

Mauryan Dynasty

- The Mauryan Dynasty, which began about 321 BCE and lasted in 185 BCE, was the first pan-Indian empire, encompassing the majority of India.
- It encompassed sections of central and northern India as well as modern-day Iran.
- Literary sources such as Kautilya's **Arthashastra**, **Megasthenes' Indica**, and Ashoka's edicts shed more insight on this period's history.
- **Dhana Nanda**, the last of the Nanda monarchs, was widely despised for his severe tax scheme.
- Furthermore, following Alexander's conquest of North-Western India, that region suffered a great deal of turmoil from other nations.
- Some of these areas were ruled by the **Seleucid Dynasty**, which was founded by Seleucus Nicator I.
- He was one of Alexander the Great's generals.
- In 321 BC, **Chandragupta**, assisted by a clever and politically adept Brahmin, took the kingdom by beating Dhana Nanda.
- Under the leadership of **Chandragupta Maurya** and his tutor Chanakya, the Maurya Empire was created in the Magadha area.
- Chanakya took Chandragupta to Taxila to learn about statecraft and governance.
- Chandragupta needed an army, so he recruited and absorbed minor military republics like the **Yaudheyas**, which had opposed **Alexander's Empire**.
- The **Mauryan army** swiftly rose to prominence as a regional force in the Indian subcontinent's northwestern area.

Chandragupta Maurya - Founder of Mauryan Empire

- The beginnings of **Chandragupta** are shrouded in mystery.
- The **Greek texts** (the earliest) identify him as being of non-warrior ancestry.
- According to Hindu texts, he was a **Kautilya disciple** of lowly origin (probably born to a Shudra woman).
- According to most Buddhist texts, he was a Kshatriya.

- It is often assumed that he was an orphaned youngster from a poor home who was tutored by Kautilya.
- **Sandrokottos** is the name given to him in Greek records.
- **Alexander** abandoned his invasion of India in 324 BC, and within a year, **Chandragupta** had beaten several of the Greek-ruled towns in the country's northwestern region.
- **Kautilya** devised the approach, which Chandragupta carried out. They had formed their own mercenary army.
- They then proceeded eastward towards **Magadha**.
- In around 321 BC, he destroyed Dhana Nanda in a series of conflicts, laying the groundwork for the **Maurya Empire**.
- In 305 BC, he signed a deal with Seleucus Nicator in which he obtained **Balochistan**, eastern Afghanistan, and the land west of the Indus.
- He also married the daughter of **Seleucus Nicator**.
- With the exception of a few locations like Kalinga and the far south, **Chandragupta** spearheaded an expansionist programme that brought practically the whole present-day India under his rule.
- From 321 BC until 297 BC, he ruled.
- He abdicated in favour of his son, Bindusara, and travelled to Karnataka with the Jain monk Bhadrabahu.
- He had converted to Jainism and is claimed to have starved himself to death in Shravanabelagola according to Jain legend.

Kautilya

- **Chandragupta Maurya's** teacher and Chief Minister.
- He was a **Taxila teacher** and scholar. **Vishnugupta and Chanakya** are two more names.
- He was also a minister in **Bindusara's palace**.
- He is recognised as being the main planner behind the Nanda throne usurpation and the development of the Mauryan Empire via his disciple, **Chandragupta**.

- Arthashastra is a book on statecraft, economics, and military strategy that he composed.
- The work is divided into 15 volumes and 180 chapters. The major concept is divided into three sections:
 - **King, Ministerial Council, and Government Departments.**
- **Criminal and civil law.**

War diplomacy

- It also includes information on commerce and markets, a mechanism for screening ministers and spies, royal responsibilities, ethics, social welfare, agriculture, mining, metallurgy, medicine, and forests, among other things.
- Chanakya is often known as the "**Indian Machiavelli.**"

Bindusara

- **Bindusara** was the son of **Chandragupta**, the Mauryan Empire's founder. Several texts, including the Puranas and the Mahavamsa, attest to this.
- Throughout his term, **Chanakya** served as Prime Minister.
- Bindusara maintains cordial diplomatic relations with Greece.
- Deimachus was the Seleucid emperor Antiochus I's envoy to Bindusara's court.
- Bindusara, unlike his father Chandragupta (who eventually converted to Jainism), belonged to the **Ajivika sect.**
- Bindusara's master, Pingalavatsa (Janasana), was an **Ajivika Brahmin.**
- Bindusara died around the 270s BCE, according to historical sources.
- Bindusara is credited for extending the Mauryan Empire to Mysore.
- He united sixteen nations into the Mauryan Empire, conquering nearly the whole Indian peninsula.

Ashoka

- Son of Mauryan Emperor Bindusara and Subhadra.
- Chandragupta Maurya's grandson.
- His other names were **Devanampiya** (Sanskrit Devanampriya, which means Beloved of the Gods) and Piyadasi.
- One of India's greatest monarchs.

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- He was born in 304 BC.
- His rule lasted from 268 BC until 232 BC, when he died.
- As a young prince, Ashoka was a superb commander who suppressed revolts in **Ujjain and Takshashila**.
- As emperor, he was ambitious and aggressive, re-establishing the Empire's supremacy in southern and western India. But it was his conquest of Kalinga (262–261 BCE) that proved to be the defining event of his life.
- He became a **Buddhist**.
- A Buddhist monk named **Moggaliputta Tissa** became his guru.
- In 247 BC, Ashoka presided over the third Buddhist Council in Pataliputra, which was presided over by Moggaliputta Tissa.

Mauryan Dynasty - Administration

- The **Empire** was split into four provinces, with Pataliputra serving as the imperial capital.
- According to Ashokan edicts, the four provincial capitals are Tosali (in the east), **Ujjain** (in the west), Suvarnagiri (in the south), and Taxila (in the north) (in the north).
- The **Kumara** (royal prince), who controlled the provinces as the king's agent, was in charge of the provincial government.
- Mahamatyas and the council of ministers helped the kumara.
- The Emperor and his **Mantriparishad** mirrored this organisational system at the imperial level.
- The Mauryans built a sophisticated currency minting method.
- The majority of coins were made of silver and copper.
- Certain gold coins were also in circulation.
- The coins were frequently used in commerce and trade.

Central Government

- The **Mauryan government** was well-known for being very centralised.
- It all started with the **Emperor** possessing enormous power and exerting all authority.

- The state was ruled by a council of ministers known as the 'Mantriparishad,' and the ministers were known as '**Mantris**' during the time.
- The '**Mantri Parishad-adhyaksha**' presided over this Mantri council.
- Mahamattas are titles bestowed upon some of the highest-ranking officials.
- There were also **Amatyas**, or high-ranking officials who worked in administrative and judicial positions.
- The **Adhyakshyas** were organised into departments and a secretariat was formed.
- The government monitored and documented manufacturing, births and deaths, industries, foreigners, **product trade and sale, and sales tax collection** to ensure smooth operations.
- Many **Adhyakshyas** are mentioned in **Arthashastra** for trade, storehouses, gold, ships, agriculture, cows, horses, city, chariots, mint, infantry, and so on.
- Yuktas are subordinate officers in charge of the Empire's income.
- **Rajjukas**: Land measuring and boundary-fixing officers.
- **Sanstha Adhyaksha**: Mint Superintendent
- **Samastha Adhyaksha**: Market Superintendent
- **Sulka Adhyaksha**: Toll Superintendent
- **Sita Adhyaksha**: Agriculture Superintendent
- **Navadhyaksha** is a ship's superintendent.
- **Loh Adhyaksha**: Iron Superintendent
- **Pauthavadhyakhsa**: Weights and Measures Superintendent
- **Mine Superintendent: Nagaradhyaksha**
- **Vyavaharika Mahamatta**: Members of the judiciary
- Public relations officers in Pulisanj
- The administration was in charge of birth and death registration, foreigners, industry, commerce, manufacturing and sale of commodities, and sales tax collection.

Military Administration

- **Senapati**, the Emperor's right-hand man, was the commander-in-chief of the whole military. The Emperor appointed him.

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- The army received its pay in cash.
- A board of 30 men oversees military administration, which is organised into six committees: infantry, cavalry, elephants, chariots, navy, and transport.
- **Gudda Purushas/Detectives** mentions two sorts of detectives:
 - **Sansthan's (stationary)**
 - **Sanchari's (wandering)**
- The Mauryan administration was notable for maintaining a large military.
- Kautilya empowered all four Varnas to serve in the military.
- Pliny claims that the **Mauryas** maintained a force of six lakh men.
- The Mauryans also had a navy in their military.
- All of the major cities have police stations.
- **Bandhangara** was the name of the jail, while Charaka was the name of the lock-up.

Justice System

- The ruler was in charge of the legal system.
- The **Gramvardha** and **Nagarvyavaharika Mahamatras** resolved disputes in both villages and towns, respectively.
- There were **Rajukas** throughout the state who were equivalent to our present district magistrates.
- **Dharmasthiya** (Civil Court) and **Kantaka Shodhana** (Criminal Court) are two further types of courts mentioned by Kautilya.

Local Administration

- Aside from the directly managed metropolitan zone, the empire was divided into four provinces, each of which was commanded by a prince or a member of the royal family (Kumara or Aryaputra).
- **Under Asoka, there were four provinces:** the Northern Province (**Uttarapatha**), which had **Taxila** as its capital, the Western Province (**Avantiratha**), which had **Ujjain** as its capital, the Eastern Province (**Prachyapatha**), which had Tosali as its centre, and the Southern Province (**Dakshinapatha**), which had Suvarnagiri as its capital.

- The kingdom's headquarters were in the central province of Magadha, with its capital at **Pataliputra**.
- He nominated some of the viceroy's officers, including the Mahamattas, who went on tour every five years.
- The village was the smallest administrative entity.
- **Gramika** Villages had a lot of liberty as a leader.
- The province governors or district magistrates were known as Pradeshika.
- **Sthanika**: Tax collectors who report to Pradeshikas.
- **Durgapal**: Fort Governors.
- **Antapala**: Frontier governors.
- **Akshapatala**: General Accountant Lipikaras.

Revenue Administration

- **Samhartta** was the head of the revenue department.
- **Sannidhata** was another significant official (treasurer).
- Land, irrigation, shops, customs, woods, ferries, mining, and pastures all generated revenue.
- Artist licence payments were collected, and fines were levied in the courts.
- One-sixth of the output was used to generate the majority of the land revenue.

Espionage

- The **Mauryas** had a well-developed espionage system.
- Spies provided information to the Emperor on the bureaucracy and markets.
- There were two kinds of spies: **Samsthana (stationary)** and **Sanchari (moving around)**
- **Gudda Purushas** were covert agents or investigators.
- The **Mahamatyapasarpa** ruled over them. These agents were chosen from various social groups.
- There were additional agents known as **Vishakanyas (poisonous girls)**.

Economy

- For the first time in South Asia, political unity and military stability enabled a single economic system and improved **trade and commerce**, resulting in higher agricultural output.

- **Hundreds of kingdoms**, many tiny armies, powerful regional chieftains, and internecine conflict gave way to a disciplined central government.
- **Farmers** were liberated from regional rulers' tax and crop collecting duties, instead paying to a centrally regulated and strict-but-fair taxation system recommended by the **Arthashastra principles**.
- **Chandragupta Maurya** introduced a common currency across India, and a network of provincial governors and administrators, as well as a civil service, ensured justice and security for merchants, farmers, and traders.
- Many bands of robbers, regional private armies, and **chieftains** who wanted to establish their own rule in local regions were destroyed by the **Mauryan army**.
- Silk and textiles, spices, and exotic delicacies were among India's exports. With increased commerce with the **Mauryan Empire**, the outside world gained access to new scientific knowledge and technology.
- In addition, Ashoka funded the building of hundreds of roads, rivers, canals, hospitals, rest stops, and other public works projects.
- In many aspects, the **Mauryan Empire's** economic state parallels that of the **Roman Empire** some centuries later.
- Both had substantial commercial relations and institutions that were akin to companies.

Religion

- **Brahmanism** was a significant religion throughout the early period of the kingdom.
- The **Mauryans** were followers of **Brahmanism, Jainism, and Buddhism**. Minor religious groups such as **Ajivikas** were also supported.
- When **Chandragupta Maurya** retired, he sacrificed his kingdom and his assets to join a roaming group of Jain monks.
- **Acharya Bhadrabahu**, a Jain monk, was Chandragupta's pupil. Thus, under Mauryan rule, Jainism became an important force.
- The spread of Jainism in South India is attributed to **Chandragupta** and Samprati.

- During their reigns, hundreds of thousands of temples and stupas are claimed to have been built.
- **Magadha**, the empire's centre, was also the birthplace of Buddhism.
- Following the **Kalinga War**, **Ashoka** abandoned expansionism and violence, as well as the harsher injunctions of the Arthashastra on the use of force, intense policing, and brutal means for tax collection and against rebels.

Decline

- For the next 50 years, **Ashoka** was succeeded by a succession of lesser monarchs.
- **Dasharatha Maurya**, Ashoka's grandson, took his place. None of Ashoka's sons could succeed him to the throne.
- His firstborn, **Mahinda**, was on a mission to preach **Buddhism** throughout the world.
- **Kunala Maurya** was blind and hence unable to attain the throne, and Tivala, son of Kaurwaki, died even before Ashoka.
- Another son, Jalauka, does not have much of a backstory.
- **Dasharatha** lost several regions, which were eventually reclaimed by Kunala's son, Samprati.
- Following Samprati, the Mauryas gradually lost several regions.
- **Brihadratha Maurya** was slain in a military display by his general **Pushyamitra Shunga** in 180 BCE, leaving no successor.
- As a result, the vast Maurya empire came to an end, giving rise to the **Shunga Empire**.

Art

- Mauryan art is an art created between the **4th and 2nd Century BC** under the Mauryan Empire, which was the first empire to control much of the Indian subcontinent
- Around the 6th century BCE, religions of the Shramana tradition, such as Jainism and Buddhism, arose.

- In the 4th century BCE, the Mauryas had established themselves as a powerful force, and by the 3rd century, they had vast swaths of India under their authority.
- There were various religious activities at the period, including the worship of Yakshas and mother-goddesses. Despite this, Buddhism became the most popular religion.
- Only during the Mauryan period, after the Harappan civilization, did colossal stone sculpture and building development.
- Pillars, sculptures, rock-cut architecture, and structures like stupas, viharas, and chaityas served a variety of purposes.
- They are superb in terms of aesthetic quality as well as design and execution.

Pillars and Sculptures

- This time saw a creative and stunning leap ahead in Indian stone sculpture; much of the prior work was likely made of wood and has now vanished.
- The best-known and greatest works of Ashoka are the artistically carved animal capitals that survive from several of his Pillars, particularly the **Lion Capital of Sarnath**, which is now India's National Emblem.
- The pillars and capitals reflect court art, while some stone pieces and numerous smaller terracotta works represent surviving popular art.

Paintings

- Megasthenes indicates that the Mauryans possessed some fine paintings, but no examples have remained.
- The paintings of the Ajanta Caves, the earliest notable corpus of Indian art, reveal that there existed a well-developed tradition that may possibly date back to Mauryan periods several years later.

Architecture

- While the time saw a second shift to the use of brick and stone, wood remained the preferred material.
- In the Arthashastra, Kautilya recommends the use of brick and stone because of their endurance.

- Nonetheless, he devotes a substantial section to precautions to be taken against fires in timber structures, demonstrating their popularity.
- The **capital city of Pataliputra** was encompassed by a large timber-palisade, punctured by holes or slits through which archers might shoot, according to the Greek envoy Megasthenes.
- Spooner and Waddell excavated at **Bulandi Bagh in Pataliputra** and discovered the ruins of massive timber palisades.
- The ruins of one of the structures, an 80-pillared hall at **Kumrahar**, are especially noteworthy.
- During Ashoka's rule, several stupas, including those at Sanchi, Sarnath, and most likely Amaravati, were created as brick and masonry mounds.
- Unfortunately, they have been remodelled several times, leaving us with little resemblance to the original constructions.

