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# Mauryan Empire

With PYQ's



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## Mauryan Empire

The **6th century BCE** saw conflicts among Mahajanapadas (Avanti, Kosala, Magadha) → Magadha emerged victorious.

- **Nanda dynasty** became powerful but unpopular, esp. under **Dhana Nanda** due to oppressive taxation.
- The invasion of **Alexander (327–323 BCE)** destabilized northwestern India. After his death, parts came under **Seleucus Nicator** (Seleucid Empire).

### Rise of the Mauryas

- In **321 BCE**, **Chandragupta Maurya**, with the guidance of **Chanakya (Kautilya)**, defeated Dhana Nanda and established the **Maurya dynasty** at Magadha.
- Chandragupta consolidated power by integrating military republics (e.g., **Yaudheyas**) and defeating the Seleucid forces.
- Capital: **Pataliputra** (modern Patna).

### Sources of the Mauryan Dynasty

The Mauryan period (322–185 BCE) is well documented through **literary texts, inscriptions, foreign accounts, and archaeological remains**.

### Literary Sources

#### (A) Brahmanical & Sanskrit Works

Work	Author	Content/Significance	Notes
<b>Arthashastra</b>	Kautilya (Chanakya/Vishnugupta)	Statecraft, economy, taxation, diplomacy, espionage, law, war. Divided into 15 books.	Rediscovered by R. Shamasastri (1905). Some interpolations.
<b>Mudrarakshasa</b>	Vishakhadatta (4th–5th CE)	Drama narrating Chandragupta's rise & Chanakya's role.	Socio-political and economic details.
<b>Parishishtaparvan</b>	Hemachandra (12th CE)	Biography of Chanakya; famine during Chandragupta's reign; conversion to Jainism.	Jain perspective.
<b>Other Works</b>	Kathasaritsagara, Brihatkathamajari,	Anecdotes, legends on Mauryas.	Less reliable, but useful for



	Rajatarangini		later perceptions.
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### (B) Buddhist Literature

- **Dipavamsa & Mahavamsa (Sri Lankan chronicles)**
  - Biographies of **Ashoka** – before and after his conversion to Buddhism.
  - Useful for Mauryan chronology & religious policies.
- **Ashokavadana & Divyavadana**
  - Narrative accounts of Ashoka's life, Dhamma, Buddhist patronage.
- **Jatakas**
  - Although pre-Mauryan in composition, they reflect the **social, economic life** and customs continuing into the Mauryan period.
- **Manjusrimulkalpa** (non-canonical Buddhist work)
  - Covers a wide period (7th BCE–8th CE).
  - Mentions Nandas & Mauryas.

### (C) Jain Literature

- **Parishishtaparvan** (already mentioned).
- **Kalpasutra & Bhadrabahu Charita**
  - Information on Chandragupta Maurya, his **Jain leanings** and migration to Shravanabelagola.

## Foreign (Greek/Classical) Accounts

### Megasthenes' *Indica*

Theme	Information Given	Remarks / Issues
Geography	India as a quadrilateral, bounded by seas.	Broadly correct.
Society	7 social classes (misinterpretation of varna-jati).	Incorrect classification.
Administration	Pataliputra, military, officers, agriculture.	Useful, but idealized.
Economy	Prosperity, absence of famine, agriculture-based.	Overstated, ignores droughts.
Religion	Krishna = Dionysus/Herakles.	Interpretation errors.
Natural History	Elephants, monkeys, gold-digging ants, oddities.	Folklore included uncritically.

**Preserved by** Diodorus, Strabo, Pliny, Arrian, Justin, Plutarch.



### Other Classical Writers:

- **Strabo** → Marriage alliance of Seleucus & Chandragupta; women bodyguards.
- **Pliny** → Trade and prosperity of India.
- **Arrian, Diodorus** → Alexander's campaigns, early glimpses of India.

### Epigraphic & Archaeological Sources

- **Ashokan Inscriptions (c. 3rd BCE)**
  - Earliest deciphered inscriptions in India (by **James Prinsep, 1837**).
  - **Rock Edicts** (Major & Minor) and **Pillar Edicts** across Indian subcontinent.
  - Language: **Prakrit** (Brahmi script mainly; also Kharoshthi, Aramaic, Greek in northwest).
  - Content: Ashoka's **Dhamma**, welfare measures, religious tolerance, administration.
- **Junagarh Rock Inscription (Rudradaman I, 150 CE)**
  - Mentions **Sudarshana Lake** (originally constructed during Chandragupta's reign).
- **Archaeological Remains:**
  - **Pataliputra** → Remains at Kumrahar (pillared hall), Bulandi Bagh.
  - Mauryan **pillars, stupas, sculptures** (e.g., Sarnath Lion Capital).

### Rulers and their Achievements

**Capital** – Pataliputra (modern Patna, Bihar)

### Chandragupta Maurya (321 BCE – 297 BCE)

#### Founder of the Mauryan Empire

#### Background & Origins

- Accounts of origins vary:
  - **Buddhist texts** (Digha Nikaya, Mahavamsa, Divyavadana): Kshatriya Moriya clan, linked with Shakyas.
  - **Brahmanical texts**: Shudra/lowly origins; considered heretics for patronising heterodox sects.
  - **Parishishtaparvan (Hemachandra)**: Grandson of peacock-tamers clan (*mayura-poshakas*).
- Greek sources call him **Sandrokottos / Androcottus**.
- Likely of humble origins, mentored by **Chanakya (Kautilya/Vishnugupta)**.





## Rise to Power

- Took advantage of **political vacuum after Alexander's withdrawal (324 BCE)** from NW India.
- With Chanakya's strategy, organised mercenary forces.
- Overthrew **Dhanananda (Nanda Dynasty)** around 321 BCE and established Mauryan rule in Magadha.

## Expansion of Empire

- Conquered NW India (between **Beas & Indus**), exploiting satrapal weakness after Alexander.
- Extended empire eastwards → whole of northern India & parts of Deccan.
- **War with Seleucus Nicator (305 BCE):**
  - Defeated Seleucus (successor of Alexander).
  - Treaty of 303 BCE → Chandragupta gained **Arachosia (Kandahar), Gedrosia (Baluchistan), Paropamisadae (Kabul), Aria (Herat)**.
  - **First recorded international treaty of India.**
  - Marriage alliance: Seleucus' daughter (Helena) married Chandragupta.
  - Seleucus received **500 war elephants** in return.

## Administration & Governance

- Built a vast empire covering **Bihar, Nepal, NW India, Gujarat, Malwa, parts of Deccan**.
- Maintained a huge standing army (Plutarch: 6,00,000 infantry).
- Pataliputra (capital) described in detail by **Megasthenes (Greek ambassador, Indica)**.
- His court included **Kautilya (chief advisor)**.
- Followed centralised autocratic system (described in *Arthashastra & Indica*).

## Later Life & Death

- According to **Jain tradition**:
  - Abdicated throne after ~25 years.
  - Migrated to **Shravanabelagola (Karnataka)** with Jain monk **Bhadrabahu**.
  - Performed **Sallekhana (ritual fasting unto death)**.

## Significance

- **First emperor to politically unify India** (except Tamil Nadu, NE India).
- Realised the concept of **Chakravartin Samrat** (universal ruler).
- Regarded as a great warrior, empire-builder, and administrator.



## Bindusara (297 BCE – 273 BCE)

### Son & Successor of Chandragupta Maurya

#### Titles & Identity

- Known as **Amitraghata** (slayer of enemies) in Sanskrit.
- Greeks called him **Amitrochates / Allitrochates**.
- Other names: **Simhasena, Madrasar** (found in some texts).

#### Expansion & Conquests

- Continued expansion of Mauryan Empire southwards.
- Conquered “**land between the two seas**” → Arabian Sea to Bay of Bengal.
- Brought **16 states** under Mauryan rule.
- Empire extended into Deccan (up to Karnataka), but **Kalinga & deep south remained outside** Mauryan control.

#### Administration & Policies

- Described as urbane, intellectual, maintaining a brilliant court.
- Continued the **centralised imperial system**.
- Appointed his son **Ashoka as governor of Ujjain**, later **Taxila**.

#### Foreign Relations

- Maintained diplomatic ties with Hellenistic world:
  - **Deimachus** – ambassador of Seleucid king Antiochus I at Bindusara’s court.
  - **Dionysius** – ambassador of Ptolemy II (Egypt).
  - Requested Antiochus for **wine, figs, and a sophist** (philosopher). Antiochus sent wine & figs, but declined sophist (illegal to “sell” philosophers).
- Maintained several Greek & Persian women in royal harem.

#### Religious Affiliation

- **Buddhist texts largely silent** on him.
- Some sources suggest he followed **Ajivika sect** (founded by Makkali Gosala).
  - Ajivika monk **Pingalavatsa** prophesied Ashoka’s greatness.
- *Mahavamsa* mentions him as follower of **Brahmanism**.
- Fragmentary inscription at Sanchi Temple 40 suggests connection with **Buddhism**.



## Death

- Reigned for ~25 years.
- Death led to a **succession crisis** for ~4 years until Ashoka firmly secured the throne.

## Ashoka – The Mauryan Emperor (268–232 BCE)

Grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, son of **Bindusara** and **Subhadrangi**. Widely regarded as one of the greatest rulers in Indian and world history for his transformation from conquest to **Dhamma** and non-violence.

## Accession to the Throne

- After Bindusara's death (273 BCE) → **succession struggle** of 4 years.
- According to **Divyavadana**:
  - Bindusara preferred **Susima** as successor.
  - Ministers, led by **Radhagupta**, supported Ashoka.
  - Ashoka allegedly killed **99 brothers** (except Vitashoka) before coronation (269 BCE).
- Earlier: served as **Viceroy of Ujjain & Taxila** (commercial and strategic hubs).



Category	Details
<b>Titles &amp; Names of Ashoka</b>	<b>Meaning / Source</b>
Ashoka	"Without sorrow" – derived from mother Subhadrangi's words at his birth
Devanampiya	"Beloved of the Gods" – used in Ashokan inscriptions
Piyadassi / Piyadasi	"Of pleasing appearance" – mentioned in Sri Lankan chronicles
Dharmashoka	Title adopted after embracing Buddhism
Buddhashakya	Mentioned in the Maski Edict
<b>Family &amp; Queens</b>	
Mother	Subhadrangi (also called Janapadakalyani or Dharma)
<b>Queens</b>	
Mahadevi (Devi) of Vidisha	Mother of Mahinda & Sanghamitra (Buddhist missionaries to Sri Lanka)
Karuvaki	Only queen mentioned in inscriptions (Queen's Edict);





	mother of Tivara
Asandhimitta	Chief queen
Padmavati	—
Tissarakhita	Infamously cut the Bodhi tree

### Extent of Empire

- Largest Mauryan empire: from **Hindukush to Bengal**, covering Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Kashmir, Nepal valleys.
- South: except Cholas, Pandyas, Keralaputras, Satyaputras (mentioned in Rock Edict II & XIII).
- **Kalinga (Odisha)** conquered in 261 BCE (8th regnal year).



*Mauryan empire under Ashoka Reign*

### Foreign Relations

- Maintained diplomatic ties with Hellenistic rulers:
  - **Antiochus II (Syria), Ptolemy II (Egypt), Antigonus (Macedonia), Magas (Cyrene/Libya), Alexander of Epirus.**
- Sent and received diplomatic and religious missions (Rock Edict XIII).
- Buddhism spread abroad → Sri Lanka, Burma, Central Asia, Mediterranean regions.



## Kalinga War (261 BCE)

- Bloodiest war of his reign.
- Rock Edict XIII:
  - 1,00,000 killed, many lakhs died, 1,50,000 deported.
  - Possibly exaggerated but indicates scale.
- Result:
  - Ashoka deeply moved → abandoned *Bherighosha* (drum of war) for *Dhammaghosha* (drum of Dhamma).
  - Turning point of his reign → moral conquest over military conquest.

## Conversion to Buddhism

- Initially known as “**Chandashoka**” (cruel Ashoka).
- Conversion:
  - Buddhist texts differ → **Nigrodha (monk)** or **Samudra (merchant-monk)** converted him.
  - Gradual process:
    - Became **Upasaka** (lay follower) ~10th year.
    - Full patron of the Sangha later (Bhabru Edict).
- Influenced by **Moggaliputta Tissa**.
- Presided over **Third Buddhist Council (247 BCE, Pataliputra)** → purification of Sangha, missionary activity.
- Sent son **Mahinda** & daughter **Sanghamitra** to Sri Lanka.

## Ashoka's Administration

- Described himself as “**father to his subjects**”.
- Officials: **Rajukas** (judicial officers), **Dhamma Mahamattas** (moral officials).
- Regular tours (Dhammayatras) for direct contact with people.
- Maintained large army but avoided aggressive wars post-Kalinga.

## Evaluation of Ashoka

- **Achievements:**
  - First ruler to **unify nearly the whole subcontinent**.
  - **Model of benevolent kingship** – direct communication, welfare measures.
  - **Cultural unification** – respected all languages/scripts (Brahmi, Kharoshthi, Aramaic, Greek).
  - Spread **Buddhism outside India** → Sri Lanka, Central Asia, Hellenistic world.



- **Limitations:**

- Dhamma was idealistic, lacked strong administrative/military foundation.
- Post-Ashoka → empire declined due to weakened central authority.

### Death & Legacy

- Died in **232 BCE** after ~40 years of rule.
- Empire weakened rapidly → NW frontiers lost soon.
- Remembered as **Chandashoka** → **Dharmashoka**.
- His legacy: **peace, tolerance, compassion, Buddhism, inscriptions**.

### Rulers of the Mauryan Dynasty after Ashoka

Ruler	Reign (BCE)	Key Points	Significance
<b>Dasharatha Maurya</b>	232 – 224	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grandson of Ashoka, succeeded him.</li> <li>• Last Mauryan ruler to issue <b>imperial inscriptions</b>.</li> <li>• Continued Ashoka's religious/social policies (Buddhist patronage).</li> <li>• Several provinces broke away.</li> <li>• Issued inscriptions at <b>Nagarjuni caves</b>.</li> </ul>	Marked the beginning of political fragmentation after Ashoka.
<b>Samprati</b>	224 – 215	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruled from <b>Pataliputra &amp; Ujjain</b> (dual capitals).</li> <li>• Recovered lost provinces (Saurashtra, Maharashtra, Andhra, Mysore).</li> <li>• Great patron of <b>Jainism</b>: disciple of Suhastisuri.</li> <li>• Made regions safe for monks; Jainism spread in Andhra, Dravida, Maharashtra, Karnataka (Coorg).</li> <li>• Mentioned in <b>Parisistaparvan &amp; Kalpasutra-bhashya</b>.</li> </ul>	Known as the "Jain Ashoka"; expanded Jain influence in South India.
<b>Shalishuka</b>	215 – 202	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successor of Samprati.</li> <li>• Mentioned in <b>Gargi</b></li> </ul>	Reflects declining royal authority and morality.



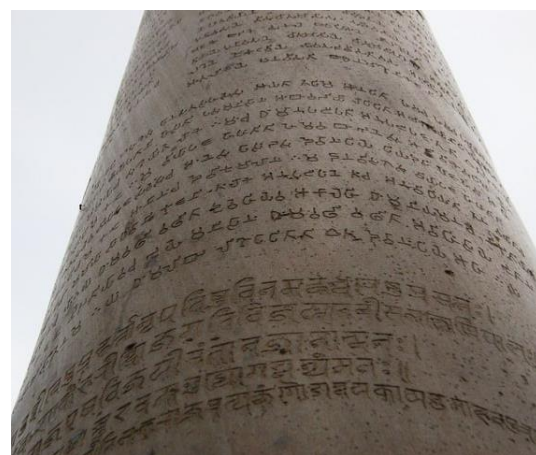
		<b>Samhita (Yuga Purana).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Described as <b>quarrelsome &amp; unrighteous.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Devavarman</b>	202 – 195	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successor of Shalishuka.</li> <li>Ruled for <b>7 years</b> (per Puranas).</li> <li>No significant achievements.</li> </ul>	Continued decline and fragmentation of empire.
<b>Shatadhanvan</b>	195 – 187	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successor of Devavarman.</li> <li>The Empire faced <b>territorial losses</b> due to invasions and rise of neighbours.</li> </ul>	Weakening military & administration.
<b>Brihadratha Maurya</b>	187 – 185	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Last Mauryan ruler.</li> <li>Weak and ineffective.</li> <li>Assassinated by <b>Pushyamitra Shunga</b> (Brahmana general) during military parade.</li> <li>Shunga dynasty established.</li> </ul>	End of Mauryan dynasty; transition to Shunga rule.

### Ashoka's Dhamma: Philosophy and Policy

**Ashoka (273–232 BCE)**, after the **Kalinga War (261 BCE)**, renounced conquest by arms (*Bherighosha*) and adopted **conquest by Dhamma (*Dhammaghosha*)**.

- Dhamma became **both a personal moral philosophy and an instrument of state policy**.
- The **sources** for Ashoka's Dhamma:
  - Major Rock Edicts (esp. XIII & XII)**
  - Pillar Edicts (esp. II, VII)**
  - Minor Rock Edicts**

"The true conquest is by Dhamma, not by war."  
— *13th Rock Edict*



Rock Edict of Emperor Ashoka about Dhamma social cohesion

#### Features:

- Respect for elders, parents, teachers.**
- Non-violence:** Prohibition of animal sacrifice; regulation of animal slaughter.
- Religious tolerance** among Brahmanas, Buddhists, Jains, Ajivikas.



- **Compassion:** Establishment of hospitals, dharmashalas, wells, rest houses.
- **Social ethics:** Kindness to servants, prisoners, women's welfare.
- **Moral administration:** Appointment of **Dhamma Mahamattas** (14th year) to propagate Dhamma.

Replaced **Vihara-yatras** with **Dhammayatras** (pilgrimage for moral preaching).

### I. Meaning and Nature of Dhamma

Perspective	Description
<b>Not a religion</b>	Neither purely Buddhist nor Brahmanical; a <b>code of ethical and social conduct</b> .
<b>Practical in nature</b>	Focused on <b>social harmony, moral values, and administrative ethics</b> , not metaphysics.
<b>Broad inclusiveness</b>	Sought to <b>unite all sects and communities</b> under a common moral framework.

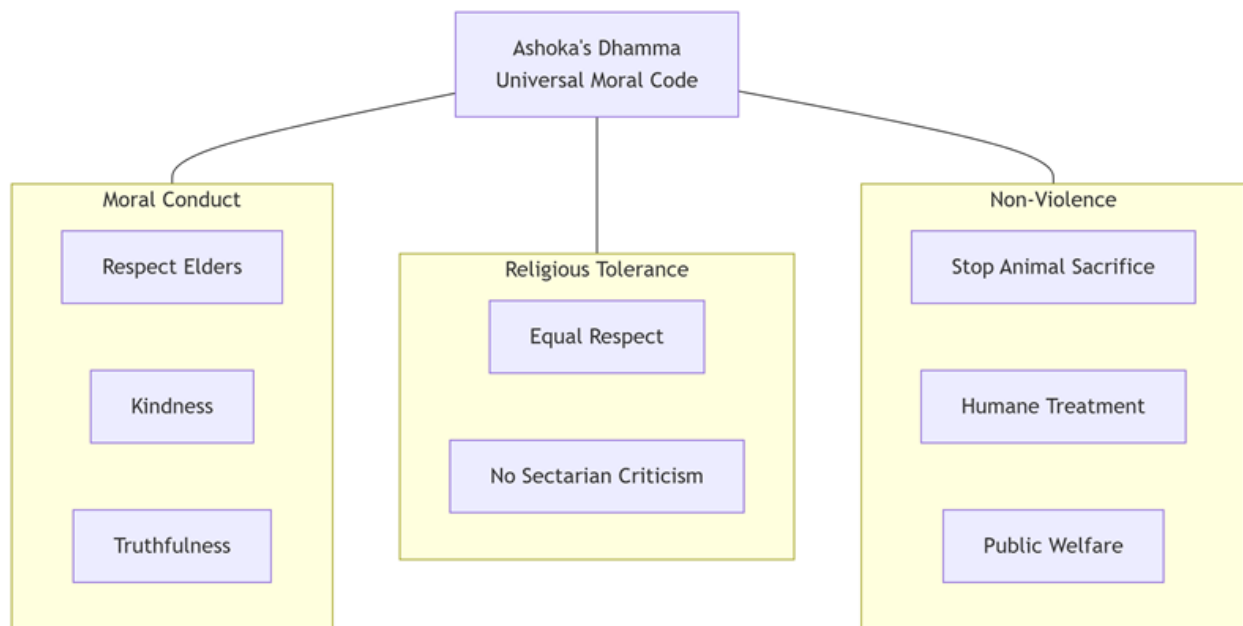
### II. Core Principles and Constituent Elements

The principles of Dhamma are detailed in Ashoka's Major and Minor Rock and Pillar Edicts.

Principle	Key Components & Edict References
<b>1. Moral Code &amp; Good Conduct</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inculcate Virtues:</b> Kindness (<i>daya</i>), charity (<i>dana</i>), truthfulness (<i>sache</i>), purity (<i>sochaye</i>), and gentleness (<i>sadhawe</i>). (Major Pillar Edict II).</li> <li>• <b>Avoid Vices:</b> Violence, cruelty, anger, jealousy, pride, and envy.</li> <li>• <b>Social Harmony:</b> Obedience to parents, respect for elders and teachers, gentle treatment of servants and slaves.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Religious Tolerance &amp; Concord</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mutual Respect:</b> "All sects deserve reverence for one reason or another." (Major Rock Edict XII).</li> <li>• <b>Practice:</b> Equal respect to <b>Brahmanas</b> and <b>Shramanas</b> (Buddhist &amp; Jain monks).</li> <li>• <b>Restraint on Speech:</b> Advised against praising one's own sect or disparaging others (<i>Samam Vachaguti</i>).</li> </ul>
<b>3. Non-Violence (Ahimsa)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Renunciation of War:</b> Gave up policy of military conquest (<i>Bherighosha</i>) for conquest by Dhamma (<i>Dhammaghosha</i>). (Major Rock Edict XIII).</li> <li>• <b>Animal Welfare:</b> Banned unnecessary <b>animal sacrifices</b> and festive slaughter. Drastically reduced meat consumption in the royal kitchen.</li> <li>• <b>Positive Steps:</b> Established veterinary hospitals, planted trees for</li> </ul>



	shade, and dug wells for animals and humans.
<b>4. The King's Duty &amp; Welfare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Paternal Ideal:</b> "All men are my children." (<i>Sabe Munishe Paja Mama</i>).</li> <li>• <b>Welfare State:</b> Undertook public works like planting trees (banyan, mango), digging wells, building rest houses, and providing medical care for humans and animals (<i>Manusha Chikitsa, Pashu Chikitsa</i>).</li> <li>• <b>Humane Justice:</b> Introduced reforms like a <b>3-day respite</b> for death row convicts and annual amnesties. Advised officers to be impartial (<i>samata</i>) and avoid torture.</li> </ul>



### III. Measures for Propagating Dhamma

Ashoka used the state machinery extensively to promote Dhamma.

- **Issuance of Edicts:** Inscribed the principles of Dhamma on rocks and pillars across his empire and beyond to make them accessible to the public.
- **Appointment of Officials:**
  - **Dhamma Mahamattas:** A special class of officers appointed in the **13th year of his reign** to propagate Dhamma among all sections, including women, and to oversee its practice. This was a major administrative innovation.
  - **Other Officials:** Officials like **Rajukas** (district officers), **Yuktas**, and **Pradeshikas** were also entrusted with the duty of disseminating Dhamma.
- **Dhamma Yatras (Tours):**





- The emperor, along with his officials, undertook tours to preach Dhamma and inspect the welfare of his subjects.
- **Prohibition of Harmful Practices:** Banned certain popular but harmful gatherings (*Samajas*) and superstitious rituals performed by women, replacing them with Dhamma-centric ceremonies (*Dhamma-mangalas*).

### Propagation of Dhamma Beyond India

- **Missionary efforts** — Ashoka sent envoys to:
  - **Sri Lanka** (Mahendra, Sanghamitra).
  - **Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, and Central Asia** (as per Greek records).
- Objective: **Spread of ethical ideals and goodwill**, not political conquest.
- Example: **Kandahar Inscription** shows impact on fowlers and fishermen who adopted non-violence.

### IV. Nature and Significance of Dhamma

Aspect	Explanation
<b>Moral philosophy</b>	Aimed at internal reform of individuals and society.
<b>Political instrument</b>	Used to integrate diverse empire through ethical governance.
<b>Humanitarian code</b>	Humane treatment of subjects and animals, proto-welfare state idea.
<b>Secular ethics</b>	Respect for all religions, emphasis on tolerance.
<b>Revolutionary governance</b>	Shift from coercion (Kautilyan realism) to persuasion (moral idealism).

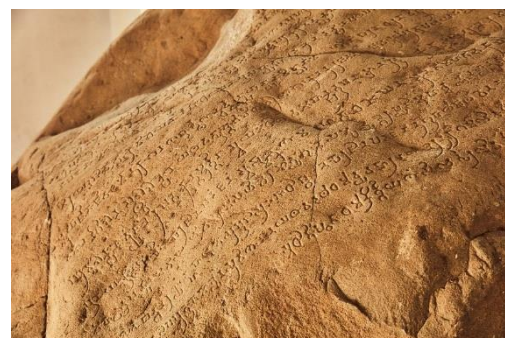
- **Legacy of Peace:** Established an ideal of kingship based on welfare and ethical conquest, which left a lasting impression on Indian political thought.
- **D.D. Kosambi:** "The real conversion of Ashoka was not of the king, but of the whole system."

### Ashoka's Inscriptions

Ashoka's edicts are the oldest deciphered written records of Indian history (deciphered by **James Prinsep in 1837**). They are the primary source for understanding his reign, policies, and the extent of his empire.

#### I. Basic Features & Classification

- **Purpose:** To communicate the King's personal concerns and his policy of **Dhamma** directly to his people.
- **King's Title:** Ashoka mostly refers to himself as **Devanampiya Piyadassi** ("Beloved of the



Gods, Piyadassi"). The name "Ashoka" appears only in a few Minor Rock Edicts (e.g., Maski, Gurjara).

- **Classification:** The 33 inscriptions, found in **India, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan** are categorized as follows:

Type	Number	Key Locations	Material & Purpose
<b>Major Rock Edicts</b>	14	Kalsi, Girnar, Sopara, Dhauri, Jaugada, Yerragudi, Shahbazgarhi, Mansehra	Large rock surfaces; for wide public proclamation.
<b>Minor Rock Edicts</b>	15+	Maski, Brahmagiri, Rupnath, Bhabru, Sannati, Ahraura	Smaller rock surfaces; often mark Ashoka's early propagation of Dhamma.
<b>Major Pillar Edicts</b>	7	Topra, Meerut, Lauriya-Araraj, Lauriya-Nandangarh, Rampurva, Allahabad	Polished Chunar sandstone pillars; from the latter part of his reign, concentrated in the Gangetic plain.
<b>Minor Pillar Edicts</b>	-	Sarnath, Sanchi, Lumbini, Nigali Sagar	Pillars; often commemorative, related to Buddhism.
<b>Separate / Cave Edicts</b>	-	Dhauri, Jaugada (Kalinga Edicts); Barabar Caves	Specific proclamations for Kalinga; donations to Ajivikas.

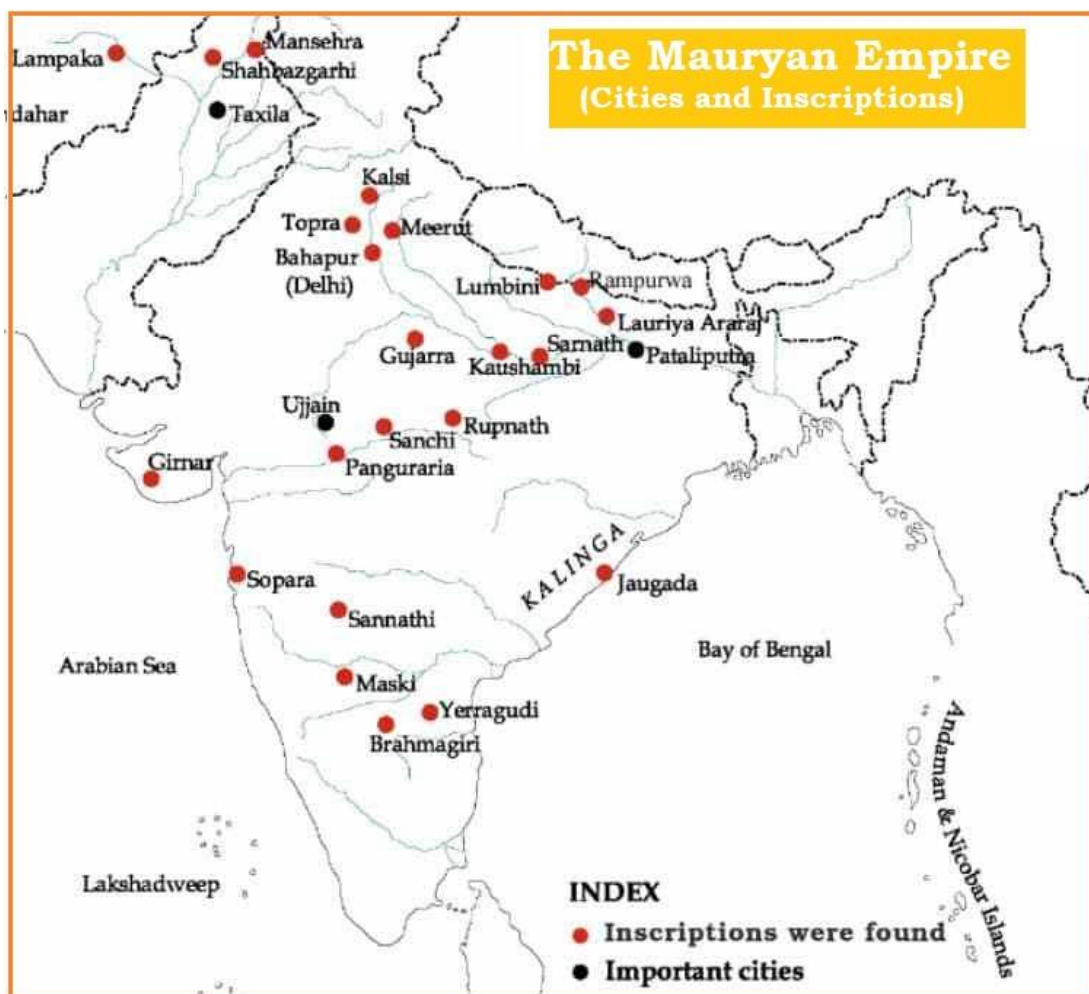


**Language, Script, and Geography**

Region	Language	Script	Examples
North & Central India	Prakrit	<b>Brahmi</b>	Kalsi, Girnar, Sanchi
Northwest (Pakistan region)	Prakrit / Aramaic	<b>Kharosthi</b>	Shahbazgarhi, Mansehra
Afghanistan	<b>Greek &amp; Aramaic</b>	Greek / Aramaic	Kandahar inscription
Nepal	Prakrit	Brahmi	Rummindei, Nigalisagar

**Decipherment:**

- Deciphered by **James Prinsep (1837 CE)**.
- Ashoka referred to himself as “**Devanampiya Piyadasi**” (**Beloved of the Gods**);  
The name *Ashoka* appears only in a few inscriptions (Maski, Gujarrar, Nittur, Udegolam).



## II. Key Messages of Major Rock Edicts (MREs)

A summary of the core messages from the Fourteen Major Rock Edicts:

Edict	Key Message / Content
<b>MRE I</b>	Prohibits animal slaughter and bans festive gatherings. Only two peacocks and one deer were killed in the royal kitchen.
<b>MRE II</b>	Provides for medical treatment for humans and animals; describes the southern kingdoms of Cholas, Pandyas, Satyaputras, and Keralaputras.
<b>MRE III</b>	Orders <b>Yuktas, Rajukas, and Pradeshikas</b> to tour their territories every five years to preach Dhamma. Preaches generosity to Brahmins and Shramanas.
<b>MRE IV</b>	The sound of the war drum ( <b>Bheri Ghosha</b> ) has been replaced by the sound of Dhamma ( <b>Dhamma Ghosha</b> ).
<b>MRE V</b>	Announces the appointment of <b>Dhamma Mahamattas</b> (officers of Dhamma) to propagate morality and look after the welfare of the people.
<b>MRE VI</b>	The King's desire to be constantly informed about the condition of his people. Mentions <b>Mantri Parishad</b> and reporters ( <i>Pativedakas</i> ).
<b>MRE VII</b>	Pleads for religious tolerance and harmony among all sects. Welfare measures for the public.
<b>MRE VIII</b>	Describes the King's <b>Dhamma Yatras</b> (tours) to places like Bodh Gaya, replacing earlier pleasure tours.
<b>MRE IX</b>	Condemns popular and meaningless ceremonies ( <b>Samajas</b> ). Stresses that moral conduct ( <i>Dhamma-mangala</i> ) is the true ceremony.
<b>MRE X</b>	Condemns the desire for fame and glory. Stresses that the only true fame is the fame earned through Dhamma.
<b>MRE XI</b>	Elaborates on Dhamma through concepts like respect for elders, compassion for all, and truthfulness.
<b>MRE XII</b>	A direct appeal for tolerance among different religious sects. Asks people to refrain from praising one's own sect and disparaging others.
<b>MRE XIII</b>	<b>The most important edict.</b> Records the <b>Kalinga War</b> and its profound impact on Ashoka. Declares the renunciation of war and the adoption of <b>Dhamma Vijaya</b> (conquest by Dhamma). Mentions his contemporary Hellenistic kings.
<b>MRE XIV</b>	Explains the purpose of inscribing these edicts—to communicate his message to the people throughout the ages.



### III. Key Messages of Pillar Edicts & Other Important Inscriptions

#### Ashokan Pillars – Artistic and Symbolic Features

- Made of **Chunar sandstone**, monolithic and highly polished.
- Height: 12–14 m, with **inverted lotus bell base**, **abacus**, and **animal capitals**.
- Common motifs:
  - Lion** – power & Buddha as “Sakyasimha.”
  - Bull** – fertility.
  - Elephant** – Buddha’s conception symbol.
  - Horse** – Buddha’s renunciation.
  - Wheel (Dharmachakra)** – Dhamma and sovereignty.
- Famous examples:**
  - Sarnath Lion Capital → **National Emblem of India**.
  - Rampurva Bull, Lauriya-Nandangarh Lion, Sanchi Elephant.



#### A. Major Pillar Edicts (MPE)

- MPE I & II:** Define Dhamma as minimizing sins, possessing virtues like compassion, charity, and truthfulness.
- MPE III:** Discusses justice and forbids practices like harshness, cruelty, anger, and envy.
- MPE IV:** Deals with the duties of **Rajukas** in administering justice and their increased powers.
- MPE V (Delhi-Topra):** Provides a detailed list of animals and birds that must not be slaughtered.
- MPE VI & VII:** Summarize the work done by Ashoka for Dhamma policy and express his belief that all sects desire self-control and purity of mind.

#### B. Minor Pillar Inscriptions (Commemorative)

##### Minor Pillar Edicts & Other Important Inscriptions

Site	Key Details
<b>Rummindei (Lumbini, Nepal)</b>	Marks Buddha’s birthplace; tax exemption to villagers.
<b>Nigalisagar (Nepal)</b>	Enlargement of Stupa of Buddha Konakamana.
<b>Kosam (Allahabad)</b>	<i>Queen’s Edict</i> – addresses conduct of royal family; warns against schism in Sangha.





<b>Kandahar (Afghanistan)</b>	Bilingual (Greek & Aramaic); moral teachings; no mention of Buddha.
<b>Girnar (Gujarat)</b>	Mentions Sudarshan Lake (constructed by Pushyagupta, Governor under Chandragupta).
<b>Sannati (Karnataka)</b>	Contains all 14 Major Rock Edicts and two separate Kalinga edicts.

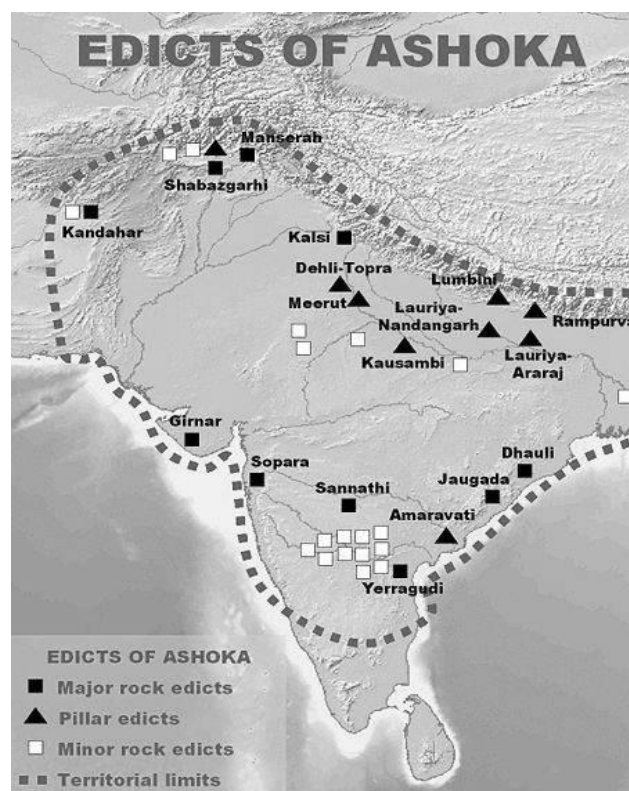
### C. Separate Rock Edicts (for Kalinga)

- Found at **Dhauli** and **Jaugada**. They replace MREs XI, XII, and XIII.

Edict	Message
<b>I</b>	Declares " <b>All men are my children.</b> " Expresses fatherly concern for subjects.
<b>II</b>	Urges dissemination of Dhamma even to individuals; moral governance emphasized.

### IV. Significance of Ashoka's Inscriptions

- Historical Source:** Provide the first authentic and datable history of ancient India.
- Extent of the Empire:** Help map the vast geographical extent of the Mauryan Empire.
- Ideology of Kingship:** Reflect a shift from a conqueror-king to a paternal, welfare-oriented ruler.
- Administrative Insight:** Reveal details about the Mauryan bureaucracy (Rajukas, Yuktas, Dhamma Mahamattas).
- Art and Architecture:** The pillars themselves are masterpieces of Mauryan art, showcasing advanced engineering and a brilliant polish.
- Linguistic Evidence:** Provide crucial evidence for the development of scripts like Brahmi and Kharosthi.

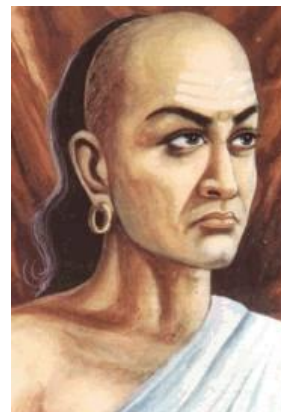




## Kautilya (Chanakya / Vishnugupta)

### Identity and Background

- Teacher, philosopher, economist, and political strategist of ancient India.
- Known by three names: **Kautilya**, **Chanakya**, and **Vishnugupta**.
- **Born in Taxila (Takshashila)**, an ancient centre of learning.
- Served as **Chief Minister (Amatya)** and **mentor** to **Chandragupta Maurya**.
- Played a decisive role in **overthrowing the Nanda dynasty** and establishing the **Mauryan Empire**.
- Also acted as an **advisor in Bindusara's court**.



### Role in the Mauryan Empire

- **Architect of Chandragupta's rise to power** through diplomacy, intelligence, and warfare.
- Laid the foundation of a **centralised administrative system**.
- Formulated the **principles of governance, taxation, espionage, and diplomacy** which became the framework of Mauryan polity.
- Advocated "**Pragmatic and Realistic Politics**", prioritising **state security and prosperity** over moral idealism.
- Emphasised **welfare monarchy** — the king's happiness lies in the happiness of his subjects.

### Arthashastra of Kautilya

Aspect	Details
<b>Meaning of "Arthashastra"</b>	<i>Artha</i> = Material well-being / wealth / state interest <i>Shastra</i> = Science / Treatise <b>Literal meaning:</b> "The Science of Statecraft and Material Well-being"
<b>Language</b>	Sanskrit
<b>Nature of the Text</b>	- Comprehensive manual on governance, administration, economics, law, and military strategy. - Regarded as one of the most sophisticated treatises on <b>political science</b> in ancient India.
<b>Composition</b>	- <b>15 Books (Adhikaranas)</b> - <b>180 Chapters</b> - <b>~6,000 Shlokas</b> - Written in both <b>prose and verse</b> (similar to <i>Mahabharata</i> style).
<b>Period of Composition</b>	Likely composed around <b>4th century BCE</b> (Mauryan period). The surviving manuscript dates to <b>~250 CE</b> .
<b>Rediscovery</b>	Rediscovered in <b>1905 CE</b> by <b>R. Shamasastri</b> , who published and translated it.
<b>Authorship &amp;</b>	Authored by <b>Kautilya (Chanakya / Vishnugupta)</b> , the chief



<b>Compilation</b>	minister of Chandragupta Maurya. Some parts may have been <b>edited or compiled later</b> , but the core philosophy belongs to Kautilya.
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### Structure of the Arthashastra

Section	Content Focus
<b>Books 1–5 (Tantra)</b>	Internal administration — duties of the king, ministers, officials, taxation, and economy.
<b>Books 6–13 (Avapa)</b>	Foreign policy, diplomacy, and interstate relations — theories of war and peace.
<b>Books 14–15</b>	Miscellaneous topics — espionage, secret operations, law enforcement, and statecraft summary.

#### KAUTILYA'S ARTHASHASTRA

##### The Science of Statecraft, State Welfare, and Power

STATECRAFT	ECONOMY	JUSTICE	ESPIONAGE	DIPLOMACY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• King as Dharma Pravakta</li> <li>• Council of Ministers</li> <li>• 27 Department Adhyakshas</li> <li>• Centralized Administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Revenue (Bhaga 1/6)</li> <li>• Treasury (Kosha)</li> <li>• State Monopolies</li> <li>• Trade &amp; Guilds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil &amp; Criminal Courts</li> <li>• Rule of Law</li> <li>• Danda (Punishment)</li> <li>• Varna-based Justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanstha (Stationary Spies)</li> <li>• Sanchara (Wandering Spies)</li> <li>• Loyalty Tests</li> <li>• Surveillance System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandala Theory</li> <li>• 12 Kings Circle</li> <li>• 6 Policies (Sandhi, Vighraha)</li> <li>• Vijigishu at center</li> </ul>



#### WELFARE (Dharma & Public Good)

- Support for weak & poor
- Disaster Relief
- Infrastructure:
  - roads
  - wells
  - irrigation



### Philosophical and Comparative Aspects

- Advocates **Artha (material well-being)** as superior to **Dharma (moral order)** and **Kama (pleasure)** — as it sustains the other two.
- Kautilya's realism parallels **Machiavelli's *The Prince*** → both emphasise practical politics over moral idealism.
- However, Kautilya integrates **welfare ethics** — moral restraint and duty-bound kingship.

### Significance and Legacy

- Earliest comprehensive treatise on **political economy and administration** in India.
- Foundation of **Mauryan administrative and political structure**.
- Influenced later texts such as **Manusmriti** and **Nitisara**.
- Provides deep insight into **ancient Indian polity, economy, and social structure**.
- Kautilya is regarded as the "**Indian Machiavelli**" for his political realism.

### Mauryan Administration

The Mauryan period (c. 322 – 185 BCE) is renowned for establishing a vast, centralized, and highly organized bureaucratic state, one of the first of its kind in Indian history. The primary sources for its study are Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, the accounts of Megasthenes (*Indica*), and the Ashokan Edicts.

### Salient Features of Mauryan Administration

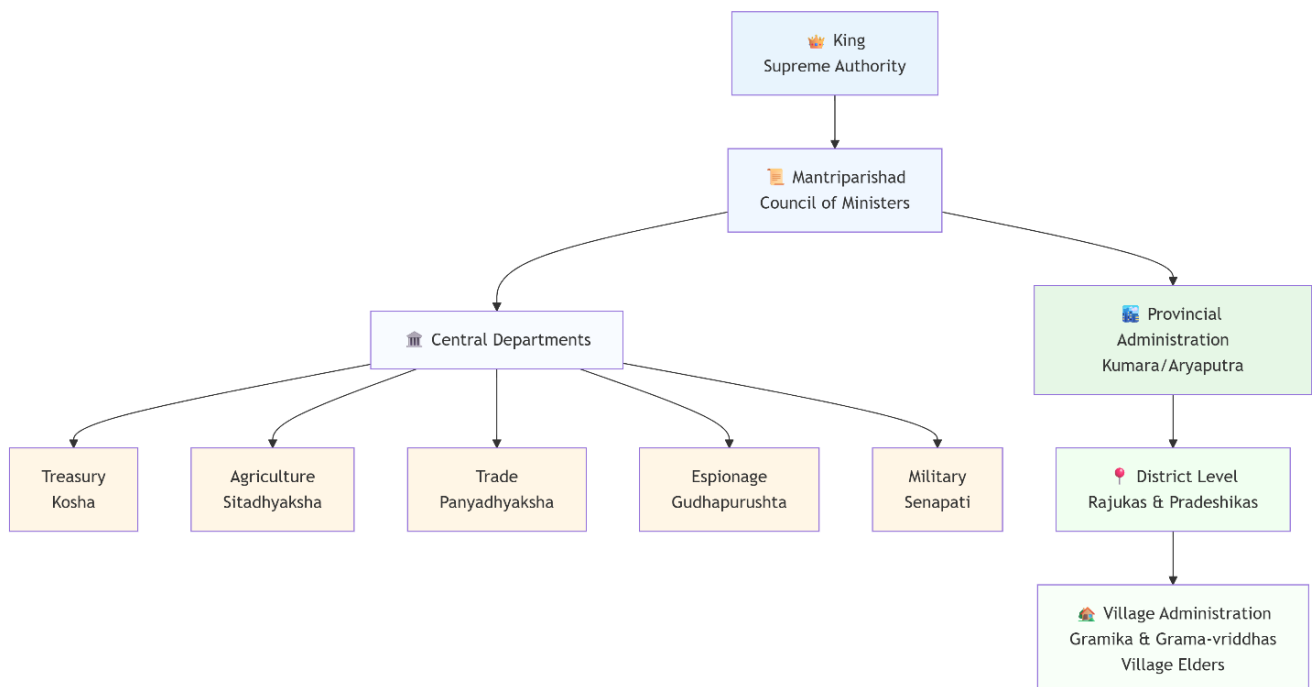
- **Highly centralised and efficient** system – the king was supreme but guided by a council of ministers.
- **Systematic record-keeping and accounting**.
- **Welfare state model** – hospitals, roads, irrigation promoted.
- **Merit-based appointments** (Amatyas trained in Arthashastra principles).
- Strong **espionage and law enforcement** system.
- Based on "**Rajadharma**" (ethical governance) and "**Arthashastra**" (practical statecraft) principles – balance between authority and welfare.
- **Hierarchy** of officials with clear roles and accountability.
- Administrative divisions: **Central → Provincial → District → Village**.



## I. Philosophical & Conceptual Foundation

- **Saptanga Rajya (Seven Elements of the State):** Kautilya's theory that a state consists of seven interlocked elements:

1. **Svamin (The King)**
2. **Amatya (The Officials)**
3. **Janapada (The Territory & Population)**
4. **Durga (The Fortified Capital)**
5. **Kosha (The Treasury)**
6. **Danda/Bala (The Army/Justice)**
7. **Mitra (The Ally)**



## II. Central Administration

### A. The King (Svamin)

- **Position:** The fountainhead of all powers—legislative, executive, judicial, and military. He was the **Dharmapravakta** (promulgator of social order).
- **Ideology:** Ruled with **paternal despotism** (seeing subjects as his children), not divine right.
- **Duties & Lifestyle:**
  - **Accessibility:** Hard-working and accessible (e.g., Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka's edicts inviting the public).



- **Welfare State:** Responsible for public welfare—digging wells, planting trees, medical care, maintaining the destitute.
- **Security:** Elaborate measures for king's safety: female bodyguards, secret exits, protection against poison, and a vast spy network.
- **Council of Ministers (Mantriparishad):**
  - A larger advisory body to assist the king in day-to-day administration.
  - Attended by **Maha Mantrins** (high ministers).
  - Influential in appointing high officials like governors and treasurers.

## B. Bureaucracy (Amatya)

- **Hierarchy of Officials:**
  - **The Eighteen Tirthas:** The highest central functionaries.
    - **Mantrin** (Chief Minister)
    - **Purohita** (High Priest)
    - **Senapati** (Commander-in-Chief)
    - **Yuvaraja** (Heir Apparent)
  - **Amatyas/Mahamattas:** High-ranking officials filling top administrative and judicial posts.
  - **Adhyakshas (Superintendents):** 27 departmental heads for economic and military functions.
    - Examples: **Sitadhyaksha** (Agriculture), **Akaradhyaksha** (Mines), **Panya dhyaksha** (Trade), **Nagaradhyaksha** (City), **Lohadhyaksha** (Iron).
- **Key Central Officers:**
  - **Samahartri:** Chief collector of revenue.
  - **Sannidhatri:** Treasurer in charge of the royal treasury and stores.
- **Recruitment & Integrity:**
  - Officials were tested for integrity through various "purification tests":
    - **Dharmopadha** (Religious test) for judges.
    - **Arthopadha** (Money test) for treasury officials.
    - **Kamopadha** (Love test) for palace staff.
    - **Bhayaopadha** (Fear test) for critical postings.
- **Salary:** Wide disparity. Ratio of a clerk's/soldier's salary to the chief minister's was 1:96.

## III. Provincial and Local Administration

### A. Provincial Structure

The empire was divided into provinces, each under a Viceroy (often a royal prince, titled *Kumara* or *Aryaputra*).



Province (During Ashoka)	Capital
Uttarapatha (North)	Taxila
Dakshinapatha (South)	Suvarnagiri
Avantiratha (West)	Ujjain
Prachyapatha (East)	Tosali
Kalinga (Added later)	Tosali/Dhauli

- The central province of **Magadha** was directly administered from **Pataliputra**.

## B. Administrative Divisions (Pyramid Structure)

- Province:** Headed by **Kumara** (Viceroy), assisted by **Mahamattas**.
- Division (Aahara/Vishaya):** Headed by **Pradeshika**.
- District:** Headed by **Rajuka** (responsible for land measurement and law & order).
- Group of Villages (Sangrahana):** Headed by **Sthanika** (tax collection), assisted by **Gopa** (record-keeping).
- Village:** Headed by **Gramika/Gramini** (village headman), assisted by **Gramavridhas** (village elders).

### a. District (Aahar / Vishaya) Administration

- Headed by **Pradeshika** (district officer).
- Assisted by *Yuktas* (clerks) and *Rajukas* (judicial-cum-revenue officers).
- Functions:
  - Revenue collection, maintenance of law and order, and record-keeping.

### b. Village Administration (Gramika System)

- Smallest administrative unit.
- Headed by **Gramika (village headman)** assisted by:
  - Gopa* – record of 5–10 villages.
  - Sthanika* – record of 10–20 villages.
- Responsibilities:
  - Collect taxes, maintain irrigation, settle disputes, and report crimes.
- Village community was self-sufficient.





#### IV. Specialized Administration

##### A. Municipal Administration (Pataliputra)

As per Megasthenes, the city was managed by **six committees (Boards) of five members each**:

Committee / Board	Function
<b>1. Industry &amp; Crafts</b>	Regulated quality, fixed prices, stamped finished goods.
<b>2. Care of Foreigners</b>	Provided lodging, medical care, and managed their property.
<b>3. Vital Statistics</b>	Registered births and deaths for tax and census.
<b>4. Trade &amp; Commerce</b>	Regulated weights, measures, markets, and prevented hoarding.
<b>5. Manufactured Goods</b>	Supervised sale, prevented mixing of old and new stock.
<b>6. Tax Collection</b>	Collected 1/10th of goods sold as tax; fraud punishable by death.

##### B. Military Administration (Danda/Bala)

- **Size:** Vast standing army. Justin mentions Chandragupta had 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 9,000 elephants, and 8,000 chariots.
- **Recruitment:** Open to all four Varnas.
- **War Office:** A council of 30 members, divided into six boards of five, each managing a wing:
  1. **Infantry** (Padadhyaksha)
  2. **Cavalry** (Asvadhyaksha)
  3. **War Chariots** (Rathadhyaksha)
  4. **War Elephants** (Hastyadhyaksha)
  5. **Navy** (Navadhyaksha) - mentioned by Megasthenes, not Kautilya.
  6. **Transport & Logistics**
- **Types of Soldiers:** *Maula* (hereditary), *Bhritya* (mercenaries), *Shreni* (guilds), *Mitra* (allies), *Atavi* (forest tribes).

##### C. Espionage System (Gudhapurushas / Spies)

- **Purpose:** To ensure stability, efficiency, and sniff out sedition.
- **Types of spies:**
  - **Samstha** (stationary) – operated from fixed locations.
  - **Sanchara** (roving) – travelled for intelligence.
- Recruited from **various social classes** (ascetics, beggars, women).



- Used to monitor:
  - Ministers, provincial officials, army, and foreign envoys.
- Played major role in **law enforcement and diplomacy**.
- Other Agents: Pativedakas/Pulisani** (special reporters to the king), **Vishakanyas** (poison girls), **Ubhayavetana** (double agents).

## V. Economic and Revenue Administration (Kosha)

### A. Land Revenue & Agriculture

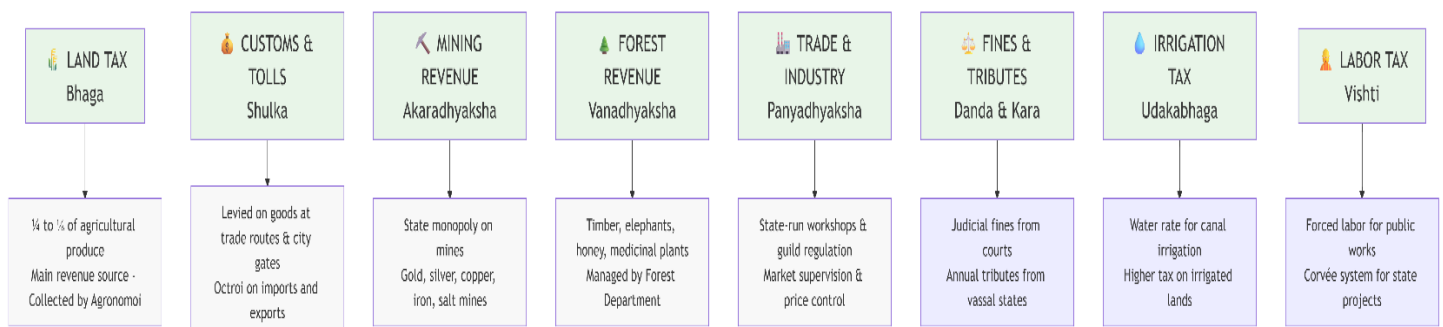
- Main Source:** Land revenue (*Bhaga*) was the primary income, typically **one-sixth** of the produce.
- Other Taxes:** *Bali* (tribute), *Pindakara* (village collective tax), *Hiranya* (cash tax).
- Irrigation Tax:** *Udakabhaga* (water rate), higher at 1/5th to 1/3rd of produce.
- Land Ownership:** Concept of private property (*Kshetra*) existed.
- State Initiatives:**
  - Shunyanivesha:** Bringing virgin land under cultivation via new settlements.
  - Sitadhyaksha:** Superintendent of agriculture managing state farms.
  - Sharecropping:** *Ardhasitikas* (kept half the produce) on state land.

### B. Trade, Industry & Urban Taxes

- State Monopolies:** Mining, salt, liquor, weapons, and iron production (*Lohadhyaksha*).
- Guilds (Shrenis):** Artisans and traders were organized into guilds headed by a *Jesthaka*.
- Taxes:** *Shulka* (customs and tolls), excise duties on manufactures.
- Officials:** *Pautavadhyaksha* (weights & measures), *Rupadarshaka* (coin inspection).

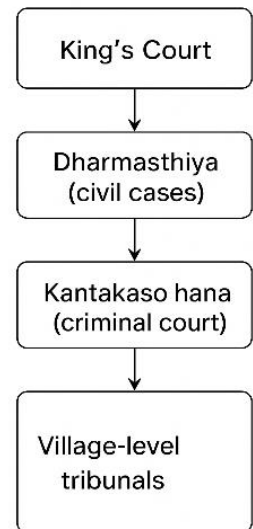
### C. Currency

- Used **punch-marked silver coins** (called *Panas*) with symbols of peacock, hill, etc.



## VI. Judicial Administration (Danda)

- **Supreme Authority:** The King was the fountainhead of justice.
- **Court System:**
  - **Dharmasthiya:** Civil courts for disputes on contracts, marriage, property.
  - **Kantakashodhana:** Criminal courts for theft, robbery, murder.
- **Judicial Officers:**
  - **Dharmasthas** (Judges)
  - **Rajukas** (also had judicial functions at the district level)
  - **Pradeshtris** (for suppression of criminals)
- **Sources of Law:** Dharma (sacred law), Vyavahara (evidence), Charitra (custom), and Rajasasana (royal edicts).
- **Punishments:** Severe, including death, amputation, and fines. Ashoka's Pillar Edict IV mentions a 3-day respite for those condemned to death and claims he introduced *samata* (fairness).



*Judicial hierarchy*

## Mauryan Society and Religion

### I. Social Structure: Varna System and Divisions

The Mauryan period saw a complex social hierarchy dominated by the Varna system, alongside other forms of social stratification.

#### A. The Prevalent Varna System

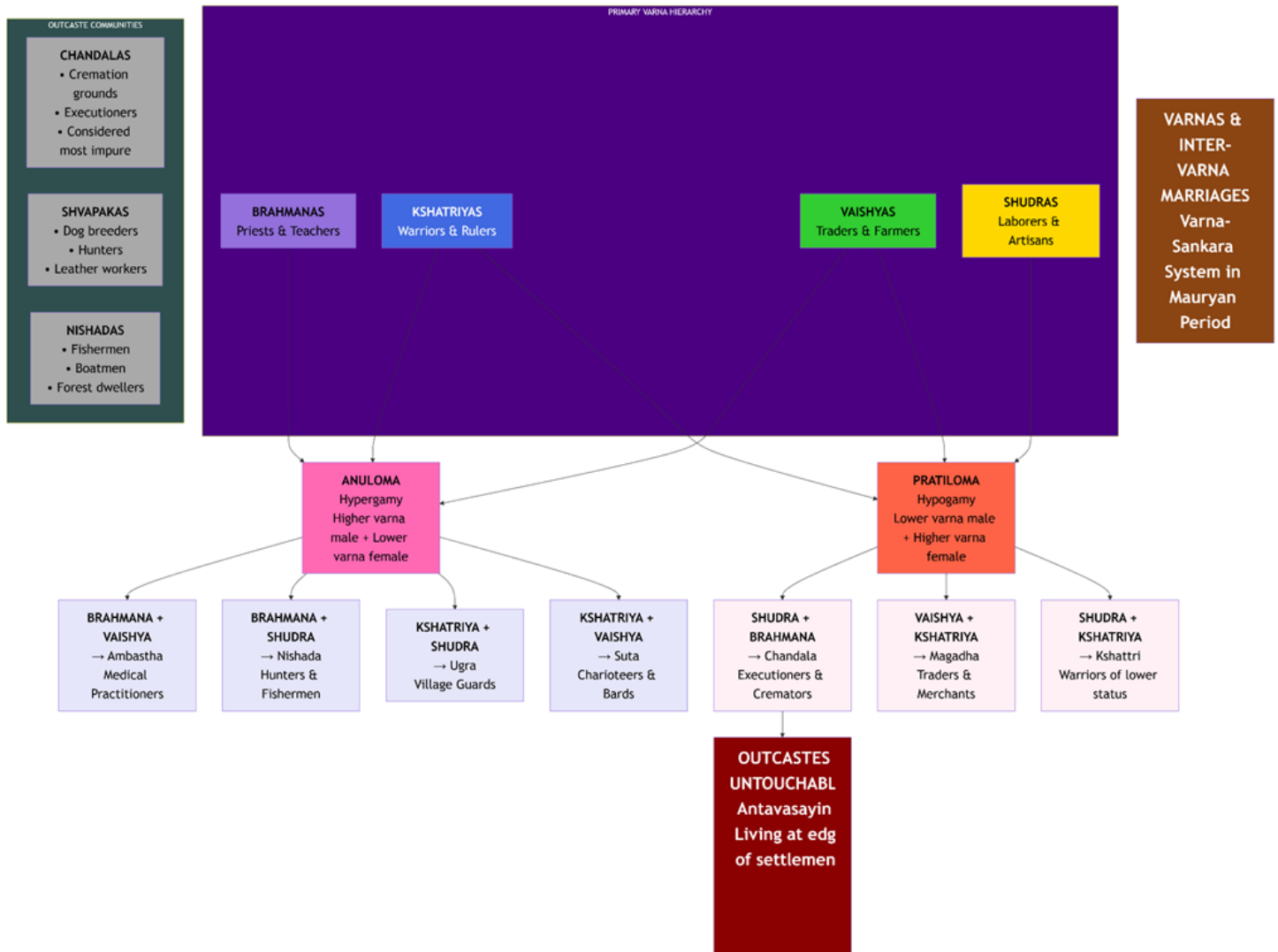
- **Continuity and Rigidity:** The four-fold Varna system
  - a. **Brahmanas** – priests and teachers; enjoyed highest prestige.
  - b. **Kshatriyas** – warriors and administrators.
  - c. **Vaishyas** – traders, agriculturists; status improved due to expanding trade.
  - d. **Shudras** – laborers and artisans; could engage in crafts and agriculture.

continued to be the primary social framework. It had become rigid, with hereditary occupations and restrictions on inter-varna mobility.

- **Dominant Groups:** Brahmanas and Kshatriyas dominated the social hierarchy.
- **Changing Status:**
  - **Vaishyas:** Experienced an improvement in status due to greater trade, commerce, and economic prosperity.



- **Shudras:** Were now permitted to engage in agricultural and artisanal activities, moving beyond mere servitude.



### Varna system in Mauryan society



**B. Megasthenes' Seven-Fold Division**

The Greek ambassador Megasthenes provided an alternative, occupational classification of society into seven categories:

1. **Philosophers** (Brahmanas, Shramanas - priests and intellectuals)
2. **Cultivators** (Peasants - the most numerous class)
3. **Soldiers**
4. **Herdsmen** (and Hunters)
5. **Artisans**
6. **Overseers** (Spies and Officials)
7. **Counsellors** (and Assessors - the elite advisors to the king)

- **Key Features:** These groups were described as hereditary, with no intermarriage between them.

**C. The "Outcastes": Untouchables and Varna-Sankaras**

- **Existence of Untouchables:** The number of "untouchables" or outcastes increased. They were considered outside the Varna system and lived on the margins of society.
  - **Terms Used:** **Chandalas** (handled cremation grounds), **Shvapakas** (dog-breeders), **Antavasayin** (those living at the end of settlements).
  - **Treatment:** They were treated inhumanely and faced severe social exclusion.
- **Varna-Sankaras:** Kautilya's *Arthashastra* mentions mixed castes resulting from inter-varna marriages (e.g., Nishad, Magadh, Suta, Chandalas). These groups were often relegated to low-status occupations.

**D. Institution of Slavery**

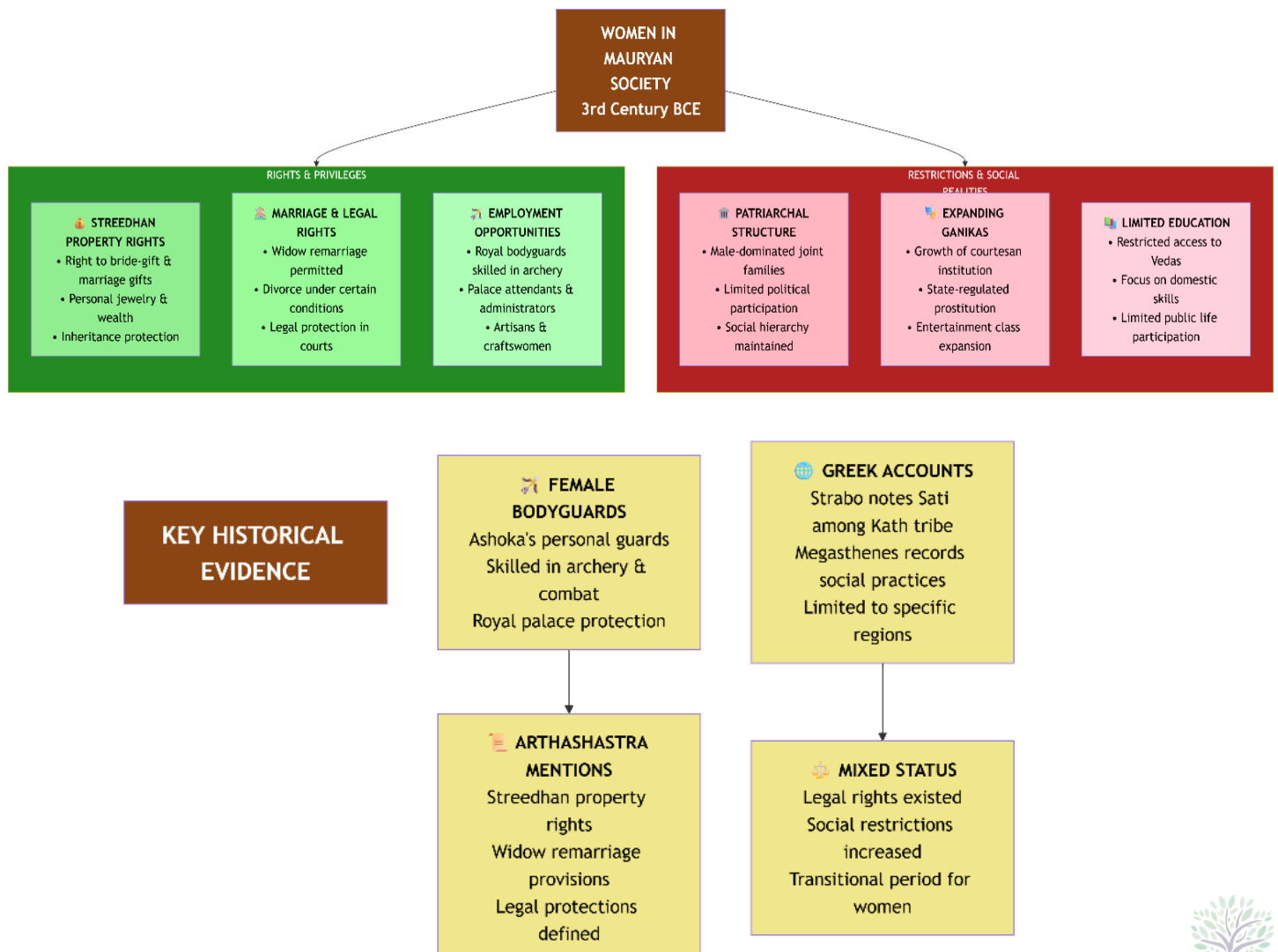
- **Arthashastra** mentions **Dasas (slaves)** and **Bhritakas (servants)**.
- Types of slavery: by birth, sale, capture in war, or judicial punishment.
- **Kautilya** prescribed humane treatment of slaves and punishments for cruelty.
- *Example:* Selling a pregnant slave was punishable unless maternity was arranged.
- **Ashoka's Edicts** urged **compassion towards slaves** and servants (Edict V).
- **Manumission** (freedom upon payment or childbirth) was allowed.
- **Forced labour (Vishti)** existed for state works.



## II. Position of Women

The status of women was a mix of traditional patriarchal norms and some legal protections.

- **Patriarchal Structure:** The joint family system was prevalent, and society was predominantly patriarchal.
- **Legal Rights:**
  - **Property:** Women were allowed to accumulate and possess **Streedhan** (bride-gift, gifts received at marriage).
  - **Remarriage & Divorce:** Widows held a respected position and were permitted to remarry. Divorce was also allowed under certain circumstances.
- **Restrictions and Issues:**
  - **Deteriorating Status:** There was a general decline in women's status. The institution of **Ganikas** (courtesans/prostitutes) expanded.
  - **Sati:** While **Kautilya does not mention Sati**, the Greek writer Strabo notes its prevalence among the Kath tribe of Punjab. It was not a widespread practice.
- **Employment:** Women were employed in various roles, most notably as the king's personal bodyguards, skilled in archery.





### III. Religious Landscape

The Mauryan period was marked by intense religious activity and a general atmosphere of tolerance, with the rise of heterodox sects challenging Brahmanical orthodoxy.

#### A. Key Religions and Their Royal Patrons

Ruler	Religious Affiliation	Key Evidence & Actions
<b>Chandragupta Maurya</b>	<b>Jainism</b> (in later life)	Renounced the throne, became a Jain ascetic, and migrated to Shravanabelagola with Acharya Bhadrabahu.
<b>Bindusara</b>	<b>Ajivikas</b>	Favoured the Ajivika sect. Was a follower of Sramanic traditions.
<b>Ashoka</b>	<b>Buddhism</b>	Embraced Buddhism after the Kalinga War. Became its greatest patron. Convened the <b>Third Buddhist Council at Pataliputra</b> (c. 250 BCE). Sent Buddhist missions worldwide (Dhamma-vijaya).
<b>Dasharatha</b>	<b>Ajivikas</b>	Donated caves in the Nagarjuni hills to Ajivika ascetics, as per inscriptions.

#### B. Religious Tolerance and Interaction

- **Policy of Tolerance:** Despite their personal faiths, the Mauryan rulers generally practiced religious tolerance. Brahmanism continued to be a significant religion.
- **Ashoka's Dhamma:** While personally a Buddhist, Ashoka's **Dhamma** was a set of universal ethical principles, not a religion. It focused on social responsibility, non-violence, respect for all sects, and moral conduct.
- **Patronage to All:** Ashoka, in his inscriptions, mentions making donations and showing respect to **Brahmanas, Shramanas (Buddhist & Jain monks), and Ajivikas**.
- **Incidents of Persecution:** Some historical accounts mention religious persecution of Brahmins, but this was not a state policy.

### IV. Economic & Social Life

- **Agrarian Base:** The majority of the population was engaged in **agriculture**. The economy was characterized by fertile soil, river systems, and diverse crops (rice, barley, millet, sugarcane, pulses).



- **Non-Agrarian Activities:** Animal herding, hunting, and artisanal crafts were common, even within villages.
- **Entertainment:** People engaged in various amusements like **hunting, acting, magic, drama, painting, Vihara-yatra (pleasure trips), Samaj (festive gatherings), and Pravahana (social functions).**
- **Artisans and Forced Labour:** Most artisans were Shudras. They were poorly paid and subjected to **Vishti** (forced labour) for the state.

## Mauryan Economy

The Mauryan period marked a watershed moment in Indian economic history, characterized by the establishment of a unified, state-regulated, and prosperous economic system across a vast subcontinental empire.

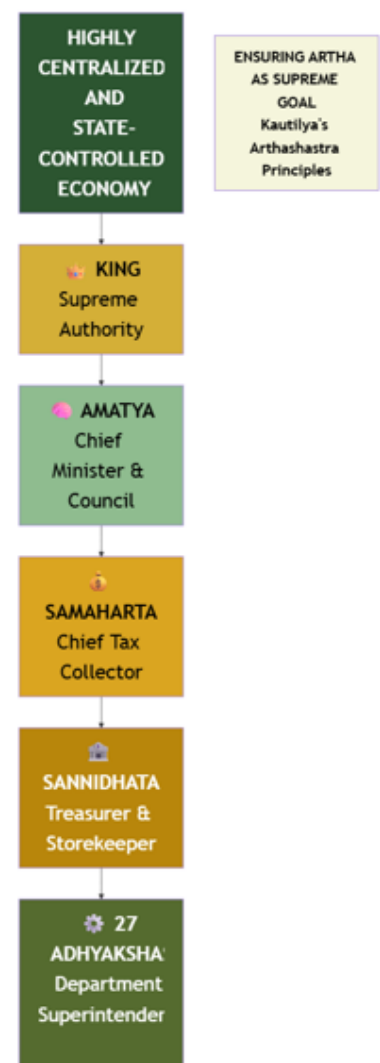
### I. Foundations of Economic Integration

- **Political Unification:** For the first time, the integration of hundreds of smaller kingdoms and republics into a single empire under a **disciplined central government** eliminated internal conflicts and trade barriers.
- **Security and Stability:** The powerful Mauryan army dismantled regional private armies and bands of robbers, ensuring **law and order** and security for merchants, farmers, and traders.
- **Administrative Framework:** A network of provincial governors, administrators, and a civil service enforced a uniform system of justice, security, and economic regulations.

### II. Key Sectors of the Economy

#### A. Agriculture: The Primary Mainstay

- **Land Revenue:** The state's primary income source. The major tax was **Bhaga**, a share of the produce, traditionally one-sixth (Shadbhaginī), though it varied based on land quality and irrigation.
- **Other Agrarian Taxes:**
  - **Bali:** A traditional tribute or additional land tax.
  - **Pindakara:** A tax assessed on and collected from groups of villages.
  - **Hiranya:** A tax paid in cash, often on specific crops.
  - **Udakabhaga:** A water-rate or higher tax on irrigated land.



*The Hierarchy of Economic Administration under Mauryan Rule*



- **State Initiatives:**

- **Sitadhyaksha:** The Superintendent of Agriculture managed state farms (*sita*).
- **Shunyanivesha:** Policy of founding new agricultural settlements on virgin land using people from overpopulated areas, slaves, and prisoners of war.
- **Irrigation:** The state built canals and dams. Officials measured land and managed water sluices to ensure equitable supply.

## B. Trade and Commerce

- **Internal Trade:**

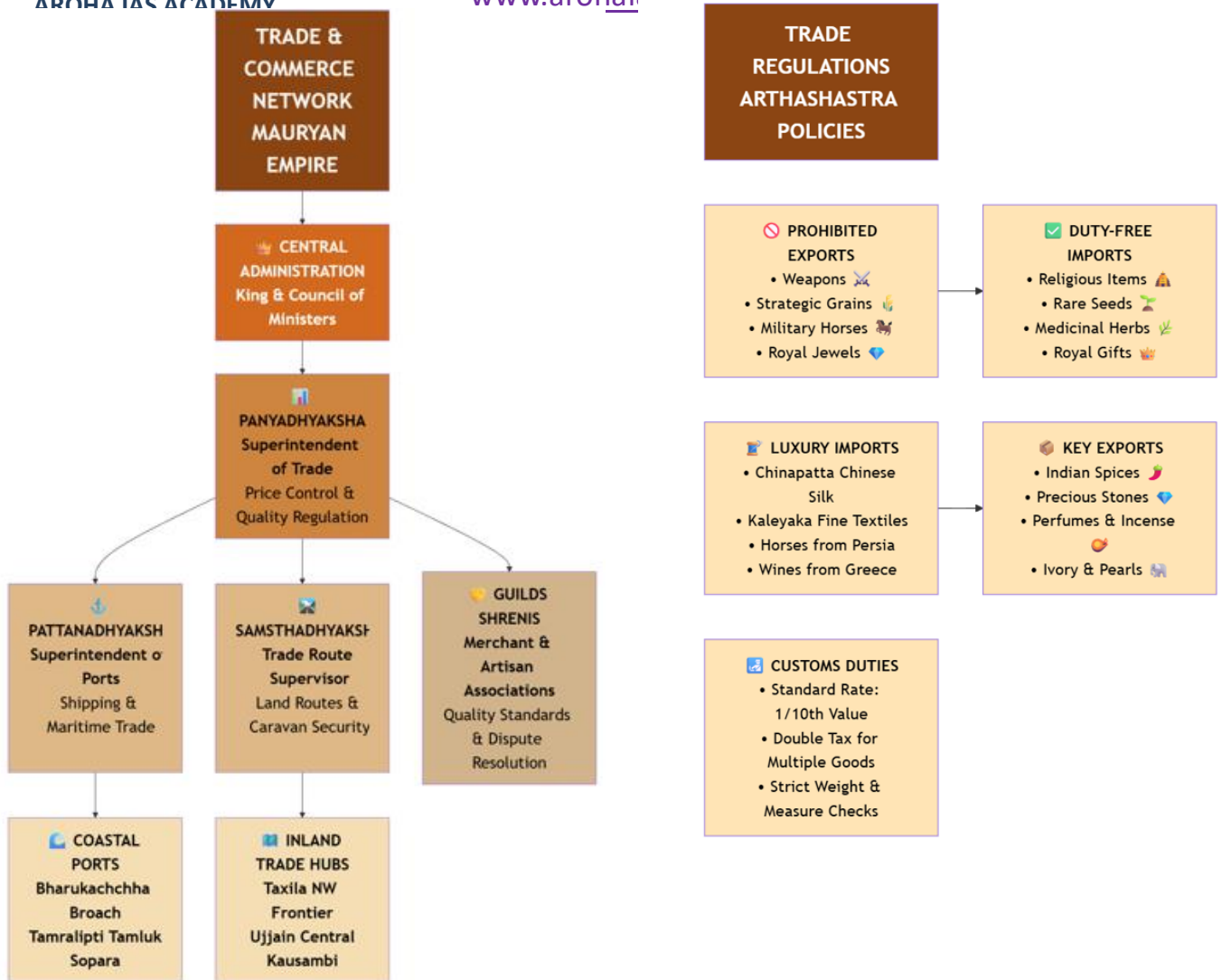
- A vast network of **roads** (funded by Ashoka) connected the empire.
- Key routes :
  - **Inland:** Pataliputra–Vaishali–Champaran–Nepal route.
  - **Waterways:** Ganga and tributaries
- **Guilds (Shrenis):** Artisans and traders were organized into powerful corporate guilds, headed by a *Jesthaka*. These guilds set standards, regulated production, and acted as banks.

- **External Trade:**

### Foreign Trade:

- Export prohibited: Weapons, grains, cattle, jewels.
- Duty-free import: Ritual items, rare seeds.
- Items traded: *Chinapatta* (Chinese cloth), *Kaleyaka* (fine textiles).
- **Trade Routes & Ports:**
  - **Northwest: Taxila** was the major entrepôt for trade with Central Asia.
  - **Seaports: Tamralipti** (in the east, modern Tamluk) and **Bharukachchha (Broach)** (in the west) were crucial maritime hubs.





### • Market Regulation:

- Officials like **Panyadhyaksha** (Controller of Trade) and **Sansthadhyaksha** (Superintendent of Markets) fixed prices, checked adulteration, and regulated weights and measures (**Pautavadhyaksha**).

### Mines, Minerals & Forest Resources

- State monopoly** over mines and forests.
- Departments:**
  - Akaradhyaksha* – Superintendent of mines.
  - Kupyaadhyaksha* – Head of forest produce.
  - Ivitiadhyaksha* – Superintendent of elephant forests (*Hastivanas*).
- Forest wealth:** Timber, elephants, honey, medicinal plants.
- Elephant protection:** Killing elephants punishable by death.
- Treasure Trove Law:**
  - Finder's reward: 1/6th of value if < 1 lakh panas; above that, entire treasure to state.



### C. Industry and Crafts

- **Textiles:** Major centres in Varanasi, Mathura, Bengal, and Ujjain.
- **Metallurgy:** Iron was produced on a large scale and its production was a **state monopoly** under the **Lohadhyaksha** (Superintendent of Iron).
- **Mining:** State-controlled mines (*Akaradhyaksha*) for gold, copper, and other minerals.
- **Adhyakshas (Superintendents):**

Adhyaksha (Superintendent)	Department / Function	Description / Role
<b>Akaradhyaksha</b>	Mining	Supervised extraction of minerals, ores, and metals; maintained records of mines and mineral output.
<b>Suvarnadhyaksha</b>	Gold	Regulated goldsmiths, purity of gold, minting of coins, and gold trade.
<b>Sutradhyaksha</b>	Textiles	Oversaw spinning, weaving, dyeing, and textile production; ensured quality and fair wages.
<b>Suradhyaksha</b>	Liquor	Controlled production, storage, and sale of liquor; regulated taverns and collected excise duties.
<b>Sunadhyaksha</b>	Slaughterhouses	Supervised animal slaughter for food and rituals; ensured cleanliness and adherence to regulations.

- **Guilds:** Ensured quality, fair wages, and coordinated production.
- **Female employment:** Women engaged in weaving and spinning.

### III. Fiscal and Monetary System

#### A. Taxation

- **Comprehensive System:** Taxes were levied on virtually every economic activity.
- **Urban Taxes: Shulka** (customs and tolls), excise duties on manufactures.
- **Forced Labour: Vishti** was a form of forced labour provided by artisans and peasants to the state.



**B. Currency**

- **Standardized Coinage:** Chandragupta Maurya introduced a **common currency** across the empire.
- **Punch-Marked Coins:** The primary currency was **silver Punch-marked Coins** (called *Panas*), bearing symbols like the peacock, hill, and crescent. Copper coins (*Mashakas*) were used for smaller transactions.

**C. State Expenditure**

Revenue was spent on:

- Maintaining a vast **standing army** and bureaucracy (salaries paid in cash).
- **Public Works:** Ashoka funded the construction of roads, rest houses, hospitals, and irrigation canals.
- **Welfare:** Maintenance of helpless children, widows, the aged, and the destitute.

**IV. Unique Characteristics and Legacy**

- **State Control:** The Mauryan state was highly interventionist, participating directly in production (e.g., arms, textiles, mining) and strictly regulating the private economy.
- **Economic Prosperity:** The combination of political unity, security, and efficient administration led to unprecedented growth in agriculture, trade, and urbanism.
- **Roman Parallel:** The Mauryan economy, with its vast trade networks, complex institutions, and guilds resembling corporations, is often compared to the **Roman Empire** for its sophistication and scale.

**Key Economic Officers (27 Adhyakshas)**

Adhyaksha	Department
Sitadhyaksha	Agriculture
Akaradhyaksha	Mines
Sutradhyaksha	Textiles
Panyadhyaksha	Commerce
Samsthadhyaksha	Market supervision

Sannidhata	Treasury
Samaharta	Revenue
Pattanadhyaksha	Ports & shipping
Suradhyaksha	Liquor
Kupyadhyaksha	Forest produce





## Mauryan Art and Architecture (c. 322 – 185 BCE)

The Mauryan period marks the beginning of monumental stone art and architecture in the Indian subcontinent. It represents a shift from perishable materials like wood and brick to durable stone, heavily patronized by the state, especially Emperor Ashoka.

### I. Characteristics and Influences

- **State Patronage:** Art was intrinsically linked to political and religious ideology, with the Mauryan emperors, particularly Ashoka, being the chief patrons.
- **Innovation in Material:** The greatest innovation was the **substitution of stone for wood and brick**.
- **Polish:** Mauryan sculptures are renowned for their **high, mirror-like gloss** or polish, akin to the Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW) pottery.
- **Achaemenid (Persian) Influence:**
  - **Similarities:** Use of polished stone, monolithic pillars, and animal capitals.
  - **Differences (Indian Innovations):**
    - **Pillars:** Mauryan pillars are **smooth and fluted**, lack a base, and feature an **inverted lotus capital (bell-shaped)** at the top. Persian pillars are fluted and stand on a base.
    - **Sculpture:** Mauryan animal capitals are **carved in the round** (fully three-dimensional) and stand on a square or circular **abacus** decorated with stylized motifs.

### Difference with Achaemenid Pillars

Basis	Ashokan Pillars	Achaemenid Pillars
Composition	Monolithic (single stone)	Multiple stone pieces joined
Location	Independently erected in open spaces	Attached to palaces/buildings
Style Influence	Iranian bell-shaped base, Mauryan polish	Heavy Persian motifs

## II. Major Forms of Mauryan Art

### A. Pillars

- **Purpose:** Primarily erected by Ashoka to propagate his **Dhamma** (edicts) and mark sacred sites.
- **Features:**
  - **Monolithic:** Carved from a single piece of stone, usually **Chunar sandstone**.



- **Structure:** Consisted of a **shaft** (tapering upwards), a **lotus capital (bell-shaped)**, an **abacus** (platform), and a **crowning sculpture**.
- **Famous Examples:**
  - **Sarnath Pillar:** Most famous. The capital features **four back-to-back lions** seated on an abacus with sculptures of an elephant, a galloping horse, a bull, and a lion, separated by **Dharma Chakras**. This is India's **National Emblem**.
  - **Laurya Nandangarh & Rampurva:** Have single lion capitals.
  - **Sankissa:** Features an elephant capital.



## B. Stupas

- **Function:** Mound-like structures containing relics of the Buddha or other sacred figures.
- **Ashoka's Role:** Popularized the stupa cult. He is said to have built **84,000 stupas** to redistribute the Buddha's relics.
- **Structure:** A cylindrical drum with a circular dome (*anda*), a square railing on top (*harmika*), and a central pole (*yashti*) with chhatras (umbrellas).
- **Examples:**
  - **Sanchi Stupa** (Madhya Pradesh): The most famous.
  - **Piprahwa Stupa** (Uttar Pradesh): Considered the oldest.
  - Others at Bharhut, Sarnath, and Taxila.



**Sanchi Stupa**



**Piprahwa Stupa**

## C. Rock-Cut Architecture

- **Beginning:** The Mauryans initiated the tradition of carving caves out of solid rock, primarily for ascetic sects like the Ajivikas.
- **Features:** Simple exteriors but **highly polished interiors** that mimic wooden structures.
- **Examples:**
  - **Barabar and Nagarjuni Hills** (near Gaya, Bihar): Caves dedicated by Ashoka and his successor Dasharatha.
  - **Lomas Rishi Cave:** Notable for its entrance, which is carved to replicate a wooden facade with a horseshoe-shaped *chaitya* arch.
  - **Sudama Cave:** Another important example in the Barabar hills.



## D. Sculpture

### Types:

1. **Yakshas and Yakshinis:** Large, free-standing stone sculptures of nature spirits and fertility deities.
  - **Didarganj Yakshini** (Patna): Most famous; a highly polished, life-sized figure holding a flywhisk.
  - **Lohanipur Torso** (Patna): A polished male figure, possibly a Jain Tirthankara.
2. **Animal Figures:** The **Dhauili Elephant** (Odisha), emerging from rock, is a masterpiece.
3. **Portraiture:** A stone portrait of **Emperor Ashoka** was found at **Kanaganahalli** (Karnataka).
4. **Ring Stones and Disc Stones:** Stone discs with intricate carvings, believed to have ritualistic significance.



## E. Palaces and Secular Structures

- **Pataliputra Palace:** Described by Megasthenes as magnificent. Excavations at **Kumrahar** (Patna) revealed the remains of a massive **80-pillared hall** built of wood.
- **Material Culture:**
  - **Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW):** A fine, glossy, luxury pottery characteristic of the period.
  - **Ring Wells:** Used for water drawal and as soak pits, indicating advanced urban planning.
  - **Burnt Bricks & Timber:** Widely used in construction, as evidenced in Pataliputra.



*Northern Black Polished Ware*

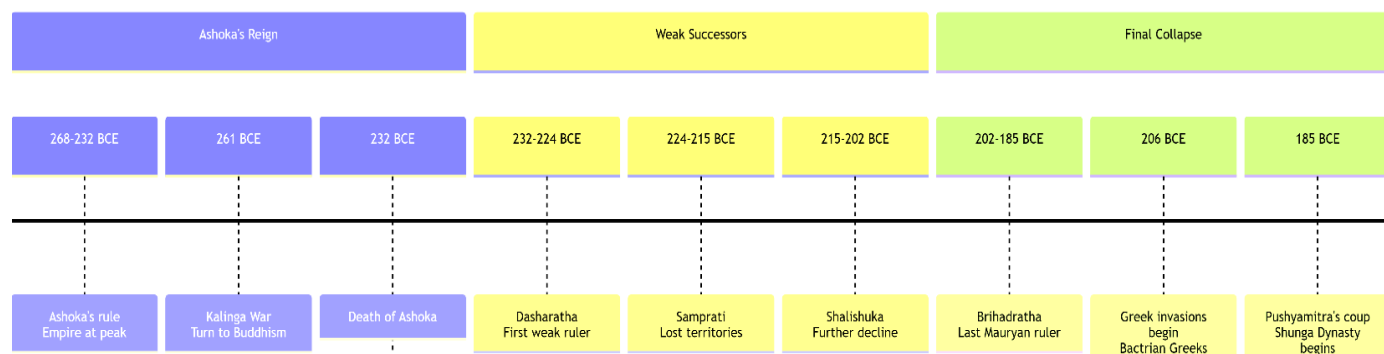


## III. Summary Table

Art Form	Examples	Key Features
<b>Pillars</b>	Sarnath, Laurya Nandangarh, Rampurva	Monolithic, polished sandstone, animal capitals (Lion, Bull, Elephant), Ashokan edicts.
<b>Stupas</b>	Sanchi, Piprahwa, Bharhut	Brick and stone mounds, relic repositories, railings and gateways added later.
<b>Rock-Cut Caves</b>	Lomas Rishi, Sudama (Barabar Hills)	Earliest examples; highly polished interiors; imitation of wooden architecture.
<b>Sculpture</b>	Didarganj Yakshini, Lohanipur Torso, Dhauli Elephant	Large, polished stone figures; focus on Yaksha/Yakshini cults; monumental scale.
<b>Secular</b>	Pataliputra Palace (Kumrahar), Ring Wells	Grand wooden structures (per Megasthenes); NBPW pottery; evidence of advanced urban infrastructure

**Decline of the Mauryan Empire (c. 232 – 185/180 BCE)**

The disintegration of the Mauryan Empire began soon after Ashoka's death (c. 232 BCE) and culminated in the assassination of the last emperor, Brihadratha, by his general Pushyamitra Shunga around 185/180 BCE. The decline was not due to a single cause but a combination of political, administrative, economic, and ideological factors.

**MAURYAN EMPIRE DECLINE TIMELINE**

**Causes for the Decline of the Mauryan Empire :**

Category	Cause	Key Points / Explanation
<b>I. Political &amp; Administrative</b>	<b>A. Weak Successors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>"Great Man" Theory:</b> Highly centralized state collapsed without strong rulers after Ashoka.</li> <li>• <b>Inefficient Rulers:</b> Series of weak kings (e.g., Dasharatha, Samprati, Brihadratha).</li> <li>• <b>Lack of Authority:</b> Only Dasharatha issued inscriptions, showing a loss of administrative grip.</li> </ul>
	<b>B. Excessive Centralization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Achilles' Heel:</b> The complex, centralized system became unmanageable under weak kings.</li> <li>• <b>Corruption &amp; Misrule:</b> Evidence of oppressive officials (<i>dushtamatyas</i>) causing revolts (e.g., in Taxila).</li> <li>• <b>Systemic Collapse:</b> The elaborate spy network and bureaucracy broke down.</li> </ul>
	<b>C. Neglect of N-W Frontier</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategic Failure:</b> No major fortifications like China's Great Wall.</li> <li>• <b>Foreign Invasions:</b> Left the empire vulnerable to Bactrian Greeks (from 206 BCE), Parthians, and Shakas.</li> </ul>
<b>II. Economic</b>	<b>A. Financial Crisis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heavy Expenditure:</b> Cost of maintaining a vast army and bureaucracy drained the treasury.</li> <li>• <b>Dwindling Revenue:</b> Heavy taxation, tax exemptions for new settlements (<i>Shunyanivesha</i>).</li> <li>• <b>Evidence of Strain:</b> Debasement of currency and selling of temple idols mentioned in later texts.</li> </ul>
<b>III. Ideological &amp; Social</b>	<b>A. Brahmanical Reaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ideological Challenge:</b> Ashoka's ban on animal sacrifices and promotion of Dhamma undermined Brahmanical ritual authority.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Economic Grievance:</b> Brahmanas lost income from sacrifices and gifts.</li> <li>• <b>Result:</b> Alienation led to hostility; Brahmanas supported the rise of new dynasties (Shungas, Satavahanas).</li> </ul>
	<b>B. Ashoka's Pacifist Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Argument:</b> Policy of <i>Ahimsa</i> led to military weakening and lack of preparedness.</li> <li>• <b>Counter-Argument:</b> Army was not disbanded; major invasions occurred 50 years after his death, so it was not the direct cause.</li> </ul>
<b>IV. Structural &amp; Geopolitical</b>	<b>A. Empire's Overextension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Natural Limits:</b> The empire became too vast to govern effectively with ancient communication technology.</li> <li>• <b>Centrifugal Forces:</b> As central control weakened, natural tendencies for regions to break away intensified.</li> </ul>
	<b>B. Spread of Material Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Loss of Monopoly:</b> Active spread of iron technology, NBPW, and coins to peripheral areas.</li> <li>• <b>Empowerment of Periphery:</b> Regions like Deccan and Kalinga developed their own power bases, ending Magadha's supremacy.</li> </ul>
<b>V. Immediate Cause</b>	<b>The Coup (185/180 BCE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Event:</b> Last Mauryan king, <b>Brihadratha</b>, was assassinated by his general, <b>Pushyamitra Shunga</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Significance:</b> Lack of public resistance to the coup highlighted the dynasty's extreme unpopularity and weakness, marking the formal end of the empire.</li> </ul>

### KEY FACTORS IN DETAIL

#### POLITICAL FAILURES

- Series of incompetent rulers
- Centralized system collapsed
- Provincial corruption spread

#### ECONOMIC PRESSURES

- Massive military costs
- Bureaucratic salary burden
- Heavy taxation discontent

#### SOCIAL CONFLICTS

- Brahmanas alienated
- Varna tensions increased
- Religious divisions grew

#### GEOPOLITICAL ISSUES

- Empire too vast to manage
- Undefined NW frontier
- Regional kingdoms rose

#### FINAL COLLAPSE

- Brihadratha assassinated
- Pushyamitra took power
- Shunga Dynasty began





**Mauryan PYQ's : (Without Answers for Practice)**

1. Magasthenes visited the court of

- (a) Ashoka **UPSC CSE 1980**
- (b) Harsha
- (c) Chandragupta Maurya
- (d) Vikramaditya

2. Which of the following is the most important cause for the decline of Buddhism after Ashoka?

**UPSC CSE 1980**

- (a) Non-patronage by the kings
- (b) Condemnation of animal sacrifices
- (c) Growth of licentious practices in Buddhist centers
- (d) Allegiance to the middle path

3. Which of the following statement is false according to Kautilya?

**UPSC CSE 1990**

- (a) King is the supreme power
- (b) King should have a strong army
- (c) A king should not appoint ministers for his help
- (d) The king should keep spies in abundance for spying

4. The Mauryan ruler who used the name 'Piyadasi' in his official declarations was

**UPSC CSE 1992**

- (a) Bimbisara
- (b) Ashoka
- (c) Chandragupta Maurya
- (d) Brihadrata

5. Chanakya, was also known as

- (a) Bhattasvamin **UPSC CSE 1993**

- (b) Rajasekhara
- (c) Vishnugupta
- (d) Visakhadatta

6. The name by which Ashoka is generally referred to in his inscriptions is

**UPSC CSE 1995**

- (a) Chakravarti
- (b) Dharmadeva
- (c) Dharmakirti
- (d) Priyadarsi

7. Which one of the following texts of ancient India allows divorce to a wife deserted by her husband?

**UPSC CSE 1996**

- (a) Kamasutra
- (b) Manava Dharma Shastra
- (c) Sukra Nitisara
- (d) Arthashastra

8. Which one of the following edicts mentions the personal name of Ashoka?

**UPSC CSE 1997**

- (a) Kalsi
- (b) Rummindei
- (c) Special Kalinga Edict
- (d) Maski

9. Which one of the following scripts of ancient India was written from right to left?

**UPSC CSE 1997**

- (a) Brahmi
- (b) Devanagari
- (c) Sharada
- (d) Kharoshthi

10. Assertion (A): According to Ashoka's edicts social harmony among the people was more



important than religious devotion.

**Reason (R):** He spread ideas of equity instead of promotion of religion.

**Options:** **UPSC CSE 1998**

- (a) Both A and R are true but R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are true but R is not a correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true but R is false
- (d) A is false but R is true

**11. Which of the following pairs are correctly matched?**

- 1. Lothal : Ancient dockyard
- 2. Sarnath : First Sermon of Buddha
- 3. Rajgir : Lion capital of Ashoka
- 4. Nalanda : Great seat of Buddhist learning

**UPSC CSE 1998**

- (a) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- (b) 3 and 4
- (c) 1, 2 and 4
- (d) 1 and 2

**12. Which one of the following ancient Indian records is the earliest royal order to preserve food-grains to be utilized during the crises in the country?**

**Options:** **UPSC CSE 1998**

- (a) Sohgaura Copper-plate
- (b) Rummindei Pillar-edict of Ashoka
- (c) Prayaga-prasasti
- (d) Mehrauli Pillar inscription of Chandra

**13. The given map relates to**

**UPSC CSE 1998**

- (a) Kanishka at the time of his death.

(b) Samudragupta after the close of his South Indian campaign.

(c) Ashoka towards close of his reign.

(d) Empire of Thaneswar on the eve of Harsha's accession.

**14. Assertion (A):** Ashoka annexed Kalinga to the Mauryan Empire.

**Reason (R):** Kalinga controlled the land and sea routes to South India.

**UPSC CSE 2000**

- (a) Both A and R are true but R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are true but R is not a correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true but R is false
- (d) A is false but R is true

**15. Consider the following statements:**

**UPSC CSE 2003**

- 1. The last Mauryan ruler, Brihadratha was assassinated by his commander-in-chief, Pushyamitra Sunga.
- 2. The last Sunga king, Devabhuti was assassinated by his Brahmana Minister Vasudeva Kanva who usurped the throne.
- 3. The last ruler of the Kanva dynasty was deposed by the Andhras.

**Which of these statements is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Only 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**16. Who among the following was not a contemporary of the other three?**



**UPSC CSE 2005**

- (a) Bimbisara
- (b) Gautama Buddha
- (c) Milinda
- (d) Prasenjit

**17. With reference to the guilds (Shreni) of ancient India that played a very important role in the country's economy,**

**which of the following statements is/are correct? UPSC CSE 2012**

1. Every guild was registered with the central authority of the State and the king was the chief administrative authority on them.
2. The wages, rules of work, standards and prices were fixed by the guild.
3. The guild had judicial powers over its own members.

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**18. Who of the following had first deciphered the edicts of Emperor Ashoka?**

**Options: UPSC CSE 2016**

- (a) Georg Buhler
- (b) James Prinsep
- (c) Max Muller
- (d) William Jones

**19. In which of the following relief sculpture inscriptions is 'Ranyo Ashoka' (King Ashoka) mentioned along with the stone portrait of Ashoka?**

**UPSC CSE****2019**

- (a) Kanaganahalli
- (b) Sanchi
- (c) Shahbazgarhi
- (d) Soligaura

**20. Who among the following rulers advised his subjects through this inscription: "Whosoever praises his religious sect or blames other sects out of excessive devotion to his own sect, with the view of glorifying his own sect, he rather injures his own sect very severely."**

- (a) Ashoka **UPSC CSE 2020**
- (b) Samudragupta
- (c) Harshavardhana
- (d) Krishna Deva Raya

**21. According to Kautilya's Arthashastra, which of the following are correct?**

**UPSC CSE 2022**

1. A person could be a slave as a result of a judicial punishment.
2. If a female slave bore her master a son, she was legally free.
3. If a son born to a female slave was fathered by her master, the son was entitled



to the legal status of the master's son.

**Options:**

- (a) 1 & 2 only
- (b) 2 & 3 only
- (c) 1 & 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 & 3

**22. Ashokan inscriptions suggest that the 'Pradeshika', 'Rajuka' and 'Yukta' were important officers at the:**

**UPSC CSE 2025**

- (a) village-level administration
- (b) district-level administration
- (c) provincial administration
- (d) level of the central administration

**23. The head of a district (Ahara), the principal coordinator of the revenue and the officer incharge of general and military functions in his jurisdiction during Mauryan empire was known as**

**CDS II 2008**

- (a) Krori
- (b) Rajuka
- (c) Foujdar
- (d) Chirastadar

**24. Which one among the following statements about Ashokan edicts is correct?**

**CDS II 2010**

- (a) The Pillar edicts were located in all parts of the empire
- (b) The edicts give details of his personal concerns but are silent on events of the empire
- (c) The subject of inscribed matter on Rock edicts differs completely with that of the Pillar edicts
- (d) The Greek or Aramaic edicts are versions or translations of the texts used in other edicts

**25. Ashokan inscriptions of Mansehra and Shahbazgadhi are written in**

**CDS I 2012**

- (a) Prakrit language, Kharoshthi script
- (b) Prakrit language, Brahmi script
- (c) Prakrit-Aramaic language, Brahmi script
- (d) Aramaic language, Kharoshthi script

**26. The Dhamma propagated by Ashoka was**

**CDS II 2012**

- (a) the tenets of Buddhism
- (b) a mixture of the philosophies of Ajivikas and Charvakas



- (c) a system of morals consistent with the tenets of most of the sects of the time  
(d) the religious policy of the state

**27. Statement I:** There was great exodus of Jaina monks under the leadership of Bhadrabahu to the Deccan following severe famine in the Ganga valley towards the end of Chandragupta's reign.

**Statement II:** Chandragupta Maurya joined the Jaina order as a monk.

**Options:** **CDS I 2013**

- (a) Both the statements are true and Statement II is the correct explanation of Statement I  
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- (c) 1 and 2

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1. Rummindei Pillar Inscription and Nigali Sagar Pillar Inscription provide clear evidence of Ashoka's faith in Buddhism.
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**Options: CDS I 2022**

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- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 & 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**35. The Mauryan architecture is said to have been influenced by that of**

- (A) China **GPSC 2017**
- (B) Burma
- (C) Anatolia
- (D) Persia

**36. Who was the founder of the Satavahana Empire?**

- (a) Kanha **SSC 2016**
- (b) Simuka
- (c) Hala
- (d) Gautamiputra





**37. Which of the following source(s) throw light on Mauryan India?**

1. Dipavamsa
2. Arthasastra
3. Mahavamsa
4. Mudrarakshasa

**Options:**

**GPSC**

**2019**

- (A) 1 only  
(B) 1 and 2 only  
(C) 1, 2 & 3 only  
(D) 1, 2, 3 & 4

**38. Which of the following texts give a detailed information on Mauryan polity?**

**Options:**

**GPSC 2017**

- (A) Manusmriti  
(B) Arthashastra  
(C) Nitisara  
(D) Ashtadhyayi

### **Mauryan PYQ's : (With Answers)**

**1. Magasthenes visited the court of**

- (a) Ashoka **UPSC CSE 1980**  
(b) Harsha  
(c) Chandragupta Maurya  
(d) Vikramaditya

**Answer: (c) Chandragupta Maurya**

**2. Which of the following is the most important cause for the decline of Buddhism after Ashoka?**

**UPSC CSE 1980**

- (a) Non-patronage by the kings  
(b) Condemnation of animal sacrifices  
(c) Growth of licentious practices in Buddhist centers  
(d) Allegiance to the middle path

**Answer: (a) Non-patronage by the kings**

**3. Which of the following statement is false according to Kautilya?**

**UPSC CSE 1990**

- (a) King is the supreme power  
(b) King should have a strong army  
(c) A king should not appoint ministers for his help  
(d) The king should keep spies in abundance for spying

**Answer: (c) A king should not appoint ministers for his help**

**4. The Mauryan ruler who used the name 'Piyadasi' in his official declarations was**

**UPSC CSE 1992**

- (a) Bimbisara  
(b) Ashoka  
(c) Chandragupta Maurya  
(d) Brihadrata

**Answer: (b) Ashoka**



**5. Chanakya, was also known as**

- (a) Bhattasvamin **UPSC CSE 1993**
- (b) Rajasekhara
- (c) Vishnugupta
- (d) Visakhadatta

**Answer: (c) Vishnugupta**

**6. The name by which Ashoka is generally referred to in his inscriptions is**

**UPSC CSE 1995**

- (a) Chakravarti
- (b) Dharmadeva
- (c) Dharmakirti
- (d) Priyadarsi

**Answer: (d) Priyadarsi**

**7. Which one of the following texts of ancient India allows divorce to a wife deserted by her husband?**

- (a) Kamasutra **UPSC CSE 1996**
- (b) Manava Dharma Shastra
- (c) Sukra Nitisara
- (d) Arthashastra

**Answer: (d) Arthashastra**

**8. Which one of the following edicts mentions the personal name of Ashoka?**

- (a) Kalsi **UPSC CSE 1997**
- (b) Rummindei
- (c) Special Kalinga Edict
- (d) Maski

**Answer: (d) Maski**

**9. Which one of the following scripts of ancient India was written from right to left?**

**UPSC CSE 1997**

- (a) Brahmi
- (b) Devanagari

- (c) Sharada
- (d) Kharoshthi

**Answer: (d) Kharoshthi**

**10. Assertion (A):** According to Ashoka's edicts social harmony among the people was more important than religious devotion.

**Reason (R):** He spread ideas of equity instead of promotion of religion.

**Options: UPSC CSE 1998**

- (a) Both A and R are true but R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are true but R is not a correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true but R is false
- (d) A is false but R is true

**Answer: (a) Both A and R are true but R is the correct explanation of A**

**11. Which of the following pairs are correctly matched?**

1. **Lothal** : Ancient dockyard
2. **Sarnath** : First Sermon of Buddha
3. **Rajgir** : Lion capital of Ashoka
4. **Nalanda** : Great seat of Buddhist learning

**UPSC CSE 1998**

- (a) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- (b) 3 and 4
- (c) 1, 2 and 4
- (d) 1 and 2

**Answer: (c) 1, 2 and 4**

**12. Which one of the following ancient Indian records is the earliest royal order to preserve food-grains to be utilized during the crises in the country?**

**Options: UPSC CSE 1998**

- (a) Sohgaura Copper-plate



- (b) Rummindei Pillar-edict of Ashoka
- (c) Prayaga-prasasti
- (d) Mehrauli Pillar inscription of Chandra

**Answer: (a) Sohgaure Copper-plate**

**13. The given map relates to**

**UPSC CSE 1998**

- (a) Kanishka at the time of his death.
- (b) Samudragupta after the close of his South Indian campaign.
- (c) Ashoka towards close of his reign.
- (d) Empire of Thaneswar on the eve of Harsha's accession.

**Answer: (c) Ashoka towards close of his reign.**

**14. Assertion (A):** Ashoka annexed Kalinga to the Mauryan Empire.

**Reason (R):** Kalinga controlled the land and sea routes to South India.

**UPSC CSE 2000**

- (a) Both A and R are true but R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are true but R is not a correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true but R is false
- (d) A is false but R is true

**Answer: (a) Both A and R are true but R is the correct explanation of A**

**15. Consider the following statements:**

**UPSC CSE 2003**

1. The last Mauryan ruler, Brihadratha was assassinated by his commander-in-chief, Pushyamitra Sunga.
2. The last Sunga king, Devabhuti was assassinated by his Brahmana Minister Vasudeva

Kanva who usurped the throne.

3. The last ruler of the Kanva dynasty was deposed by the Andhras.

**Which of these statements is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Only 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3**

**16. Who among the following was not a contemporary of the other three?**

**UPSC CSE 2005**

- (a) Bimbisara
- (b) Gautama Buddha
- (c) Milinda
- (d) Prasenjit

**Answer: (c) Milinda**

**17. With reference to the guilds (Shreni) of ancient India that played a very important role in the country's economy, which of the following statements is/are correct?**

**UPSC CSE 2012**

1. Every guild was registered with the central authority of the State and the king was the chief administrative authority on them.
2. The wages, rules of work, standards and prices were fixed by the guild.
3. The guild had judicial powers over its own members.

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only



(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: (c) 2 and 3 only**

**18. Who of the following had first deciphered the edicts of Emperor Ashoka?**

**Options: UPSC CSE 2016**

- (a) Georg Buhler
- (b) James Prinsep
- (c) Max Muller
- (d) William Jones

**Answer: (b) James Prinsep**

**19. In which of the following relief sculpture inscriptions is 'Ranyo Ashoka' (King Ashoka) mentioned along with the stone portrait of Ashoka?**

**UPSC CSE 2019**

- (a) Kanaganahalli
- (b) Sanchi
- (c) Shahbazgarhi
- (d) Soligaura

**Answer: (a) Kanaganahalli**

**20. Who among the following rulers advised his subjects through this inscription: "Whosoever praises his religious sect or blames other sects out of excessive devotion to his own sect, with the view of glorifying his own sect, he rather injures his own sect very severely."**

- (a) Ashoka **UPSC CSE 2020**
- (b) Samudragupta
- (c) Harshavardhana
- (d) Krishna Deva Raya

**Answer: (a) Ashoka**

**21. According to Kautilya's Arthashastra, which of the following are correct?**

**UPSC CSE 2022**

1. A person could be a slave as a result of a judicial punishment.
2. If a female slave bore her master a son, she was legally free.
3. If a son born to a female slave was fathered by her master, the son was entitled to the legal status of the master's son.

**Options:**

- (a) 1 & 2 only
- (b) 2 & 3 only
- (c) 1 & 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 & 3

**Answer: (d) 1, 2 & 3**

**22. Ashokan inscriptions suggest that the 'Pradeshika', 'Rajuka' and 'Yukta' were important officers at the:**

**UPSC CSE 2025**

- (a) village-level administration
- (b) district-level administration
- (c) provincial administration



(d) level of the central administration

**Answer:** (b) district-level administration

**23. The head of a district (Ahara), the principal coordinator of the revenue and the officer incharge of general and military functions in his jurisdiction during Mauryan empire was known as**

**CDS II 2008**

- (a) Krori
- (b) Rajuka
- (c) Foujdar
- (d) Chirastadar

**Answer:** (b) Rajuka

**24. Which one among the following statements about Ashokan edicts is correct?**

**CDS II 2010**

- (a) The Pillar edicts were located in all parts of the empire
- (b) The edicts give details of his personal concerns but are silent on events of the empire
- (c) The subject of inscribed matter on Rock edicts differs completely with that of the Pillar edicts
- (d) The Greek or Aramaic edicts are versions or translations of the texts used in other edicts

**Answer:** (d) The Greek or Aramaic

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**25. Ashokan inscriptions of Mansehra and Shahbazgadhi are written in**

**CDS I 2012**

- (a) Prakrit language, Kharoshthi script
- (b) Prakrit language, Brahmi script
- (c) Prakrit-Aramaic language, Brahmi script
- (d) Aramaic language, Kharoshthi script

**Answer:** (a) Prakrit language, Kharoshthi script

**26. The Dhamma propagated by Ashoka was**

**CDS II 2012**

- (a) the tenets of Buddhism
- (b) a mixture of the philosophies of Ajivikas and Charvakas
- (c) a system of morals consistent with the tenets of most of the sects of the time
- (d) the religious policy of the state

**Answer:** (c) a system of morals consistent with the tenets of most of the sects of the time

**27. Statement I:** There was great exodus of Jaina monks under the leadership of Bhadrabahu to the



Deccan following severe famine in the Ganga valley towards the end of Chandragupta's reign.

**Statement II:** Chandragupta Maurya joined the Jaina order as a monk.

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**GPSC 2017**

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**SSC 2016**

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