harsha started showing the favor for the quietest teachings of Buddhism. he favored the Hinyana initially and Mahayana later. We find in him a great devotee of Buddhism, who enforced the Buddhist traditions with utmost strictness. He forbade the slaughter of any living thing. Use of animal flesh was a punishable offense in his reign. The benevolent institutions based upon Asoka's model were established through his empire. Numerous monasteries were erected in the closing years of his empire. Huen Tsang describes about the numbers of the monks occupying the monasteries to be around 2 Lakh.



Though, the father of Harsha was a Sun Devotee, his remote ancestor Pushyabhuti was a Shiva follower, his brother Rajyavardhana and sister Rajyashri were Buddhism devotees, Harsha was benevolent of all the three and erected temples also. However, the in the closing part of his reign, his favorite was the faith of Buddhism.

### Prayag Assembly:

Every five years, Harsha is known to have called for an assembly at Prayag. This ceremony began with the worship of Surya, Shiva and Buddha (a testimony to his tolerance to all faiths), and after that he use do charitable distribution. It is told that every Buddhist monk was given 100 pieces of gold, a pearl and cotton clothe. He also used to donate the cloths and ornaments he wore and then asked his sister Gayatri for cloths and ornaments.

### Bhandi

- ✓ Bhandi was a leading noble of Kannauj and on advice of the statesmen of Kannauj, he offered the crown of Kannauj to Harsha after death of Grahavarmana.
- ✓ Bhandi was later described as one of the chief officers of Harsha. When Harsha chased Shashanka for release of his sister, through Bhandi Harsha knew that her sister has been released and Shashanka has escaped.

### Simhanada:

- ✓ Simhanada was the General of the Harsha's army and his Prime Minister.
- ✓ When Harsha was preparing to conquest the South, he was warned by Simhanada bout the dreadful consequences.
- ✓ This was for the first time that Harsha did not pay attention to his seasoned councilor and paid the price for the same when he was defeated by Pulkesin II.

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