

INDIAN MYTHOLOGY & HISTORY

**MAURYANS &
CHANAKYA**

TIMELINE

	-3000 BCE	-2500 BCE	-2000 BCE	-1500 BCE	-1000 BCE	-500 BCE	0 CE	500 CE	1000 CE	1500 CE	2000 CE
	5000 ya	4500 ya	4000 ya	3500 ya	3000 ya	2500 ya	2000 ya	1500 ya	1000 ya	500 ya	now
India	Indus Valley Civilization			Gangetic Valley Vedic Civilization			Jainism/ Buddhism / ★ Mouryas	Satavahans/ Sakas/ Hunas	Guptas/ Adi Sankara	Muslim Invasion	Mughals/ Marathas/ British/ Independent India
Mesopotamia	Mesopotamian						Parthian	Romans	Islamic		
Egypt	Egyptian					Greek	Byzantine		Islamic		
Europe		Greek					Greeks / Romans	Romans	Byzantine / Romans / Dark Ages		Renaissance / Colonization / Industrial Revolution / World Wars
Persia		Ancient Persian				Persian			Islamic		
China			Ancient China			Imperial China					Ming, Qing, Communists
Americas		Mayan			Aztecs & Incas						Europeans

BRONZE AGE

IRON AGE

HOW DO WE KNOW ABOUT THIS ERA?

- British historians only considered the sources that were written in a factual format.
- Indian Puranas contained information about dynasties of Indian kings including and prior to Rama, but, since these Puranas were written with many exaggerations, and consisted of stories which are clearly irrational, the entirety of Puranas are considered as fiction, not facts.
- Thus, official Indian history of royal dynasties begins from the times of Buddha, Mahavira, followed by Mauryans & Chanakya during 6th to 4th century BCE, when Greek started coming to India. *Indica* was a book written by Megasthenes gives a detailed account of life in Mauryan Empire.
- Many Indians, on the other hand, think that Ramayana, Mahabharata and many other Puranic stories are also historical and dynasties mentioned therein are mostly factual.

ABOUT CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA

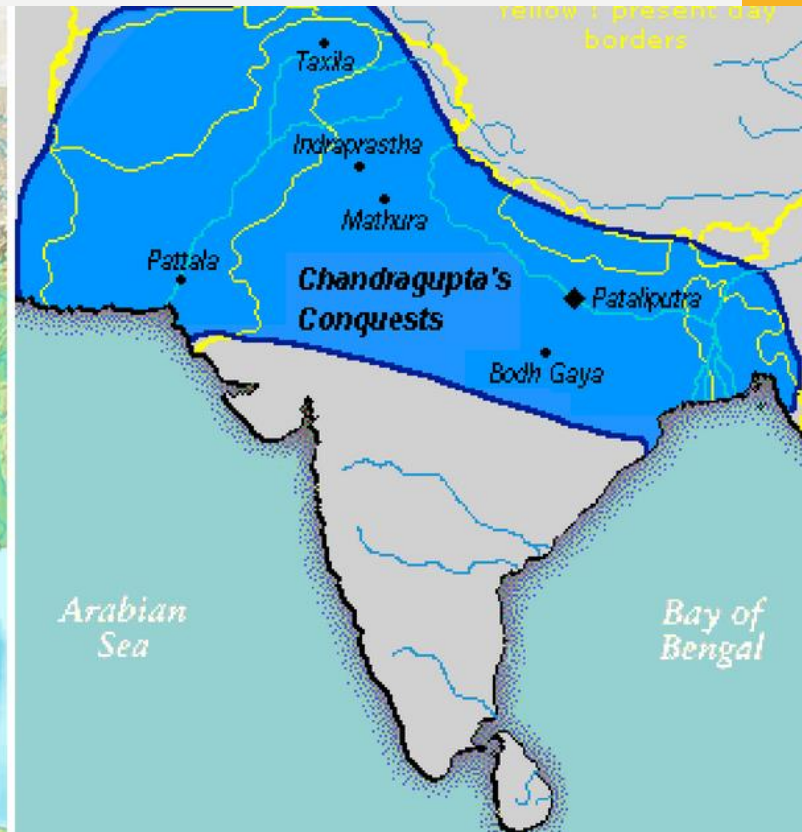
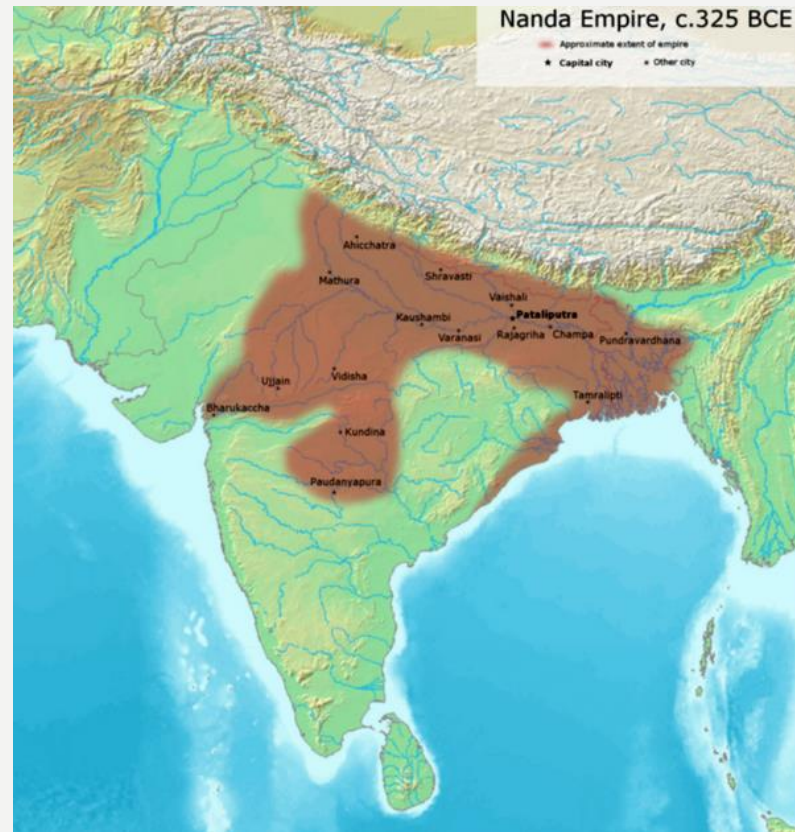
- Dhanananda was king of Magadha (the current state of Bihar in eastern part of India).
- A greedy and arrogant person, he insulted Kautilya.
- Kautilya's vow
- Kautilya met a young boy with leadership qualities, and chose him to avenge his insult.
- Kautilya is also known as Chanakya.
- They started attacking the periphery of Magadha's empire and then advanced to the center and then dethroned Dhanananda.

ABOUT PORAS & ALEXANDER

- Porus was the king of the western part of India (current Pakistan).
- Alexander, the first king from Europe to win entire West Asia, came to attack India, clearly the richest country at that time.
- He was able to defeat Porus, but, was very amazed by the fighting qualities of Porus and according to the accounts of the Greek historians, Alexander let a captured Porus live.
- Alexander supposedly wanted to continue to attack the Magadha empire, but, his soldiers revolted, as they were tired from a long mission and the resistance shown by a small king gave them ample indication that it will be impossible to beat the Magadha Empire – a much larger force.

GREEK CONTACTS WITH MAGADHA

- A few years later, the Greek general Seleucus, who stayed back after departure of Alexander, and ruled the area around current Afghanistan, tried to attack Magadha empire, but, Chandragupta Maurya defeated him roundly and captured parts of Afghanistan.
- Chandragupta married Seleucus's daughter and formed an alliance with Greeks.



Chandragupta ruled from Bengal in East to Afghanistan and Baluchistan in West.

According to Megasthenes, Mauryan army had 60000 infantry, 30000 cavalry, 9000 war elephants & 8000 chariots.

KAUTILYA'S ARTHASHASTRA

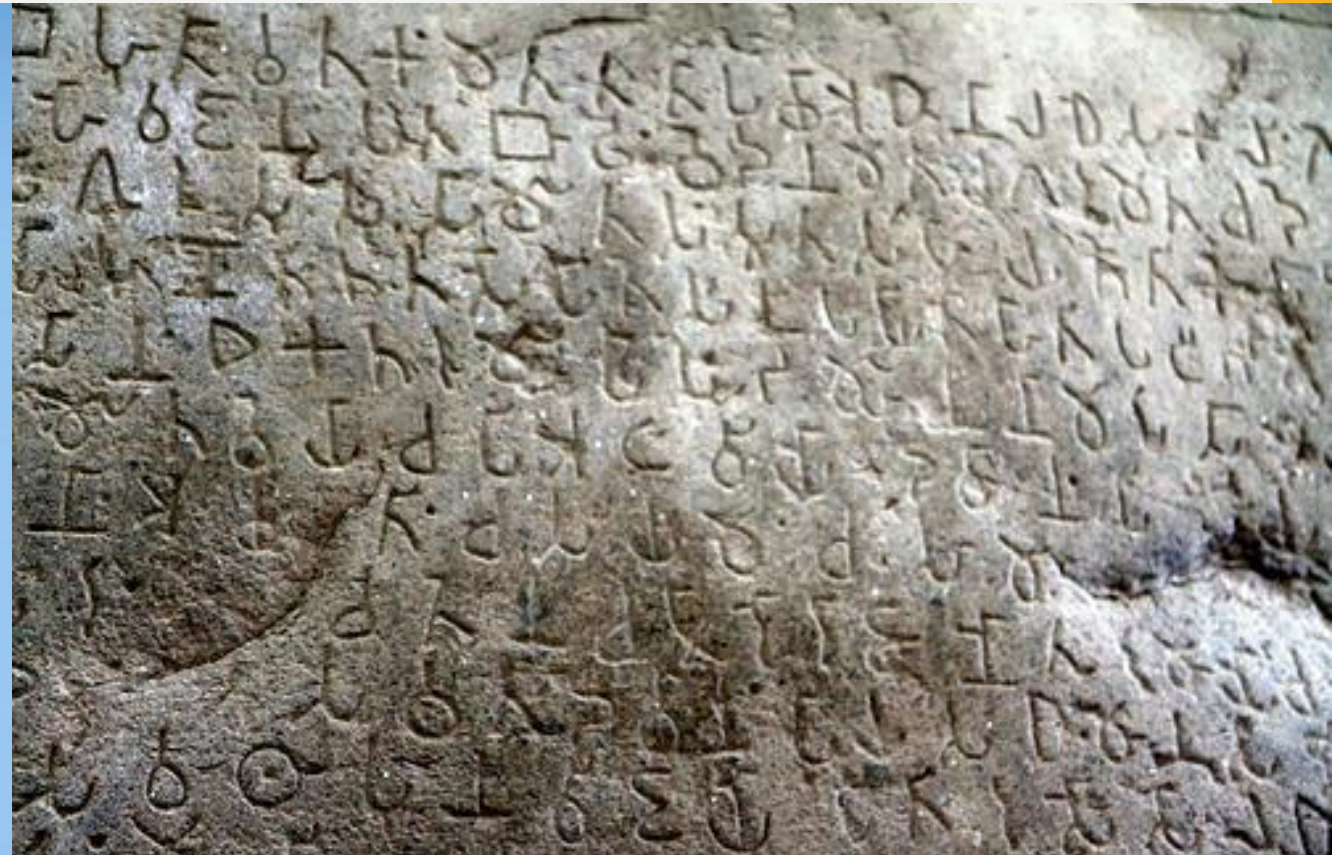
- The book contains detailed information about specific topics that are relevant for rulers who wish to run an effective government.
- Diplomacy and war (including military tactics) are the two points treated in most detail but the work also includes recommendations on law, prisons, taxation, irrigation, agriculture, mining, fortifications, coinage, manufacturing, trade, administrations, diplomacy, and spies.
- The ideas expressed by Kautilya in the Arthashastra are completely practical and unsentimental.
- Kautilya openly writes about controversial topics such as assassinations, when to kill family members, how to manage secret agents, when it is useful to violate treaties, and when to spy on ministers.

VIDEO

Chanakya's words of wisdom - <https://youtu.be/DKvIkPsfLTU>

ASHOKA

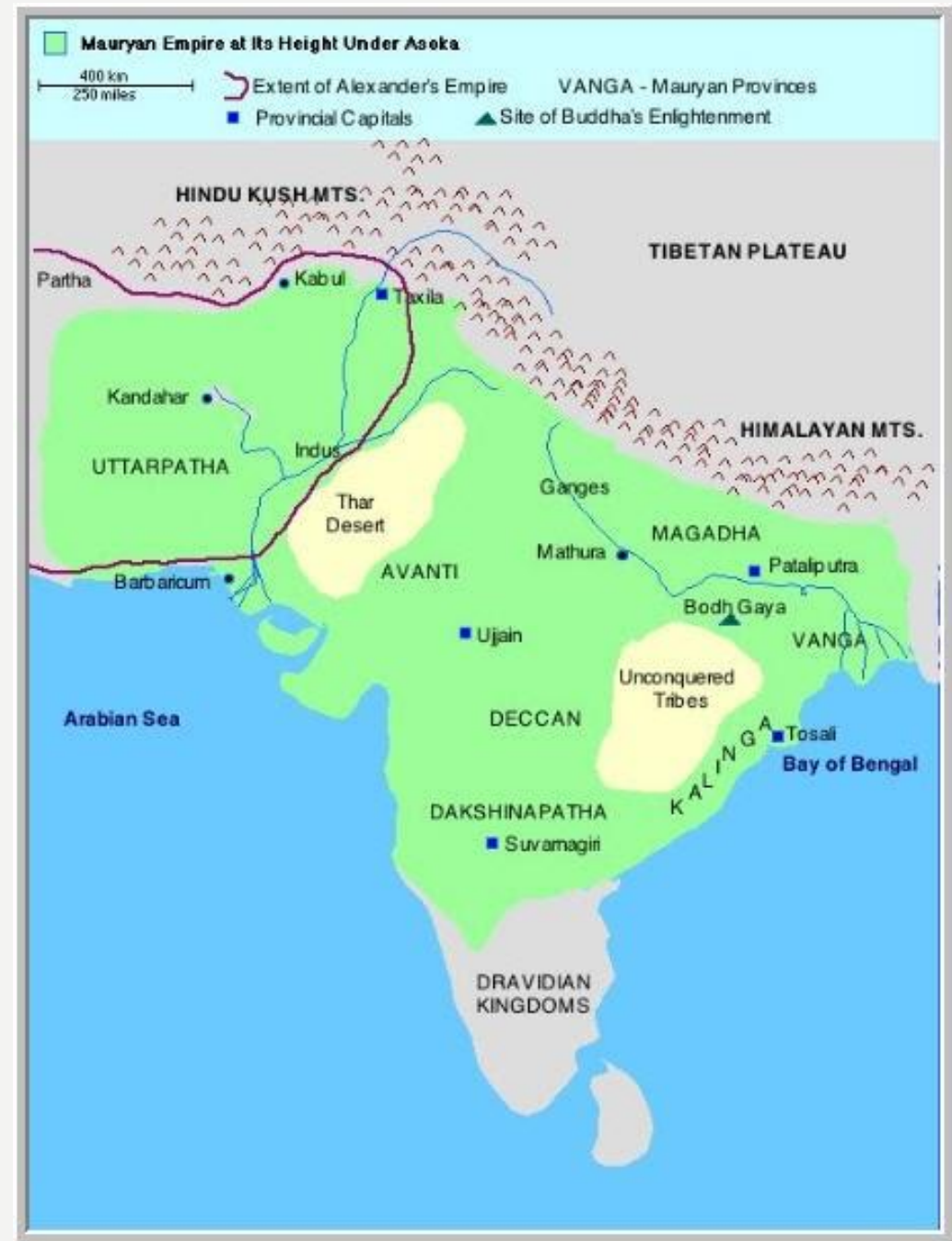
- Grandson of Chandragupta, Ashoka came to power after a violent struggle with his many brothers.
- He was a great general and expanded his empire to almost all parts of India.
- He put inscriptions on rocks about his life and his messages, including signs that are used even now as India's national symbol and on its flag.



KALINGA WAR

- Most historians think that Magadha's attack on Kalinga changed his view about life.
- The war was brutal as over 100,000 soldiers got killed in the bloody war.
- At the end of the war, Ashoka supposedly felt rather guilty and embraced Buddhism.
- He is believed to have implemented the principle of *ahimsa*.
- He sponsored Buddhist mission throughout Asia, sending his own children for its spread.
- Some recent historians do not think that Ashoka became a pacifist.

ASHOKA'S RULE



MAURYAN ADMINISTRATION

- Centralized, supported by a team of Ministers (*Mantri*) & Officials (*Amatya*)
- 4 levels
 - Central, provincials, district & Village
- They collected $1/4^{\text{th}}$ to $1/6^{\text{th}}$ of produce as Taxes.
- Pataliputra, the capital city, was looked after by a committee of 30 people, divided into 6 boards, responsible for things such as Industry, Welfare of Visitors, Trade and Commerce etc. This shows a high degree of sophistication.

DISSOLUTION OF MAURYAN EMPIRE

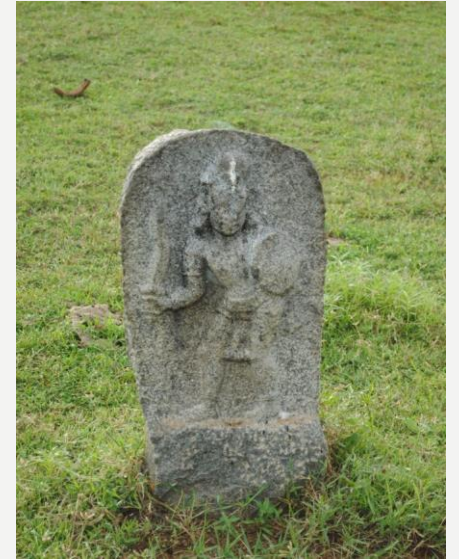
- The Maurya Empire began to dissolve with Ashoka's death. Costly salaries for soldiers and government officials ended up bankrupting the central treasury. In place of an expansive empire, local rulers began to take charge of smaller regions, placing themselves strategically along trade routes.

FURTHER STUDIES

- <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-worldhistory/chapter/the-maurya-empire/>

SANGAM CULTURE

- About this time, the Tamil literature flourished for the first time (about 300 BC to 400 AD).
 - Thiruvalluvar wrote Tirukkular a poem of about 1330 couplets about morality, ethics and way of life.
 - Tolkappiyam was a grammar book.
- Pandya's rules the southern Tamilnadu, Cheras rules current Kerala and Cholas rules northern Tamilnadu.
- Southern kingdoms traded with Romans, as we see golden coins from Rome.
- Hero stones were found that memorialized war heroes.
- They followed either Hinduism or worship of nature.



THIRUVALLUVAR'S WORDS OF WISDOM

- Make foes of bowmen if you must, Never of penmen.
- Those who have wisdom have all: Fools with all have nothing.
- When the rare chance comes, seize it. To do the rare deed.
- Those are fools however learned. Who have not learned to walk with the world.
- Cling to the One who clings to nothing; And so clinging, cease to cling.
- Although an act of help done timely, might be small in nature, it is truly larger than the world itself.

FURTHER STUDIES

- <http://www.historydiscussion.net/history-of-india/sangam-period-literature-administration-and-economic-condition-during-sangam-period/739>