

ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

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Post-Mauryan Period

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Post Mauryan Period

Indian
Successors

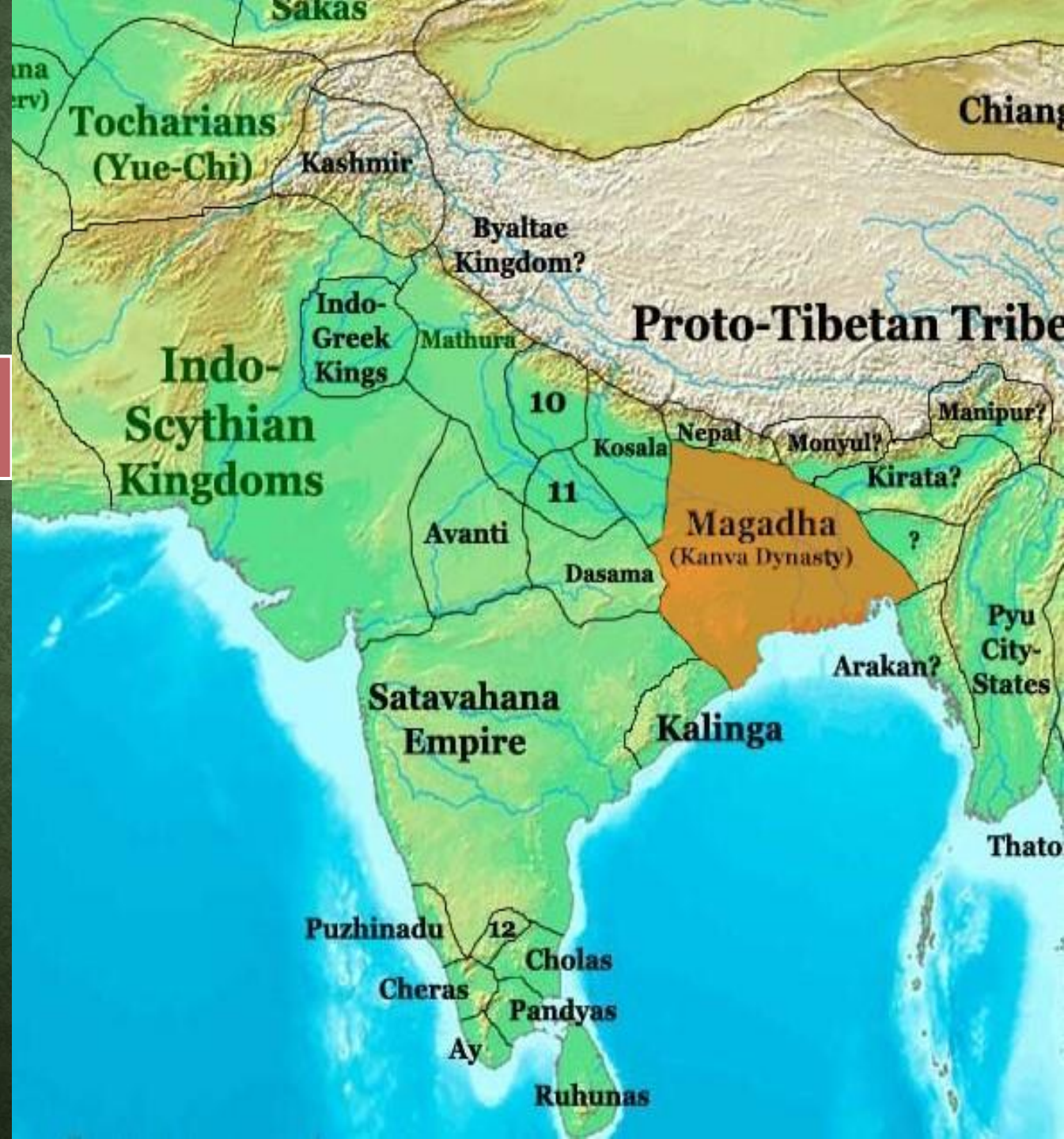
Sunga, Kanva,
Satavahan

Foreigner
Successors

Indo-Greek, Shaka,
Parthians, Kushan

South Indian
States

Pandya, Chola,
Chera



Shunga Period (185 BCE–73 BCE)

- ❑ The last Maurya king Brihadartha was murdered in 185 BCE by his own commander-in-chief, Pushyamitra Shunga, while he was inspecting his troops.
- ❑ Pushyamitra's empire extended over only part of the erstwhile Maurya empire, including Pataliputra, Ayodhya, Vidisha, and modern-day Punjab.
- ❑ The ten Sunga kings ruled this dynasty. Pushyamitra Sunga performed two Ashvamedha sacrifices, as mentioned in the Ayodhya stone inscription of King Dhana.
- ❑ He defeated the Bactrian Greek king, Demetrius. He was succeeded by his son Agnimitra on whom Kalidas, in his *Malavikagnimitra*, narrates the love story of Malavika, a maiden of the queen, and Agnimitra.
- ❑ **Bhagabhadra/Bhagavata** was probably the fifth king. **Devabhuti**, known as Devabhumi, was the last ruler who was killed by his *Brahmana* minister Vasudeva Kanva, who founded the Kanva dynasty.

- ❑ The Shungas were important patrons of culture at a time when some of the most important developments in Hindu thought was taking place.
- ❑ Patanjali's *Mahabhasya* was composed in this period. Artistry also progressed with the rise of the Mathura art style.
- ❑ Heliodorus pillar was built in Vidisha under the Shungas, at the instigation of Heliodorus, ambassador of the Indo-Greek king Antialcidas.
- ❑ The pillar originally supported a statue of Garuda.
- ❑ Buddhist scriptures such as the Asokavadana ancient Tibetan historian Taranatha have written about the persecution of Buddhists.
- ❑ Pushyamitra is said to have burned down Buddhist monasteries, destroyed stupas, massacred Buddhist monks and put rewards on their heads, but some consider these stories as a probable exaggeration.
- ❑ Two dedications by King Brahmamitra and Indragnimitra are recorded at the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya and have been claimed to show Shunga support for Buddhism.

Post-Mauryan Art (Shunga Period)

The Sunga period, spanning from approximately 185 BCE to 73 BCE, is often depicted in some historical accounts as a time of Brahmanical resurgence and anti-Buddhist sentiment. This perception largely stems from various Buddhist texts and chronicles which suggest a hostile attitude of the Sungas towards Buddhism. However, a closer examination of the archaeological and artistic developments during the Sunga period reveals a more nuanced reality that challenges the notion of outright anti-Buddhism.

Sources of the Anti-Buddhist Perception

- Divyavadana: This Buddhist text describes the Sunga rulers, particularly Pushyamitra Sunga, as being antagonistic towards Buddhism. It mentions instances of Buddhist persecution and the destruction of monasteries.

- Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa: These chronicles from Sri Lanka echo similar sentiments, portraying the Sunga dynasty as suppressors of Buddhism and supporters of Brahmanism.

These sources, while valuable, reflect the perspectives of the Buddhist communities and may contain biases or exaggerations aimed at highlighting the struggles of Buddhism under Sunga rule.



Post-Mauryan Art (Shunga Period)

Sources of the Anti-Buddhist Perception

Despite the accounts in Buddhist texts, the archaeological evidence from the Sunga period suggests a continued patronage of Buddhist art and architecture. The period witnessed significant contributions to Buddhist monuments, indicating that the Sunga rulers were not entirely antagonistic towards Buddhism.

1. Stupa Constructions:

- Sanchi Stupa II: The Sunga period saw the renovation and expansion of the Sanchi Stupa, one of the most significant Buddhist stupas in India. The construction of the Stupa II at Sanchi, adorned with intricate carvings and gateways, is a testament to the Sungas' involvement in Buddhist architectural projects.
- Bharhut Stupa: Located in Madhya Pradesh, the Bharhut Stupa is another prominent Buddhist monument that underwent extensive development during the Sunga period. The stupa features detailed reliefs and sculptures depicting Jataka tales and scenes from the life of the Buddha, showcasing the integration of Buddhist themes into the artistic endeavors of the time.

2. Artistic Patronage:

- Toranas and Vedikas: The Sunga period is renowned for the construction of elaborate gateways (toranas) and railings (vedikas) around stupas. These structures, often richly decorated with Buddhist iconography, indicate that the Sungas invested in enhancing Buddhist religious sites.
- Gandhara Influence: The Sunga art also reflects the influence of Gandhara art, which combined Greek and Buddhist artistic elements. This cultural synthesis underscores the openness of the Sunga rulers to diverse artistic traditions, including those associated with Buddhism.

3. Other Buddhist Sites:

- Bodh Gaya: Excavations at Bodh Gaya, the site of the Buddha's enlightenment, reveal that the Sunga rulers contributed to the development and embellishment of this sacred Buddhist site. The architectural enhancements include the construction of stupas and the addition of decorative elements.

Post-Mauryan Art (Shunga Period)

Historiographical Perspectives

Romila Thapar

Historian Romila Thapar suggests that while the Sunga rulers might have had a preference for Brahmanical practices, they were not overtly hostile towards Buddhism. The artistic and architectural projects of the time indicate a degree of religious tolerance and cultural pluralism.

D.D. Kosambi

Kosambi highlights that the Sunga period, marked by political consolidation and economic prosperity, allowed for the flourishing of diverse religious traditions, including Buddhism. The period's contributions to Buddhist art reflect a pragmatic approach to governance and patronage, rather than strict religious exclusivity.

Conclusion

The development of art and architecture during the Sunga period provides compelling evidence that challenges the view of the Sunga's as strictly anti-Buddhist. While the period may have seen a resurgence of Brahmanical traditions, the significant contributions to Buddhist monuments and the flourishing of Buddhist art indicate a more complex and inclusive approach to religious and cultural patronage. The legacy of the Sunga period, therefore, is one of cultural synthesis and religious plurality, reflecting a broader and more tolerant outlook than the anti-Buddhist label suggests.

Kanva Dynasty (73 BCE-28 BCE)

- ❑ Vasudeva Kanva was initially a minister of the Shunga Emperor Devabhuti, who then assassinated the former emperor and usurped the throne.
- ❑ The Kanva ruler allowed the kings of the Shunga dynasty to continue to rule in obscurity in a corner of their former dominions.
- ❑ There were four Kanva rulers. They were descendants of the sage Saubhari. He was succeeded by his son Bhumimitra.
- ❑ Coins bearing the legend Bhumimitra have been discovered from the Panchala realm. Copper coins with the legend "Kanvasya" have also been found from Vidisha, as well as Kaushambi in the Vatsa realm.
- ❑ Bhumimitra ruled for fourteen years and was later succeeded by his son Narayana. Narayana ruled for twelve years. He was succeeded by his son Susharman who was the last king of the Kanva dynasty.

- ❑ After the defeat at the hands of Satavahanas and the fall of the Kanva dynasty, the Magadha empire came to an end.
- ❑ The defeat of the Kanva dynasty by the Satavahana dynasty was a localised event in Central India and numismatic and epigraphic evidence suggests that Magadha later came under the hegemony of the Mitra dynasty of Kaushambi from the 1st century BCE until the 2nd century CE.
- ❑ The Puranas suggest that the last king of the Kanva dynasty was killed by Balipuccha, who founded the Andhra dynasty, but there is a lack of numismatical and archaeological evidence to support this.



Satavahana Kings & Achievements

Simuka	c. 230 BCE - 207 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Established the Satavahana dynasty by overthrowing the previous Andhra rulers.- Laid the foundation of the empire, initially centred around the Deccan region.- Expanded the empire to its zenith, encompassing vast territories in central and southern India, including present-day Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and parts of Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.
Satakarni I	c. 180 BCE - 124 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Successfully conducted military campaigns against neighbouring kingdoms- After Kharavela was dead, Satakarni I conquered Kalinga. He got the fame of 'Lord of Dakshinapatha'.- The name of his wife was Nayanika. She wrote an inscription named Naneghat. In this, she described the king, Satakarni I, as Dakshinapathapati.- He also performed Ashvamedha Yagya and brought Brahmanism back to Deccan, its origin.
Satakarni II	c. 107 BCE - 90 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Continued the territorial expansion of the Satavahana Empire, consolidating control over regions in southern India.- Patronage of literature and the arts, contributing to the flourishing of Prakrit poetry.
Hāla	c. 20 BCE - 24 CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Authored the Gaha Sattasai, a celebrated anthology of Prakrit verses, offering insights into contemporary society, culture, and values.

Gautmiputra Satkarni

Reign
86-110 CE
103-127 CE
106-130 CE



- ❑ It appears initially the Shaka Kshatrapas of Western India succeeded in dislodging the Satavahanas from the western and central region, but later the fortunes of the Satavahanas were revived by most famous ruler, Gautamiputra Satkarni.
- ❑ He not only defeated the Shakas but also raised the power and prestige of the Satvahanas to greater heights. It was under his reign that the empire was at its peak.
- ❑ He also wrested Malwa and Kathiawar from the Shakas. His empire extended from Malwa in the north to Karnataka in the south, having general authority over the present-day Andhra region.
- ❑ In the Nashik inscription, he is also described as *ekabamhana* (a peerless Brahmana) and *khatiya-dapamanamada* (one who destroyed the high-handedness and pride of the Kshatriyas).

- ❖ He donated land to the Buddhist monks, the *Mahasamghikas*, at Karle (the Karle Inscription mentions the grant of 'Karajika' village near modern Pune, Maharashtra) and at Nashik.
- ❖ He assumed the titles of *Rajaraja* and *Maharaja*.
- ❖ In the later period of his reign, he probably lost some of the conquered Kshaharata territories to the Kardamaka line of the Shaka Kshatrapas of Western India, as evident in the Junagadh Inscription of the Rudradaman I.
- ❖ He was defeated by Rudradaman twice but was destroyed as Rudradaman's daughter was married to his son Vasishthiptra Pulumavi.

Satavahana Kings & Achievements

Vasisthiputra Pulumavi	c. 130 CE - 158 CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Governed during a period of stability and prosperity, overseeing the consolidation of territorial gains made by his predecessors.- Patronage of religious institutions, supporting Hindu and Buddhist establishments.- Promoted the arts and architecture, with notable constructions such as the Naneghat inscription.
Yajna Sri Satakarni	c. 170 CE - 199 CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Expanded the empire's influence through successful military campaigns, extending Satavahana control over vast regions in southern India.- Established diplomatic ties and trade relations with the Roman Empire, evidenced by the discovery of Roman coins in Satavahana territory.
Sri Yajna Satakarni	c. 170 CE - 199 CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Consolidated the territorial gains made by his predecessors, focusing on administrative reforms and infrastructure development.- Supported the flourishing of art and architecture, patronizing temples and monuments across the empire.

In the mid-3rd century, the Satavahana dynasty came to an end and various forces came into power in their stead such as the Vakatakas in the Deccan, the Kadambas in Mysore, the Abhiras in Maharashtra, and the Ikshvakus in Andhra emerged as the main rulers.

Satavahana Polity & Administration

Representation of Kingship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Kings represented as upholders of dharma, striving for the royal and divine ideal set forth in the dharmashastras.- Portrayed possessing supernatural powers and qualities of mythical heroes like Rama, Arjuna, and Bhima.
Administrative Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Kingdom divided into subdivisions known as aharas or rashtras, meaning districts.
Administrative Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Officers called amatyas or mahamatras, possibly serving as ministers or advisors to the king.- Adoption of military and feudal traits in administration.
Military and Feudal Traits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Senapati appointed as provincial governors.- Use of military terms like kataka and skandhavaras in inscriptions.
Grades of Feudatories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Three grades of feudatories: Raja (with the right to strike coins), Mahabhoja, and Senapati.
Tax-free Land Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- First in Indian history to grant tax-free land to Buddhists and Brahmanas to gain religious merit.

Satavahana Kingdom


Social Organisation

- ❑ Since the Andhras are identified with the early Satavahanas, they were probably a local Deccan tribe who were gradually Brahmanised.
- ❑ They claimed to be Brahmans and considered it their primary duty to uphold the *varna* system.
- ❑ They worshipped Vaishnava gods such as Krishna and Vasudeva.
- ❑ Though they made liberal sacrificial fees to the Brahmanas, they also promoted Buddhism by granting land to Buddhist monks, especially to Mahayana Buddhists.
- ❑ **Nagarjunakonda** and **Amravati** in Andhra Pradesh and **Nashik** and **Junar** areas of Maharashtra became important Buddhist sites under the Satavahanas and their successors, the Ikshvakus.

Architecture

- ❖ The Karle Chaitya in the western Deccan belongs to this era.
- ❖ During the Satavahana phase, many *chaityas* (sacred shrines) and *viharas* (monasteries) were cut out of the solid rock in the north-western Deccan or Maharashtra with great precision and skill.
- ❖ The Nashik inscriptions of Nahapana and Gautamiputra Satakarni, which are on the walls of the three viharas, is another important architectural site belonging to this period.
- ❖ The official language of the Satavahanas was Prakrit, though the script was Brahmi.
- ❖ One famous Prakrit text, *Gathasattasai*, is attributed to a Satavahana king called Hala, which consisted of 700 verses all written in Prakrit.

Kalinga (Chedi Dynasty)

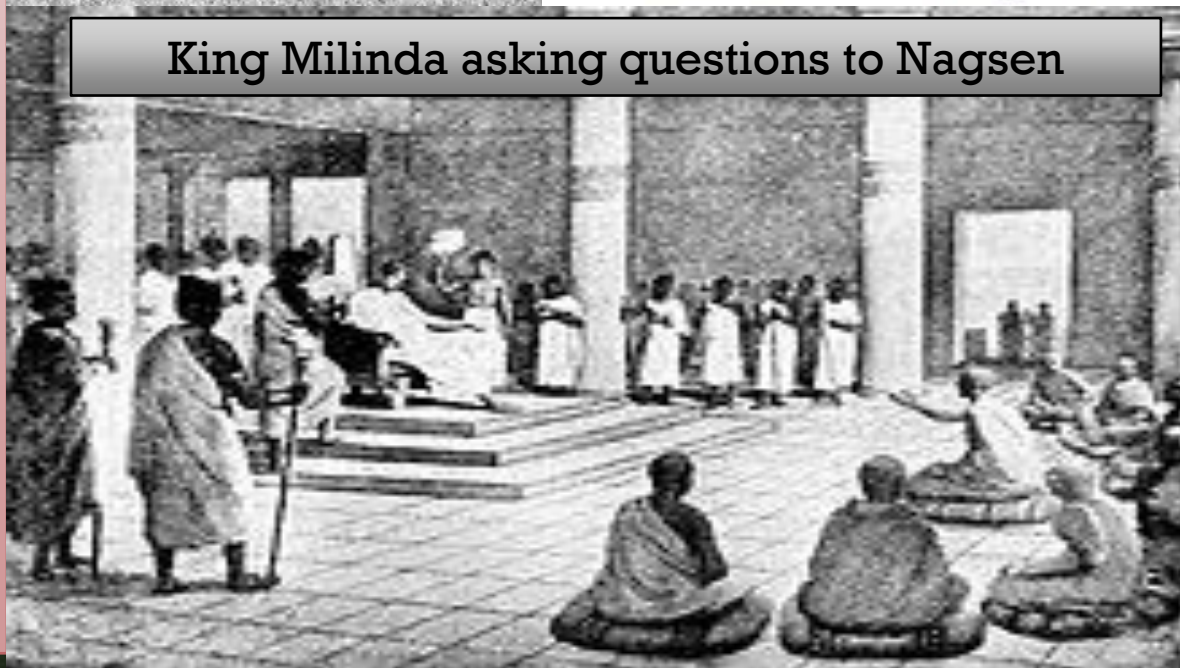
Conquest by Ashoka	- Kalinga conquered by Ashoka through a violent battle, resulting in significant loss of men and property.
Prominence under Chedi dynasty	- After Ashoka, Kalinga became prominent under the kings of the Chedi dynasty.
King Kharavela (1st century BCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Belonged to the Mahameghavahanas of Kalinga.- Wrested Kalinga from the Mauryans, founding an independent line of kings, the Chedis of Kalinga.- Known as Bhikshu-Raja.- Constructed the 'Palace of Victor'.- Famous for the Hathigumpha Inscription, situated in the Udaigiri hills near Bhuvaneshwar.- Provided cave shelters for Jaina monks in Udaigiri Hills.- Fought many successful battles against neighbors.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Engraved on the Udaigiri hills near Bhuvaneshwar.- Second inscription by Naganika after his Nanaghat inscription.- Proves Jainism's entry into Orissa and its potential establishment as the state religion within 100 years of Mahavira's death.- Named after the image of an elephant carved out of stone next to the boulder carrying the inscription.
Hathigumpha Inscription	
Religious Affiliation	- Follower of Jainism, as indicated by the Hathigumpha Inscription.

Indo-Greek

- **Demetrius** (King of Bactria) invaded India around 190 BCE and probably also came into conflict with Pushyamitra Shunga. He conquered the south of the Hindu Kush.
- **Menander/Milinda** (165–145 BCE) is the most celebrated Indo-Greek ruler who not only stabilised Indo-Greek power, but also extended his empire's frontiers in India.
 - ❖ His empire extended over parts of both Bactria and northwestern India and appears to have included southern Afghanistan and Gandhara, the region west of the River Indus.
 - ❖ He had his capital at *Sakala* (modern Sialkot, Punjab).
 - ❖ He was converted to Buddhism by Nagasena has been identified with King Milinda mentioned in the famous Buddhist text *Milindapanho*.
- **Hermadius** (The last ruler of this dynasty) was defeated by the Parthians around the last quarter of the 2nd century BCE, which led to the end of Greek rule in Bactria and the area to the south of the Hindu Kush.



King Milinda asking questions to Nagasen



Shaka/Scythians

‘Shaka’ is the Indian term used for the people called the Scythians, who originally belonged to Central Asia. Interestingly, Patanjali in his *Mahabhasya* refers to the Shakas as ‘Anirvasita (pure) Shudras’. The Shakas advanced into Bactria, Parthia, and the Indus plains. There were five branches of the Shakas who finally settled with their seats of power in different parts of India and Afghanistan:

1. Afghanistan-**Vonones** and **Spalirises**.
2. Punjab with Taxila as their capital: - **Maues**
3. Mathura: - **Azilises**
4. Western India (Gujarat): - Rudradaman I
5. Deccan.

Important Rulers

Maues/Moga/Moa (90 BCE) was probably the first Shaka king in India who established power in Gandhara. His coins carried figures of typically Indian deities like *Abhisheka Laxmi*. **Azes** was associated with the Vikram Samvat era of 58 BCE, which is used to mark Azes’ accession. This era was earlier reckoned with the victory of an Ujjain king named **Vikramaditya** over the **Shakas**.

Rudradaman I (130 CE–152 CE)



- ❑ He was the most famous of all the Shaka *Kshtarapa* rulers. His empire was spread over almost the whole of western India which included Sindh, Gujarat, Konkan, Narmada Valley, Malwa and Kathiawar except the Nashik and Pune areas.
- ❑ He improved the Sudarshan Lake from Chandragupta Maurya’s reign, located in the semi-arid zone of Kathiawar, and this task is described in the famous Junagarh or Girnar Inscription (dated in the Shaka year 72, i.e., 150– 151 CE).
- ❑ He had also defeated Gautamiputra Satkarni, the lord of the *Dakshinapatha*, twice, but did not destroy him as he was a close relative.
- ❑ Rudradaman’s daughter was married to Gautamiputra Satakarni’s son Vasishthiptra Pulumavi.

Shaka/Scythians



Coin of Maues depicting Balarama, 1st century BCE (British Museum)

Mathura Lion Capital

The Bimaran casket, representing the Buddha surrounded by Brahma (left) and Śakra, was found in a stupa with coins of Azes I inside. (British Museum)



A coin of the Indo-Scythian king Azes



Silver coin of Vijayamitra in the name of Azes I. A Buddhist triratna symbol is on the left of the reverse.

Scytho-Parthians/*Shaka-Pahlavas*

In the mid-1st century CE, the Shakas' domination in northwest India was followed by that of the Parthians. **Gondophernes/Guduvhara** was the most famous and important Parthian king and it was during his reign that **St. Thomas** came to India to propagate Christianity.



The Hellenistic temple with Ionic columns at Jandial, Taxila, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. It is usually interpreted as a Zoroastrian fire temple from the period of the Indo-Parthians.



Portrait of Gondophares, founder of the Indo-Parthian kingdom. He wears a headband, earrings, a necklace, and a cross-over jacket with round decorations.



Coinage of Pahares I, Indo-Parthian king of Turan (Circa 160-230 CE). Bearded bust left, wearing Parthian-style tiara. Crude figure of Nike walking right.



Coins of the Indo-Parthian king Abdagases, in which his clothing is clearly apparent. He wears baggy trousers, rather typical of Parthian clothing.

Kushan

The Kushans were also referred to as *Yueh-Chis* (Moon tribe) They first occupied Bactria, where they displaced the Shakas, and gradually seized Gandhara, replacing the rule of the Greeks and the Parthians in these areas. Their empire extended from the river Oxus to the river Ganga, from Khorasan in Central Asia to Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh.



Shiva Linga worshipped by Kushan devotees



Kujula Kadphises/Kadphises I (15 CE – 64 CE) amalgamated the five clans of the *Yue-chi* tribe and laid the foundations of a unified Kushana empire. He minted coins in copper and is believed to have imitated the Roman ‘*aurei*’ type coins to facilitate trade. His coins also suggest an association with Buddhism. He adopted the epithet ‘*dharmathida*’ and ‘*sachadharmathida*’.

Vima Kadphises/Wema Kadphises II (64 CE – 78 CE) was the son of Kadphises I and started as a co-ruler with his father for some time but later ruled independently. He conquered Gandhara from the Parthians and further spread the kingdom to the east of the Indus to the Mathura region. He issued a large number of gold coins. He was a firm devotee of Shiva and proclaimed himself as ‘**Mahishvara**’ on his coins. All his coins (both gold and copper) have unmistakable signs of Shiva with his trident bull.

Kanishka

- ❑ He was the son of Kadphises II and is perhaps the most famous Kushana king, under whose reign the Kushana empire reached its zenith.
- ❑ It expanded from Central Asia to Afghanistan and north-western India, further east into the Ganga valley and southwards into the Malwa region, and included Varanasi, Kaushambi, and Shravasti in Uttar Pradesh and Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❑ The centre of this huge empire was **Bactria**, as evident in the use of the Bactrian language in Kanishka's coins and inscriptions.
- ❑ The famous **Rabatak Inscription** (in modern Baghran province, Afghanistan) presents valuable information on Kanishka.
- ❑ He adopted the title of '**Devputra**', and has been shown wearing a '**peaked helmet**' on some coins.
- ❑ Kanishka had two capitals: **Purushapura** and **Mathura**.
- ❑ He is remembered for two major reasons. He started the **Shaka era** (78 CE), which is accepted as the **beginning** of his reign. He held the fourth Buddhist council at Kundalavana (near Srinagar) under the presidency of Vasumitra and Aswaghosha.



"King of Kings, Kanishka the Kushan".
British Museum.



Statue of Kanishka in long coat and boots, holding a mace and a sword, in the Mathura Museum. An inscription runs along the bottom of the coat.

Kanishka

- According to legends, it was **Passa**, a Buddhist monk who advised Kanishka to commence the fourth Buddhist Council.
 - ❖ Kanishka also patronised the Gandhara and Mathura schools of sculpture.
 - ❖ At Mathura, a headless statue of Kanishka depicting him as a warrior has been found. He controlled the famous Silk Route in Central Asia.
- Another striking aspect of Kanishka's personality was his attitude of religious tolerance as the king's coinage depicts motifs drawn from a great variety of religious traditions:
 - ❖ **Indian** (the motifs of the *Shiva* and the *Buddha*),
 - ❖ **Greek** (motifs of Greek deities such as *Helios*- a sun god and *Selene*-moon goddess), and
 - ❖ **West Asian** (such as motifs of Persian gods *Atash*- fire god, and *Mithra*-sun god).
- Towards the end of his long reign, it appears that he led an unsuccessful military expedition into Central Asia against the Chinese and was defeated by General **Pan-Chao** and forced to pay tribute to the Chinese emperor **Ho-ti**.

The immediate successors of Kanishka were **Vasishka**, **Huvishka**, **Kanishka II** (who adopted the title of 'Kaiser'), and Vasudeva I, who during his reign, around the mid-2nd century CE took the title *Shaono Shao Vasudevo Koshano*, which indicates that by this time the Kushanas were totally **Indianized**.



Kanishka in the Buddhist [Kanishka Casket](#) (detail).

Kushan emperors

30 CE–350 CE



Heraios

1–30 CE

Kujula Kadphises

50–90 CE

Vima Takto

90–113 CE

Vima Kadphises

113–127 CE

Kanishka I

127–151 CE

Huvishka

151–190 CE

Vasudeva I

190–230 CE

Kanishka II

230–247 CE

Vāsishka

247–267 CE

Kanishka III

267–270 CE

Vasudeva II

270–300 CE

Mahi

300–305 CE

Shaka

305–335 CE

Kipunada

335–350 CE



Depictions of the "Shakyamuni Buddha" (with legend ΠΑΚΑΜΑΝΟ ΒΟΔΔΟ "Shakamano Boddo") in Kanishka's coinage.



Gold coin of Kanishka I with Greek legend and Hellenistic divinity **Helios**. (c. 120 AD).

Obverse: Kanishka standing, clad in heavy Kushan coat and long boots, flames emanating from shoulders, holding a standard in his left hand, and making a sacrifice over an altar. Greek legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΚΑΝΗΡΚΟΥY " [coin] of Kanishka, king of kings".

Reverse: Standing Helios in Hellenistic style, forming a benediction gesture with the right hand. Legend in Greek script: ΗΛΙΟΣ *Helios*. Kanishka monogram (*tamgha*) to the left.

Kanishka casket



Kanishka casket



Remnants of the Kanishka stupa.



Kanishka, surrounded by the Iranian Sun-God and Moon-God (detail)



Relics from Kanishka's stupa in Peshawar, sent by the British to Mandalay, Burma in 1910.

The "[Kanishka casket](#)", dated to 127 CE, with the Buddha surrounded by [Brahma](#) and [Indra](#), and Kanishka standing at the center of the lower part, [British Museum](#).



Depiction of the [Buddha](#) enveloped in a [mandorla](#) in Kanishka's coinage. The mandorla is normally considered as a late evolution in Gandhara art. ^[34]

The Impact and Contribution of Contacts with Central Asia

Pottery and Architecture

- ❑ The typical pottery of the Shaka-Kushana phase was red ware, both plain and polished, with medium to fine fabric. Distinctive pots included sprinklers and spouted channels.
- ❑ The construction of brick walls and the use of burnt bricks for flooring and tiles for both roofing and flooring were evident. Introduction of Graeco-Roman architectural styles in structures like stupas and monasteries.

Trade and Agriculture

- ❑ The Shaka-Kushana phase saw the establishment of direct contact between India and Central Asia, fostering trade. India imported gold from the Altai mountains and possibly through trade with the Roman Empire.
- ❑ The Kushanas controlled the Silk Route, which was a major source of income through tolls levied on traders.
- ❑ The Kushanas issued gold coins on a large scale and promoted agriculture, with archaeological evidence of irrigation facilities in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Western Central Asia.

Military Knowledge and Equipment

- ❑ The Shakas and Kushanas introduced better cavalry and popularized the use of riding horses on a large scale.
- ❑ The use of reins, saddles, and toe-stirrups made of rope was common. They also introduced tunics, turbans, trousers, heavy long coats, and long boots, which facilitated military victories.
- ❑ Introduction of new military strategies and equipment, including the use of chariots and advanced archery techniques.

Polity

- ❑ The Shakas-Kushanas propagated the idea of divine kinship, with Kushan kings called sons of god. They introduced the satrap system, dividing the empire into satrapies governed by Satraps.
- ❑ The Indo-Greeks introduced military governorship with governors called strategos to maintain power over conquered people.
- ❑ Development of efficient tax collection systems and bureaucratic structures influenced by Central Asian models.

The Impact and Contribution of Contacts with Central Asia

❑ The Shakas and Kushanas added new elements to Indian culture and enriched it. They settled in India and adopted its script, language, and religion, becoming Indianized over time.

Indian Society

❑ As conquerors, they were absorbed into Indian society as Kshatriyas, with the lawgiver Manu considering them as second-class Kshatriyas. In no other period of ancient history were foreigners assimilated into Indian society on such a large scale as in the post-Maurya period.

❑ Some foreign rulers converted to Vaishnavism, such as the Greek ambassador Hellodorus who set up a pillar in honor of Vishnu. Others, like the Greek ruler Menander, adopted Buddhism.

Religion

❑ The Kushana rulers worshipped both Shiva and the Buddha, as seen in Kushana coins. The Central Asian contacts influenced Indian religions, especially Buddhism, leading to the origin of Mahayana Buddhism.

❑ Kanishka was a great patron of Mahayana Buddhism, organizing the fourth Buddhist council at Srinagar and setting up many stupas.

❑ The construction of stupas and the development of regional schools of sculpture were prominent. Stupas, like those at Bharhut, Sanchi, Amravati, and Nagarjunkonda, were large hemispherical domes with relics of the Buddha or monks.

Art and Literature

❑ The Central Asian rulers patronized Indian art, leading to the establishment of new schools of art, such as the Gandhara, Mathura, and Amravati schools. The fusion of Greek, Persian, and Indian artistic elements created unique styles.

❑ Patronage of Sanskrit literature. Junagadh Inscription of Rudradaman I, the earliest specimen of kavya style in chaste Sanskrit. Patronage of authors like Ashvaghosha by Kushanas. Important Buddhist texts like Mahavastu and Divyavadana from this period. Creation of bilingual inscriptions and texts, reflecting the multilingual nature of Central Asian influences.

Post-Mauryan Art

Schools of Arts in Post Mauryan Period

PLUTUS
IAS

Gandhar

Mathura

Amravati

- A gold reliquary
- Anthropomorphic traditions
- Buddha with a youthful Apollo-like face
- Dressed in transparent garments
- Standing figures of Buddha

- The halo behind the head of Buddha
- The curly hair--- Parthian style.
- The drapery---Hellenistic cultures

The Buddha Idols

- ✓ Two postures - standing and sitting
- ✓ A Buddha sitting under a Bodhi tree
- ✓ A Right hand in Abhaya posture
- ✓ A Dharma chakra
- ✓ The head is shaven except for one lock.
- ✓ Made of white-spotted red stone

- ✓ Satavahana & Ikshvaku rulers
- ✓ 'White marble'
- ✓ Naturalistic manner
- ✓ Life of Buddha and Jataka stories
- ✓ Human & Animal form
- ✓ Religious & Secular Images

Brahmanical Images

Surya--- Riding a chariot

Balarama--- heavy turban on his head.

Saraswati is seated with manuscript

Durga---killer of buffalo demons.

The Images of Rulers--- Kanishka & Wima

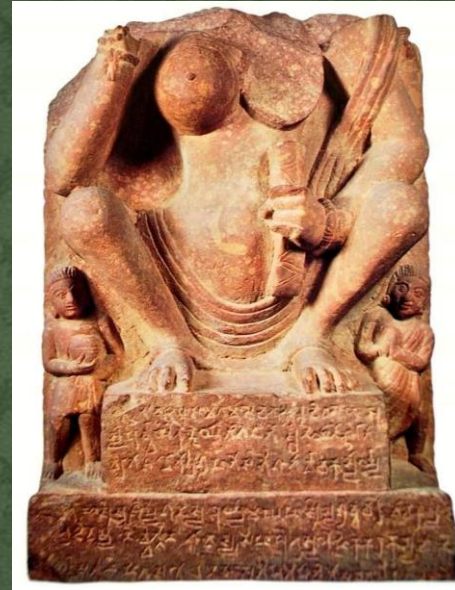
Post-Mauryan Art (Gandhar Art)



Post-Mauryan Art (Mathura Art)



Fertility God



Saraswati



Kartikeya and Agni



Vasudev



Post-Mauryan Art (Amravati Art)



Amravati Buddha



Queen Mahamaya's Dream



Buddha Statues
at Amravati

Post-Mauryan Art



Architrave



Architrave



Yakshini.



Pillar capital.



Lion pillar capital.



The Miracle of Walking in the air at Savrasti.



Pipal tree.



Miracle of the Buddha walking on the River Nairanjana



Bimbisara with his royal cortege issuing from the city of Rajagriha to visit the Buddha.



Foreigners making a dedication to the Great Stupa at Sanchi.

Post-Mauryan Art (Differences)

Aspect	Gandhara School	Mathura School	Amaravati School
External Influence	Heavy influence of Greek or Hellenistic sculpture; also known as Indo-Greek art	Developed indigenously; not influenced by external cultures	Developed indigenously; not influenced by external cultures
Material Used	Early period: bluish-grey sandstone; later period: mud and stucco	Spotted red sandstone	White marble
Religious Influence	Mainly Buddhist; influenced by Greco-Roman pantheon	Influence of Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism	Mainly Buddhist
Patronage	Kushana rulers	Kushana rulers	Satvahana rulers
Area of Development	North West Frontier, modern-day Kandahar	Mathura, Sonkh, Kankalitila	Krishna-Godavari lower valley, Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda
Features of Buddha Sculpture	Spiritual state, wavy hair, fewer ornaments, half-closed eyes, protuberance on head	Delighted mood, smiling face, masculine body, shaven head, seated in padmasana with mudras, protuberance on head	Less emphasis on individual features, part of narrative art depicting life stories and Jataka tales of Buddha

Consider the following statements:

1. Mathura art had more influences from Central Asian art as compared to Gandhar School.
2. Amravati school consisted of only Buddhist art.
3. Mathura art was mainly made of white marble and Amravati with white-spotted red stone.

Which of the following statements is correct?

- A. 3 Only
- B. 1 and 3 Only
- C. All
- D. None

41. Consider the following statements with reference to the differences between Mathura and Amravati school:

1. Mathura school focused on single images while Amravati school laid more emphasis on the use of dynamic images.

2. Mathura school used red sandstone while Amravati used Gray Sandstone.

Which of the given statements is/are not correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 & 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Consider the following statements about the social life of pre-Mauryan times and mark the option which is correct.

1. The legal and social system was partially biased against the Shudras.
2. Women were highly respected and enjoyed considerable freedom.
3. The popular assemblies of *Sabha* and *Samiti* lost their importance.
4. The polity and social life of the *Gana-Sanghas* was not as rigid as that of the kingdoms.

(a) i and iii

(b) i, iii, and iv

(c) ii, iii, and iv

(d) None of these

Q23. Which one of the following books of ancient India has the love story of the son of the founder of the Sunga dynasty?

(a) Swapnavasavadatta

(b) Malavikaagnimitra

(c) Meghdoota

(d) Ratnavali

Q24. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements:

1. The concept of Bodhisattva is central to the Hinayana sect of Buddhism.
2. Bodhisattva is a compassionate one on his way to enlightenment.
3. Bodhisattva delays achieving his own salvation to help all sentient beings on their path to it.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) i only
- (b) ii and iii only
- (c) ii only
- (d) i, ii and iii

Q26. With reference to the invaders in ancient India, which one of the following is the correct chronological order?

- (a) Greeks-Shakas-Kushanas
- (b) Greeks-Kushanas-Shakas
- (c) Shakas-Greeks-Kushanas
- (d) Shakas-Kushanas-Greeks

Q27. Consider the following statements:

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) i and ii
- (b) Only ii
- (c) Only iii
- (d) i, ii and iii

Post-Mauryan Art

Q. The centuries between 200 B. C. And A.D. 300 constitute a landmark in the socio-religious history of India. Analyse the proposition.

The period from 200 B.C. to A.D. 300 is significant in Indian history due to profound socio-religious transformations. Various literary sources, numismatic evidence, and inscriptions document these changes, reflecting a dynamic and evolving society. Here's an analysis of the socio-religious developments during this era:

Social-Religious Perspective

1. Influence of Foreigners:

- The entry of various foreign groups, such as the Indo-Greeks, Shakas, and Kushanas, led to increased social dynamism. These groups often embraced Indian religions, contributing to a rich cultural amalgamation. Menander, an Indo-Greek ruler, converted to Buddhism, as depicted in the narrative text Milinda Panho. Similarly, Rudradaman of the Shaka clan adopted Buddhist practices, indicating the ease of integration into Indian society and religion.

2. Kanishka's Patronage:

- Kanishka, a prominent Kushana ruler, played a critical role in the propagation of Buddhism, especially the Mahayana sect. His patronage included convening the Fourth Buddhist Council in Kashmir, which was crucial for the development and spread of Mahayana Buddhism.

Major Socio-Religious Developments

1. Rise of New Social Classes:

- During this period, a new class of Kshatriyas emerged. These new Kshatriyas often placed themselves above the Brahmins, challenging the traditional social hierarchy.

2. Impact on Varna System:

- The emergence of new social dynamics led to a reconfiguration of the varna system. Mixed marriages and the rise of new classes contributed to a more complex social structure, often viewed negatively by the orthodox Brahmanical perspective.

3. Manusmriti and Social Regulation:

- In response to these changes, the Manusmriti was written, which attempted to codify and reinforce the traditional social order. Manu's laws emphasized the hierarchical nature of society and prescribed strict boundaries for different social groups. According to the Manusmriti, women were confined to domestic roles, emphasizing their subservience and defining their position within the household. The concept of Streedhana (women's property) was introduced, reflecting a patriarchal control over women's rights and property.

Significance of Indigenous Development

1. Artistic Innovations and Schools:

- Emergence of Regional Schools: Indigenous artistic traditions evolved significantly during this period, leading to the development of distinct schools of art such as the Mathura School, which was known for its indigenous style and iconography. The Gandhara School, while influenced by Hellenistic traditions, developed its unique artistic identity that emphasized realistic and detailed human figures.

- Stupa Architecture: The construction and enhancement of stupas, such as the Sanchi and Bharhut stupas, reflect the indigenous innovation in Buddhist architecture. These structures were adorned with elaborate reliefs and sculptures depicting Buddhist themes and local deities, indicating a rich tradition of religious art.

2. Literature and Philosophy:

- Literary Contributions: The post-Mauryan period saw significant contributions to literature, with works like Gathasaptashati by Hala and Buddhacharita by Ashvaghosha reflecting the rich cultural and intellectual life of the time. Manusmriti, composed during this period, provided a comprehensive codification of social norms and laws.

- Philosophical Growth: The period also witnessed the growth of philosophical thought, with the establishment of major Buddhist centers like Nalanda and the spread of Hindu philosophical schools.

3. Economic and Social Developments:

- Guilds and Trade: The establishment of guilds (shrenis) played a vital role in the economic life of the period. These guilds not only facilitated trade and commerce but also contributed to social welfare and the patronage of religious and artistic activities.

The development of major trade routes, such as the Uttarapatha and Dakshinapatha, enabled the flow of goods and ideas across regions, fostering economic prosperity and cultural exchange.

- Urbanization: The period saw significant urbanization, with the emergence of cities like Mathura, Vidisha, and Ujjain as major economic and cultural centers. This urban growth facilitated the interaction between different cultures and the exchange of artistic and intellectual traditions.

Post-Mauryan Religious Practices

Brahmanical
Revivalism

Shunga &
Satavahana

Greek & Central
Asian Influences

Indo-Greek,
Shaka & Kushan

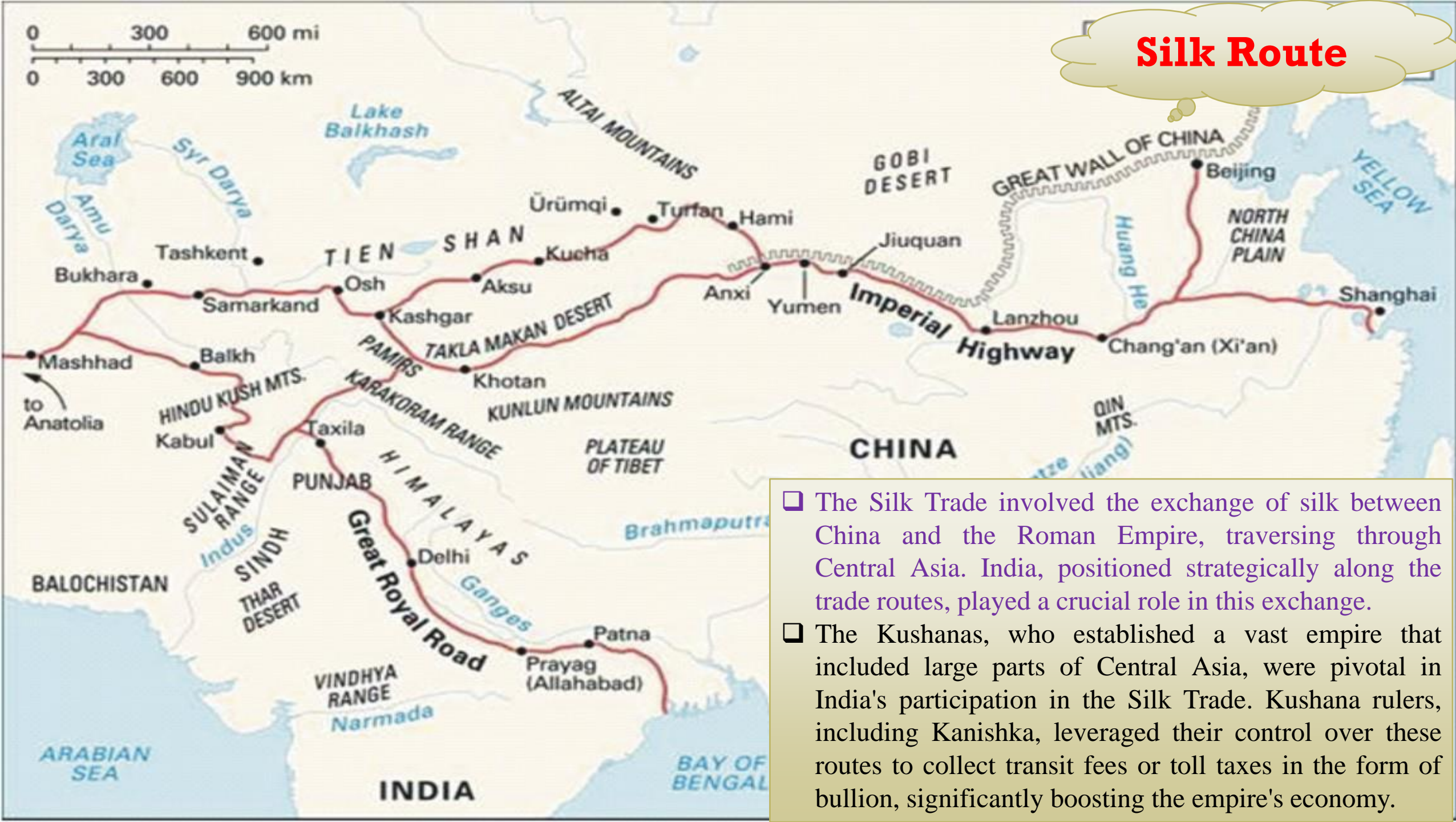
Deccan & South
India

Sangam Age

School of Art and
Architecture

Gandhar,
Mathura &
Amravati

Silk Route



- ❑ The Silk Trade involved the exchange of silk between China and the Roman Empire, traversing through Central Asia. India, positioned strategically along the trade routes, played a crucial role in this exchange.
- ❑ The Kushanas, who established a vast empire that included large parts of Central Asia, were pivotal in India's participation in the Silk Trade. Kushana rulers, including Kanishka, leveraged their control over these routes to collect transit fees or toll taxes in the form of bullion, significantly boosting the empire's economy.

Utharpath & Dakshinpath



Post-Mauryan Period

Justify Pliny's statement that Rome was being drained out of its gold by India during the first century of the Christian era.

Pliny the Elder, a Roman historian and natural philosopher, famously lamented in his work Natural History that "Rome was being drained of its gold by India." This statement highlights the extensive trade relationship between India and Rome, particularly during the first century AD, where a significant outflow of Roman gold was observed in exchange for luxury goods from India. The assertion can be justified through several facets of the Indo-Roman trade dynamics of the time:

1. Extensive Indo-Roman Trade Networks

a. North India and the Kushanas:

- Trade Dominance: The Kushana Empire, strategically located along the Silk Road, controlled major trade routes connecting India to Central Asia and the Roman Empire. Their control over these routes allowed them to collect substantial transit fees and customs duties.
- Luxury Goods: North Indian regions, under the Kushanas, were major exporters of luxury items such as spices, textiles, and precious stones, which were in high demand in Rome.

b. The Deccan and the Satavahanas:

- Ports and Trade: The Satavahanas facilitated trade through major ports such as Sopara (near modern-day Mumbai) and Bharuch. These ports were critical hubs for maritime trade with Rome.
- Export Goods: The Deccan region was known for exporting valuable commodities like cotton, silk, and pearls, which were highly prized in Roman markets.

c. Southern India and the Tamil Kingdoms:

- Prominent Ports: Southern Indian kingdoms like the Cholas, Cheras, and Pandyas operated key port cities including Muziris, Arikamedu, Puhar, and Korkai. These ports became significant centers for Indo-Roman trade.
- Wealth from Trade: These ports facilitated the export of spices, ivory, and precious stones, contributing to the wealth of these South Indian kingdoms and leading to a substantial inflow of Roman gold into the region.

2. Luxury Goods and High Demand in Rome

a. Exotic Commodities:

- Spices and Aromatics: Spices such as pepper, cardamom, and cinnamon from India were in great demand in Roman kitchens and medicinal practices. These spices were considered luxury items and commanded high prices.
- Textiles: Indian silk and cotton fabrics were highly coveted in Rome for their quality and exotic nature. Indian textile craftsmanship was renowned, and these goods were seen as status symbols among Roman elites.

b. Precious Stones and Jewelry:

- Gems: India was known for its wealth of precious stones, including diamonds, sapphires, and pearls. These were exported in large quantities to Rome, where they were used in jewelry and other luxury items. The demand for these luxury goods led to a significant outflow of gold from Rome to India, as the Roman economy sought to acquire these precious items.

3. Economic Mechanisms and Wealth Flow

a. Balance of Trade:

- Trade Imbalance: The trade between India and Rome was heavily skewed in favor of India. Rome imported a vast amount of luxury goods from India, while the exports from Rome to India were relatively minimal, primarily comprising items like wine and olive oil.
- Bullion Drain: As a result of this trade imbalance, Rome had to pay for the excess imports with gold and silver, leading to a substantial outflow of bullion to India.

b. Numismatic Evidence:

- Roman Coins in India: Archaeological discoveries have uncovered large quantities of Roman gold coins in various parts of India, particularly in the South. This is a clear indicator of the extensive trade and the flow of gold into India.
- Economic Prosperity: The abundance of these coins highlights the economic prosperity brought about by trade and the significant accumulation of wealth in Indian kingdoms.

c. Roman Concerns:

- Roman Complaints: Pliny's concerns reflect broader worries within the Roman Empire about the economic impact of the luxury trade. The drain of gold to India was seen as detrimental to the Roman economy, which struggled to balance its trade deficit.