

POST-MAURYAN OR PRE-GUPTA PERIOD (200 BCE– 300 CE)

- Earlier labelled as DARK PERIOD of Indian history – because of lack of political centralization.
- Southern kingdoms – Chola, Pandya, Chera – Sangam literature.
- Earliest intruders – Bactrian Greeks (Yavanas), Scythians (Sakas), Parthians (Pallavas), Kushanlas (Tusaras).
- Extensive external trade.

INDIGENOUS DYNASTIES:

1. **SUNGAS (184-75 BCE)** – Founded by Pushyamitra Sunga
2. **KANVAS (75-28 BCE)** – Vasudeva, the minister of the last Sunga ruler, murdered his master and founded the Kanvas rule.
3. **OTHER DYNASTIES OF NORTH INDIA** included independent principalities in Ayodhya, Kausambi, Mathura.
4. **SATAVAHANAS-**
 - Appeared as successors of Mauryas in the **Deccan** region and ruled for 460 years.
 - Mentioned in the Puranas as **Andhras**.
 - **Simuka**, first ruler of Satavahanas, was the immediate successor of Ashoka.
 - Greatest ruler – **Gautamiputra Satakarni**
5. **SANGAM DYNASTIES OF SOUTH-**
 - Main kingdoms – Chola, Pandaya, Chera



-
- Sangams were patronized by Pandya kings of Madurai :
 1. First Sangam – held at Madurai; attended by gods and legendary poets; no literary work is available.
 2. Second Sangam – held at Kapadapuram; only Tolkappiyam survives from this.
 3. Third Sangam – held at Madurai; few works survive.

- Sangam literature –
 1. Tolkappiyam (Tamil grammar) by Tolkappiyar
 2. Sillapathikaram (Tamil epic) by Elanga Adigal
 3. Manimegalai (Tamil epic) by Sittalai Sattanar

KUSHANA EMPIRE:

- Among the most powerful entities of the classical world.



- Kushans deified the ruler.
- Saka era was introduced by Kanishka in 78 CE.
- Kanishka patronized Mahayana Buddhism.

GUPTA EMPIRE (300-550 CE)

- GOLDEN AGE and its criticism.
- POLITICAL HISTORY-
 1. Early Guptas: Srigupta and his son Ghatotkachagupta.

2. **Chandragupta I:**

- Married Lichchhavi princess **Kumaradevi**. This enhanced status of Guptas.
- He is regarded as founder of Gupta era in 320 CE to commemorate his accession.

3. **Samudragupta:**

- Harisena, the author of **Allahabad Prasasti** (found on one side of Allahabad Pillar of Ashoka), gives detailed account of the conquests of Samudragupta.
- Called INDIAN NAPOLEON
- Gold coins show him playing the Veena

4. **Chandragupta II:**

- Also called **Vikramaditya**.
- *Devichandraguptam* by Vishakhadatta
- Principal opponent was **Saka ruler of Gujarat** and Kathiawar
- Secured friendship of **Vakatakas** via matrimonial alliance (daughter Prabhavati married to Vakataka king). This gave Chandragupta II strategic advantage against Saka king. He thus annexed Gujarat and Kathiawar.
- Inscription on Iron Pillar of Mehrauli is after King Chandra.
- Fa Hien visits India to secure Buddhist manuscripts.
- Kalidasa lived in his court. Important works include *Abhijana Shakuntalam*, *Malvika Agnimitram*, *Kumara Sambhava*, *Raghuvansham* (Chandragupta II is the hero in this). All of these were written in Sanskrit.

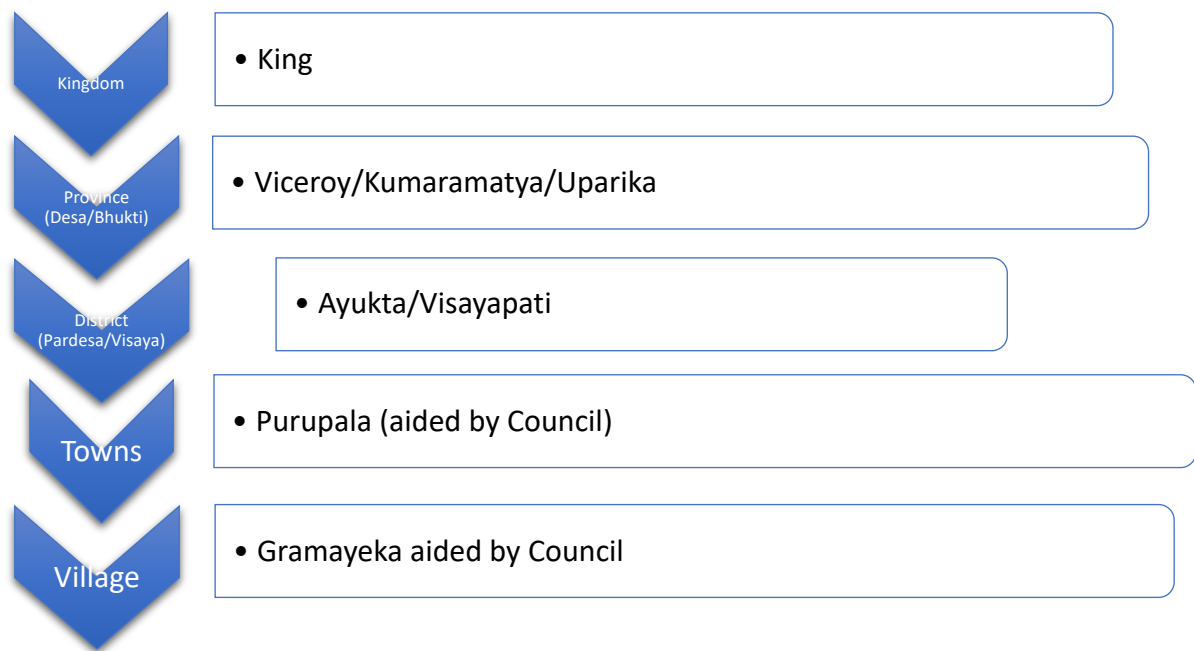
In the play, king Ramagupta decides to surrender his queen Dhruvadevi ("Devi") to a Shaka enemy when besieged. Ramagupta's younger brother Chandragupta enters the enemy camp disguised as the queen and kills the enemy ruler. The rest of the story is not clear from the surviving passages, but based on other historical evidence, it appears that in the last part of the play, Chandragupta dethrones Ramagupta and marries Dhruvadevi.

5. **Kumaragupta** – maintained empire; constructed Nalanda; attacked by Hunas.

6. **Skandagupta** – deterred Hunas; assumed title of Vikramaditya.

● **Administration:**

1. Kingship
2. Mantriparishad headed by Mantri Mukhya
3. Moral guidance by Purohita (ensured that laws are not violative of sacred texts)
4. Sabha – a representative body to give voice to people.



5. Gupta administration was highly decentralized.
- Economy:
 1. Roman Empire fell and trade declined to some extent.
 2. Internal trade flourished.
 3. Large number of gold coins circulated.
 4. Collected one-sixth of produce as tax.
 - Society:
 1. Patriarchal
 2. Varna system – caste/jati became rigid.
 3. Monogamy
 4. Endogamy (marriage within same caste)
 5. Sati practice started (Eran inscription of Bhanugupta – 510CE)
 6. Child marriage, dowry, female infanticide
 7. Women and Shudras could hear Mahabharata and Ramayana
 8. Manusmriti became codified law
 - Religion:
 1. Guptas – Vaishnavite
 2. Vakatakas – Shaivites
 3. Avatar concept introduced to unite Vaishnavites (Vishnu) and Bhagvatism (Vasudeva Krishna)
 4. 10 Avatars of Vishnu

POST GUPTA PERIOD (550 – 750 CE)

- Post-Gupta period is characterized by the growth of feudalism (origin can be traced to pre-Gupta period). Practice of land grants corroded the authority of the state.
- Relapse of a market economy into subsistence economy – because of the fall of Roman empire.
- Thus, large states could not be sustained. Several regional states were formed.
- **NORTH INDIA under HARSHA:**
 1. Sources:

- a. Bana, the court poet of Harsha, wrote **Hashacharita** and **Kadambari**.
- b. Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim wrote **Si-yu-ki**.
- c. Harsha himself wrote dramas – **Ratnavali**, **Nagananda**, **Priyadarsika**.

2. Early life of Harsha:

- Belonged to the **Pushyabhuti dynasty** with its capital at Thaneswar.
- Harsha was the 2nd son of King Prabhakaravardhana.
- Harsha's elder brother, Rajyavardhana, was made King but faced several problems.
- Grahavarman, the Maukhari ruler of Kanauj and the husband of Rajyashri (daughter of King Prabhakaravardhana), was murdered by Deva Gupta (ruler of Malwa) who in alliance with Sasanka (ruler of Gauda or Bengal) now occupied Kannauj and imprisoned Rajyashri.
- Rajyavardhana campaigned and killed Deva Gupta but was deceived and killed by Sasanka.
- Meanwhile, Rajyashri escaped to forests of Central India.
- Harsha now succeeded his brother at Thaneswar. He rescued his sister and drove out Sasanka.

3. Harsha's conquests:

- Drove away Sasanka and occupied Kannauj. He made it his new capital.
- Captured Vallabhi.
- Wars with Pulakesin II: was not a complete success but it resulted in an honorable treaty with Pulakesin II.



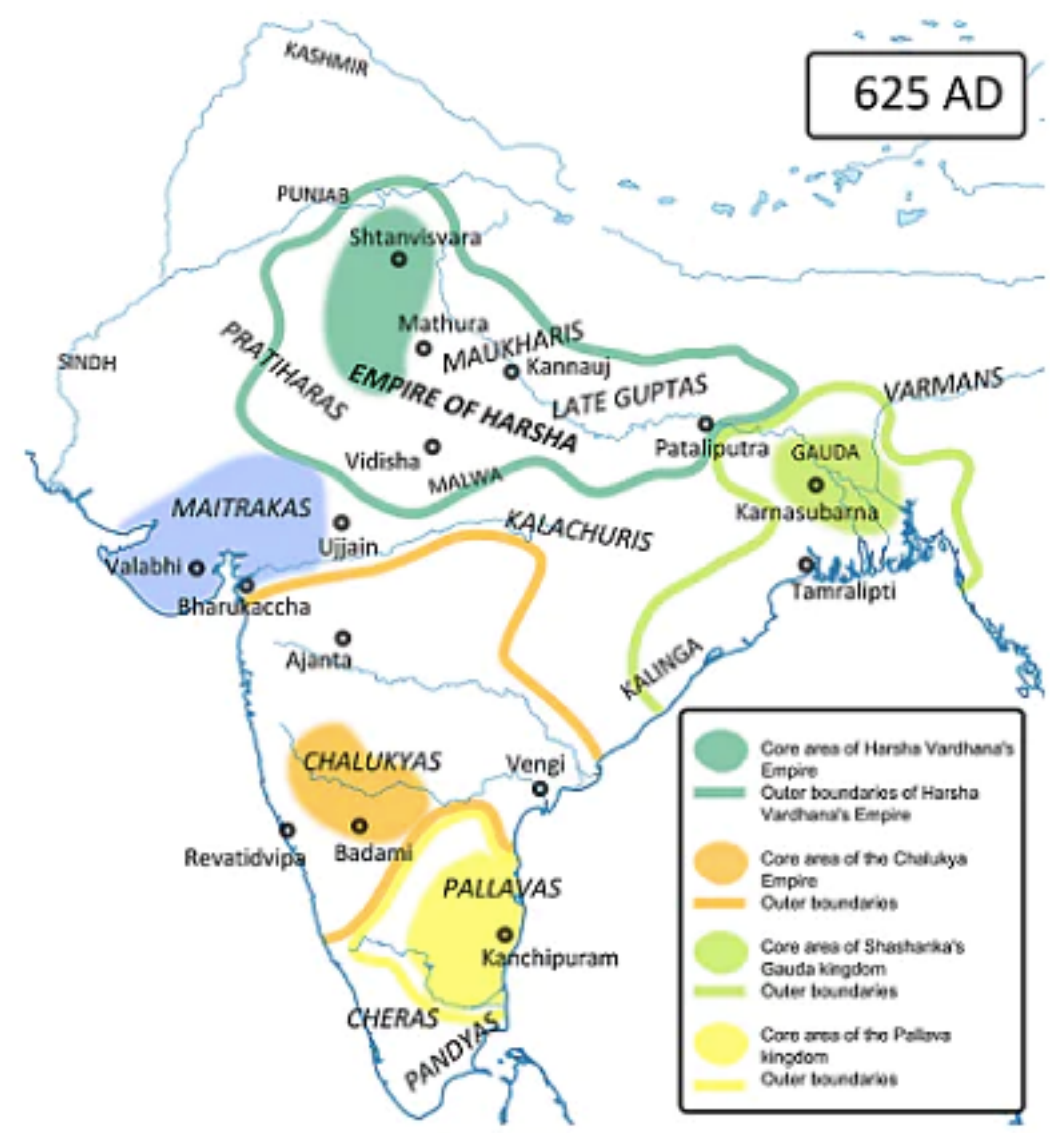
4. Administration:

- Like Guptan administration.
- Became more feudal as land grants continued.

5. Economy:

- Decline had started during Guptas, and it went on unabated.
- This is evident from paucity of trade centers, coins, and disappearance of trade guilds.
- Thus, agriculturists were forced to undertake subsistence agriculture.

○ **SOUTH INDIA:**



PALLAVAS of Kanchi(560 – 903 CE)

1. Simhavishnu – first important ruler.

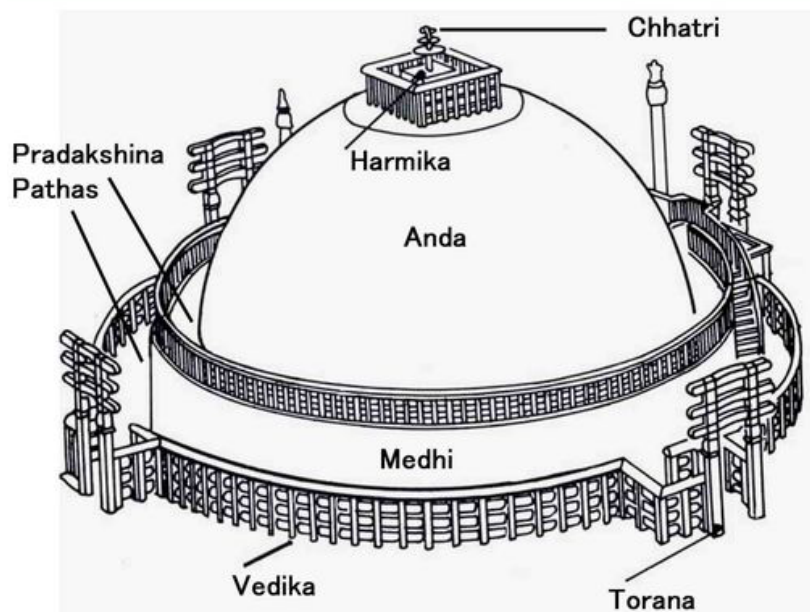
2. **Mahendravarman I** - struggle between Pallavas and Chalukyas begins.
 3. **Narasimhavarman I (630 – 68 CE)** –
 - a. Repelled the invasion of Pulakesin II, killed him and captured the Chalukyan capital, Badami or Vatapi. Hence, he assumed the title of **Vatapikonda**.
 - b. Said to have defeated the Cholas, Cheras, Pandyas. Also sent naval expeditions to Ceylon.
 - c. Founded the new city of **Mamallapuram** and built several monolithic temples in it.
 - d. Hiuen Tsang visited his empire.
 4. Several successors followed.
- CHALUKYAS of Badami (543 – 755 CE)**
1. **Pulakesin I (542 – 66 CE)** – founded the empire with capital at Badami/Vatapi.
 2. **Kirtivarman** – expanded the empire.
 3. **Pulakesin II (609 – 42 CE)** –
 - a. Greatest of Chalukya rulers.
 - b. His clash with Harsha in which he was able to check the advance of Harsha.
 - c. Conflict with Pallavas – His first expedition against them was a complete success and he annexed the northern part of Pallava kingdom. But his second expedition against the Pallava was a disaster. Badami was captured and Pulakesin II was killed.
 - d. Hiuen Tsang visited his kingdom.
 4. Several successors followed.
-

ARCHITECTURE

○ BUDDHIST:

1. Stupa:

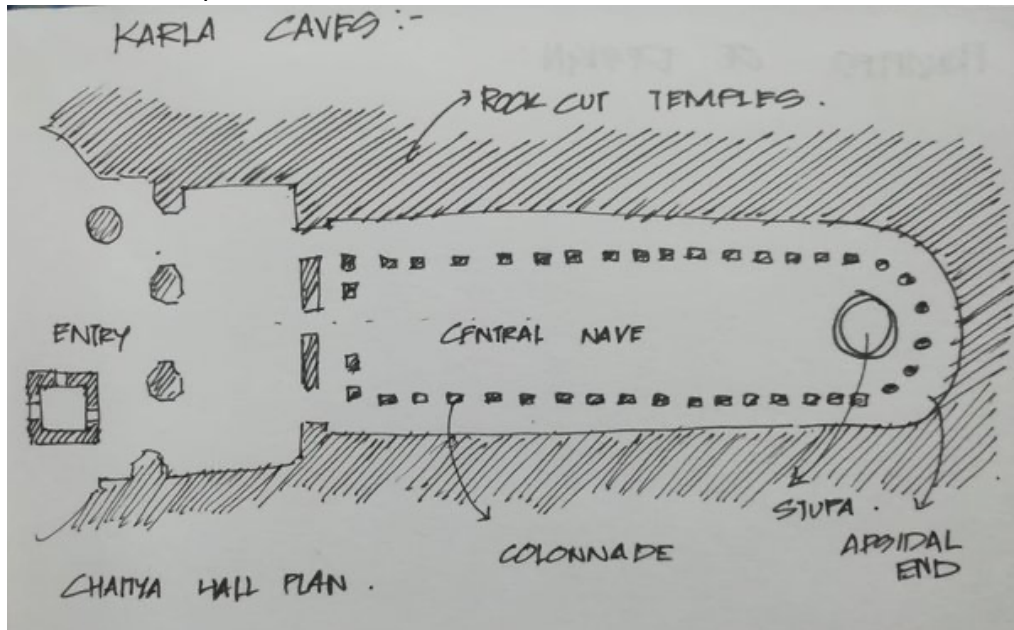
- Funeral mound where ashes or remains are preserved.



- Sanchi stupa, Amravati stupa, etc.

2. Chaitya:

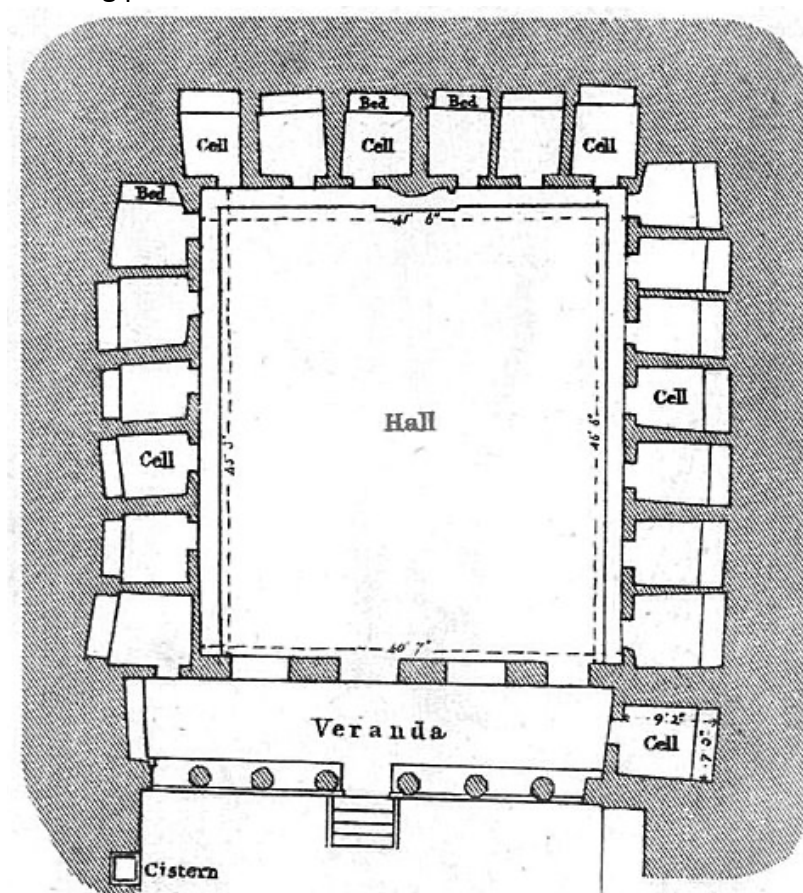
- Place of worship for Buddhist monks.



-
- e.g., Ajanta caves, Karle caves, Nasik caves

3. Vihara:

- Dwelling place of monks.

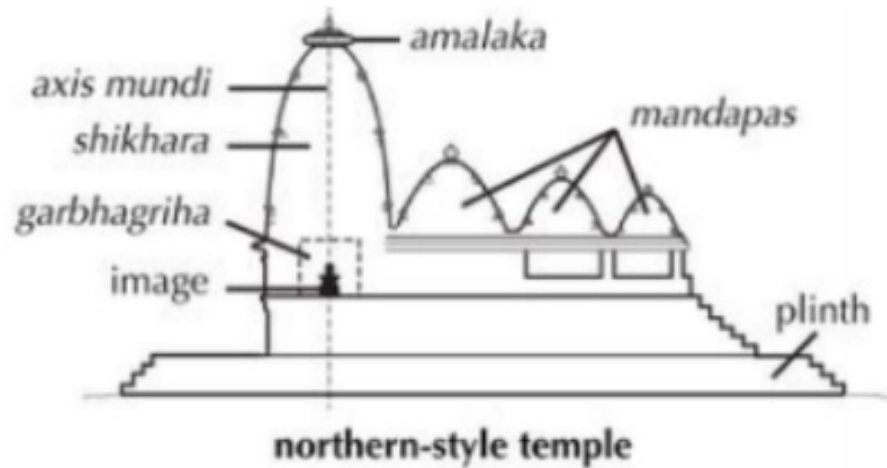


-
- e.g. Ajanta, Ellora, Udaigiri, Khandgiri

○ **HINDU:**

1. Nagara style:

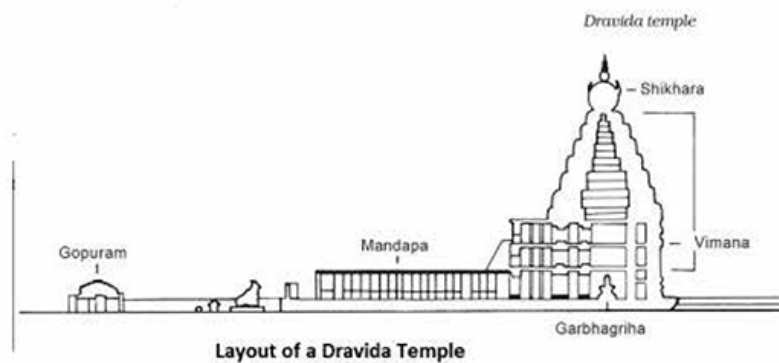
- North Indian temples
- Guptas began temple architecture in India



- E.g. Jagannath temple (Puri), Lingaraj temple (Bhuvaneshwar), Sun temple (Konark), Khajuraho temple (Madhya Pradesh)

2. Dravidian style:

- Narmada to Kanyakumari
- Began under Pallavas



- E.g. Brihadeshwara temple (Tanjore), Chidambaram (Natraj) temple in Tamil Nadu, Meenakshi temple (Madurai)

3. Vesara style:

- mix of Nagara and Dravidian style
- began under Chalukyas
- The Shikhara is flat from top.
- E.g. Virupaksha temple (Aihole), Hoysala temple (Halebid), Temples at Pattadakal