

Chapter-5

The Rise of Empires

5.1. What is an Empire?

The word 'empire' comes from the Latin word **imperium**, which means **supreme power**. Simply put, an empire is a **collection of smaller kingdoms or territories ruled by one powerful emperor**. Often, these territories came under imperial control after wars or conquests.

The smaller kingdoms did not vanish. They usually kept their own rulers, but those rulers had to **accept the emperor's overlordship**. This meant they became **tributaries**, paying **regular tribute** to the emperor in the form of gold, silver, grain, livestock, elephants, or other valuable goods.

A **tributary (or vassal)** is a ruler or state that has submitted to an emperor. They continue to govern their land but must:

- Accept the emperor's authority.
- Send regular tribute (money, metals, crops, animals or soldiers).
- Show loyalty and respect.

This system helped the emperor control vast lands without directly ruling every corner.

Ancient Indian texts used special titles to show the emperor's supreme authority:

- Samrāj - "lord of all" or supreme ruler (Emperor)
- Adhirāja - overlord
- Rājadhirāja - king of kings



DID YOU KNOW?



The title **Chakravartin**, often used for emperors in ancient India, literally means "one whose chariot wheels roll everywhere", symbolising that their power extended across the entire world known to them.

5.2. Features of an Empire

An empire was more than a large kingdom; it was a system of power, control and organisation. To hold vast territories together, emperors had to combine military strength with efficient administration, access to resources and cultural patronage.

1 Central Authority

At the heart of every empire was the emperor, who exerted authority over tributary kings and chiefs. These local rulers governed their areas but paid tribute (in grain, gold, livestock or elephants) and acknowledged the emperor's supremacy. In return, they were allowed to continue ruling under imperial protection.

2 Military Power

Strong, trained armies expanded the empire, kept tributary states under control and defended its borders. Rival kingdoms often competed for supremacy and the one with superior military and resources became the overlord.



5.2.1. Trade, Trade Routes and Guilds

Running an empire was not easy. Wars and armies may expand borders, but maintaining them was a costly affair. Soldiers needed food, clothes, weapons and salaries. Horses and elephants required constant care. Forts, roads and ships had to be built. All of this demanded enormous economic power.

That's why rulers depended heavily on production and trade. A strong economy kept the empire alive and also improved people's quality of life. Trade routes, whether by road, river or sea, were carefully controlled, so that goods could move safely across regions and even beyond India's borders.

Archaeology and literature tell us what was traded in ancient India :

- Textiles like cotton and silk.
- Spices and agricultural produce.
- Luxury goods such as gems, handicrafts and ornaments.
- Animals for farming or warfare.



DID YOU KNOW?



The Roman Empire prized Indian spices and cotton so highly that Roman writers complained their women were "draining Rome's gold" by importing luxuries from India! This shows how far Indian trade networks reached.



5.3. The Rise of Magadha

Between the 6th and 4th century BCE, north India went through a period of great change. Among the sixteen mahājanapadas (large kingdoms with assemblies), one stood out, **Magadha** (modern south Bihar and nearby regions). It soon became the centre of power and laid the foundation for India's first great empire.



Some of the sixteen mahājanapadas

5.3.1. Early Strength of Magadha

Powerful rulers such as **Ajātaśatru** expanded Magadha and strengthened it through wars, alliances and administration. Interestingly, two of the greatest spiritual teachers in world history, **Gautama Buddha** and **Mahāvira**, lived during his reign.

Magadha's rise was not accidental. Its geography and resources gave it many advantages :

- 1 Fertile land of the Ganga plains → Produced abundant crops.
- 2 Thick forests nearby → Provided timber for construction and elephants for the army.
- 3 Rich deposits of iron ore and minerals → Gave tools for farming and sharper, lighter weapons for soldiers.
- 4 Rivers like the Ganga and Son → Acted as highways for trade and communication.

Wait... But How?



Tiny Questions, Big Explorer Answers!



Rishi asks: Why was Magadha able to rise so quickly?

Rishi explains: Because nature gave it rich land, forests, iron and rivers. Rulers used these resources wisely and built a strong army and administration. That's how Magadha became the most powerful kingdom.

5.3.2. The Nanda Dynasty

In the 5th century BCE, **Mahāpadma Nanda** founded the Nanda dynasty. He expanded Magadha by uniting many smaller kingdoms under his rule. The economy grew so strong that he even issued coins, a clear mark of royal power and prosperity.

Greek accounts tell us that the Nandas maintained one of the largest armies of the time. But power and wealth came with problems. The last ruler, **Dhana Nanda**, was said to be extremely wealthy but also deeply unpopular because of his oppressive policies.

This discontent eventually paved the way for a new power — the Mauryan Empire.



A punch-marked silver coin of Mahāpadma Nanda.

DID YOU KNOW?



Greek writers mentioned that the Nanda army had about 2,00,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, 2,000 chariots and 3,000 elephants → one of the largest standing armies in the ancient world!

Wait... But How?

Tiny Questions, Big Explorer Answers!

Priya asks: If the Nandas had so much power, why did their dynasty end?

Priya explains: Because rulers must be loved and respected by their people. Dhana Nanda's unfair ways made people angry, and this anger helped a new leader, Chandragupta Maurya, rise to power.

5.6.5. Glimpses of Everyday Life in the Mauryan Era (continued...)

Crafts and artisans

- Cities were alive with the work of blacksmiths, potters, carpenters, jewellers and other artisans.
- Their skills produced tools, ornaments and daily-use items in demand both within and beyond the empire.

Communication

- Couriers carried messages across the empire, keeping communication active.
- Vessels of water were placed at intervals along the streets to deal with fires – an early form of civic safety.



Water pot kept on the street

Food and agriculture

- Farmers grew two crops a year because rain came in both summer and winter.
- Granaries stocked with food grains helped people during emergencies.

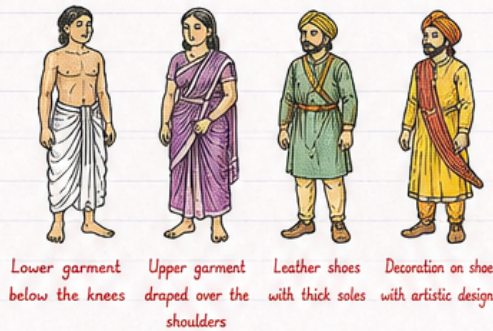


Granary to store grain

5.6.5. (continued...)

Dress and appearance

- People usually wore cotton garments.
- Lower garment reached below the knees.
- Upper garment was draped over the shoulders.
- Some wore leather shoes with decorated designs and thick soles, not only for comfort but also to appear taller.



Lower garment below the knees

Upper garment draped over the shoulders

Leather shoes with thick soles

Decoration on shoes with artistic designs

DID YOU KNOW?



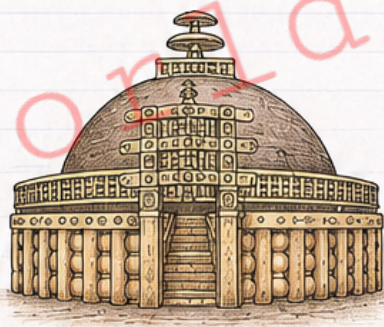
The Mauryas were not only powerful rulers. They cared for their people's safety, welfare and comfort. Good governance, planning and balanced laws made their empire strong and respected for centuries.

5.6.6. Art and Architecture of the Mauryas

The Mauryan period marked a turning point in India's art and architecture. For the first time, large-scale use of stone replaced earlier materials like wood and brick, giving structures strength and permanence.

Stūpas, Chaityas and Vihāras

- The Great Stūpa at Sanchi is one of India's oldest stone monuments.
- A stūpa is a dome-shaped structure built over relics of the Buddha or great monks, serving as a place for meditation and worship.
- The large, round hemispherical dome is called the anda, which means egg or cosmic womb.
- People walked around it in pradakṣiṇā (circumambulation) as an act of meditation and worship.
- Chaityas were prayer halls where communities gathered for religious practices.
- Vihāras were monasteries where Buddhist monks lived, studied scriptures and taught students. They became important centres of learning and meditation.



The Great Stupa, Sanchi

Rock-Cut Sculptures and Symbolism

- The elephant sculpture at Dhauri represents the Buddha – powerful, intelligent, calm and gentle.
- Animals like elephants, lions, horses and bulls were frequently carved to symbolise strength, wisdom and cosmic order.



Elephant sculpture at Dhauri

5.6.7. Mauryan Coinage

Archaeologists have discovered hoards of Mauryan punch-marked coins. These were not carved designs modern coins but small silver pieces stamped with symbols such as the sun, trees, mountains or animals.

- These symbols represented royal authority while others showed control over trade or resources.
- Coins helped in trade, supported taxation and showed the strength of the economy.



Mauryan silver punch-marked coins

WAIT... BUT HOW?



Rishi asks: Why were punch marks used instead of designs like today?

Rishi explains: Punch marks were easy and quick to make. Each mark carried a meaning – some showed royal authority while others showed control over trade or resources.



FIGURE IT OUT – LET'S PRACTICE!

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. A stūpa is a dome-shaped structure built over relics of the _____ or great monks.
2. People walked around the stūpa in _____ (circumambulation).
3. Chaityas were _____ halls where communities gathered for religious practices.
4. Vihāras were _____ where Buddhist monks lived and studied scriptures.
5. Mauryan coins were stamped with symbols such as the _____, trees, mountains or animals.

B. Choose the correct options (one or more).

1. Mauryan coins helped in:
 - (a) Trade
 - (b) Taxation
 - (c) Punishment
 - (d) All of these
2. Which of the following were symbols in art and coinage?
 - (a) Sun
 - (b) Trees
 - (c) Mountains
 - (d) All of these
3. Which structure is called the anda?
 - (a) Stūpa
 - (b) Chaitya
 - (c) Vihāra
 - (d) Palace

C. Give two reasons.

1. Why were granaries important during the Mauryan period?

2. Why did Mauryan rulers use stone instead of wood and brick for large structures?

Chapter-5 : The Rise of Empires (Continued)

5.6.3. Mauryan Art and Symbols

- The Mauryas were renowned for their polished stone architecture. A stunning example is the Sarnath pillar capital erected by Aśoka, where the Buddha gave his first teaching.
- Four lions stand back-to-back, symbolising royal authority.
- Below them are carvings of an elephant, bull, horse and lion, along with the dharmachakra (wheel of dharma), representing the Buddha's teachings.
- The Lion Capital of Sarnath was chosen as India's national emblem after Independence.



Sarnath Pillar Capital

DID YOU KNOW?

The national motto "satyameva jayate" ("Truth alone triumphs") was added from the Mundaka Upaniṣad, which in full reads: satyameva jayate nānṛtaṁ — Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood.

5.6.4. Glimpses of Everyday Life in the Mauryan Era

Archaeological finds give us a vivid picture of everyday life and traditions during the Mauryan period. Terracotta figurines, sculptures and artefacts reveal the artistry of the time, as well as the values and cultural practices of society.



Terracotta figurine of a dancing girl



Saptamātrikās – Seven Mother Goddesses



Female deities



Terracotta horse head

Recall & Relate

Such figurines show us that Mauryan society valued performance, adornment and artistry.

5.6.5. Mauryan Coinage

- Archaeologists have discovered hoards of Mauryan punch-marked coins, small silver pieces stamped with different symbols such as the sun, trees, mountains, or animals.
- These were not carved designs like modern coins but punch marks made using tiny punches and dies.
- Each mark carried meaning: some represented royal authority, while others showed control over trade or resources.



Mauryan silver punch-marked coins

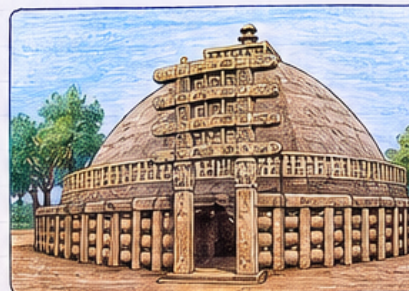
Key Words

- Empire
- Tributary
- Magadha
- Aśoka
- Dharma
- Stūpa
- Chaitya
- Vihāra

5.6.6. Art and Architecture of the Mauryas

Stūpas, Chaityas and Vihāras

- The Great Stūpa at Sanchi is one of India's oldest stone monuments. Originally built of bricks by Aśoka, it was later enlarged with stone.
- A stūpa is a dome-shaped structure built over relics of the Buddha or great monks, serving as a place for meditation and worship.
- The large, round hemispherical dome in the centre of a stūpa is called the anda (egg or cosmic womb).
- Chaityas were prayer halls and Vihāras were monasteries for monks.



The Great Stupa at Sanchi

Remember

Stūpas, chaityas and vihāras show how Aśoka spread the teachings of the Buddha far and wide.

5.6.7. Crafts and Urban Life

- Cities were alive with the work of blacksmiths, potters, carpenters, jewellers and other artisans.
- Well-planned cities had streets, drainage and public safety.
- Houses, often built of wood, sometimes rose to two storeys.
- Vessels of water were placed at intervals along the streets to deal with fires — an early form of civic safety.



Elephant sculpture at Dhauri

Essence of the Chapter

- ✓ Rise of Magadha → Nanda → Maurya Empire.
- ✓ Aśoka chose the path of peace and spread Dharma.
- ✓ Mauryas promoted art, architecture and trade.
- ✓ Their ideas inspired India for centuries.



Figure It Out - Let's Practice! (Answers)

A. Fill in the Blanks

- farmers ; food supply
- state granary ; famine
- taller
- pradakṣiṇā
- prayer ; monasteries

B. Choose the Correct Options

- (c) Excellent roads and trade
- (a) Value for adornment & performance

C. Match the Limb to Meaning

- 1 - c 2 - d 3 - b 4 - a



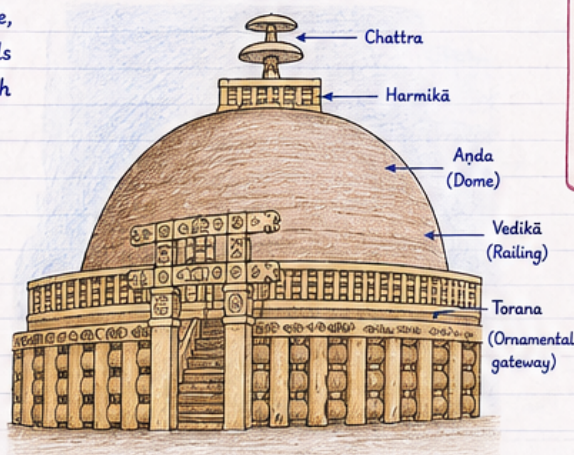
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The Mauryan period marked a turning point in India's art and architecture. For the first time, large-scale use of stone replaced earlier materials like wood and brick, giving structures strength and permanence.

Stūpas, Chaityas and Vihāras

- The Great Stūpa at Sanchi is one of India's oldest stone monuments. Originally built of bricks by Ashoka, it was later enlarged with stone.
- A stūpa is a dome-shaped structure built over relics of the Buddha or great monks, serving as a place for meditation and worship.
- The large, round hemispherical dome in the centre of a stūpa is called the **anda**, which means egg or cosmic womb.
- People walked around it in **pradakṣiṇā** (circumambulation) as an act of meditation and worship.
- Chaityas were prayer halls where communities gathered for religious practices.
- Vihāras were monasteries where Buddhist monks lived, studied scriptures and taught students. They became important centres of learning and meditation.

The Great Stūpa at Sanchi



Rock-Cut Sculptures and Symbolism

- The elephant sculpture at Dhauri shows the Buddha—powerful, intelligent, calm and gentle.
- Animals like elephants, lions, horses and bulls were frequently carved to symbolise strength, wisdom and cosmic order.

RECALL & RELATE

The elephant sculpture at Dhauri shows how Ashoka's message of dharma was conveyed through art and symbols.

DID YOU KNOW?

The lion capital of Sarnath, built by Ashoka, is India's national emblem today. The four lions stand back-to-back, symbolising courage, power and pride.



Sarnath Pillar Capital

5.6.7. Mauryan Coinage

Archaeologists have discovered hoards of Mauryan punch-marked coins. These were not carved designs like modern coins but small silver pieces stamped with symbols such as the sun, trees, mountains or animals.



Mauryan silver punch-marked coins

WAIT... BUT HOW?

Rishi asks: Why were punch marks used on coins instead of making designs?

Rishi explains: Punch marks were easy and quick to make. Each mark carried a meaning—some showed royal authority while others showed control over trade or resources.



5.6.5. Glimpses of Everyday Life in the Mauryan Era

Archaeological finds give us a vivid picture of everyday life and traditions during the Mauryan period.

Crafts and artisans



- Artisans like blacksmiths, potters, carpenters, jewellers made tools, ornaments and daily-use items in demand.

Well-planned cities



- Cities had straight streets, drainage systems and wells for public use.
- Houses were often built of wood, sometimes rose to two storeys.

Communication and safety



- Couriers carried messages across the empire and vessels of water were placed at intervals along the roads for travellers.

Dress and appearance



- People wore cotton garments.
- Some wore leather shoes with designs and thick soles.

Food and agriculture



- Farmers grew two crops a year.
- Granaries stored grains to protect food supply in emergencies.



FIGURE IT OUT – LET'S PRACTICE!

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Great Stūpa at _____ is one of India's oldest stone monuments.
2. The round dome in a stūpa is called the _____.
3. Vessels of water were placed at intervals along the _____.
4. People usually wore _____ garments.
5. Mauryan coins were called _____.

B. Choose the correct options (one or more).

1. Mauryan coins were stamped with symbols like:
 - (a) Sun
 - (b) Tree
 - (c) Mountains
 - (d) Flowers
2. The elephant sculpture at Dhauri shows:
 - (a) Power & wisdom
 - (b) Calm & gentle nature
 - (c) The Buddha's teachings
 - (d) All of these

C. Give two reasons.

1. Why were stūpas built?

2. Why was the Mauryan Empire able to grow?

5.5.4. The King Who Chose Peace – Aśhoka

Another great ruler of the Maurya dynasty was Aśhoka (268–232 BCE), the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya. He is remembered not only for the size of his empire but also for the values that guided his later rule.

The Kalinga War (261 BCE)

- At the beginning of his reign, Aśhoka was ambitious and determined to expand his empire.
- His territory stretched across almost the entire Indian subcontinent – from present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan to Bangladesh and most of India, except the far south.
- But then came a turning point. Around 261 BCE, Aśhoka fought a fierce war against Kalinga (modern Odisha).
- The battle was bloody and devastating. According to his own inscriptions carved on rocks and pillars, thousands were killed and countless others were displaced.

A Change of Heart

This deep sorrow led him to make an extraordinary choice. Aśhoka renounced violence and embraced the teachings of the Buddha. From that time, he resolved to rule through peace, justice and welfare rather than through conquest.

What did Aśhoka say in his edicts?

- He claimed to care for all people and even animals, not just those inside his empire.
- He supported medical treatment for humans and animals.
- He established rest houses and wells along highways.
- He encouraged people of different sects and faiths to respect one another.
- These messages show Aśhoka as one of the earliest rulers in history to speak of animal welfare, environmental care and religious tolerance.

Aśhoka Spreads the Message of Dharma

Embracing the Buddha's teachings, Aśhoka sent emissaries far and wide to Sri Lanka and parts of mainland South and Southeast Asia to spread the message of peace, compassion and non-violence. He even sent his own son, Mahinda, and daughter, Saṅghamittā, as emissaries to Sri Lanka.

Aśhoka's Edicts – A King's Voice to His People

Aśhoka often called himself "Devanampiya Piyadasi" (Beloved of the Gods, One who looks with kindness). In his edicts, he wrote:

- I care for all my people.
- I want happiness in this world and the next.
- Obey your parents, respect elders, be kind to friends and relatives.
- Do not waste money in useless ceremonies. Use it for the welfare of all.
- Follow dharma. Dharma brings happiness both here and hereafter.

Aśhoka's Edicts: Language and Script

- Most of Aśhoka's edicts were written in **Prakrit**, the language of ordinary people.
- They were inscribed in **Brahmi script**, the ancestor of many Indian scripts.

5.5.5. The Decline of the Mauryas

The Mauryan Empire continued for about 50 years after Aśhoka's death. But unlike him, his successors lacked the same vision and strength.

- Gradually, the vast empire began to weaken.
- Local rulers and smaller kingdoms broke away and became independent.
- Finally, around 185 BCE, the Mauryan Empire came to an end.
- Yet, the ideas of governance, welfare and dharma that Aśhoka and Kautilya promoted continued to inspire India for centuries.

5.6. Life in the Mauryan Period

Cities like Pāṭaliputra were bustling centres of governance and commerce. The capital was famous for its majestic palaces, public buildings and carefully planned streets. With a strong taxation system and brisk trade, the Mauryan treasury remained full, supporting the empire's armies, administration and welfare projects.

5.6.1. Agriculture and Food Security

- Agriculture was the backbone of the economy.
- Farmers grew two crops a year because rain came in both summer and winter.
- Families were rare and the state maintained granaries stocked with food grains for emergencies.
- The **Sohgaura copper plate inscription** (4th–3rd century BCE) is one of India's earliest administrative records.



Granaries to store food grains

5.6.2. Crafts and Urban Life

- Cities were alive with the work of blacksmiths, potters, carpenters, jewellers and other artisans.
- Urban life was well-organised.
- Well-planned cities had streets, drainage and public safety.
- Couriers carried messages across the empire.



- Vessels of water were placed at intervals along the streets.

Potter at work.



Upper garment



Leather shoes

5.6.7. Mauryan Art Symbols

- Archways were known for their polished stone architecture.
- The **Sarnath pillar capital** (with four lions) is India's national emblem.
- Below them are carvings of elephant, bull, horse and lion with the Dharma Chakra.



5.6.5. Glimpses of Everyday Life

- Terracotta** figurines, sculptures and artefacts reveal art, traditions and cultural practices.
- They show the creativity and skills of Mauryan people.



5.6.6. Stūpas, Chaityas and Vihāras

- Stūpas – dome-shaped structures built over relics for meditation and worship.
- Chaityas – prayer halls for communities.
- Vihāras – monasteries for monks to live and study scriptures.

Aśhoka's Empire at its greatest extent



DID YOU KNOW?

The title **Chakravartin**, often used for emperors in ancient India, literally means "one whose chariot wheels roll everywhere", symbolising that their power extended across the entire world known to them.



Major Pillar Edict (Delhi-Topra pillar)

Recall & Relate

Aśhoka's decisions after the Kalinga war show how a leader's thinking can change and how values like peace and compassion can make a strong empire even greater.



The Wheel (Dharma Chakra) on our National Flag

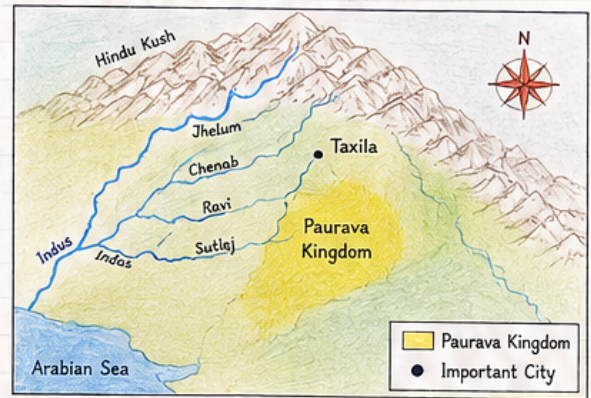
DID YOU KNOW?

The word **dharma** appears in almost every Indian tradition – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and even later Indian philosophies. Each tradition gives it a slightly different shade of meaning, but all agree it is the foundation of a just and meaningful life.

5.4. The Arrival of the Greeks

While Magadha was rising in the east, the northwest of India was a crossroads of cultures. This region connected India with Central Asia and the Mediterranean world. Among the small kingdoms here was the **Paurava kingdom**, ruled by King Porus, remembered for his bravery.

The northwestern frontiers of India



5.4.1. Alexander's Campaigns in the East

A brilliant general with dreams of conquering the entire world, Alexander launched a campaign against the Persian Empire. After many victories, he entered northwestern India.

- He defeated King Porus in the battle of **Hydaspes (Jhelum)**.
- He established cities and forts.
- He planned to go further into India, but his soldiers refused.
- Weary and homesick, he returned along the coast.
- His army suffered terrible losses from hunger, thirst and disease.

DID YOU KNOW?

A Greek coin probably shows Alexander on horseback attacking Porus on his elephant.



5.4.2. Alexander's Dialogue with the Gymnosophists

During his stay in India, Alexander met Indian sages called Gymnosophists or "naked philosophers". They were their wisdom and fearless way of living.

- Alexander asked them difficult questions.
- The sages answered calmly and with clever riddles.
- He was so impressed that he respected their knowledge and ideas.
- This meeting showed the exchange of ideas between East and West.

Famous Riddles

- Alexander: "Which is stronger – life or death?" Sage: "Life, because it endures while death does not."
- Alexander: "How can a man be most loved?" Sage: "If he is most powerful, yet does not inspire fear."



5.5. The Mighty Mauryas

After Alexander left, his empire broke apart. In this period of change, a new power rose in Magadha. First, the **Nandas** ruled. Later, **Chandragupta Maurya** built the Mauryan Empire.

Mauryan Empire

- Founded by Chandragupta Maurya in 321 BCE.
- It stretched from the Hindu Kush in the northwest to Karnataka in the south and from Bengal in the east to Gujarat in the west.
- It was one of the largest empires in ancient India.

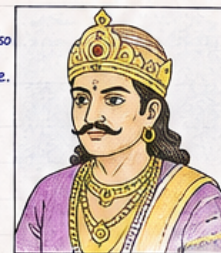
Recall & Relate

Magadha became the centre of power because it had fertile land, iron resources, good rivers and trade routes.

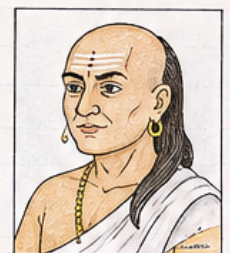
5.5.1. Chandragupta Maurya and Kautilya

Chandragupta Maurya was a young and ambitious leader. With the help of his teacher Kautilya (also known as **Chanakya** or **Vishnugupta**), he overthrew the last Nanda ruler and started the Mauryan Empire.

- Kautilya was a brilliant thinker, teacher and statesman.
- He guided Chandragupta in politics, administration and strategy.
- Together, they built a strong and well-organised empire.



Chandragupta Maurya



Kautilya (Chanakya)

Wait... But How?

Tiny Questions, Big Explorer Answers!

Rishi asks: How could Chandragupta defeat the powerful Nandas?

Rishi explains: With Kautilya's clever planning, support of the people and a well-trained army, Chandragupta was able to defeat the Nanda ruler and establish the Mauryan Empire.



5.5.2. Kautilya's Concept of a Kingdom – Saptāṅga Theory

Kautilya believed that a kingdom should be like a living body with **seven** important parts or "limbs". These **seven parts** (**Saptāṅga**) must work together for the kingdom to be strong, stable and prosperous.

1. Swāmi (The King)  The ruler, the head of the kingdom.	2. Amātya (Ministers and Officials)  Wise councillors and administrators to run the state.	3. Janapada (Territory and People)  The land and its people who support the kingdom.	4. Durga (Forts and Cities)  Strong forts and cities to protect the kingdom.	5. Kośa (Treasury)  Wealth in the form of money, gold and other resources.	6. Daṇḍa (Army)  Trained soldiers and officers to maintain law and order.	7. Mitra (Allies)  Friendly states and neighbours who support in times of need.
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Kautilya said a king's happiness lies in the happiness of his people. A well-governed kingdom ensures justice, safety, prosperity and welfare for all.



1. What is an Empire?

Definition :-

An empire is a collection of smaller kingdoms or territories ruled by one powerful emperor.



An emperor is the supreme ruler. The smaller kingdoms did not vanish. They kept their own rulers but had to accept the emperor's overlordship and pay tribute to him.

A tributary (vassal) is a ruler or state that submits to an emperor.

Duties of a Tributary :-

- Accept the emperor's authority.
- Send regular tribute (money, metals, crops, animals or soldiers).
- Show loyalty and respect.

Empires help control vast lands without ruling every corner directly.

2. Features of an Empire

An empire is more than a large kingdom. It is a system of power, control and organisation.

- Central Authority : Emperor at the heart of the empire.
- Military Power : Strong, trained armies defended borders and controlled states.
- Fortifications and Security : Fortified settlements, watch posts, bases for soldiers.
- Administration and Law : Officials collected taxes, maintained order, regulated trade and made laws.
- Control of Resources and Trade : Access to rivers, forests, mines and fertile land. Trade routes ensured steady supply of goods.
- Culture and Learning : Centres of art, literature, religion and philosophy.
- Communication and Infrastructure : Roads, river routes and sea links connected distant parts of the empire.



Rishi says - Empires need armies and forts, but trade is just as important. How else could kings pay soldiers or build grand cities?

3. Trade, Trade Routes and Guilds

Trade was not easy.

- Wars and armies may expand borders but maintaining them was costly.
- Soldiers needed food, clothes, weapons and salaries.
- Horses and elephants required constant care.
- Forts, roads and ships had to be built.

Trade Routes :-

Carefully controlled by rulers so that goods could move safely across regions and beyond India's borders.



Guilds (Srenis) :-

Powerful associations of traders, craftsmen, moneylenders and even agriculturists.

- Turned competitors into collaborators.
- Had the authority to set rules.
- Guilds spread across India and lasted for centuries.



4. The Rise of Magadha

Between 6th and 4th century BCE, many mahajanapadas (large kingdoms with assemblies) existed.

One among them - Magadha (in modern south Bihar and nearby regions) - rose to become the centre of power.

Magadha's rise was not accidental. Its geography and resources gave it many advantages :-

- Fertile land of Ganga plains - abundant crops.
- Thick forests - timber for construction, tools and weapons.
- Rich deposits of iron ore and minerals - useful for soldiers.
- Rivers like Ganga and Son - helped in trade and communication.



5. The Nanda Dynasty

In 5th century BCE, Mahapadma Nanda founded the Nanda dynasty.

- He expanded Magadha by uniting many smaller kingdoms.
- The economy grew strong through taxes, coins and trade.
- But the last Nanda ruler, Dhana Nanda, was unpopular.
- He was very wealthy but hated by people due to harsh rule.



Punch-marked silver coin of Mahapadma Nanda.



Rishi asks - Why were elephants so important in ancient battles?

Rishi explains - Elephants were like tanks. Their huge size and strength could crush enemy lines and break fort gates.

6. The Arrival of the Greeks

Greek accounts tell us that the Nandas had a huge army.

- 2,00,000 infantry
- 20,000 cavalry
- 2,000 chariots
- 3,000 elephants



Alexander

But power and wealth came with problems. People were unhappy with Nanda rule. This gave a chance to outsiders.

Alexander of Macedon (Greece) launched his campaign against the Persian Empire. After many victories, he entered India in 327 BCE.

He fought King Porus in the battle of Hydaspes (Jhelum).

Though Alexander won, his army was tired and homesick.

He returned along the coast.

7. Alexander's Campaigns in East

- 334-331 BCE - Defeated Persian Empire.
- 327-325 BCE - Came to India.
- Fierce resistance from people.
- Army suffered losses from hunger, disease and climate.

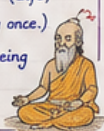
Alexander's Dialogue

He met Indian sages (Gymnosophists). They believed in simple living, wisdom and self-control.

Alexander admired their knowledge.

Famous Riddles

- Which is stronger - life or death? (Life, because it endures while death comes only once.)
- How can a man be most loved? (By being useful and kind.)

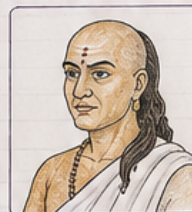


8. Chandragupta Maurya

- After Nandas, Chandragupta Maurya with the help of his teacher Kautilya (Chanakya/Vishnugupta) defeated the Nandas.
- He established the Mauryan Empire.
- It was one of the largest empires in ancient India.
- Its extent - From Hindu Kush in northwest to Karnataka in south and from Bengal in east to Gujarat in west.



Chandragupta Maurya



Kautilya (Chanakya)

9. Kautilya's Idea of a Kingdom - Saptāṅga Theory

Kautilya believed a kingdom is like a living body. It has seven important parts (limbs) which must work together.

- Swāmi (The King)
- Amātya (Ministers and Officials)
- Janapada (Territory and People)
- Durga (Forts and Cities)
- Kośa (Treasury)
- Dañḍa (Army)
- Mitra (Allies)



A well-governed kingdom ensures justice, safety, prosperity and welfare for all.



★ THE RISE OF EMPIRES – FAST REVISION NOTES ★

WHO ? WHAT ? WHEN ? WHERE ? – Important One Line Facts

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- ★ Who was Kautilya also known as ? – Vishnugupta
- ★ Who wrote the 'Arthashastra' ? – Kautilya (Chanakya)
- ★ Who wrote 'Indika' ? – Megasthenes (Greek ambassador)
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- ★ Who was the author of 'Mudrarakshasa' ? – Vishakhadatta
- ★ Who was the founder of Jainism ? – Lord Mahavira
- ★ Who was the founder of Buddhism ? – Gautama Buddha

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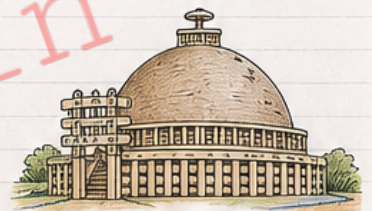
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- ★ Where is the Great Stupa of Sanchi ? – Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh)
- ★ Where is Sarnath located ? – Near Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh)

D. WHAT ... ? (Facts)

- ★ What is an Empire ? – A large kingdom ruled by one powerful emperor.
- ★ What is a Tributary (Vassal) ? – A ruler or state that accepts the authority of an emperor and pays tribute.
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Important Monuments / Symbols

- 1 Great Stupa at Sanchi



- 2 Ashoka Pillar (Lion Capital) at Sarnath



- 3 Mauryan Punch-marked Coin



E. ONE LINE IMPORTANT FACTS – QUICK RECALL

1. Mahāpadma Nanda was the founder of the Nanda Dynasty.
2. The Nandas were powerful but not loved by the people.
3. Chandragupta Maurya overthrew the Nandas with the help of Chanakya.
4. Chandragupta built a strong and vast empire.
5. Megasthenes, a Greek ambassador, visited Chandragupta's court.
6. He wrote 'Indika', an account of India.
7. Bindusara, son of Chandragupta, was also a strong ruler.
8. Ashoka was the greatest Mauryan emperor.
9. Kalinga War changed Ashoka's life.
10. After the war, Ashoka chose the path of peace and Dharma.
11. Ashoka cared for the welfare of all his subjects.
12. He built hospitals for humans and animals.
13. He planted trees and dug wells along the roads.
14. His edicts are a source of valuable information about his rule.
15. India's National Emblem is the Lion Capital of Sarnath.
16. Ashoka's wheel (Dharma Chakra) is on our National Flag.
17. Guilds (Śreṇis) played an important role in trade and crafts.
18. Stūpas, Chaityas and Vihāras show the growth of Buddhism.
19. Pradakṣiṇā is an act of respect and devotion.
20. Mauryan coins had symbols of sun, animals, trees, mountains etc.
21. Pataliputra was a large and beautiful capital.
22. Alexander's army was very strong but he returned as his men were tired and homesick.
23. Porus fought bravely and won Alexander's respect.
24. Kautilya was a wise teacher and great thinker.
25. Arthashastra is one of the earliest treatises on statecraft.
26. The Mauryan Empire united most of India under one rule.
27. People enjoyed peace and security during the Mauryan period.
28. Mauryas had a well organised administration.
29. The empire declined after Ashoka's death.
30. The Mauryan Empire ended around 185 BCE.

★ **Remember :** The Mauryan rulers worked for the welfare of the people and left behind a rich legacy of peace, art, literature and administration.

All the Best for your Exams !



★ THE RISE OF EMPIRES ★

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Great Stupa
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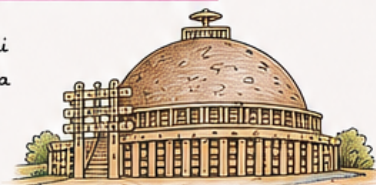
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Saptāṅga Theory - Seven Limbs of a Kingdom

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
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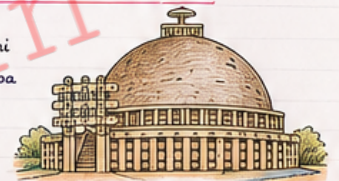
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The Rise of Empires

Top One - Liners (Fast Revision)

1. ★ The word **Empire** comes from the Latin word **imperium**, meaning supreme power.
2. A **tributary** (vassal) accepts the emperor's authority and pays regular tribute.
3. Ancient Indian imperial titles included **Samraj**, **Adhiraja** and **Rajadhiraja**.
4. ★ **Śrenis** were powerful associations or **guilds** of traders, craftsmen, moneylenders and agriculturists.
5. ★ **Magadha** emerged as the most powerful among the sixteen mahajanapadas.
6. **Ajātaśatru** strengthened Magadha through wars, alliances and administration.
7. Magadha had fertile land, forests, iron ore and the **Ganga** and **Son** rivers.
8. ★ **Mahāpadma Nanda** founded the Nanda dynasty.
9. ★ **Dhana Nanda** was the last Nanda ruler.
10. The Nandas were among the first in India to issue **punch-marked silver coins** on a large scale.
11. ★ **Pāṇini** composed the **Aṣṭādhyāyī**, containing 3,996 concise sūtras of Sanskrit grammar.
12. ★ **Porus** was the ruler of the Paurava kingdom and was remembered for his bravery.
13. ★ **Alexander** entered India and fought King Porus.
14. Alexander's soldiers eventually refused to advance further into India.
15. ★ **Chandragupta Maurya** founded the **Mauryan Empire** around **321 BCE**.
16. ★ **Kautilya** was also known as **Chanakya** or **Vishnugupta**.
17. Kautilya was a brilliant teacher of politics, economics and strategy.
18. ★ **Pāṭaliputra** was the capital of Chandragupta Maurya.
19. Chandragupta defeated the **Greek satraps** left behind by Alexander.
20. ★ **Megasthenes** was a Greek ambassador and historian at Chandragupta's court.
21. ★ Megasthenes recorded his observations about India in **Indika**.
22. ★ Kautilya's famous treatise was the **Arthaśāstra**.
23. ★ Kautilya explained the **Saptāṅga theory** - seven limbs of a kingdom.
24. The seven limbs were - **Swāmi**, **Amātya**, **Janapada**, **Durga**, **Kosha**, **Danda** and **Mitra**.
25. ★ **Aśhoka** (268 - 232 BCE) was the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya.
26. ★ Around **261 BCE**, Aśhoka fought the **Kalinga War**.
27. The suffering caused by the Kalinga War led Aśhoka to renounce violence.

The Rise of Empires - Top One - Liners

Page 2 of 2

28. Aśhoka resolved to rule through **peace**, **justice** and **welfare** rather than conquest.
29. ★ Aśhoka sent his son **Mahinda** and daughter **Sanghamitta** to **Sri Lanka** to spread Buddhism.
30. ★ Aśhoka's messages were mainly written in **Prakrit** and inscribed in the **Brahmi script**.
31. ★ In his edicts Aśhoka called himself '**Devanampiya Piyadasi**'.
32. Devanampiya means 'Beloved of the Gods'.
33. Piyadasi means 'One who regards others with kindness'.
34. Aśhoka encouraged **dharma**, harmony, kindness and respect among different faiths.
35. ★ **Dharma** (dhamma in Prakrit) means moral law and righteous conduct.
36. Aśhoka supported medical treatment for humans and animals.
37. He established **rest houses** and **wells** and planted **fruit** and **shade trees** for travellers.
38. ★ The Mauryan Empire came to an end around **185 BCE**.
39. ★ **Agriculture** was the backbone of the Mauryan economy.
40. Farmers grew **two crops a year**, in summer and winter.
41. The state maintained **granaries** stocked with food grains for emergencies.
42. ★ The **Sohgaura copper plate inscription** is one of India's earliest administrative records.
43. Mauryan cities had **craftsmen** such as blacksmiths, potters, carpenters and jewellers.
44. ★ The **Sarnath Pillar Capital** was erected by Aśhoka.
45. ★ Its **four lions stand back-to-back**, symbolising royal authority.
46. The **Dharmachakra** (Wheel of Dharma) is also seen at the centre of India's national flag.
47. ★ The **Lion Capital** of **Sarnath** was chosen as India's **National Emblem** after Independence.
48. ★ The **Great Stūpa at Sanchi** was originally built of bricks by Aśhoka and later enlarged with stone.
49. A **stūpa** is a dome-shaped structure built over relics of the Buddha or great monks.
50. **Chaityas** were prayer halls and **Vihāras** were monasteries for Buddhist monks.
51. ★ Walking around a stūpa in devotion is called **pradakṣiṇā**.
52. The large hemispherical dome of a stūpa is called the **anda**.
53. The rock-cut elephant sculpture at **Dhauli** represents the Buddha as powerful, intelligent, calm and gentle.
54. ★ Mauryan **punch-marked coins** were small silver pieces stamped with symbols such as the sun, trees, mountains and animals.
55. ★ Mauryan art is especially renowned for its **polished stone architecture**.

All the Best for your Exams ! 😊

11. TOP ONE-LINERS – THE RISE OF EMPIRES

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41. The state maintained granaries stocked with food grains for emergencies.
42. The Sohgaura copper plate inscription is one of India's earliest administrative records.
43. Mauryan cities had craftsmen like blacksmiths, potters, carpenters and jewellers.
44. ★ The Sarnath Pillar Capital was erected by Aśhoka.
45. ★ Its four lions stand back-to-back, symbolising royal authority.
46. The Dharmachakra (Wheel of Dharma) is also seen at the centre of India's national flag.
47. ★ The Lion Capital of Sarnath was chosen as India's National Emblem after Independence.
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51. ★ Walking around a stūpa in devotion is called pradakṣiṇā.
52. The large hemispherical dome of a stūpa is called the anda.
53. The rock-cut elephant sculpture at Dhauili represents the Buddha as powerful, intelligent, calm and gentle.
54. ★ Mauryan punch-marked coins were small silver pieces stamped with symbols such as the sun, trees, mountains and animals.
55. ★ Mauryan art is especially renowned for its polished stone architecture.

MEANINGS (Remember)

- Empire – Supreme power over large territories.
- Tributary (Vassal) – A ruler/state that accepts the emperor's authority and pays tribute.
- Dharma (Dhamma in Prakrit) – Moral law and righteous conduct.
- Devanampiya – Beloved of the Gods.
- Piyadasi – One who regards others with kindness.

IMPORTANT BOOKS & AUTHORS

- Aṣṭādhyāyī – Written by Pāṇini. Contains 3,996 concise sūtras of Sanskrit grammar.
- Arthaśāstra – Written by Kautilya (Chanakya / Vishnugupta). A great treatise on administration, politics, economy, war, espionage and welfare of people.
- Indika – Written by Megasthenes. A detailed account of India.

KAUTILYA'S SAPTĀṅGA THEORY

Kautilya explained that a kingdom stands on seven limbs (Saptāṅga).

- ① Swāmi – The King
- ② Amātya – Ministers and Officials
- ③ Janapada – Territory and People
- ④ Durga – Forts and Cities
- ⑤ Kosha – Treasury
- ⑥ Danda – Army
- ⑦ Mitra – Allies

These seven together make a strong kingdom.

AŚHOKA – MUST KNOW FACTS

- ① Grandson of Chandragupta Maurya.
- ② Ruled from 268 – 232 BCE.
- ③ Fought the Kalinga War around 261 BCE.
- ④ After the war, he gave up violence and chose the path of peace, justice and welfare.
- ⑤ Sent his son Mahinda and daughter Sanghamitta to Sri Lanka to spread Buddhism.
- ⑥ His edicts were written in Prakrit in the Brahmi script.
- ⑦ He called himself "Devanampiya Piyadasi" in his edicts.
- ⑧ Promoted dharma, harmony and respect for all religions.
- ⑨ Built rest houses, wells, planted trees and arranged medical treatment for humans and animals.

TRADE, GUILDS & ECONOMY

- Agriculture was the backbone of the Mauryan economy.
- Farmers grew two crops a year – in summer and winter.
- State maintained granaries for emergencies.
- Śrenis (guilds) played an important role in trade, crafts and agriculture.
- Traders used land routes and sea routes for trade.
- Mauryan coins were punch-marked silver coins with various symbols.

MOST EXPECTED EXAM QUESTIONS (Practice)

- ★ Who founded the Nanda dynasty?
- ★ Who was the last Nanda ruler?
- ★ Who composed the Aṣṭādhyāyī?
- ★ Who was Alexander?
- ★ Who was King Porus?
- ★ Who founded the Mauryan Empire?
- ★ Who was Kautilya? By what other names was he known?
- ★ Who was Megasthenes? What did he write?

- ★ Who was Aśhoka?
- ★ When did Aśhoka fight the Kalinga War?
- ★ Who were Mahinda and Sanghamitta?
- ★ What was Aśhoka's message called?
- ★ In which language and script were Aśhoka's edicts written?
- ★ What title did Aśhoka use in his edicts?
- ★ What is a tributary (vassal)?
- ★ What is a stūpa? What is pradakṣiṇā?

Revise daily and write these points in your own words before the exam.

