

1st August 2014

# Puranic chronology of India

## 1. Context

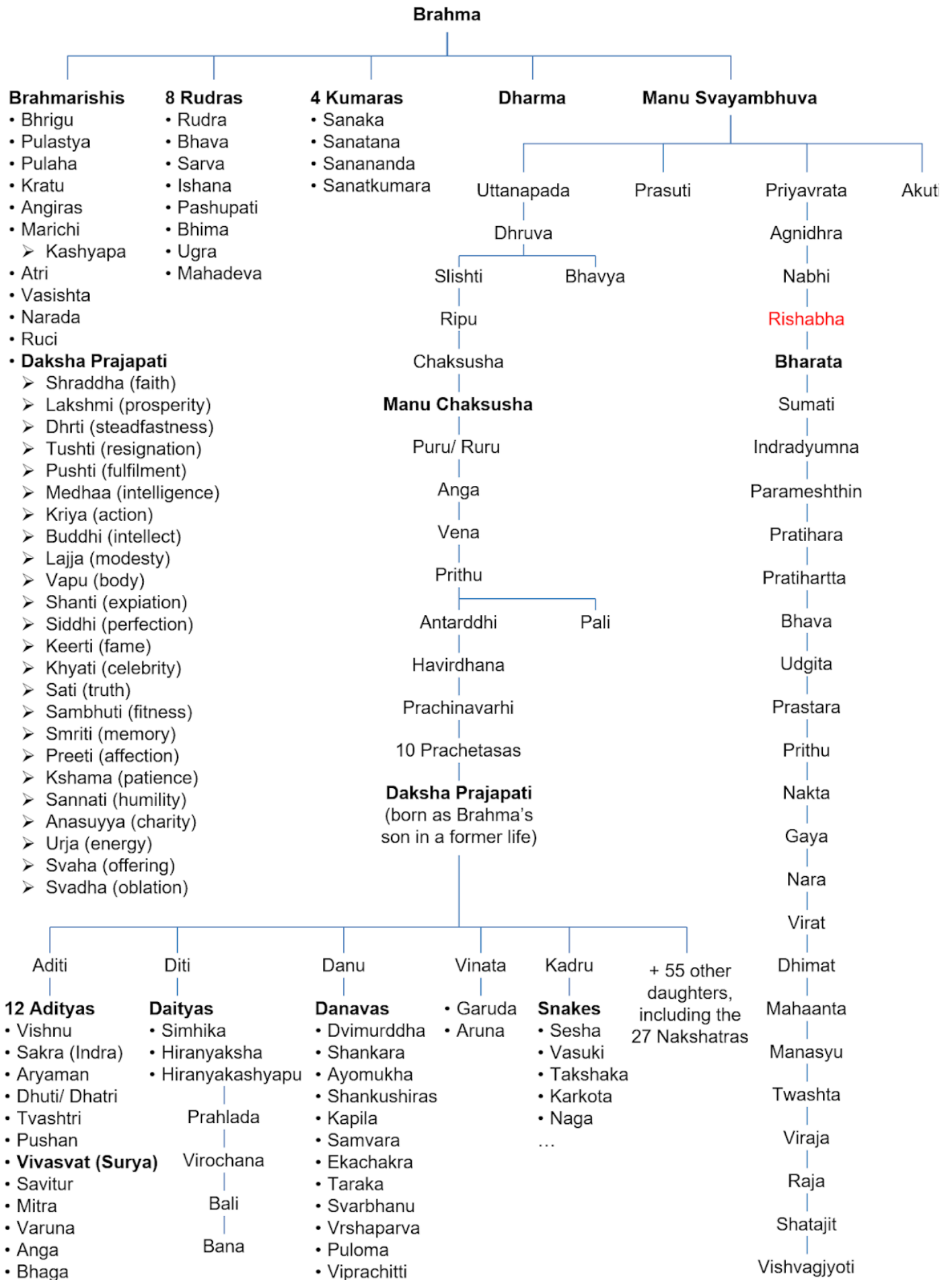
India is presented to the world as a paragon of unity in diversity – a nation-state<sup>1</sup> of diverse peoples united by a common culture. The preservers of our culture – the native chroniclers of India – boast of a glorious past stretching back into millennia, steeped in the fourfold concepts of dharma,<sup>2</sup> artha,<sup>3</sup> kama<sup>4</sup> and moksha.<sup>5</sup> Our traditions sing paeans to Yudhishthira's adherence to dharma in the face of extreme temptation to do otherwise, applaud King Marutta's selfless pursuit of wealth and his decision to leave most of it to posterity, approve of Vishwamitra's ambition to realize the status of a Brahmarishi despite his Kshatriya birth and venerate our multiple sages who chose the arduous path of self-realization. However, these cultural traditions have been disputed<sup>6</sup> and attacked<sup>7</sup> by eminent personalities and dismissed as myth. Our history textbooks tell us that Magadha (not Ayodhya) was one of India's first kingdoms and that Buddha and Mahavira were contemporaries who lived in/ around Magadha around 600 BCE. However, when we visit the sites of India's so-called earliest centres of civilization (e.g., Sarnath where the Buddha preached his first sermon), we see evidence from the Jain tradition that its earlier Tirthankaras<sup>8</sup> were already living in that city hundreds of years ago.<sup>9</sup> On top of this, the Jains appear to share the same hoary past as the Hindus do, with their first Tirthankara (Rishabhadeva) believed to be the king of Ayodhya more than 20 generations before Mahavira.

In addition to the Jain tradition, the history preserved in our native chronicles – the Puranas – appears to have some support from archaeology as well. Although most of the sites described in the Puranas are now populated and hence cannot be excavated, the few non-inhabited sites (e.g., Dwaraka) exhibit evidence of ancient civilizations.<sup>10</sup> This begs the question as to whether we should truly discard the traditions preserved in India's native chronicles or take the trouble to re-examine them in a new light. This essay presents the chronology of India as preserved by its native historians and tests the validity of this chronology when compared to independent accounts of ancient India.

The accepted chronology of ancient India is based on William Jones'<sup>11</sup> identification of Sandrocottus<sup>12</sup> with Chandragupta Maurya, the first king of the Mauryan empire. This identification serves as the basis for determining the era of Buddha, the dates of the subsequent kings of Magadha and of other kingdoms of India. According to this chronology, Chandragupta Maurya ascended the throne of Magadha around 315 BCE. However, the Puranas as well as Megasthenes' account of the milieu he lived in present a compelling case for debunking this identification and associating Sandrocottus with Chandragupta I, the founder of the Imperial Guptas. According to the Puranas, Chandragupta Maurya was crowned in 1538 BCE, Ashoka was crowned in 1489 BCE, and Chandragupta I ascended the throne of Pataliputra around 315 BCE in time to be the monarch referred to as Sandrocottus when Megasthenes arrived in Pataliputra in 302 BCE. This essay presents the evidence for this Puranic chronology and aims to resolve other conundrums in Indian history, such as the age of Vikramaditya and Adi Sankara, with this revised timeline.

## 2. The Puranic list of kings

The Puranas are Vedic India's repository of creation myths and lists of royal dynasties. A Purana is expected to include at least five topics<sup>13</sup> – primary creation of the universe in the current age (Sveta-varaha Kalpa), secondary creation by the survivors of the Great Deluge, the genealogy of gods and patriarchs, the reigns of the Manus (the first humans) and the history of the solar and lunar dynasties – in addition to topics specific to that Purana. Figure 1 (compiled from the Vishnu, Matsya and Vayu Puranas) shows the list of kings after the primary creation of the universe by Lord Brahma. We can see that Rishabhadeva (the first Jain Tirthankara) and his son Bharata<sup>14</sup> find a place near the top of the list, attesting to the antiquity of the Jain tradition.



[[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-btcqMlrOSFk/XqSV0\\_Wio-I/AAAAAAAAABz8/cBDIJlqbsmwvet9rskV2JtzMqJ1JWbS1wCLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/1.%2BPrimary\\_creation.png](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-btcqMlrOSFk/XqSV0_Wio-I/AAAAAAAAABz8/cBDIJlqbsmwvet9rskV2JtzMqJ1JWbS1wCLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/1.%2BPrimary_creation.png)]

Figure 1: List of kings after primary creation by Lord Brahma as stated in the Vishnu Purana

Primary creation ends with the re-incarnation of Daksha Prajapati and the creation of the gods (Adityas) and their adversaries (Daityas and Danavas). This is followed by the Deluge, after which Vivasvat (the Sun god) and Soma (the wine/ moon god) become the progenitors of the solar and lunar race of kings respectively (Figure 2). Aided by the Matsya avatar of Lord Vishnu, Vivasvat's son (Satyavrata) commandeers his ark through the waters of the Deluge. Satyavrata's son (Ikshavaku) establishes the solar race at Ayodhya while his daughter (Ila) and the wine/moon god's son (Budha) institute the lunar race at Pratisthana (near modern Allahabad). While the Ikshavaku (solar) dynasty at Ayodhya continues in an unbroken line, the lunar race splits into five branches with the 5 sons of Yayati, whose descendants proceed to found the line of the Magadha kings.

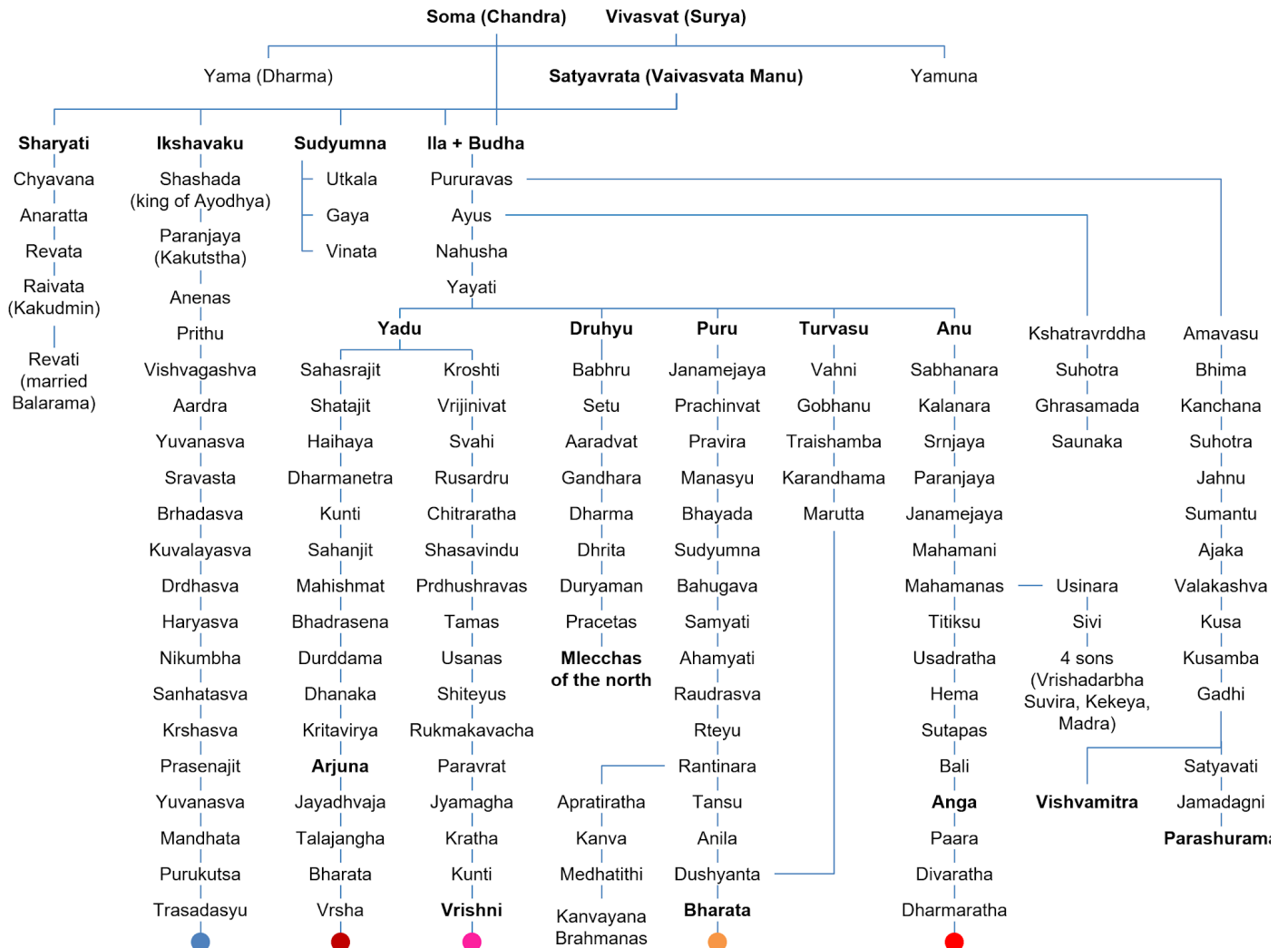
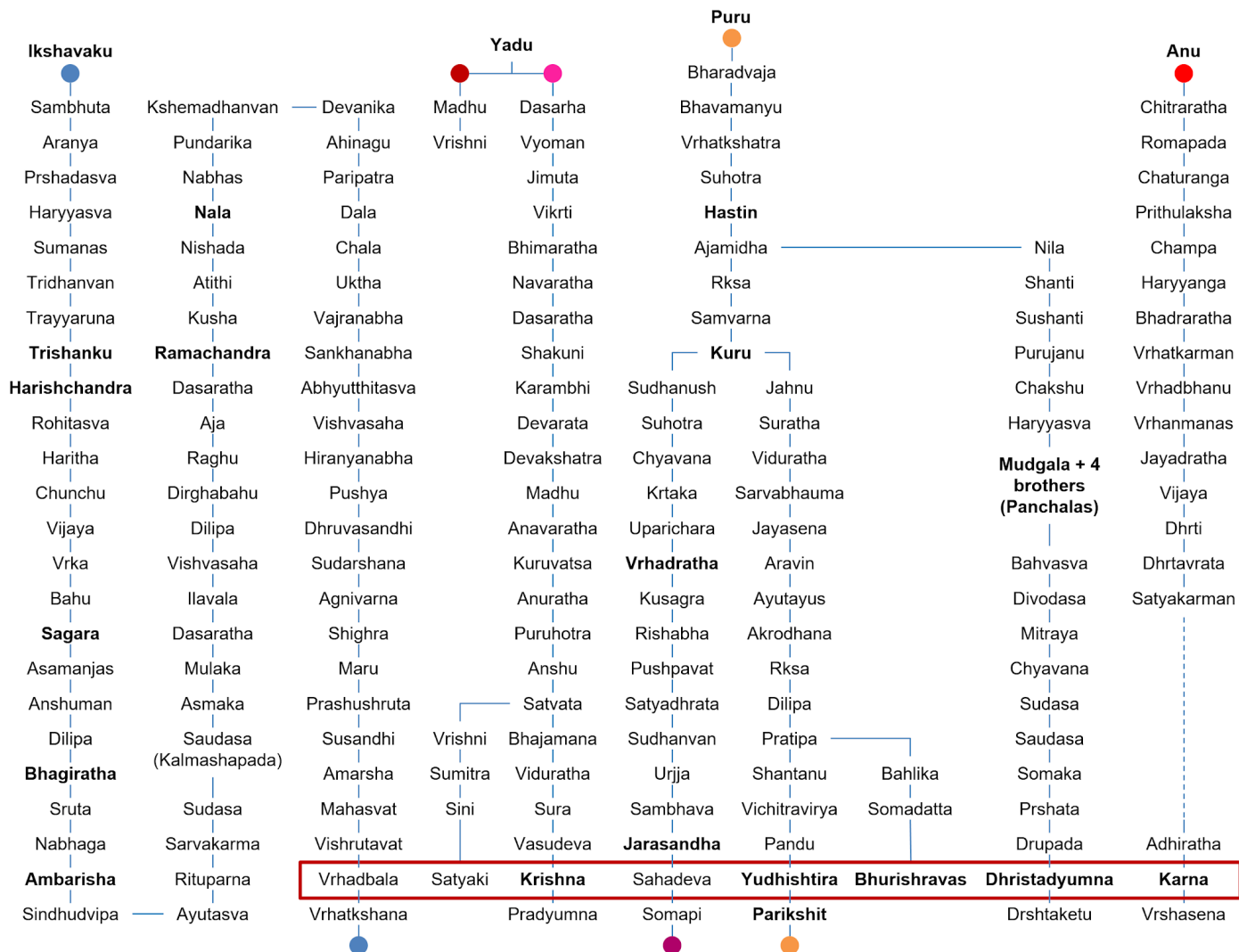


Figure 2: List of kings in the Vaivasvata (descendants of Vivasvat) Manvantara as stated in the Vishnu Purana

Puru's line splits into two with the sons of his scion Kuru founding the kingdoms of Indraprastha and Magadha (see Figure 3). Vrhadratha's sons establish the dynasty of Varhadrathas at Magadha while Yudhisthira institutes the kingdom of Indraprastha (Delhi). The list of kings continues until the Great War of the Bharata clan (Mahabharata) and the death of Lord Krishna, an event which heralds the onset of the Kaliyuga – the present age. Yudhisthira continues the Kuru dynasty at Hastinapura (in addition to holding on to Indraprastha) after the war. Abhimanyu's son Parikshit, born and revived on the last day of the Great War, rules Hastinapura after the abdication of Yudhisthira.

One can see that the Puranic chronology is internally consistent<sup>15</sup> as it lists Lord Parashurama being 32 generations before Lord Rama and Lord Rama being 30 generations before Vrhadbala (the king of Ayodhya who was slain by Abhimanyu in the Great War), which is the order we would expect them to be in.



[[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-MMbFCyarJ10/X4NGdP2-fOI/AAAAAAAAAB\\_4/e4piFq9T1W8DWR\\_OytMDRNbsPT-Sa06xACLcBGAsYHQ/s2048/3.%2BSecondary\\_creation\\_to\\_the\\_war.png](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-MMbFCyarJ10/X4NGdP2-fOI/AAAAAAAAAB_4/e4piFq9T1W8DWR_OytMDRNbsPT-Sa06xACLcBGAsYHQ/s2048/3.%2BSecondary_creation_to_the_war.png)]

Figure 3: List of kings in the Vaivasvata Manvantara until the Great War as stated in the Vishnu Purana

Al-beruni,<sup>16</sup> [fn16] the scholar who accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni during his invasion of India, writes: [https://www.blogger.com/null] <sup>17</sup> [fn17]

The year 400 of Yazdajird, which we have chosen as a gauge, corresponds to the following years of the Indian eras:

- Year 953 of the Saka-kala
- Year 1088 of the era of Vikramaditya
- According to both Brahmagupta and Pulisa, 4132 years of the Kaliyuga have elapsed *before* our gauge-year

The Encyclopaedia Britannica states:<sup>18</sup> [fn18]

The Era of Yazdajird begins with the elevation of Yazdajird III to the throne of Persia on June 16, 632 CE. To the year of the Persian era, we have to add 631 to get the year of our era in which the Persian year begins.

In other words, Al-beruni's gauge year (when he was in India) would be 631+400 = 1031 CE.

This allows us to calculate the epochs of the Saka-kala, Vikrama era and the onset of the Kaliyuga as follows:

- The Saka-kala began in 1031-953 = 78 CE
- The Vikrama era began in 1088-1031 = 57 BCE
- The Kaliyuga began in 4132-1030 = 3102 BCE

This date of the Kaliyuga is supported by the Aihole inscription of King Pulakeshin II – the Chalukyan emperor who checked the southward advance of King Harshavardhana of Kannauj. King Harshavardhana was the patron of the

Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang during 630-643 CE. [\[https://www.blogger.com/null\]](https://www.blogger.com/null) <sup>19</sup> The Aihole inscription commemorates the construction of a stone mansion built by Ravikirti, a poet in the court of Pulakeshi II (Satyashraya).<sup>20</sup> The inscription extolls the exploits of Pulakeshi II and describes his victory over Harshavardhana of Kannauj. So we should expect the Aihole inscription to be of this time. A transliteration of the inscription is given below:<sup>21</sup>

“त्रिंशत्सु त्रिसहस्रेषु भारता दाहवदितः ।  
सप्ताब्दशतयुक्तेषु शतेष्वब्देषु पंचमु ।  
पंचाशत्सु कलौ काले षट्सु पंचशतासु च ।  
समासु समतीतासु शकानामपि भूभुजाम् ” ॥

[\[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-)

[U\\_AOpFahzEc/XqSVbDmPHul/AAAAAAAAABz0/tmqS4fMwde8v\\_IVHHjQXKUThmeM4aLYyACLCBGAsYHQ/s1600/Aihole%2Binscription.png\]](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-U_AOpFahzEc/XqSVbDmPHul/AAAAAAAAABz0/tmqS4fMwde8v_IVHHjQXKUThmeM4aLYyACLCBGAsYHQ/s1600/Aihole%2Binscription.png)

Verse 33: Trimshatsu [30] trisahasreshu [3000] Bhaarata daaha avaaditaha |

Sapta abda shatayukteshu [700] shateshu [100] abdeshu panchasu [5] |

Verse 34: Panchaashatsu [50] Kalaukale shattsu [6] panchashataasu [500] cha |

Samatsu samatitasu shakaanamapi bhubhujaam ||

Verse 35: This stone mansion of Jinendra, a mansion of every kind of greatness, has been caused to be built by the wise Ravikirti, who has obtained the highest favour of that Satyashraya whose rule is bounded by the three oceans.<sup>22</sup>

‘Abda’ means one solar year<sup>23</sup> (which is why ‘shatabdi’ means 100 years or a centenary). ‘Sapta abda Shatayukteshu’ means 7 with (yukta) 100 years, or 700. ‘Shateshu abdeshu panchasu’ means 100 years 5 or 105 years. So the total time in Verse 33 is 30+3000+700+105 = 3835 years after ‘Bharaata daaha avaaditaha.’ Vadati is to speak, so avaaditaha means ‘It was said.’ So ‘Bharaata daaha avaaditaha’ means ‘It is said about the sacrifice (daaha) of the Bharata clan.’

This information allows us to translate verses 33, 34 and 35 as:

It is said that in the Kali age, 30+3000+700+105 = 3835 years since the end of the Bharatas (probably the abdication of the throne of Hastinapura by the Pandavas after Lord Krishna’s death = the onset of the Kali Yuga) and 50+6+500 = 556 years since the destruction of the Saka kings.

When this stone mansion of Jinendra, a mansion of every kind of greatness, has been caused to be built by the wise Ravikirti, who has obtained the highest favour of that Satyashraya whose rule is bounded by the three oceans.

One interpretation of the inscription<sup>21</sup> is that the ‘shateshu’ (100) in the second line is ‘gateshu’ (elapsed). This would mean that the inscription effectively translates to:

30+3000+700+5 = 3735 years have elapsed since the abdication of the Pandavas (the onset of the Kali Yuga) and 50+6+500 = 556 years have elapsed since the onset of the Saka-kala when this stone mansion of Jinendra has been built.

Taking 78 CE as the Saka-kala (the year of the extirpation of the Saka kings) from Al-beruni, we get 556+78 = 634 CE as the date of the Aihole inscription, which agrees with our timeline for Pulakeshi II.

This brings the onset of the Kali Yuga to 3735-634+1 = 3102 BCE, which agrees with Al-Beruni. The Mahabharata war would be 36 years earlier, in 3138 BCE.

The Puranas also provide data on the number of kings in and reign-lengths of dynasties after the Great War (see Figure 4 and Figure 5). In Magadha, the Puranas state:

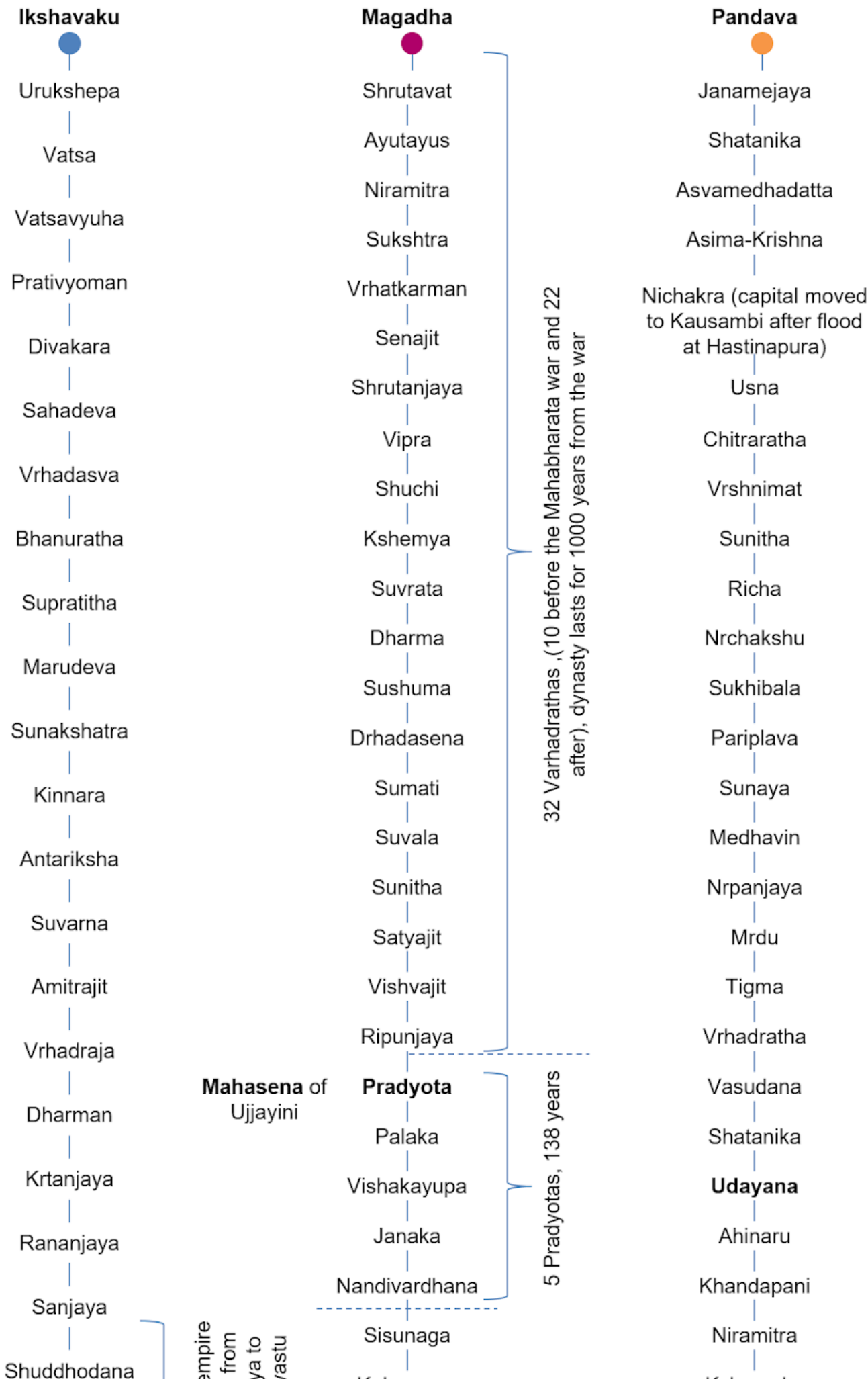
- 22 Varhadratha kings will reign for 1000 years after the birth of Parikshit<sup>24</sup>



- 5 Pradyota kings will reign for 138 years after the last of the Varhadrathas<sup>25</sup> [fn25]
- 10 Sisunaga kings will reign for 362 years after the last of the Pradyotas<sup>26</sup> [fn26]
- 9 Nanda kings will reign for 100 years after the last of the Sisunagas<sup>27</sup> [fn27]
- 10 Maurya kings will reign for 137 years after the last of the Nandas<sup>28</sup> [fn28]
- 10 Sungas kings will reign for 112 years after the last of the Mauryas<sup>29</sup> [fn29]
- 4 Kanva kings will reign for 45 years after the last of the Sungas<sup>30</sup> [fn30]
- 30 Andhrabhrtya (Satavahana) kings will reign for 435-460 years after the last of the Kanvas<sup>31</sup> [fn31]
- The Andhras having passed away, there shall be seven contemporary races [Abhiras, Garddhabas, Sakas, Yavanas, Tusaras, Mundas and Maunas]; as, ten Abhiras. The Matsya Purana includes a satellite dynasty of Andhras in this list.<sup>32</sup> [fn32]
- The chronology in the Vayu Purana gives 67 years to the Abhiras<sup>32</sup> [fn32]
- Then 11 Pauras will be kings for 300 years<sup>33</sup> [fn33]
- Once these are destroyed, the Kailakila Yavanas will be kings; the chief of whom will be Vindhyashakti. These will rule for a 106 years.<sup>34</sup> [fn34]

Sethna says<sup>35</sup> [fn35] that Pradyota (the 1<sup>st</sup> king of the Pradyota dynasty that succeeded the Varhadrathas) had another name – Chanda Mahasena. The Kathasaritsagara by Somadeva makes these two monarchs coeval,<sup>36</sup> [fn36] with Pradyota ruling from Magadha and Mahasena ruling from Ujjayini. I have listed both kings as contemporaries in Figure 4.

We can see that the Puranas include the Buddha in the Ikshvaku dynasty, which is in alignment with Buddhist texts.<sup>37</sup> [fn37]





[[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-41dI2aa4IC0/XqSYLgd2Wxl/AAAAAAAAAB0o/xsn3cPm\\_gQ0NrOalwttuaVvA\\_LQUUeLhwCLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/4.%2BSecondary\\_creation\\_after\\_the\\_war.png](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-41dI2aa4IC0/XqSYLgd2Wxl/AAAAAAAAAB0o/xsn3cPm_gQ0NrOalwttuaVvA_LQUUeLhwCLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/4.%2BSecondary_creation_after_the_war.png)]

Figure 4: List of kings in the Kaliyuga (after the Great War) as stated in the Vishnu Purana

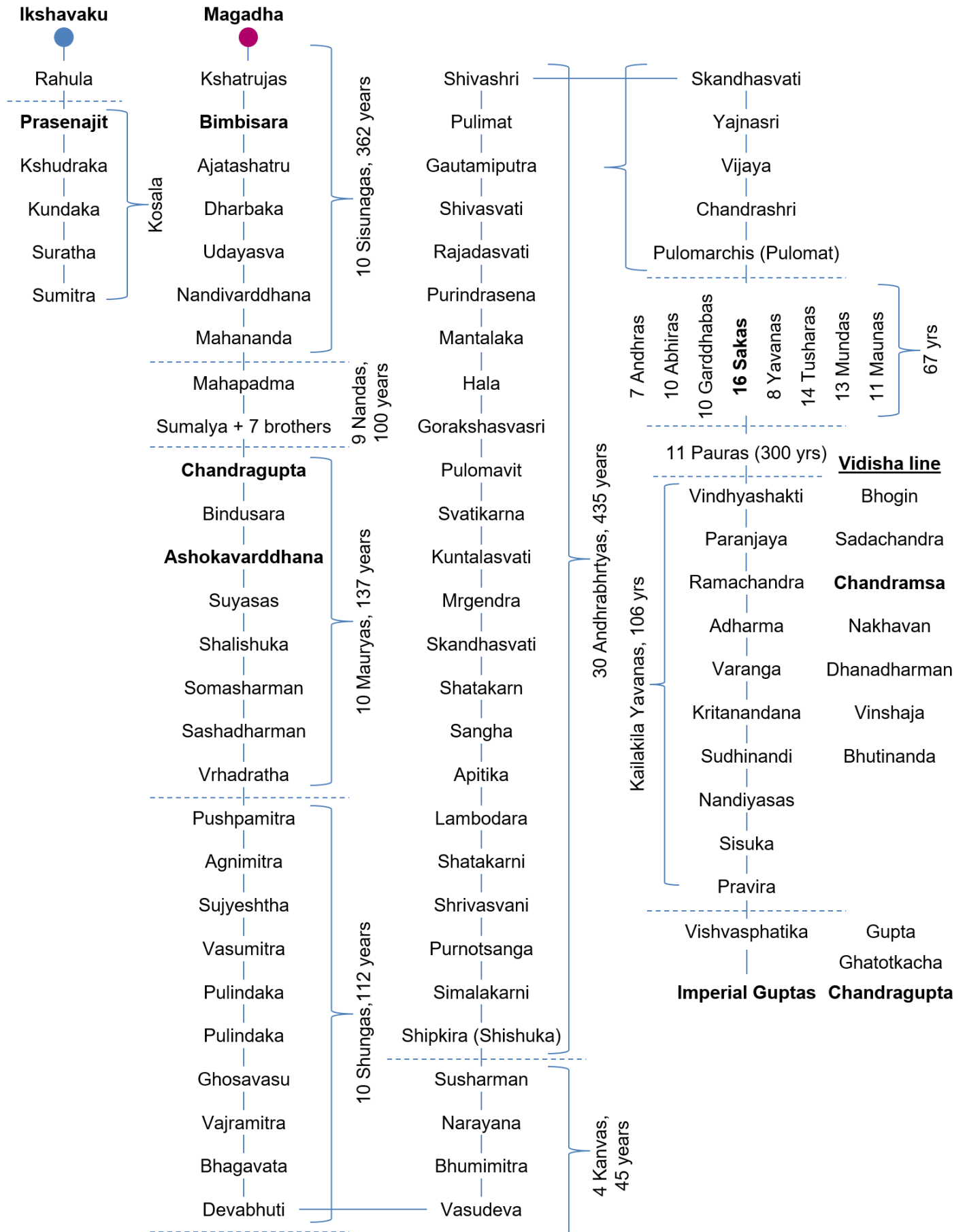
As Figure 5 shows, the Puranas state that a race of Saka kings will come into prominence after the decline of the Andhrabhrtya dynasty. We know from the Mudrarakshasa that the Sakas were present in India from the time of the Mauryas.<sup>38</sup> [fn38] Also, Sethna says that<sup>39</sup> [fn39] Gautamiputra – the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the 30 kings of the Andhrabhrtya dynasty – is known from both epigraphy and numismatics to have destroyed the Saka Nahapana's Kshaharata family. It seems plausible that the remnants of the Sakas regrouped after the Andhrabhrtya dynasty ceased to remain relevant.

The Vishnu Purana continues with the royal line of Magadha once the above races pass away:

In Magadha a sovereign named Vishvasphatika will establish other tribes; he will extirpate the Kshatriya race and elevate fishermen, barbarians, Brahmanas and other castes to power. The Guptas of Magadha will reign along the Ganges to Prayaga.<sup>40</sup> [fn40]

This may be construed to mean that Vishvasphatika will establish the Gupta dynasty (a non-Kshatriya tribe) at Magadha.





[[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-UsQSPetzScw/X4NF3a54aYI/AAAAAAAAAB\\_w/fP6IE6-mv6I-i23rUeQGp9EM5LkVqI-6wCLcBGAsYHQ/s2019/5.%2BSecondary\\_creation\\_after\\_Buddha.png](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-UsQSPetzScw/X4NF3a54aYI/AAAAAAAAAB_w/fP6IE6-mv6I-i23rUeQGp9EM5LkVqI-6wCLcBGAsYHQ/s2019/5.%2BSecondary_creation_after_Buddha.png)]

Figure 5: List of kings in the Kaliyuga (after the Great War) as stated in the Vishnu Purana. The Vidisha list is from the Vayu Purana.<sup>41</sup> [fn41]

In addition to the list of kings, the Puranas provide a parallel chronology based on the cycle of the Saptarishis (Ursa Major):

1. When the first two stars of the Saptarishis rise in the heavens and some lunar asterism is seen at night at an equal distance between them, then the Saptarishis continue stationary in that asterism for a hundred years.<sup>42</sup> [\[#fn42\]](#)
2. At the birth of Parikshit, they [the Saptarishis] were in Magha and the Kali age then commenced.<sup>43</sup> [\[#fn43\]](#)
3. The Saptarishis entered Magha for 100 years 75 years before the Kaliyuga (i.e., in 3177 BCE)<sup>44</sup> [\[#fn44\]](#)
4. The Saptarishis were conjoined with the Maghas in Parikshit's time for 100 years. The Brahmanas (Saptarishis) will be in the 24<sup>th</sup> constellation for 100 years at the termination of the Andhras.<sup>45</sup> [\[#fn45\]](#)
5. From the coronation of Mahadeva [Mahasena] down to the birth of Parikshit, the total duration was 1050 years.<sup>46</sup> [\[#fn46\]](#)
6. From Mahapadma's coronation to Parikshit's birth, this interval is indeed known as 1500 years.<sup>47</sup> [\[#fn47\]](#)
7. When the seven Rishis are in Purvashadha, then Nanda [Mahasena] will begin to reign.<sup>48</sup> [\[#fn48\]](#)
8. In contrast to #6, the Vishnu Purana says that 1015 (not 1500) years elapsed between Parikshit's birth and *Mahapadma's* coronation (which matches with #7 that the Saptarishi's transition from Magha (at Parikshit's birth) to Purvashadha takes 1000 years). However, this number does not match with the individual reign-lengths of the kings from Parikshit to Mahapadma Nanda in the same Vishnu Purana (Chapter 23, Verse 3; Chapter 24, Verses 2, 3), which add up to 1500 years (= 1000 years for the Varhadhrathas + 138 years for the Pradyotas + 362 years for the Sisunagas). 1500 years as the combined interval between Parikshit and Mahapadma Nanda is corroborated by the Vayu and Matsya Puranas as well. Since the Vayu Purana has Mahadeva [Mahasena] instead of Mahapadma in the same verse (see #5 above), the Vishnu Purana must mean Mahasena (the king of Ujjayini/ Pradyota of Magadha) instead of Mahapadma Nanda in Chapter 24, Verse 39. This means it was Mahasena who lived ~1000 years from Parikshit's birth (see Figure 4), which matches the Saptarishi's transition from Magha to Purvashadha.
9. In the interval elapsed from Pulomat (the last Andhra king) to Mahapadma – that interval was 836 years.<sup>49</sup> [\[#fn49\]](#)
10. The Saptarishis were situated equally with regard to Pushya while Pratipa was king. At the end of the Andhras, who will be in the 27<sup>th</sup> century afterwards, the cycle repeats itself.<sup>50</sup> [\[#fn50\]](#)
11. From Pratipa's reign (pratipe-ragni) to the end of the Andhras comprised a complete cycle of the Saptarishis [2700 years]<sup>51</sup> [\[#fn51\]](#)
12. At the end of 27 Andhras, the Saptarishis will be in a line with the towering, brilliant Agni (pradipte-agni)<sup>52</sup> [\[#fn52\]](#)
13. When the sun and moon and the asterism Tishya and the planet Jupiter are in one mansion, the Kṛta age shall return.<sup>53</sup> [\[#fn53\]](#)

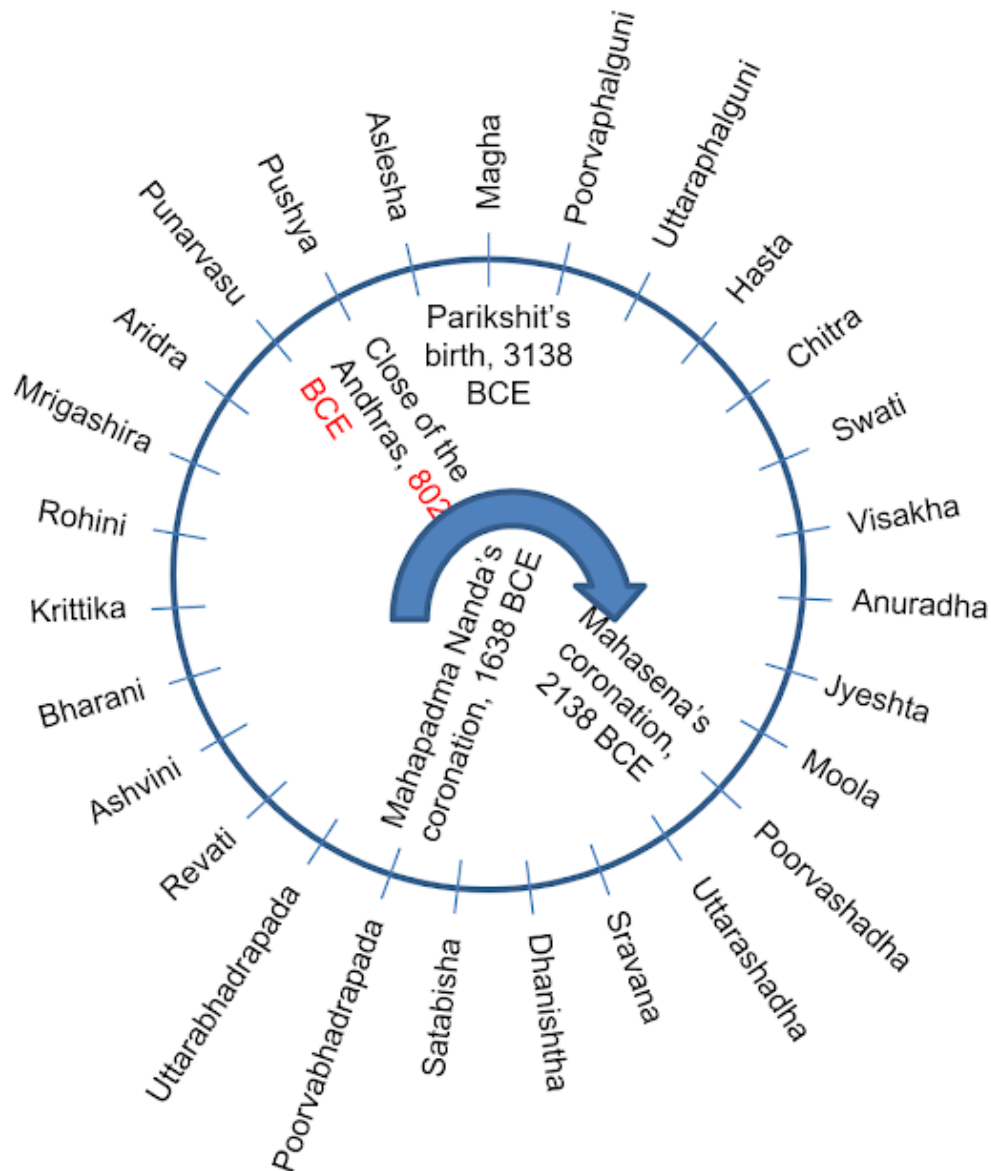
Assuming #11 and #12 are versions of the same statement, we should either read "Pratipa's reign" or "brilliant Agni" in both statements. Since Pratipa's reign is stated in two Puranas, we should construe the Matsya Purana statement to mean that the Saptarishis at the end of the Andhra dynasty will be in-line with the same asterism that they were during Pratipa's reign.

We know from #2 and #6 that the Saptarishis were in Magha during Parikshit's birth and in Purvashadha (10<sup>th</sup> asterism from Magha) during Mahasena's coronation (1000 years apart based on #5). This tells us that the motion of the Saptarishis is forward (not retrograde) and that they should be in Purvabhadrapada during Mahapadma's coronation (500 years after Mahasena's coronation) and in Punarvasu/ Pushya at the end of the Andhra dynasty (836 years after Mahapadma's coronation). This has two implications:

- The Saptarishis were in Pushya during Pratipa's reign (2700 years earlier) as well, which is in-line with #9.
- 300 years elapsed between Pratipa and Parikshit's birth (i.e., the time taken by the Saptarishis to traverse from Pushya to Magha), giving us an average reign-length of 50 years from Pratipa to Parikshit (6 generations including Abhimanyu – see Figure 3) – a reasonable estimate.

We are now in a position to create a timeline for the emergence of the Gupta kings in Magadha based on the Saptarishi cycle, the date of the Kaliyuga (3102 BCE) and the reign-lengths of the various dynasties mentioned in the Puranas.

As Figure 6 shows, the Andhra dynasty would have ended around 802 BCE. The Puranas specify 67 years for 10 Abhiras, 300 years for 11 Pauras and 106 years for the Kailakila Yavanas before Vishvasphatika (probably the first Gupta) comes into prominence at Magadha. This brings Vishvasphatika to the throne in 329 BCE (= 802-67-300-106). Samudragupta's Allahabad pillar inscription<sup>54</sup> [fn54] mentions the names of his predecessors Gupta and Ghatotkacha *before* his father – the *Maharajadhiraja* (king of kings) Chandragupta I. With Vishvasphatika as the founder of the Gupta dynasty, this brings Chandragupta I to the throne of Magadha two generations after 329 BCE, making him the perfect candidate to be Sandrocottus when Megasthenes arrived in Pataliputra in 302 BCE.



[[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-yq7ngZpGvpM/XqScVPCzsyI/AAAAAAAAAB1Q/j3mqleDOrisph88nDAiFmv6qmPNw1ooKgCLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/6.%2BSaptarishi\\_cycle.png](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-yq7ngZpGvpM/XqScVPCzsyI/AAAAAAAAAB1Q/j3mqleDOrisph88nDAiFmv6qmPNw1ooKgCLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/6.%2BSaptarishi_cycle.png)]

Figure 6: The Saptarishi cycle as described in the Puranas

We shall now examine the Greek accounts of Sandrocottus to determine whether their description of Sandrocottus matches Chandragupta I or Chandragupta Maurya.

### 3. The Greek accounts of Ancient India

Seleucus Nicator, the chief successor of Alexander's East Asian empire, invaded India in c. 306-303 BCE.<sup>55</sup> As per Greek accounts, Sandrocottus was the king of Magadha at the time, and when the war ended, the peace was greatly to his advantage. Seleucus abandoned any claims east of the Indus, transferred the satrapies of the Parapanisadaei (around Kabul), Aria (around Herat) and Arachosia (around Kandahar) to Sandrocottus and sent an ambassador (Megasthenes) to the royal court at Pataliputra in 302 BCE.<sup>56</sup> Megasthenes' account on India (*Indica*) is now lost, but other Greek writers have left us extensive quotes on ancient India from it:<sup>57</sup>

- Solinus says: Father Bacchus [Dionysus] was the first who invaded India. From him to Alexander the Great 6451 years are reckoned with 3 months additional, the calculation being made by counting the kings, who reigned in the intermediate period, to the number of 153.
- Pliny's report on Indians: From the days of Father Bacchus to Alexander the Great, their kings are reckoned at 154, whose reigns extend over 6451 years and 3 months.
- Arrian says: From the time of Dionysus to Sandrocottus the Indians counted 153 kings and a period of 6042 years, but among these a republic was thrice established ... and another to 300 years and another to 120 years.
- When he [Dionysus] was leaving India, he appointed Spatembas to be the king of the country. When Spatembas died his son Boudyas succeeded to the sovereignty; the son of the latter, whose name was Kradeuas, duly inherited the kingdom.
- Diodorus writes<sup>58</sup> "the dominions of the nation of the Prasii and the Gandaridai, whose king is Xandrames, had an army of 20,000 horses, 200,000 infantry, 2,000 chariots and 4,000 elephants ... Owing to this, their country has never been conquered by a foreign king ... thus Alexander, after conquering all Asia, did not make war upon the Gangaridai ... when he learned that they possessed four thousand elephants well trained and equipped for war."
- The Greeks<sup>59</sup> refer to Sandrocottus' people – the Prasii (Sanskrit for Prachya or "easterners") – as "the tribe of people far superior to all the rest" (Strabo), "who surpass in power and glory every other people, not only in this quarter, but one may say in all India" (Pliny) and to Sandrocottus as the king who "overran and subdued the whole of India with an army of 600,000 men" (Plutarch).
- Plutarch writes<sup>60</sup> "Androcottus himself, who was then but a youth saw Alexander himself and afterwards declared that Alexander could easily have taken possession of the whole country."
- Justin writes<sup>61</sup> that Sandrocottus was born in humble life.

### The identity of Dionysus

We may safely assume that Megasthenes received his information from the Puranas that existed during his time, and he identified an Indian king described in the Puranas with Dionysus. The count of kings reported by Megasthenes must be from the Indian king identified with Dionysus to the Indian contemporary of Alexander (who would be Sandrocottus, since Plutarch states that they met). Allan Dahlquist<sup>62</sup> says "the same god is sometimes called Dionysos and sometimes Helios." Helios is the Sun god and Dionysos is the son of Zeus. His Indian counterpart would be Vivasvat – the Sun God and the son of Dyaus (the sky God and the Indian equivalent of Zeus). In a separate post,<sup>63</sup> I have shown that Megasthenes' Dionysus is indeed Vivasvat – the Sun god and progenitor of the solar race. The third king in the lunar dynasty of kings (called Boudyas) would be Budha, which seems to be consistent. Kradeuas would then be Pururavas and Spatembas would be Satyavrata, the monarch who navigated his ark through the Great Deluge. Sethna understands this name to be a variant of Sapta-ambhas (seven waters)<sup>64</sup> which would be consistent with the feat attributed to Satyavrata (one can also suggest Sphuta-ambhas, or one who clears the waters). With the originators of the Greek king-count identified, we only need to check which monarch occupies the 153<sup>rd</sup> or 154<sup>th</sup> position from Vivasvat.

### The identity of Sandrocottus

If we count the kings from Chandragupta I to Vivasvat (Figure 2-Figure 5), we get 154 kings *without* the 10 Abhiras and the 11 Pauras. Interestingly, these are the only two dynasties described in the Puranas *without* a list of kings, suggesting that the leaders of these dynasties were not royalty. In other words, these two dynasties would neatly fit into the "republics" that Megasthenes refers to in his *Indica* (the 300 years he quotes for one republic fits with the 300

years for the 11 Pauras). Chandragupta Maurya is nowhere near the 153-king count mentioned in the Puranas (there are only 92 kings between Chandragupta Maurya (assuming 9 Nandas) and Vivasvat).

The other attributes of Sandrocottus as described by the Greeks are also borne out by Puranic description of Chandragupta I. The Vishnu Purana says that the Guptas will be non-Kshatriyas, which matches Justin's description that Sandrocottus came from "humble origins."

The relatively small dominions assigned to the Guptas by the Puranas (Magadha to Prayaga) and the Greek paeans to Sandrocottus as the king who "overran and subdued the whole of India with an army of 600,000 men" may seem out of place, but we should remember that the Puranas are referring to the Gupta dominions at the time of Vishvasphatika. As we have already mentioned, Samudragupta himself does not refer to his predecessors Gupta and Ghatotkacha as *Maharajadhirajas* – this title is reserved for his father, Chandragupta I. So the Puranas are referring to the nascent empire of Gupta (probably the same as Vishasphatika), Ghatotkacha and the prince Chandragupta I – who ruled over Magadha to Prayaga – and the Greeks are referring to Chandragupta I after he became a sovereign in his own right.

### The identity of Xandrames

The Greek accounts state that Xandrames was the king of the Gangaridai and the immediate opponent of Alexander were he to cross the Hyphasis (Beas).<sup>65</sup> [fn65] We also know that Sandrocottus was not yet a king when he met Alexander (based on Plutarch), so he had not yet conquered the domains that the Greeks praise him for. Also, as the Prasii capital was Pataliputra and the Greeks do not mention any threat to Alexander from the Prasii, we may surmise that Xandrames was:

- A king of the territories to the west of Pataliputra (hence posing a direct threat to Alexander)
- A king who lived during Alexander's invasion (326 BCE) and before Sandrocottus became king of the Prasii (~315 BCE)

As per our timeline from Figure 6, Vishvasphatika ascended the throne of Magadha around 329 BCE (= 802-67-300-106), very close to Alexander's invasion of India. The Vayu Purana mentions two dynasties before this monarch – the Kailakila Yavanas in Magadha and the Nagas in Vidisha (Madhya Pradesh). The Nagas are to the west of Magadha so this is the dynasty that we should focus our search for Xandrames on. The name of the third monarch in the Vidisha line<sup>66</sup> [fn66] (see Figure 5) – *Chandramsa* – immediately catches our eye as a suitable Greek equivalent of Xandrames. As the king of the territories west of Magadha and on the throne before 329 BCE, Chandramsa would have been Alexander's opponent if Alexander had crossed the Beas. There is no such equivalent for Chandragupta Maurya in the Puranas if we assume that he was Sandrocottus.

### The identity of Amitrachates

Strabo calls the son of Sandrocottus "Amitrochades" while Athenaeus calls him "Amitrachates." [https://www.blogger.com/null] <sup>67</sup> [fn67] As per Sethna, this name can be equated to "Amitra-chetta" – mower of enemies – a term close to the appellation "Sarva-rajo-chetta" given to Samudragupta by his successors<sup>67</sup> in light of his far-flung conquests as described in his Allahabad pillar inscription. We have also seen that certain Greek scribes drop the letter 'S' from the Sanskrit name (e.g., Plutarch's Androcottus for Sandrocottus), so the king's name could be "Samitrachates" which is close to Samudragupta. Chandragupta Maurya's son (Bindusara) does not seem to be the factual (he is not credited with military prowess) or phonetic equivalent of Amitrachates.

In summary, the portrait of Sandrocottus as painted by the Greeks closely matches with that described by the Puranas for Chandragupta I and not Chandragupta Maurya. This implies that Chandragupta Maurya ascended the throne of Magadha in 1538 BCE (= 3138-1000-138-362), a date which is in stark contrast with today's accepted chronology. The next section examines the reasons for why we currently accept Chandragupta Maurya as being a contemporary to Alexander and presents a rebuttal for each of these reasons.

## 4. In defense of our revised chronology



In his book, Sethna cites the following pillars of support for the accepted chronology of identifying Chandragupta Maurya as Sandrocottus and as a contemporary of Alexander and offers a rebuttal for each:

### The Gupta dynasty ruled from 319 CE – J.F. Fleet

According to J.F. Fleet,<sup>68</sup> [fn68] the Imperial Gupta dynasty was founded by Chandragupta I in 319-320 CE. [https://www.blogger.com/null] <sup>69</sup> [fn69] Mookerji writes that the basis for fixing this date is Al-beruni's statement that the Gupta-kala was separated from the Saka-kala by 241 years. With the Saka-kala starting in 78 AD (established earlier in this essay), the Gupta-kala would start in 78+241 = 319 CE.

### REBUTTAL:

Al-beruni's exact statements on the eras followed in India during his time are as follows:<sup>17</sup> [fn17]

The epoch of the era of Saka or Saka-kala falls 135 years later than that of Vikramaditya. The Hindus had much to suffer from him [Saka] till at last they received help from the east, when Vikramaditya marched against him, put him to flight and killed him in the region of Karur. Now this date became famous, as people rejoiced in the news of the death of the tyrant, and was used as an epoch of an era. Since there is a long interval between the era which is called the era of Vikramaditya and the killing of Saka, we think that that Vikramaditya from whom the era has got its name is not identical with that one who killed Saka.

As regards the Gupta-kala, people say that the Guptas were wicked powerful people, and that when they ceased to exist this date was used as an epoch of an era. The epoch of the era of the Guptas falls, like that of the Valabha era, 241 years later than the Saka-kala.

Al-beruni's statement makes it clear that 319 CE (the Gupta-kala) is not the *beginning* of the reign of the Guptas, but rather the *end*. He uses the Sanskrit word *kala* (doom) in the same sense for the Sakas as well as the Guptas. Lord Krishna uses *kala* in the same sense in his discourse to Arjuna:<sup>70</sup> [fn70]

*I am Kala, now engaged in destroying the worlds. Even without thee, none of the warriors engaged in battle shall survive.*

### There are alternatives available to the Puranic chronology

Al-beruni also writes:<sup>17</sup> [fn17]

The year 400 of Yazdajird (1031 CE), which we have chosen as a gauge, corresponds to the following years of the Indian eras:

- Year 953 of the Saka-kala [so the Saka-kala began in 1031-953 = 78 CE]
- Year 1488 of the era of Sri Harsha [so the Sri Harsha era began in 1488-1031 = 457 BCE]
- Year 1088 of the era of Vikramaditya [so the Vikrama era began in 1088-1031 = 57 BCE]
- Year 712 of the Valabha era, which is identical with the Gupta-kala [so the Gupta-kala began in 1031-712 = 319 CE]
- According to both Brahmagupta and Pulisa, 4132 years of the Kaliyuga have elapsed *before* our gauge-year [so the Kaliyuga began in 4132-1030 = 3102 BCE]
- The epoch of the Pandava-kala is the year 3479 *before* the gauge year [this has been interpreted to mean that the Pandavas abdicated their throne in 3479-1030 = 2448 BCE]

The last statement is corroborated by Varahamihira, one of the Navaratnas in the court of Vikramaditya of Ujjayini. In his *Brihatsamhita*, Varahamihira writes:<sup>71</sup> [fn71]

"According to the theory of Vriddha Garga, the course of the Seven Seers by whom the northern region is, as it were, protected ... The Seven Rishis were in Magha when King Yudhishtira ruled the Earth, and the period of that king is 2526 years before the Saka-kala."

If we take the Saka-kala as 78 CE, this puts Yudhishtira's abdication at 2526-78 = 2448 BCE, which matches Al-beruni's Pandava-kala. With 2773 years between Yudhishtira's abdication and the emergence of the Guptas (= 2300 years between Parikshit's coronation in 3102 BCE and the collapse of the Andhrabhrtyas in 802 BCE + 473 years between the Andhrabhrtyas and Vishvasphatika), we would have the Guptas ascending the throne of Magadha in ~325 CE.



**REBUTTAL:**

As any student of Hindu mythology knows, the Pandavas abdicated their throne on hearing the news of Lord Krishna's death and set out for their pilgrimage to Mt. Meru. Lord Krishna's death heralded the onset of the Kaliyuga (3102 BCE as per King Pulakeshin II's inscription and Al-Beruni's own observation). We also know from the Puranas that the earlier clause in Varahamihira's statement – that the Saptarishis were in Magha when Yudhisthira was king – was true from 3177 to 3077 BCE. This means Yudhisthira should have abdicated his throne in 3102 BCE. Varahamihira being a scholar himself must have known this, so it behooves us to check his source. The Kashmiri historian Kalhana (author of the *Rajatarangini*) gives us Vriddha-Garga's exact quote:<sup>72</sup> [fn72]

At the junction of the Kali and Dvapara ages, the virtuous sages who delight in protecting the people [the Saptarishis] stood in the asterism over which the Pitris preside [Magha].

The above statement clarifies that both Varahamihira and Vriddha-Garga agree that Yudhisthira was king *until the onset of the Kaliyuga* when the Saptarishis were in Magha. We must note that Varahamihira does not say that Yudhisthira abdicated his throne 654 years (= 3102-2448) after Lord Krishna's death/ the Kaliyuga's onset – he says that Yudhisthira's abdication took place 2526 years before the *Saka-kala* – while acknowledging that the Yudhisthira ceased to be king when the Kaliyuga began in 3102 BCE. The inescapable conclusion would be that both Al-beruni and Varahamihira are referring to a Saka-kala other than 78 CE – *an era that was established in 3102-2526 = 576 BCE*. We already know from Figure 5 that the Sakas were in prominence in India after 802 BCE (after the collapse of the Andhrabhrtya dynasty). The Vayu Purana says that the Sakas reigned for 380 years<sup>33</sup> [fn33] after the Andhrabhrtyas (i.e., from 802 to 422 BCE), so 576 BCE is a probable date for their era.

A Saka-kala of 576 BCE (different from the second Saka-kala of 78 CE) helps us resolve other conundrums in Indian history. Sethna writes in his book:<sup>73</sup> [fn73] Varahamihira gives 427 Saka as the date of his earliest work, the *Panchasiddhantika*. Amaraja gives a date of 509 Saka for Varahamihira's death. With a Saka-kala of 576 BCE, Varahamihira's career would be between 149 and 67 BCE. We know that 57 BCE is taken as the traditional Vikramaditya of Ujjayini's death (Al-Beruni's Vikrama era) and that Varahamihira is considered to be one of the nine jewels in his court. Our revised chronology places Varahamihira perfectly in Vikramaditya's court.

Further, the accepted chronology assumes Chandragupta II – the 4<sup>th</sup> of the Imperial Guptas – to be Varahamihira's royal patron Vikramaditya. Since the accepted chronology has the Imperial Guptas reigning from 319 CE, Varahamihira and Chandragupta II are shifted to ~400 CE<sup>74</sup> [fn74] while the Vikrama era is associated with a legendary monarch. However, with the Imperial Guptas starting in 315 BCE and 4 kings between Chandragupta I and Chandragupta II,<sup>75</sup> [fn75] 57 BCE is a plausible date for the death of Chandragupta II. Our chronology reconciles the epochs of Varahamihira, Vikramaditya and Chandragupta II.

**The Yona Rulers in Ashoka's edicts refer to Greek kings, hence placing him in ~250 BCE**

The supporting assertion for the accepted chronology can be summed up as:<sup>76</sup> [fn76]

Rock Edict (R.E.) XIII of the famous Mauryan emperor Ashoka mentions five rulers, the first of whom is termed "Yona Raja." These kings are Amtiyoka, Turamaya, Amtikini, Maga and Alikasudara. Since "Yona" is Prakrit for "Yavana," which connotes Greeks, modern historians have identified these five rulers and their reign-length as Antiochus II Theos of Syria (261-246 BCE), Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (285-247 BCE), Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia (278-239 BCE), Magas of Cyrene (300-258 BCE) and Alexander of Epirus (275-255 BCE) or his namesake at Corinth (252-247 BCE). If Chandragupta Maurya ascended the throne in 315 BCE, then Ashoka would be king from 266 to 230 BCE (based on the Puranic reign-lengths), making him a contemporary of the five rulers he names. This means the Guptas could not have been the rulers of Magadha in 315 BCE.

**REBUTTAL:**

Sethna dismantles the above assertion using 4 arguments:

- **"Yona" does not necessarily mean Greeks**

Sethna argues that there is no need to posit "Greeks" for "Yonas" in Ashoka's inscription. Indian traditions are replete with references to Yavanas, who are depicted as degraded Kshatriyas who have fallen away from Vedic culture. In the Srimad Bhagavatam,<sup>77</sup> [fn77] Lord Krishna battles Kala-Yavana – an invader of Mathura from the

west – as well as Jarasandha from the east. We have already seen references to Yavanas and Kambojas in the armies of Chandragupta Maurya (before he became the king of Magadha) and Parvateshwara in the *Mudrarakshasa*. The Puranas state that the Kailakila Yavanas – with names such as Vindhyashakti, Paranjaya and Ramachandra – reigned in Magadha before the Imperial Guptas. No historian has argued that these Yavanas were Greeks, and the same argument can be extended to Ashoka's Yavanas. All that can be said is Amtiyoka was a king "of a people from the West of India proper who were not following Vedic culture."

- **There is no mention of Ashoka or Buddhism in the classical records of the 5 Greek kings**<sup>78 [fn78]</sup>

Sethna quotes the renowned Indian historian R.C Majumdar as saying "Greece knew nothing of Buddhism prior to the rise of Alexandria in the Christian era. Buddha is first mentioned by Clement of Alexandria (150-218 CE)." This is despite Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt sending his ambassador Dionysus to the court of Sandrocottus' son (Ashoka's father if we accept the current chronology). The Greeks have recorded their experiences with India in detail – we know of Alexander's dealings with Ambhi (Omphis), Paurava (Porus) and Dandayana (Dandamis), Athenaeus writes that Sandrocottus sent presents to Seleucus, Epiphanius informs us that the head of Ptolemy II Philadelphus' library at Alexandria was anxious to translate the books of the Hindus. However, after the accounts related to Sandrocottus and Amitrachates, we get no name of any king of India. With Ashoka placed in the same timeframe as the five Greek kings, this neglect becomes hard to explain.

- **The five kings named in R.E. XIII were not contemporaries of Ashoka**<sup>79 [fn79]</sup>

The accepted chronology places Ashoka on the throne of Magadha between 266 – 230 BCE. Sethna quotes R.K. Mookerji as stating: "There were several kings of Asia Minor of equal or higher status [than the 5 kings of Europe and Northern Africa] whom Ashoka should have mentioned in R.E. XIII, such as Eumenes of Pergama (262 – 240 BCE) or nearer home, Diodotus of Bactria." The explanation given for these omissions is that Ashoka's edict was carved before 255 BCE (i.e., before Diodotus broke away from the Seleucid empire). Ashoka's Pillar Edict (P.E.) VII, inscribed in the 27<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, states "this Dhammalipi should be inscribed where there are stone pillars or stone tablets so that it may long endure." However, Ashoka's Rupnath Minor Rock Edict says "have this matter engraved on rocks. Here and far off where there is any stone column, have it engraved on the stone column." This tells us that the idea of having edicts engraved on rocks as well as columns did not occur to Ashoka until his first rock edict. This in turn means that R.E. XIII was engraved after P.E. VII, which is dated to Ashoka's 27<sup>th</sup> reign-year. In other words, R.E. XIII, which mentions the 5 kings, was engraved after 239 BCE (= 266-27) and thus should not mention Antiochus II (261-246 BCE), Ptolemy II (285-247 BCE), Antigonus Gonatas (278-239 BCE), Magas (300-258 BCE) and both Alexanders, as all of them would have passed away by 239 BCE. The fact that R.E. XIII mentions kings after their deaths indicates that it does not refer to the Greek kings at all.

- **Ashoka's description of his predecessors does not match the Greek description of Sandrocottus**<sup>80 [fn80]</sup>

In R.E. V, Ashoka states "For a very long time previously there was no dispatch of business and no reporting at all hours. This, therefore I have done, namely, that at all hours and in all places ... the reporters may report peoples' business to me." In contrast, Megasthenes writes of Sandrocottus: "the king remains in court for the whole day without allowing the business to be interrupted, even though the hour arrives when he must attend to his person. The palace is open to all comers, even when the king is having his hair combed or dressed. It is then that he gives audience to ambassadors and administers justice to his subjects." In other words, Ashoka's admonitions do not apply even to his grandfather. Both statements can be correct only if Ashoka were moved to a time different from Sandrocottus.

## **Ashoka's Kandahar Inscription proves that he was coeval with Greeks**

The supporting assertion for the accepted chronology can be summed up as:<sup>81 [fn81]</sup>

The bilingual Ashokan inscription discovered in April 1958 in Kandahar has two languages: Greek and Aramaic. The Greek is of the type current in the period c. 275-225 BCE and its translation is engraved below it in Aramaic. This is consistent with the chronological position of R.E. XIII, making Ashoka a contemporary of the five Greek kings he names in R.E. XIII.

## **REBUTTAL:**

Sethna posits the contrary hypothesis that the Aramaic text was for the "Yonas" in R.E. XIII – an Iranianized sect of Indians living in the Kandahar area in ~1500 BCE – and the Greek text is a later translation of the Aramaic text by Greeks living in the same area in ~275 BCE. He uses the following arguments to support his hypothesis:

- **The Aramaic text is much older than the Greek text**<sup>82</sup> [fn82]

Sethna notes three characteristics of the Aramaic text that prompts the above conclusion:

1. The Aramaic text has a high proportion of Iranian words for a short text – *patizbata*, *frabasta*, *frabasti*, *hupatyasti* and *mazista*. The type of words used indicates an Iranian language of ancient type, such as Avesta or Old Persian and not of the Middle Iranian stage.
2. Some of the words (such as *ptytw*) are definitely Iranian but cannot be elucidated in the light of post-Alexandrine or even Achaemenid Iranian.
3. The non-Iranian portion of the text also exhibits several signs of archaism. Benveniste says “to put this Aramaic text in the historical perspective which accords with it, we should compare it to the documents of Achaemenid date found in Egypt two centuries after the Great kings [e.g., Ramses II and Seti I, dated to ~1400 BCE].”

- **The Aramaic text is faithful to the text in other Ashokan edicts while the Greek is not**<sup>83</sup> [fn83]

Sethna concludes that although every concept and phrase in the Greek text can be unobjectionably related to the Aramaic, the converse is not true because the Greek text misses out on the specificity of the Aramaic text. Dupont-Summer says “the Aramaic recension, a little longer, is manifestly closer to the Indian text ... the Greek scribe ... may have wished ... to make explicit the passage he was translating.” For example, the Greek version states in general that Ashoka would abstain from the slaughter of animals, while the Aramaic version specifies the killing of only a few animals for the king’s sake – in accord with the original text in R.E. I, which states only three animals would be killed daily in the king’s kitchen. The Greek text also mentions Ashoka’s name as “Piodasses” with a double “s” – a form not mentioned in any of the Ashokan edicts.

- **The practice of later rulers engraving edicts on existing Ashokan monuments was prevalent in India**<sup>84</sup> [fn84]

The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta is engraved on a pillar that already has an Ashokan epigraph engraved below it, and the inscriptions of the Saka Rudradaman I and of Skandagupta are both on the same Junagarh rock – a rock that already has an edict of Ashoka. When we have a precedent of two Ashokan inscriptions sharing space with later rulers, we should not be surprised to observe a third inscription in Kandahar receive the same treatment. An inspection of the Greek text shows that the first four lines are less interspaced than the rest, as though the engraver spaced them close anticipating less room for the remaining 10 lines, but then finding that the space was ample, spaced the remaining lines farther apart. This initial crowding would be required only if the Aramaic text already stood in the middle of the rock and the engraver was attempting to inscribe something above it.

With the principal supports for the accepted chronology of India refuted, the next two sections of this essay examine the utility of our revised chronology in solving some of the enduring conundrums in Indian history.

## 5. Kalhana and the epoch of the Kaliyuga, Buddha, Vikramaditya and Saka-Kala

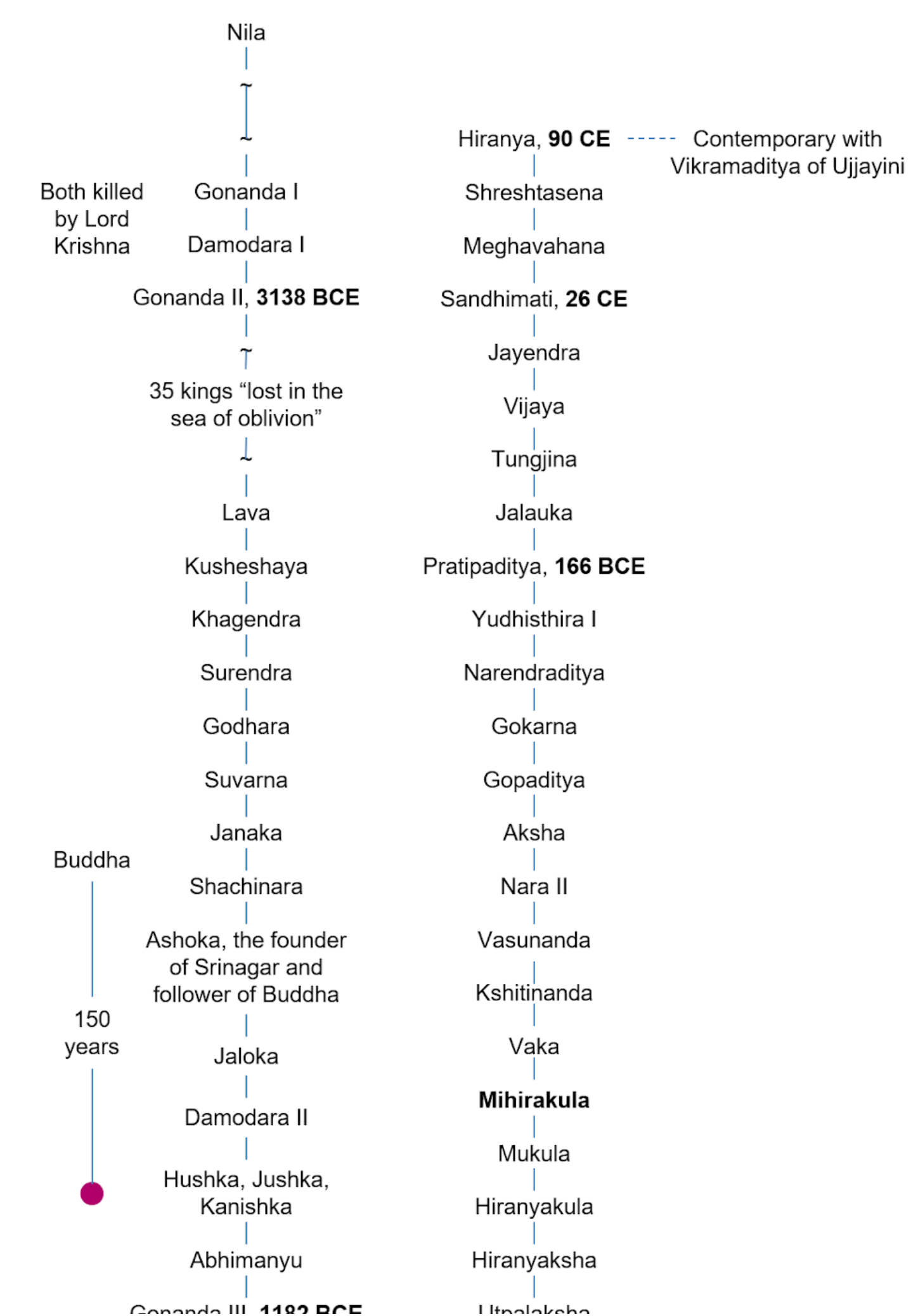
Kalhana, writing in *Rajatarangini*,<sup>85</sup> [fn85] gives Saka 1070 as his own date and counts 2330 years from Gonanda III of Kashmir to himself. Since Kalhana writes about Lalitaditya Muktapida (reigned 724 to 760 CE) – the Karkota king of Kashmir who repulsed the Arab invasions of Mummuni – we must assume that Kalhana is using the Saka-kala of 78 CE so that he comes after Lalitaditya. According to Kalhana,<sup>86</sup> [fn86] Gonanda I and his son Damodara I were killed by Lord Krishna during Jarasandha’s campaigns against Mathura. Gonanda II, who was Gonanda I’s grandson, was too young to participate in the Mahabharata war.

Kalhana provides reign-lengths only from the time of Gonanda III and counts 1016 years between the coronation of Gonanda III and the abdication of Yudhisthira (21 kings including the first and last),<sup>87</sup> [fn87] giving an average reign-length of 48 years. Kalhana also says that<sup>88</sup> [fn88] 35 kings between Gonanda II and Lava were “lost to the sea of oblivion.” With a Saka-kala of 78 AD, Kalhana is placed at 1148 AD (Saka 1070) and Gonanda III at 1182 BCE (2330 years before him). Assuming Gonanda II was born in 3138 BCE (at the time of the Great War) and given that 49 kings reigned between him and Abhimanyu (both included) – who would have abdicated in favour of Gonanda III in 1182 BCE – we get an average reign-length of 40 years for the first 49 kings of Kashmir, which seems reasonable given that the next 21 kings reigned for an average of 48 years each. This means Kalhana would agree with 3102 BCE as the epoch of the Kaliyuga.

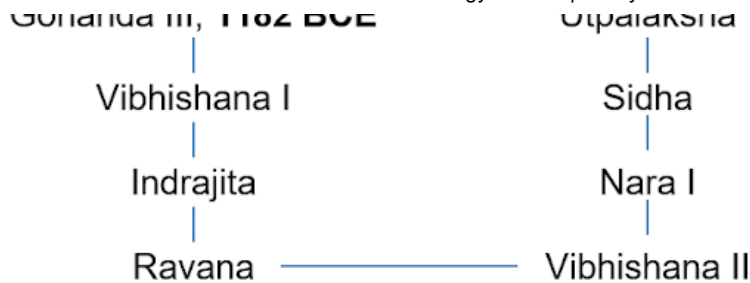
Kalhana's chronology places Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka two generations before Gonanda III. He also says that the Buddha passed away 150 years before their reigns.<sup>89</sup> [fn89] With 40 years to a generation and Gonanda III crowned in 1182 BCE, Kalhana would concur with Buddha's parinirvana occurring in ~1400 BCE ( $= 1182 + 2 \times 40 + 150$ ), which is consistent with our chronology.<sup>90</sup> [fn90]

We know that the traditional Vikramaditya is believed to have died in 57 BCE. Kalhana's chronology places the coronation of Yudhisthira's successor (Pratipaditya) at 166 BCE (1016 years after Gonanda III). Kalhana says that Pratipaditya was a relative of Vikramaditya – a king of some distant country – and confirms that some writers *erroneously* believe this Vikramaditya to be the same as the enemy of Saka.<sup>91</sup> [fn91] This affirms the traditional belief that there was indeed a Vikramaditya who lived sometime between 166 and 57 BCE. Kalhana's records are also consistent with Al-beruni's observation that the Vikramaditya of the Vikrama era is different from the one who killed Saka.

Lastly, Kalhana counts 6 kings between Pratipaditya and Sandhimati (both included), who reigned over 192 years.<sup>92</sup> [fn92] Sandhimati was followed by Meghavahana (34 years) and Shresthasena (30 years). Kalhana says that the next king Hiranya – crowned in 90 CE ( $= 166 - 192 - 34 - 30$ ) was a contemporary of Vikramaditya of Ujjayini (also called Harsha),<sup>93</sup> [fn93] who was renowned for being the destroyer of the Sakas. This is in conformity with Al-beruni's Vikramaditya who destroyed the Sakas in 78 CE and founded the Saka-kala. Kalhana (see Figure 7) and Al-beruni thus provide independent confirmation of our revised chronology.







[[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-FCQiqgbvhbc/XqSgheTszvI/AAAAAAAAAB1w/13JXMLUjdBwQl2Cc5szU4ctEVJe-PL0rACLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/7.%2BRajatarangini\\_chronology.png](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-FCQiqgbvhbc/XqSgheTszvI/AAAAAAAAAB1w/13JXMLUjdBwQl2Cc5szU4ctEVJe-PL0rACLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/7.%2BRajatarangini_chronology.png)]

Figure 7: The Kashmiri kings as per Kalhana's Rajatarangini

## 6. The epochs of Mahavira, Kumarila Bhatta and Adi Sankaracharya

Mahavira, the 24<sup>th</sup> Tirthankara of the Jains, is said to have attained Nirvana 470 years before the Vikrama era of 57 BCE.<sup>94</sup> [fn94] Since he is believed to have died at the age of 72, his lifespan works out to 599 – 527 BCE. As Kumarila Bhatta and Adi Sankara were proponents of the Vedic doctrine and thus opponents of Jain and Buddhist philosophy, their lives and times have been mentioned in sources belonging to these two faiths.

The Jinavijaya, one of the earliest works on the life of Mahavira, states:<sup>95</sup> [fn95]

Kumarila Bhatta was born in the year 2077 of the Yudhisthira Saka (557 BCE) and fell from his Jain teacher's grace in the year 2109 (525 BCE). Sankara's death occurred in year 2157 in the Yudhisthira Saka (477 BCE).

When 15 years had elapsed from his birth, Sankara met Bhattacharya for the first and last time.

Jains and Buddhists follow the Yudhisthira Saka as an epoch, which corresponds to 468 years after the commencement of the Kaliyuga in 3102 BCE (= 2634 BCE).<sup>96</sup> [fn96] We know from the various biographies of Adi Sankara – the Sankara Digvijayas – that he was 32 years old when he left the Earth. Adi Sankara's lifespan thus must have been from 509 to 477 BCE. The verse referring to the meeting between Sankara and Kumarila Bhatta (in Prayag) was when the latter was in the process of giving up his life by self-immolation. We can calculate this event to have occurred in 494 BCE, giving a lifespan of 63 years to Kumarila Bhatta (557 – 494 BCE). This makes Kumarila Bhatta and Mahavira contemporaries. We find confirmation of this in the Jinavijaya, which states that King Sudhanvan and Kumarila Bhatta were contemporaries of its hero, Mahavira.<sup>97</sup> [fn97]

We shall now examine these dates in light of our revised chronology.

The Nepali chronology of Suryavanshi (solar descent) kings states [<https://www.blogger.com/null>]<sup>98</sup> [fn98] that the 1<sup>st</sup> king of this dynasty came to the throne in year 1389 of the Kaliyuga while the 23<sup>rd</sup> king is said to have been coronated 2700 years after the Kaliyuga. The 27<sup>th</sup> king is said to have come to the throne in Harsha Samvat 119. We may recollect that Al-Beruni mentions the Sri Harsha era to have begun in 457 BCE, which gives us the following timeline for the Nepal royal dynasty:

1<sup>st</sup> king (1713 BCE) → 23<sup>rd</sup> king (402 BCE) → 27<sup>th</sup> king (338 BCE)

Using the above timeline, Vrishadeva Varma, the 18<sup>th</sup> king of the dynasty would be placed ~ 500 BCE. Adi Sankara is said to have visited Nepal during the reign of Vrishadeva Varma,<sup>98</sup> which supports our chronology for Adi Sankara (509 – 477 BCE). This in turn supports the timelines of Kumarila Bhatta and Mahavira.

Lastly, let us dwell on the Sri Harsha era and its importance to the original Vikramaditya and Adi Sankara. We have seen that Kalhana refers to Harsha as one of Vikramaditya's other names. The Sankara Digvijaya states<sup>99</sup> [fn99] that as per the records of Sringeri Math, Adi Sankara was born in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Vikramaditya.<sup>100</sup> [fn100] If we take Sri Harsha to be the original archetype of the two Vikramadityas who followed him (i.e., the founder of the Vikram Samvat of 57 BCE and the founder of the Saka-kala of 78 CE), then Sri Harsha would have become king in 523 BCE. His death in 457 BCE would have heralded the start of the Sri Harsha era, just as Chandragupta II Vikramaditya's death in 57 BCE would have heralded the start of the Vikrama era.

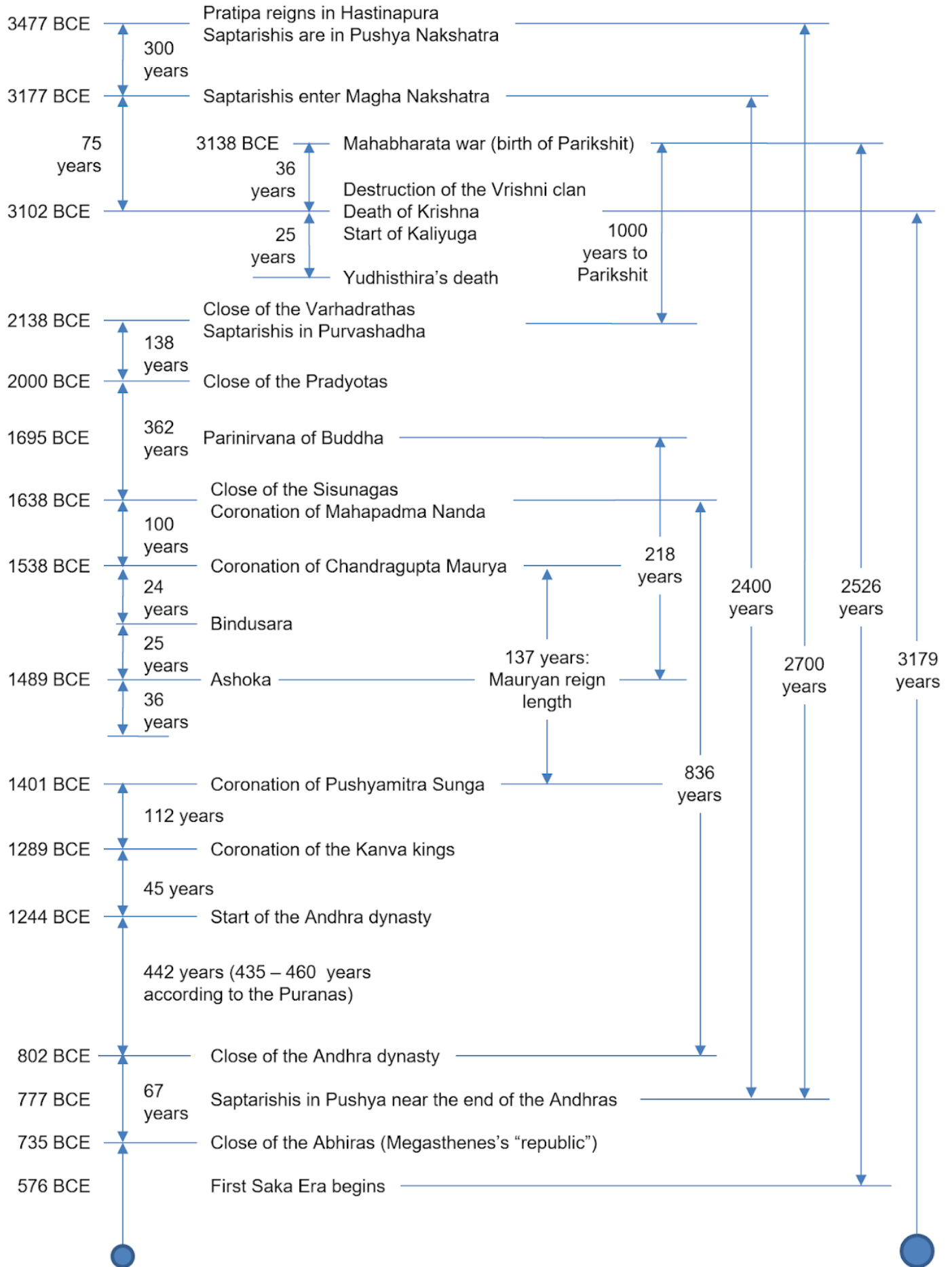


Ujjayini falls in the province of Malava and some of the later Imperial Gupta kings provide their timelines in an era that we have not encountered earlier – the Malava era. Kumaragupta I<sup>101</sup> is said to have been ‘the ruler of the Earth’ in Malava era 493.<sup>102</sup> Since we have assumed Chandragupta II to be the founder of the Vikrama era of 57 BCE, Kumaragupta must be invoking a much older era to date his reign. If we take Sri Harsha Vikramaditya to be the founder of the Malava era – his homeland – then Kumaragupta would have been king in 36 CE. Govindagupta, who was a Maharaja in his own right,<sup>103</sup> would have reigned between Chandragupta II and Kumaragupta. Our chronology thus reconciles the timelines of Sri Harsha Vikramaditya, Mahavira, Kumarila Bhatta, Adi Sankara, Chandragupta II and Kumaragupta.

## 7. The revised chronology of Ancient India

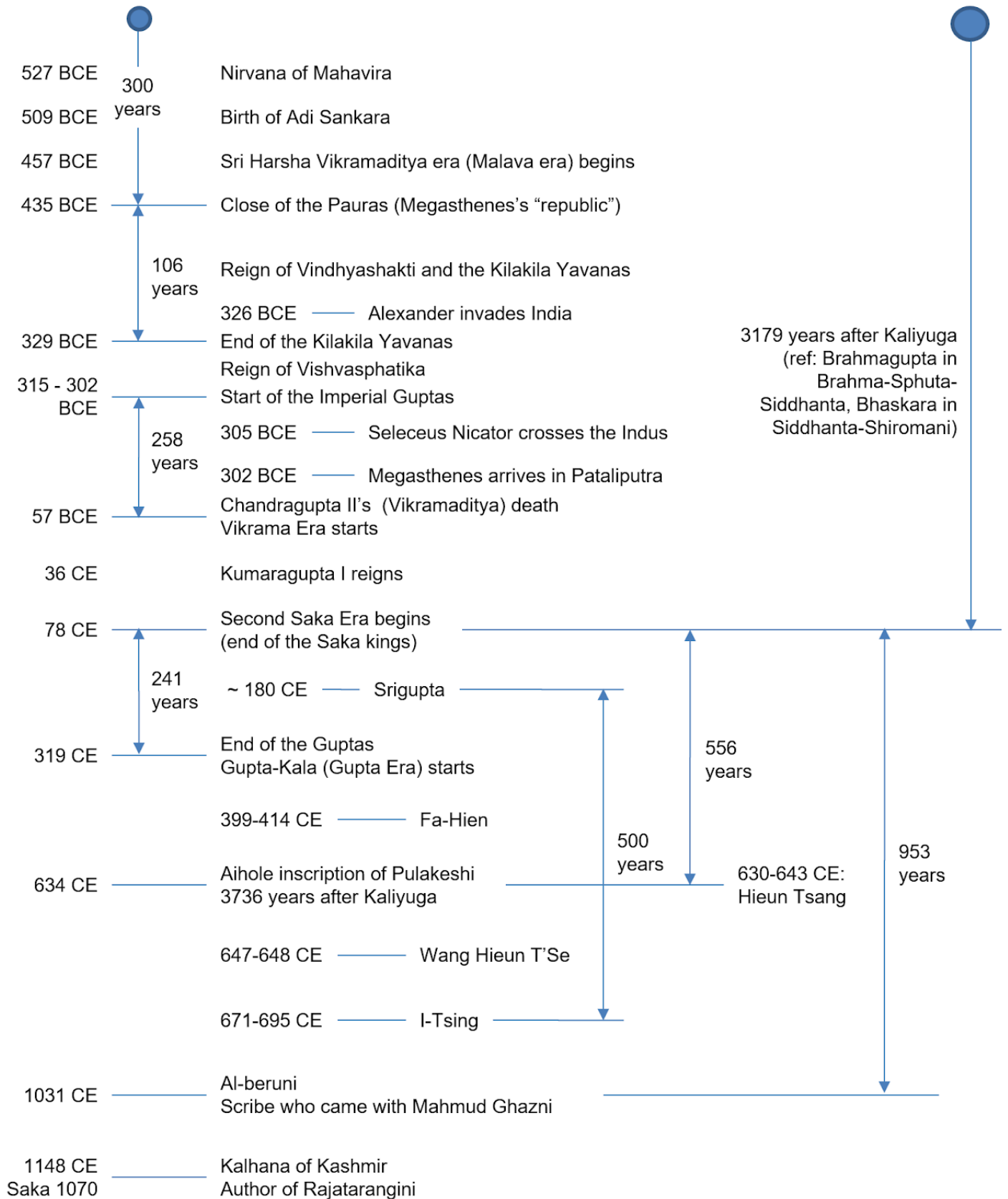
We are finally in a position to present the chronology of Ancient India as described in the Puranas and extend it to Alberuni’s time.

Figure 8 lists the chronology of ancient India from Pratapa’s reign in 3477 BCE to the first Saka-kala of 576 CE.



[[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-dMokJF7HqDA/XqSjC9TUzMI/AAAAAAAAAB2M/H0J54\\_4MSUAYasKlosx9elrwWTCa-1AggCLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/8.%2BPuranic\\_chronology\\_1.png](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-dMokJF7HqDA/XqSjC9TUzMI/AAAAAAAAAB2M/H0J54_4MSUAYasKlosx9elrwWTCa-1AggCLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/8.%2BPuranic_chronology_1.png)]

Figure 9 lists the chronology of ancient India from 576 BCE to 1148 CE.



[[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-z9SQdkFYptg/XqSjKeK5OTI/AAAAAAAAAB2Q/sbSKd8nj3p0cC\\_CXTJ-kObJQdf9OgQblwCLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/9.%2BPuranic\\_chronology\\_2.png](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-z9SQdkFYptg/XqSjKeK5OTI/AAAAAAAAAB2Q/sbSKd8nj3p0cC_CXTJ-kObJQdf9OgQblwCLcBGAsYHQ/s1600/9.%2BPuranic_chronology_2.png)]

1. Merriam-Webster defines "nation-state" as a form of political organization in which a group of people who share the same history, traditions, or language live in a particular area under one government. A state is a political and geopolitical entity while a nation is a cultural and ethnic one.↪ [#ref1]

2. Performance of actions in-line with one's duties to society↪ [#ref2]

3. Pursuit of capital to improve one's standard of living↪ [\[#ref3\]](#)
4. Fulfillment of ambition↪ [\[#ref4\]](#)
5. Attainment of perennial peace or liberation↪ [\[#ref5\]](#)
6. "The chronology of the earlier part of Indian history is notoriously uncertain" – Romila Thapar's preface to the chronology of India in her book "History of Early India from the Origins to AD 1300." The earliest states (Magadha, Sakya) formed around 600 BCE in her chronology.↪ [\[#ref6\]](#)
7. "India is a geographical term. It is no more a united nation than the Equator" – Winston Churchill↪ [\[#ref7\]](#)
8. A human being who helps others achieve liberation and enlightenment (one who helps others cross the great ocean of worldly life is a "tīrtha" – a ford – and a person who fills that role is a tīrthaṅkara – a "ford-maker")↪ [\[#ref8\]](#)
9. <http://www.jainworld.com/education/juniors/junles03.htm>, accessed on July 5, 2014. Simhapuri is Sarnath.↪ [\[#ref9\]](#)
10. [http://drs.nio.org/drs/bitstream/2264/507/1/Migration\\_Diffusion\\_6\\_56.pdf](http://drs.nio.org/drs/bitstream/2264/507/1/Migration_Diffusion_6_56.pdf), accessed on July 6, 2014↪ [\[#ref10\]](#)
11. Sir William Jones was a scholar of ancient India and co-founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.↪ [\[#ref11\]](#)
12. The Hellenized name of the king ruling in the Magadhan capital of Pataliputra during the ambassadorship of Megasthenes.↪ [\[#ref12\]](#)
13. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/483763/Purana>, accessed on July 5, 2014↪ [\[#ref13\]](#)
14. As per the Jain tradition, Bharata was the king of Ayodhya and the brother of Bahubali, whose 57-foot tall monolith adorns Shravanabelagola in Karnataka. India receives its name after this emperor.↪ [\[#ref14\]](#)
15. The cycle of yugas (ages) is believed to be Krta (Satya) -> Treta -> Dwapara -> Kali. Lord Parashurama is believed to have lived in the Krita yuga, Lord Rama is believed to have lived in the Treta Yuga and Lord Krishna is believed to have lived in the Dwapara yuga.↪ [\[#ref15\]](#)
16. Abu al-Raihan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Beruni (973-1048 CE) was Muslim scholar and polymath from the Khwarezm empire who accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni during the latter's raids on India and wrote a book on India↪ [\[#ref16\]](#)
17. "Alberuni's India Vols. I and II," Dr. E.C. Sachau, Chapter XLIX, pp. 6-7, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1910↪ [\[#ref17\]](#)
18. "The Encyclopaedia Britannica," 11th edition, Vol. VI, Hugh Chisholm, pp. 317, The Encyclopaedia Britannica Company, New York, 1910↪ [\[#ref18\]](#)
19. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 2, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989.↪ [\[#ref19\]](#)
20. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aihole\\_inscriptions#Aihole\\_Inscription\\_of\\_Pulakesin\\_II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aihole_inscriptions#Aihole_Inscription_of_Pulakesin_II), accessed on October 11, 2015↪ [\[#ref20\]](#)
21. <http://trueindianhistory-kvchelam.blogspot.com/2009/10/3-aihole-inscription.html> (accessed on October 11, 2015)↪ [\[#ref21\]](#)
22. <http://www.sdstate.edu/projectsouthasia/upload/Aihole-Inscription-of-Pulikeshin-II.pdf>, accessed on October 11, 2015↪ [\[#ref22\]](#)
23. "Early System of Nakshatras, Calendar and Antiquity of Vedic & Harappan Traditions," A.K. Bag, pp.12, Indian Journal of History of Science, Vol. 50.1, 2015↪ [\[#ref23\]](#)
24. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 23, Verse 3↪ [\[#ref24\]](#)
25. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 2↪ [\[#ref25\]](#)
26. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 3↪ [\[#ref26\]](#)
27. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 6↪ [\[#ref27\]](#)
28. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 8↪ [\[#ref28\]](#)
29. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 11↪ [\[#ref29\]](#)
30. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 12↪ [\[#ref30\]](#)
31. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 12. The Matsya Purana lists 29 kings and gives a total reign length of 435 years.↪ [\[#ref31\]](#)
32. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, commentary on Verse 14, pp. 405. H.H. Wilson (translator of this Purana and Head of the Sanskrit department at Oxford University) says that the Vayu Purana has the only intelligible reading of this verse.↪ [\[#ref32\]](#)
33. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 15↪ [\[#ref33\]](#)
34. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 16↪ [\[#ref34\]](#)
35. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 106, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref35\]](#)
36. "The Kathasaritsagara or Ocean of the streams of story," Vol. 1, pp. 279, C.H. Tawney, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1880. Both kings had a son named Palaka, which may be the reason for the confusion. The daughters of Pradyota and Mahasena were married to Udayana of the Pandava dynasty and the hero of the Kathasaritsagara. The Puranas are consistent with the Kathasaritsagara in placing Udayana as

coeval with both Pradyota and Mahasena.↪ [\[#ref36\]](#)

37. "Although both the Puranas and Buddhist texts include Shuddodana, Gautama Buddha and Rahula in their accounts of the Ikshvaku dynasty, according to the Buddhist texts, Mahasammata, an ancestor of Ikshvaku was the founder of this dynasty" – from "Dictionary of Pali Proper Names: A-DH," G.P. Malalasekara, pp. 461–462, Motilal Banarsidass (2007) [1937]. This is probably Mahaanta of Figure 1.↪ [\[#ref37\]](#)

38. "Mudrarakshasa of Visakhadatta," M.R. Kale, pp. 194, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1965. The exact quote by Viradhagupta to Rakshasa is "The city of Kusumapura [Pataliputra] is blockaded on all sides by the forces belonging to Chandragupta and Parvateshvara, composed of the Sakas, Yavanas, Kiraras, Kambojas, Parasikas, Bahlikas and others."↪ [\[#ref38\]](#)

39. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 54, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref39\]](#)

41. Vayu Purana, Chapter 99, Verses 367-368↪ [\[#ref41\]](#)

40. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 17↪ [\[#ref40\]](#)

42. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 33↪ [\[#ref42\]](#)

43. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 34↪ [\[#ref43\]](#)

44. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 7, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref44\]](#)

45. Matsya Purana, Chapter 272, Verse 43↪ [\[#ref45\]](#)

46. Vayu Purana, Chapter 99, Verse 415↪ [\[#ref46\]](#)

47. Matsya Purana, Chapter 272, Verse 37. The sum total of the Nanda dynasty years provided in all the Puranas unequivocally add up to 1500 years.↪ [\[#ref47\]](#)

48. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 39↪ [\[#ref48\]](#)

49. Matsya Purana, Chapter 272, Verse 37, Vayu Purana, Chapter 99, Verses 416, 417↪ [\[#ref49\]](#)

50. "The Sacred books of the Hindus, Volume 18, Part 1 – The Matsya Purana," Baman Das Basu (editor), Appendix III, pp. xlii, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 2008↪ [\[#ref50\]](#)

51. Brahmanda Purana, Introduction, Historical Tradition in the Brahmānda Purāna, pp. lxxviii; Vayu Purana, Chapter 99, Verse 418↪ [\[#ref51\]](#)

52. Matsya Purana, Chapter 272, Verse 38↪ [\[#ref52\]](#)

53. Vishnu Purana, Book IV, Chapter 24, Verse 30↪ [\[#ref53\]](#)

54. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahabad\\_Stone\\_Pillar\\_Inscription\\_of\\_Samudra\\_Gupta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahabad_Stone_Pillar_Inscription_of_Samudra_Gupta), accessed on July 4, 2014↪ [\[#ref54\]](#)

55. [http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/wars\\_seleucus\\_india.html](http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/wars_seleucus_india.html), accessed on July 6, 2014↪ [\[#ref55\]](#)

56. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 1, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref56\]](#)

57. "Megasthenes and Indian religion," Allan Dahlaquist, pp. 55, 65, Motilal Banarsidass, Uppsala, 1962↪ [\[#ref57\]](#)

58. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 114-115, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref58\]](#)

59. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 212, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref59\]](#)

60. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 193, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref60\]](#)

61. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 194, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref61\]](#)

62. "Megasthenes and Indian Religion," Allan Dahlaquist, pp. 37, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1977↪ [\[#ref62\]](#)

63. <https://bharatbhumika.blogspot.com/search/label/Dionysus>, accessed on April 25, 2020↪ [\[#ref63\]](#)

64. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 103, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref64\]](#)

65. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 114, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref65\]](#)

66. H.H. Wilson has, for some reason, omitted "Chandramsa" in his commentary on Verse 16, Chapter 14, Book IV of the Vishnu Purana while listing all the other kings of the Naga dynasty of Vidisha.↪ [\[#ref66\]](#)

67. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 144, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref67\]](#)

68. John Faithfull Fleet was an English civil servant with the Indian Civil Services and became known as a historian, epigraphist and linguist.↪ [\[#ref68\]](#)

69. "The Gupta empire," Radhakumud Mookerji, pp. 15, Motilal Banarsidass Delhi, 1973↪ [\[#ref69\]](#)

70. Gita, Chapter 11, Verse 32↪ [\[#ref70\]](#)

71. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 46, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref71\]](#)

72. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 49, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref72\]](#)

73. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 52-53, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref73\]](#)
74. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/92493/Chandra-Gupta-II>, accessed on July 11, 2014↪ [\[#ref74\]](#)
75. Chandragupta I, Samudragupta, Ramagupta I, Chandragupta II – 4 kings between 258 years↪ [\[#ref75\]](#)
76. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 233, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref76\]](#)
77. Srimad Bhagavatam, Canto 10, Chapter 51↪ [\[#ref77\]](#)
78. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 237-240, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref78\]](#)
79. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 236, 294, 297, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref79\]](#)
80. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 245-246, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref80\]](#)
81. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 307, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref81\]](#)
82. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 313-314, 330 Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref82\]](#)
83. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 320-321, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref83\]](#)
84. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 316-317, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref84\]](#)
85. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 48, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref85\]](#)
86. "Kings of Kashmira – being a translation of the Sanskrit work Rajatarangini," J.C. Dutt, pp. 5-6, I.C. Bose & Co., Calcutta, 1879↪ [\[#ref86\]](#)
87. "Kings of Kashmira – being a translation of the Sanskrit work Rajatarangini," J.C. Dutt, pp. 25, I.C. Bose & Co., Calcutta, 1879↪ [\[#ref87\]](#)
88. "Kings of Kashmira – being a translation of the Sanskrit work Rajatarangini," J.C. Dutt, pp. 7, I.C. Bose & Co., Calcutta, 1879↪ [\[#ref88\]](#)
89. "Kings of Kashmira – being a translation of the Sanskrit work Rajatarangini," J.C. Dutt, pp. 13, I.C. Bose & Co., Calcutta, 1879↪ [\[#ref89\]](#)
90. Our chronology places Ashoka in 1477 BCE. The Buddha is said to have passed away 218 years before Ashoka.↪ [\[#ref90\]](#)
91. "Kings of Kashmira – being a translation of the Sanskrit work Rajatarangini," J.C. Dutt, pp. 26, I.C. Bose & Co., Calcutta, 1879↪ [\[#ref91 title=\]](#)
92. "Kings of Kashmira – being a translation of the Sanskrit work Rajatarangini," J.C. Dutt, pp. 35, I.C. Bose & Co., Calcutta, 1879↪ [\[#ref92\]](#)
93. "Kings of Kashmira – being a translation of the Sanskrit work Rajatarangini," J.C. Dutt, pp. 59, I.C. Bose & Co., Calcutta, 1879↪ [\[#ref93\]](#)
94. "The Age of Sankara," T.S. Narayana Sastry, pp. 145, B.G. Paul & Co., Madras, 1916↪ [\[#ref94\]](#)
95. "The Age of Sankara," T.S. Narayana Sastry, pp. 150-152, B.G. Paul & Co., Madras, 1916↪ [\[#ref95\]](#)
96. "The Age of Sankara," T.S. Narayana Sastry, pp. 22, B.G. Paul & Co., Madras, 1916↪ [\[#ref96\]](#)
97. "The Age of Sankara," T.S. Narayana Sastry, pp. 149, B.G. Paul & Co., Madras, 1916↪ [\[#ref97\]](#)
98. "The Age of Sankara," T.S. Narayana Sastry, pp. 28, B.G. Paul & Co., Madras, 1916↪ [\[#ref98\]](#)
99. "Sankara Digvijaya," Madhava-Vidyaranya, pp. xviii, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 2002↪ [\[#ref99\]](#)
100. The Vetala Panchavimshati - the story of the legendary king Vikramaditya of Ujjayini and his exchanges with a Vetala (a spirit) - refers to Sankaracharya as saying "Philosophy is either a gift of nature or the reward of study" ("Vikram and the Vampire," Richard F. Burton, pp. 58, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1870). This would not have been possible if Adi Sankara lived in 788 CE (the current timeframe associated with him).↪ [\[#ref100\]](#)
101. Kumaragupta was Chandragupta II's son and the brother of Govindagupta (who ruled before him)↪ [\[#ref101\]](#)
102. "Ancient India in a new light," K.D. Sethna, pp. 496-497, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref102\]](#)
103. "Rise and fall of the Imperial Guptas," Ashvini Agrawal, pp. 186-187, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1989↪ [\[#ref103\]](#)

Posted 1st August 2014 by [Arun](#)

Labels: [Puranic\\_chronology](#)

20

[View comments](#)



**Rajender Maru** May 27, 2016 at 1:00 AM

Hats off to you for the Nobel work.

Regards

Rajender Maru

[Reply](#)



**Swanti Kumar** November 4, 2016 at 8:51 AM

very nice collection

[Reply](#)**Anonymous** February 16, 2017 at 12:06 PM

Interesting analysis. I have one concern. The astronomy softwares that I have do not support entry of Saptarshi in Magha in 3102 BCE. It's difficult to communicate this by this comments block. If you are interested to understand the issue, please contact me at madhuprathi-at-hotmail-dot-com.

[Reply](#)[Replies](#)**Arun** September 15, 2019 at 9:25 AM

Thank you for your comment. The meaning of 'Saptarishis being in a certain nakshatra for 100 years' has already been analyzed by several aficionados of Hindu mythology, and the consensus seems to be that this is fiction as far as astronomy is concerned (google the paper "Saptarshi's visit to different Nakshatras"). The cycle was used as a tool to track the passage of time (i.e., instead of saying 'Parikshit lived 1000 years before Nanda,' one could say 'The Saptarishis traversed 10 constellations between Parikshit and Nanda') rather than correspond to an observable event in the night sky.

[Reply](#)**AI** August 28, 2017 at 10:26 PM

Only the present day Gurjars have history of rule in India that trace back to these ancient times i.e. Mahabharata (creation of Gujarat / Gujardesha by Lord Krishna after settling in Dwarka), Ramayana (as lineage of Luv Kush, Lakshmana), Vikramaditya, Bhoja, Porus, etc.

[Reply](#)**H95** December 31, 2018 at 8:20 AM

Good analysis. But Jain texts place beginning of Nanda dynasty at about 60 years after death of Mahavira. That would conform with the current accepted chronology of ~312 to 322 BCE for Chandragupta Maurya's coronation. How do you view this clash of texts.

[Reply](#)[Replies](#)**Arun** September 15, 2019 at 10:43 AM

Thank you for this comment. I looked up the source for Lord Mahavira and Mahapadma Nanda's timelines - this comes from the Sthaviravali of Hemachandra, a 12th century CE hagiographer. In his account, Hemachandra states:

1. Kunika was the king of Magadha during Lord Mahavira's lifetime
  2. Kunika's successor Udayin founded the city of Pataliputra
  3. Mahapadma Nanda was a contemporary of Udayin
  4. Mahapadma Nanda ascended the throne 60 years after Lord Mahavira's Nirvana
  5. Chandragupta Maurya ascended the throne 155 years after Lord Mahavira's Nirvana
- [https://s3.amazonaws.com/jainworldwp/jainbooks/images/18/The\\_Jain\\_Church\\_After\\_Mahav.htm](https://s3.amazonaws.com/jainworldwp/jainbooks/images/18/The_Jain_Church_After_Mahav.htm)

According to accepted history, the chronology in the Puranas and Buddhist records,

1. Pataliputra was founded by Udayabhadrā (Udayasva in the Puranas), the son of Ajatashatru.
2. Ajatashatru was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha
3. The Jain contemporary of Gautama Buddha was Nigantha Nataputta
4. Mahapadma Nanda succeeded Mahananda of the Sisunaga dynasty, not Udayasva
5. According to the chronology in the Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa (written in the 3rd-4th centuries CE), Gautama Buddha's Nirvana occurred ~60 years prior to Mahapadma Nanda's coronation (Gautama Buddha's Nirvana was 218 years before Ashoka's coronation according to the Dipavamsa, who became king ~150 years after Mahapadma Nanda according to the Puranas)

So it appears that Hemachandra has confused Lord Mahavira with Gautama Buddha or with Nigantha

Nataputta. The first identification is obviously impossible and the second has been debunked by later scholarship (see "Will the real Nigantha Nataputta please stand up? Reflections on the Buddha and his contemporaries" at [http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S1011-76012015000100006](http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1011-76012015000100006))

In other words, Hemachandra is not a reliable source for Lord Mahavira's timeline.

Lastly, Jains place the date of Lord Mahavira's Nirvana at 470 years before the Vikrama era of 57 BCE, i.e., at 527 BCE. If we assume Sandrocottus = Chandragupta Maurya, then Chandragupta Maurya must have ascended the throne of Magadha in ~315 BCE (after Alexander's invasion of India in 326 BCE). This means we have 527-315 = 212 years between Lord Mahavira's Nirvana and Chandragupta Maurya's coronation. But since Hemachandra states this interval to be 155 years, we have further reason to doubt Hemachandra's statements on Lord Mahavira's timeline.

Reply



**Abhi** May 16, 2019 at 7:29 PM

The mlechha dynasty (abhiras, and yavanas, and sakas) in the Vishnu Purana are said to rule for 1390 years. Then why is Gupta in 300 bc and not later?

Reply

Replies



**Arun** September 15, 2019 at 9:24 AM

Verse 14 of Book IV says "After these [Andhras], various races will reign, as seven Ábhíras, ten Garddhabas, sixteen Śakas, eight Yavanas, fourteen Tusháras, thirteen Muñdas, eleven Maunas, altogether seventy-nine princes, who will be sovereigns of the earth for one thousand three hundred and ninety years." But the footnote to this verse says "They are not however continuous, but nearly contemporary dynasties." In other words, 79 contemporary princes rule for a combined reign-length of 1309 years.

Wilson (the translator) also says (in the footnote) that "The passage of the Váyú, although somewhat similar in terms, has a different purport: 'Of these, the Andhras having passed away, there shall be seven contemporary races; as, ten Ábhíras.' The passage is differently read in different copies, but this is the only intelligible reading."

In other words, the reign-length of the seven contemporary races succeeding the Andhras is equivalent to the reign-length of 10 Abhiras. The footnote states that the Vayu Purana gives 67 years to these Abhiras.

Reply



**Bipin Shah** September 10, 2019 at 11:57 AM

It appears to be great work. I have a question about Mahavira who thrived under Srenika(Sanskrit) or seniya(Pali), under jaina text. Some called him as Ashok Chandra or Bimbisara or Bombasara as per Buddhist Records. He ruled magadha and married Chellana, daughter of Chetak, king of vaishali. His son was name kunika and whose son was name Uday bhada or Uddayin. I don't see them in Magadha chronology. Some text describe Mahavira as contemporary of Buddha. Buddhist text calls Kunika as Ajatshatru and Udayain as same. Can you explain that. my email is beeper1520@gmail.com

Reply

Replies



**Arun** September 21, 2019 at 4:08 PM

Thank you for your comment. I would like to clarify a few data points:

- As per Jain records, Lord Mahavira was born in 599 BCE [1], attained Kevala (enlightenment) at the age of 42 [2] in 557 BCE and died in 527 BCE [3] at the age of 72.
- As per Jain records, Lord Mahavira visited Rajagriha in the first year of his ministry and Champa in the 14th year of his ministry [4]. Srenika was ruling in Magadha and Kunika was ruling in Champa at these times. So Lord Mahavira must have met Srenika in 557 BCE and Kunika in 543 BCE.
- As per the Pali Mahāvamsa (v.21, 22), king Asoka's accession was 218 years after the Buddha's death and his coronation was four years later [5].

- d. As per the Puranas, Chandragupta Maurya and his successor ruled for 24+25 years before Ashoka [6]. Assuming Sandrocottus = Chandragupta Maurya acceded to the throne of Magadha in 315 BCE (in time for Seleucus Nicator's invasion of India), Ashoka would have acceded to the throne in 266 BCE.
- e. Ashoka's accession to the throne in 266 BCE places Lord Buddha's death in 484 BCE (218 years earlier)
- f. As per Buddhist records, Lord Buddha is supposed to have died in the 8th year of Ajatashatru's reign [7]. So Ajatashatru would have acceded to the throne of Magadha in 492 BCE.
- g. As per Buddhist records, Lord Buddha attained Nirvana when he was 35 and lived to the age of 80 [8]. So his lifespan works out to 564 BCE (birth) - 529 BCE (Nirvana) - 484 BCE (death).
- h. As per Buddhist records, Bimbisara reigned for 52 years and was five years younger than the Buddha [9]. This places Bimbisara on the throne of Magadha from 544-492 BCE.

Based on this data, the answers to your questions are as follows:

- i. Bimbisara and Ajatashatru appear in the Puranic chronology of Magadha under the Sisunaga dynasty.
  - ii. Lord Mahavira (who died in 527 BCE) could not have met Ajatashatru in 543 BCE because Ajatashatru did not become king of Magadha until 494 BCE. So Kunika (who was king of Champa in 543 BCE) cannot be Ajatashatru.
  - iii. This explains the discrepancy of the faiths professed in the Jain and Buddhist records for the two sets of kings (Srenika/ Kunika and Bimbisara/ Ajatashatru). Both religions claim the monarchs as their own, which is only possible if they are two different sets of people.
  - iv. Srenika would not appear in the Puranic chronology of kings because the Puranas only list the names of the Andhra kings - the dominant dynasty in ~550 BCE - in their text.
  - v. The bigger question is that my proposed chronology places Lord Buddha (1775-1695 BCE) much before Lord Mahavira (599-527 BCE). This is supported by the statement in Jain texts that Lord Mahavira visited the Vasudeva temple in Nangala + the Baladeva temple in Avattagama in the fifth year of his renunciation and the Vasudeva temple in Kundaga Sannivesa + the Baladeva temple in Maddanagama in the eighth year of his renunciation [10]. There were no temples in Lord Buddha's time, so Lord Mahavira must have lived in a time much after Lord Buddha.
- For this to be true, Sandrocottus cannot be Chandragupta Maurya.

- 1. "Lord Mahavira and his Times," Kailash Chand Jain, pp. 32, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1974
- 2. "Lord Mahavira and his Times," Kailash Chand Jain, pp. 56, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1974
- 3. "Lord Mahavira and his Times," Kailash Chand Jain, pp. 84, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1974
- 4. "Lord Mahavira and his Times," Kailash Chand Jain, pp. 62, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1974
- 5. [http://www.palikanon.com/english/pali\\_names/ay/asoka.htm](http://www.palikanon.com/english/pali_names/ay/asoka.htm)
- 6. "Puranic Chronology of the Mauryan Dynasty," H.G. Shastri, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol. 22, pp. 78, 1959
- 7. "A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India," Upinder Singh, pp. 270, Pearson Education, Delhi, 2008
- 8. <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Buddha>
- 9. [http://www.palikanon.com/english/pali\\_names/b/bimbisara.htm](http://www.palikanon.com/english/pali_names/b/bimbisara.htm)
- 10. "Lord Mahavira and his Times," Kailash Chand Jain, pp. 51-53, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1974



**Anonymous** October 16, 2019 at 11:17 AM

Excellent.



**Srinivas** October 14, 2022 at 8:18 AM

I really liked the corrected chronology you presented. This is inline with some of the Mahabharata dates I had made some time ago. I wish to point out that Dr. Raja Ram Mohan Roy Has placed the Buddha in 1200 BCE (<https://indiafacts.org/a-new-dating-of-buddha-based-on-the-evidence-of-sumatitantra/>). He similarly dates Mahavira. He also suggests that Chandragupta 1 was the contemporary of Alexander as you point out and that Kumaragupta (great grand son of Chandragupta 1) was Devanamapiya Piyadasi and not Ashoka Maurya who ruled during Antioch II's reign. This is inline with what you point out. A small difference I wish to point to is that Bimbisara was probably the father of Ajatashatru. Chandragupta Maurya's son's name was "Bindusara" (who was the father of Ashoka Maurya). Hoping that the corrected chronology + the Harrapan civilization that spanned 2600 to 1900 BCE fall inline with archeological evidence. This really helps us appreciate the correctness of our Puranas. Provides a strong proof against the Aryan migration myth and shows that Vedic thought was indigenous to us Indians and not an external import as has been made out in the mainstream. The Vedic thought were transmitted orally over millennia before Sanskrit script was ripe for writing the Vedas. My speculation is that the profound ideas expounded in the Upanishads and puranas were achieved over several 1000 years of human presence in India and not written down overnight.



**Arun** October 14, 2022 at 5:19 PM

>> A small difference I wish to point to is that Bimbisara was probably the father of Ajatashatru. Chandragupta Maurya's son's name was "Bindusara" (who was the father of Ashoka Maurya). This is correct and is stated in Figure 5.

Reply



**Ajay Rawat** April 1, 2020 at 8:19 PM

Such a nice information.....wonderful....salute to all contributors & researchers !!

Reply



**Dr. Mausumi Akter** April 15, 2020 at 7:48 PM

Splendid work.

Reply



**Kealp** May 1, 2020 at 4:09 AM

Absolutely detailed, just wonder how many years of study one may have engrossed in !!!! Kalpesh Shah

Reply



**Anti-Inquisition** May 12, 2020 at 1:45 AM

Commendable efforts made to bring forth the data given in the Puranas. I sincerely hope that this is presented to the government for further discussions so as to present a correct history for our people. It's utterly important.

Reply



**Venakat** April 25, 2021 at 3:49 AM

digital india essay

Reply



**Ramanan** January 27, 2022 at 4:42 PM

Excellent exposition. Regards.

Reply



Enter Comment

[Load more](#)