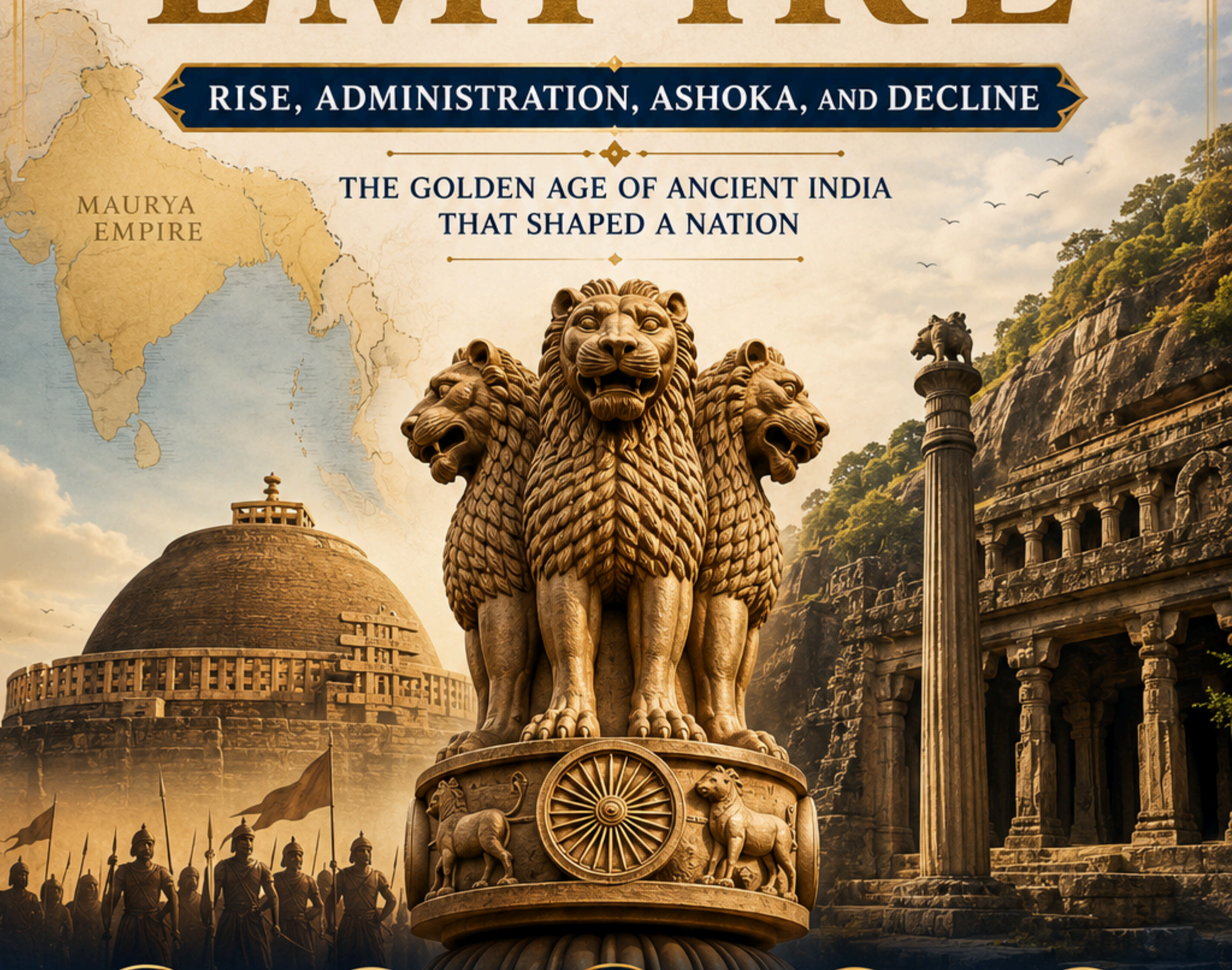


MAURYAN EMPIRE

RISE, ADMINISTRATION, ASHOKA, AND DECLINE

THE GOLDEN AGE OF ANCIENT INDIA
THAT SHAPED A NATION

MAURYA
EMPIRE



RISE

From Chandragupta
to Empire



ADMINISTRATION

Efficient Governance
& Strong System



ASHOKA

Dhamma, Peace &
Welfare



LEGACY

Art, Architecture
& Culture



DECLINE

Reasons & Impact
on the Empire



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INTRODUCTION

2. MEANING

- The empire was established and ruled by the Maurya dynasty.
- It marks the beginning of an era of imperial rule in India.
- Known for strong centralized administration and vast territorial expansion.

The Mauryan Empire was the **first historical empire of India** that established political unity, efficient administration and left a lasting legacy in Indian history.

3. TIME PERIOD

- Founded: 322 BCE
- Ended: 185 BCE
- Duration: ~137 years
- Divided into:
 - Early Mauryan (322–273 BCE)
 - Later Mauryan (273–185 BCE)

MAURYAN EMPIRE (322–185 BCE)



4. FOUNDER

Chandragupta Maurya

- With the help of his teacher Chanakya (Kautilya), he overthrew the Nanda dynasty.
- Established the Mauryan Empire in 322 BCE.

5. EXTENT

- One of the largest empires of the ancient world.
- From Afghanistan in the northwest to Karnataka in the south.
- From Himalayas in the north to Bay of Bengal in the east.

6. IMPORTANT RULERS

1. Chandragupta Maurya (322–298 BCE)
 - Founder of the empire
2. Bindusara (298–273 BCE)
 - Expanded the empire further
3. Ashoka the Great (273–232 BCE)
 - Greatest ruler, known for Dhamma and peace
4. Later Mauryas (232–185 BCE)
 - Empire gradually declined

7. SIGNIFICANCE

- First empire to unify a large part of India politically.
- Well-organized administration and governance.
- Promotion of trade, agriculture, art, architecture and literature.
- Ashoka's Dhamma left a deep impact on Indian culture and world history.

8. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LITERARY SOURCES

- Arthashastra (Kautilya)
- Indica (Megasthenes)
- Buddhist Texts (Divyavadana, Mahavamsa)
- Jaina Texts (Parishishtaparvan)
- Puranas

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

- Ashokan Inscriptions
- Pillar Edicts & Rock Edicts
- Coins
- Archaeological Remains (Sanchi, Taxila, Pataliputra)



IN SHORT

The Mauryan Empire was a turning point in Indian history. It established the idea of a united and well-administered state, whose legacy continued for centuries.



Mauryan Empire: Rise, Administration, Ashoka, and Decline



A. LITERARY SOURCES

- 1. Arthashastra (Kautilya/Chanakya)**
 - Treatise on Statecraft, Politics, Economy, Society and Military.
 - Provides detailed information on Mauryan administration, taxation, trade, espionage, etc.
- 2. Buddhist Texts**
 - Divyavadana, Mahavamsa, Mahabodhivamsa
 - Describe Ashoka's life, his conversion, Dharma policy and Buddhist activities.
- 3. Jain Texts**
 - Parishishtaparvan (Hemachandra), Kalpasutra, Acharanga Sutra
 - Contain references to Chandragupta Maurya and early Mauryan times.
- 4. Puranas**
 - Vishnu Purana, Matsya Purana, Vayu Purana, Bhagavata Purana
 - Provide dynastic lists and traditions of Magadha rulers including Mauryas.

B. EPIGRAPHIC SOURCES

- 1. Ashokan Edicts**
 - Major source for Mauryan history, especially about Ashoka.
 - Found on rocks, pillars and caves across the subcontinent.
 - Types:
 - Major Rock Edicts
 - Minor Rock Edicts
 - Pillar Edicts
 - Minor Pillar Edicts
 - Cave Edicts
 - In Prakrit language (Brahmi script) and Greek & Aramaic in NW India.

C. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

- 1. Excavations**
 - Sites: Pataliputra, Taxila, Sanchi, Kaushambi, Rajgir, Vaishali, Ujjain, etc.
 - Reveal urban planning, palaces, fortifications, artifacts, seals, pottery, tools and coins.
- 2. Monuments & Structures**
 - Stupas (Sanchi, Bharhut)
 - Pillars, railings, cave inscriptions
 - Provide information on art, architecture and Mauryan patronage.

1. KEY HISTORICAL SOURCES OF THE MAURYAN PERIOD

D. FOREIGN ACCOUNTS

- 1. Megasthenes – Indica**
 - Greek ambassador at Chandragupta Maurya's court.
 - Describes Pataliputra, administration, society, economy, army, fauna, flora.
- 2. Other Greek Writers**
 - Strabo, Arrian, Diodorus, Pliny
 - Provide supplementary details on Mauryan India.

E. NUMISMATIC SOURCES

- Punch-marked coins (silver)
- Inscribed coins
- Provide information on economy, trade, metal usage, symbols and administration.

F. OTHER SOURCES

- Inscriptions of later periods referring to Mauryas.
- Folk traditions and legends.
- Art, seals, beads, terracotta objects, ivories, and other material remains.

IMPORTANCE

- ✓ Help in reconstructing political history, administration, economy, society, religion and culture.
- ✓ Provide first-hand and contemporary evidence.
- ✓ Together, they present a comprehensive picture of the Mauryan Empire.

NOTE

No single source gives complete information. By combining all sources critically, we get a reliable understanding of the Mauryan Period.



Mauryan Empire: Rise, Administration, Ashoka, and Decline



2. DYNASTIC LINEAGE AND MAJOR RULERS

The Mauryan Empire was founded by **Chandragupta Maurya** in 322 BCE and ruled by a line of powerful rulers for nearly 137 years.



1. CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA (322 – 298 BCE)

- Founder of the Mauryan Empire.
- With Chanakya's help, he overthrew the Nanda dynasty.
- United a large part of India under his rule.
- Defeated Seleucus Nicator, a Greek general.
- Signed a treaty and received Ariana, Arachosia, Gedrosia and 500 war elephants.
- Author of Arthashastra.

Key Focus:

Consolidation and Expansion of Empire

DYNASTIC ORIGIN

- Founded by Chandragupta Maurya with the guidance of his teacher Chanakya (Kautilya).
- Overthrew the last Nanda ruler Dhana Nanda.
- Established the Mauryan Empire with Pataliputra as the capital.



2. BINDUSARA (298 – 273 BCE)

- Son and successor of Chandragupta Maurya.
- Expanded the empire further in all directions.
- Known by the Greeks as Amitrochates.
- Maintained a strong administration and a large army.
- Sent envoys to Hellenistic kingdoms.

Key Focus:

Expansion and Consolidation

MAURYAN DYNASTY (322 – 185 BCE)

4. LATER MAURYAS (232 – 185 BCE)

- After Ashoka, the empire gradually weakened.
- Important later rulers:
 - Dasharatha (232 – 224 BCE)
 - Samprati (224 – 215 BCE)
 - Shalishuka
 - Devavarman
 - Brihadratha (last ruler)
- Weak rulers, internal conflicts and loss of territories.
- Last ruler Brihadratha was killed by his general Pushyamitra Shunga in 185 BCE.

Key Focus:

Decline and Disintegration

3. ASHOKA THE GREAT (273 – 232 BCE)



- Greatest ruler of the Mauryan Empire.
- Initially a strong ruler; later embraced Buddhism after the Kalinga War.
- Promoted Dhamma (righteousness), peace and welfare of people.
- His edicts on pillars and rocks are a major source of history.
- Spread Buddhism to India and abroad.

Key Focus:

Dhamma, Welfare and Cultural Flourishing

LINEAGE FLOW

Chandragupta Maurya (322 – 298 BCE)

Bindusara (298 – 273 BCE)

Ashoka the Great (273 – 232 BCE)

Later Mauryas (232 – 185 BCE)

End of Mauryan Dynasty (185 BCE)

KEY POINTS



- The Mauryan dynasty transformed a small kingdom into a vast empire.
- It had five major phases: Chandragupta, Bindusara, Ashoka, Later Mauryas and Decline.
- Strong leadership, efficient administration and moral values were the pillars of Mauryan rule.

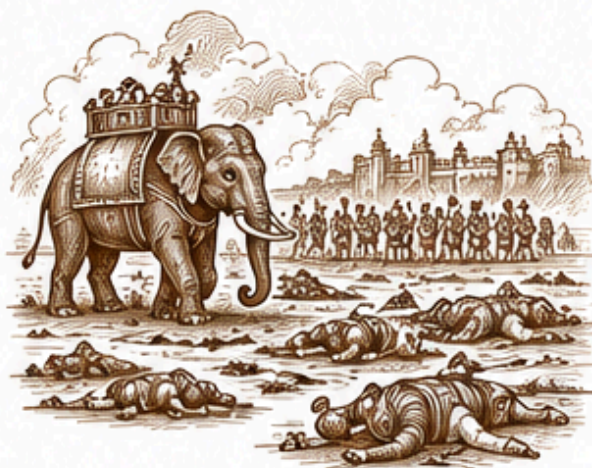


3. ASHOKA THE GREAT (c. 268 – 232 BCE) AND HIS POLICY OF DHAMMA

A. THE KALINGA WAR (261 BCE) AND ITS IMPACT

1. BACKGROUND

- Kalinga (modern Odisha) was an independent and prosperous kingdom.
- It was strategically important for trade, as it controlled the routes to South India and Southeast Asia.
- After conquering most of India, Ashoka turned his attention to Kalinga.
- In 261 BCE, he launched a military campaign to conquer Kalinga.



2. THE KALINGA WAR (261 BCE)

- The war was fierce and bloody.
- Kalinga put up strong resistance, but was ultimately defeated.
- As recorded in Ashoka's Major Rock Edict XIII, the war caused:
 - 1,00,000 people killed
 - 1,50,000 people deported
 - Many times more died due to famine, disease and other causes



THE KALINGA WAR (261 BCE) AND ITS IMPACT

3. ASHOKA'S INNER TURMOIL

- The massive loss of life deeply shocked Ashoka.
- He was filled with remorse and sorrow seeing the destruction and suffering caused by the war.
- He realized that true conquest is not by the sword but by Dhamma (righteousness).
- This became a turning point in his life.



4. IMPACT ON ASHOKA

- Ashoka renounced the path of violence and conquest.
- He embraced the path of Dhamma and moral governance.
- He decided to win hearts through righteousness, compassion and welfare.
- The war marked his transformation from a conqueror to a compassionate ruler.



5. IMPACT ON THE EMPIRE AND PEOPLE



- Promoted peace, stability and unity in the empire.
- Reduced suffering and hardship of people.
- Encouraged economic growth through trade and welfare.
- Strengthened the bond between the ruler and the people.
- Spread a message of non-violence and tolerance.



6. REFLECTION IN ASHOKA'S EDICTS

- Major Rock Edict XIII is the clearest evidence of Ashoka's remorse.
- He expresses his sorrow for the conquest of Kalinga.
- He declares his commitment to Dhamma and the welfare of all living beings.
- He instructs his officials to work for the happiness and moral progress of the people.



7. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE



- The Kalinga War is a landmark event in Indian history.
- It shows Ashoka's humanity and capacity for change.
- It laid the foundation for ethical governance in India.
- Ashoka became an example of righteous kingship for future generations.



KEY TAKEAWAY

The Kalinga War (261 BCE) was a decisive turning point in Ashoka's life. The horrific destruction and suffering transformed him from a ruthless conqueror into a champion of Dhamma, peace and compassion. Instead of further conquests, he chose the conquest of hearts.



3. ASHOKA THE GREAT (c. 268 – 232 BCE) AND HIS POLICY OF DHAMMA

B. CONVERSION TO BUDDHISM AND POLICY OF DHAMMA

1. BACKGROUND

- After the devastating Kalinga War (261 BCE), Ashoka was deeply haunted by the loss of life and suffering.
- He began to reflect on the futility of violence and the need for a righteous path.
- He came in contact with Buddhist monks and teachings.
- This led him to embrace the teachings of Lord Buddha.



2. CONVERSION TO BUDDHISM



- Ashoka accepted Buddhism not just as a religion, but as a way of life.
- He became an ardent follower of Buddha's teachings.
- He did not impose Buddhism on his subjects.
- He respected all religions and believed in learning from all.



3. WHAT IS DHAMMA?

- Dhamma was Ashoka's code of moral and ethical conduct.
- It was not limited to any particular religion or sect.
- It was a universal path of righteousness for all people.
- Based on values like compassion, truth, self-control and respect.

In short:

Dhamma = Righteous living, Kindness and Welfare of all living beings.



ASHOKA THE GREAT (c. 268 – 232 BCE) CONVERSION TO BUDDHISM AND POLICY OF DHAMMA



4. PRINCIPLES OF DHAMMA



- ★ Respect for all religions and sects
- ★ Kindness to all living beings
- ★ Obedience to parents and elders
- ★ Truthfulness and purity
- ★ Generosity and charity
- ★ Avoidance of cruelty
- ★ Self-control and patience
- ★ Promotion of harmony and social welfare



5. MEASURES TO PROMOTE DHAMMA

- Issued numerous Edicts on rocks and pillars to spread the message of Dhamma.
- Appointed Dhamma-Mahamatras (officers) to look after the moral and social welfare of the people.
- Encouraged welfare activities:
 - Construction of hospitals for humans and animals.
 - Planting of trees and digging of wells.
 - Rest houses for travelers.
 - Fair treatment of prisoners.



6. ASHOKA'S EDICTS – VOICE OF DHAMMA



- More than 30 Major Rock Edicts, 7 Pillar Edicts and several Minor Edicts.
- Edicts were written in Prakrit (Brahmi script) and Greek/Aramaic in some regions.
- These Edicts highlight:
 - Welfare of people
 - Moral values
 - Religious tolerance
 - Non-violence and compassion
 - Duties of rulers and subjects



7. SPREAD OF BUDDHISM



- Ashoka sent Buddhist missionaries to various parts of India and abroad.
- Important missions were sent to:
 - Sri Lanka (Mahinda & Sanghamitta)
 - Central Asia
 - Egypt and Syria
 - Greece (Hellenistic kingdoms)
 - Southeast Asia
 - Himalayan regions



8. IMPACT OF ASHOKA'S POLICY OF DHAMMA

- ✓ Strengthened unity and peace in the empire.
- ✓ Improved the welfare and happiness of the people.
- ✓ Promoted ethical governance and moral responsibility.
- ✓ Left a lasting legacy of tolerance, compassion and humanity.
- ✓ Ashoka is remembered as a righteous and enlightened ruler.



★ KEY TAKEAWAY

Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism and his policy of Dhamma transformed the Mauryan Empire into a model of moral governance, compassion and welfare. His message of peace, tolerance and righteousness continues to inspire the world even today.



Mauryan Empire: Rise, Administration, Ashoka, and Decline



3. ASHOKA THE GREAT (c. 268 – 232 BCE) AND HIS POLICY OF DHAMMA C. ASHOKAN INSCRIPTIONS AND EDICTS

The Edicts are the voice of Ashoka.
They are the most important source for understanding his administration, policy of Dhamma and ideals.



1. WHAT ARE ASHOKAN INSCRIPTIONS?

- Inscriptions and Edicts are messages inscribed by Ashoka on rocks, pillars, cave walls and other surfaces.
- They were meant to spread the message of Dhamma and guide his officials and people.
- Written in Prakrit language (Brahmi script) and Greek/Aramaic in some areas.
- They are divided into Major Rock Edicts, Pillar Edicts and Minor Rock & Pillar Edicts.

2. TYPES OF ASHOKAN EDICTS

- ◆ **Major Rock Edicts**
14 edicts inscribed on large rock surfaces at different sites.
- ◆ **Pillar Edicts**
7 major edicts inscribed on polished stone pillars.
- ◆ **Minor Rock & Pillar Edicts**
Shorter edicts with specific messages, found at various places.

3. MAJOR ROCK EDICTS (I – XIV)

- Found at sites like Girnar, Dhauili, Jaugada, Shahbazgarhi, Mansehra and others.
- Cover a wide range of subjects.
- Key themes:
 - Dhamma and moral values
 - Welfare of people and animals
 - Religious tolerance
 - Duties of officials
 - Non-violence
 - Policies on social welfare, justice and administration



ASHOKAN INSCRIPTIONS AND EDICTS (THE EPIGRAPHIC LEGACY OF ASHOKA)

4. PILLAR EDICTS (I – VII)

- Inscribed on monolithic pillars at places like Topra, Meerut, Lauriya Nandangarh, Rampurva, Sarnath and others.
- More focused and specific in nature.
- **Important themes:**
 - Dhamma in administration
 - Duties of officers
 - Ashoka as a just ruler
 - Respect for all sects
 - Avoidance of unnecessary ceremonies and rituals



5. MINOR ROCK & PILLAR EDICTS

- Shorter in length and more local in nature.
- Found at Bairat, Maski, Gujarra, Sopara and others.
- Provide information about:
 - Ashoka's personal beliefs
 - His officials
 - Local administration
 - His tours and visits



6. LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT



- Majority are in Prakrit language.
- Script used is Brahmi.
- In the northwest, some edicts are in Greek and Aramaic.
- This shows Ashoka's effort to reach people of different regions and languages.

Examples of Bilingual Edicts:

Kandahar (Greek & Aramaic),
Shahbazgarhi (Prakrit & Aramaic)



7. MAJOR THEMES OF EDICTS

- ★ Dhamma (Righteousness and Moral Living)
- ★ Respect for all religions
- ★ Welfare of people and animals
- ★ Non-violence and compassion
- ★ Obedience to parents, respect for elders
- ★ Fairness in administration
- ★ Justice and punishment with mercy
- ★ Harmony, tolerance and peace
- ★ Self-control, truthfulness and purity

Dhamma was not a new religion, but a moral code for all.

8. HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

- ✓ First extensive use of inscriptions by any Indian ruler.
- ✓ Provide authentic information about Ashoka's administration, policies and ideas.
- ✓ Reflect his humane and welfare oriented governance.
- ✓ Important source for history, language, script, art and society of Mauryan period.



9. MAJOR SITES OF ASHOKAN INSCRIPTIONS



- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Girnar (Gujarat) | • Kandahar (Afghanistan) | • Topra (Haryana) |
| • Dhauili (Odisha) | • Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh) | • Meerut (Uttar Pradesh) |
| • Jaugada (Odisha) | • Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh) | • Bairat (Rajasthan) |
| • Shahbazgarhi (Pakistan) | • Lauria Nandangarh (Bihar) | • Maski (Karnataka) |

These inscriptions are spread across the empire, showing Ashoka's desire to communicate with his people everywhere.





1. NATURE AND CHARACTER

- 

- The King (Samrat) – supreme authority.
- Assisted by a Council of Ministers (Mantriparishad).
- Important Departments (Tirthas):
 - ☆ Mantri – Chief Minister
 - ☆ Purohita – Priest
 - ☆ Senapati – Commander-in-Chief
 - ☆ Yuvaraja – Crown Prince
 - ☆ Samaharta – Chief Collector (Revenue)
 - ☆ Sannidhata – Treasurer
 - ☆ Pradvivaka – Chief Justice
 - ☆ Dandapala – Head of Police



- The empire was divided into Provinces (Pradeshas).
- Each province was placed under a Kumara (Prince) or Aryaputra, assisted by a Mahamatra.
- Provinces were further divided into Districts (Ahara) and Sub-districts.
- Districts were governed by Rajukas and Pradeshtas.
- Regular reporting and inspection ensured efficient control.



- At the district level, Rajukas were responsible for revenue collection, justice and administration.
- Gramika (village headman) looked after each village.
- Village administration was assisted by a council of elders.
- Record keeping, land measurement and irrigation management were well organized.



- The administration had various departments (Adhyakshas) each headed by a Superintendent.
- Some important departments:
 - ★ Samaharta – Revenue Department
 - ★ Sannidhata – Treasury Department
 - ★ Panyadhyaksha – Trade and Commerce
 - ★ Sitadhyaksha – Agriculture
 - ★ Akaradhyaksha – Mines and Minerals
 - ★ Sutradhyaksha – Industries and Textiles
 - ★ Durgadhyaksha – Forts
 - ★ Nauadhyaksha – Shipping and Ports
 - ★ Ashvadyaksha – Horses
 - ★ Hastyadhyaksha – Elephants



- Land revenue was the main source of income.
- The usual rate was $\frac{1}{6}^{\text{th}}$ of the produce.
- Other sources: customs, trade, mines, forests, fines and monopolies.
- Land was measured and classified based on quality.
- State controlled trade in important commodities like salt, metals, liquor, etc.



- A large, well-organized and salaried army.
- Fourfold army: Infantry, Cavalry, Elephants and Chariots.
- The army was under the Senapati.
- A separate department for police (Dandapala) ensured law and order.
- Spies (Guptacharas) were employed to collect information and prevent conspiracies.



- A comprehensive system of checks and balances.
- Officials were appointed with fixed salaries.
- Regular inspections by secret agents and superior officials.
- Strict punishments for corruption and negligence.
- Emphasis on accountability and welfare of the people.



- ★ Helped in the expansion and maintenance of a vast empire.
- ★ Ensured peace, prosperity and law & order.
- ★ The system was so efficient that it served as a model for later dynasties.
- ★ Arthashastra remains a valuable treatise on administration.





5. MAURYAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Mauryan art and architecture reflect the power, resources, administrative efficiency and cultural vision of the empire. They mark the beginning of a distinct imperial style in India.



1. GENERAL FEATURES

- Great patronage during Chandragupta Maurya and especially under Ashoka.
- Art was closely linked with religion, administration and public welfare.
- Use of high quality materials like stone and polished sandstone.
- First example of large scale stone architecture in India.
- Simplicity, symmetry, durability and majestic finish are its hallmarks.



2. PILLAR ARCHITECTURE

- Ashoka erected monolithic stone pillars throughout the empire.
- Made of fine-grained sandstone, highly polished.
- Used for inscriptions (edicts) and to mark important events and places.
- The pillars are excellent examples of Mauryan craftsmanship and imperial authority.

Salient Features

- ★ Monolithic (single piece)
- ★ Highly polished surface (Mauryan polish)
- ★ Bell-shaped base, slender shaft and animal capital on top



3. PILLAR CAPITALS

- The capitals are the masterpieces of Mauryan art.
- Animal figures were carved with great realism and artistic excellence.
- Most famous is the Lion Capital of Sarnath.



These capitals reflect strength, vigilance, power and righteousness.

MAURYAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE



5. ROCK CUT ARCHITECTURE

- Mauryans developed rock-cut caves for religious and practical use.
- Barabar Caves in Bihar are the earliest rock-cut caves in India.
- These were donated by Ashoka and his grandson Dasharatha to Ajivikas.



Features

- ★ Cut into granite hills
- ★ Highly polished interiors
- ★ Simple but elegant design
- ★ Lomas Rishi Cave has a carved arch façade

4. STUPAS

- Stupas were built to enshrine Buddhist relics.
- Ashoka is credited with the construction of many stupas and the enlargement of older ones.
- The Great Stupa at Sanchi is a prime example.



Features

- ★ Hemispherical dome (anda)
- ★ Harmika and Chhatra on top
- ★ Surrounded by a stone railing (vedika)
- ★ Toranas (gateways) with intricate carvings

6. OTHER ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS

- Palaces: The wooden palace at Pataliputra, described by Megasthenes, was grand and well-constructed.
- Fortifications: Pataliputra was surrounded by wooden walls, moats and gates.
- Wells, reservoirs, rest houses and roads were also constructed for public welfare.



7. MAURYAN POLISH

- One of the most remarkable achievements of Mauryan craftsmen.
- A mirror-like polish on stone surfaces.
- Gives the pillars and sculptures a smooth, shining and durable finish.
- This technique was unique and remained unmatched for centuries.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

- ★ Mauryan art and architecture reflect imperial power and unity of the empire.
- ★ They promoted Buddhist ideals and moral values.
- ★ They laid the foundation of Indian art traditions.
- ★ They show the high level of skill, organization and resources of the Mauryan state.
- ★ Many elements influenced later Indian art and architecture.



9. IMPORTANT EXAMPLES

- ★ Ashokan Pillars – Sarnath, Allahabad, Rampurva, Lauriya Nandangarh, Vaishali, etc.
- ★ Pillar Capitals – Sarnath Lion Capital (National Emblem of India), Rampurva Bull, Rampurva Elephant, etc.
- ★ Rock-cut Caves – Barabar Caves (Lomas Rishi, Sudama, Vishvakarma), Nagarjuni Caves.
- ★ Stupas – Sanchi, Bharhut (enlarged), Taxila (Dharmarajika Stupa).
- ★ Palace and Fortifications – Pataliputra.





6. CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF THE MAURYAN EMPIRE

2. OVER-EXTENSION OF EMPIRE

- The empire was extremely vast, spread over a large territory.
- Difficult to administer and control such a huge area effectively.
- Communication and transport facilities were limited.
- Distant provinces began to become independent.



1. WEAK SUCCESSORS

- After Ashoka, the later Mauryan rulers were weak and incapable.
- They lacked the ability, vision and energy to maintain such a vast empire.
- Frequent changes in rulers weakened the administration.



3. ECONOMIC STRAIN

- Heavy expenditure on administration, army, public works and welfare activities.
- Continuous wars and expansion increased the financial burden.
- High taxes burdened the people and affected agriculture and trade.
- State control over trade and industries reduced private initiative.



DECLINE OF THE MAURYAN EMPIRE



4. CENTRALIZATION OF POWER

- Highly centralized administration made the system rigid.
- Too much power in the hands of the king.
- Lack of local autonomy and participation.
- When the center weakened, the entire system collapsed.



5. MILITARY WEAKNESS

- A large standing army was expensive to maintain.
- Under weak rulers, discipline and morale of the army declined.
- Frontier regions were neglected.
- The empire could not effectively face external invasions.



6. PROVINCIAL REVOLTS

- Under weak rulers, many provincial governors became powerful.
- They declared independence and set up their own kingdoms.
- Examples: Pushyamitra Shunga (Magadha), Takshashila, Ujjain and others.



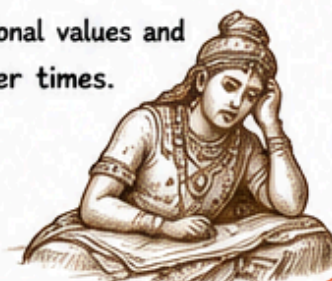
7. EXTERNAL INVASIONS

- The Mauryan Empire faced invasions from outside.
- The most important was the invasion of the Greeks under Seleucus Nicator (c. 305 BCE).
- Later, the Indo-Greeks and other foreign powers took advantage of the empire's weakness.



8. SOCIAL AND MORAL FACTORS

- Excessive emphasis on non-violence led to a decline in military spirit.
- Luxurious life and peace under Ashoka led to a decline in the fighting qualities of people.
- Decline in traditional values and discipline in later times.



RESULT

- Due to these internal weaknesses and external pressures, the Mauryan Empire began to disintegrate in the 2nd century BCE.
- The last Mauryan ruler, Brihadratha, was killed by his general Pushyamitra Shunga in c. 185 BCE, ending the Mauryan Empire.



Mauryan Empire: Rise, Administration, Ashoka, and Decline



QUICK EXAMINATION FACTS



REMEMBER

- Small facts
- Build strong memory
- High scores!

MAURYAN EMPIRE – The first empire to unite most parts of India under one administration.
ASHOKA THE GREAT – Greatest Mauryan ruler, known for Kalinga War, Dhamma and Buddhist patronage.
DHAMMA – Ashoka's policy of moral conduct, compassion, tolerance and welfare of people.
MAURYAN ADMINISTRATION – Highly centralized system described in Arthashastra and inscriptions.

QUICK EXAMINATION FACTS

● **Founder:** Chandragupta Maurya founded the Mauryan Empire in 322 BCE.



● **Mentor:** Chanakya (Kautilya) was the chief advisor and architect of the empire.



● **Dynasty:** Maurya Dynasty (c. 322 – 185 BCE) ruled for about 137 years.



● **Capital:** Pataliputra (modern Patna) was the capital of the Mauryan Empire.



● **Greatest King:** Ashoka the Great (c. 268 – 232 BCE) was the greatest ruler.



● **Kalinga War:** Fought in 261 BCE against Kalinga (Modern Odisha).



● **Impact of Kalinga War:** Thousands were killed and many were deported.



● **Ashoka's Change:** Deeply pained by the war, Ashoka embraced Buddhism.



● **Policy of Dhamma:** Based on non-violence, tolerance, compassion, respect for all religions, truthfulness and welfare.



● **Spread of Buddhism:** Under Ashoka, Buddhism spread to Sri Lanka, Central Asia, West Asia, Greece and beyond.



● **Famous Works:** Ashoka built stupas, rest houses, wells, hospitals and planted trees.



● **Arthashastra:** Written by Chanakya; important source on Mauryan administration, economics, war and espionage.



● **Administration:** Highly centralized with king as the supreme authority.



● **Council of Ministers:** Mantri Parishad advised the king on important matters.



● **Provincial Administration:** Empire divided into provinces (Kumaras, Aryaputras, Pradesikas).



● **District Administration:** Districts were under Rajukas and Yukta officials.



● **Local Administration:** Villages were managed by Gramika (village headman).



● **Revenue System:** Land revenue was the main source; 1/6th of the produce was taken as tax.



● **Other Sources of Income:** Customs, trade, fines, mines, forests, state monopolies, taxes, etc.



● **Army:** Well organized with infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants.



● **Spy System:** A vast network of spies (Gudhapurusha) was used.



● **Art – Pillars:** Ashokan Pillars are fine examples of Mauryan art and craftsmanship.



● **Art – Capital:** Sarnath Lion Capital is the National Emblem of India.



● **Stupas:** Sanchi, Bharhut, Amaravati stupas were built during Mauryan period.



● **Caves:** Barabar and Nagarjuni caves were rocks-cut and polished.



● **Mauryan Polish:** Mirror-like polish on pillars and sculptures is a hallmark.



● **Decline – Weak Successors:** Later Mauryan kings were weak and incapable.



● **Over-extension:** The vast empire was difficult to administer and control.



● **Economic Strain:** Heavy taxation, wars and public expenditure weakened economy.



● **Provincial Revolts:** Many provinces declared independence.



● **External Invasions:** Indo-Greeks and other foreign powers took advantage.



● **End of Mauryan Empire:** The last Mauryan king Brihadratha was killed in 185 BCE by his general Pushyamitra Shunga.



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MCQs



Page 1

1

Who was the founder of the Mauryan Empire?

- A. Bindusara
- B. Chandragupta Maurya
- C. Ashoka the Great
- D. Brihadratha

Correct Answer: B. Chandragupta Maurya

Explanation:

Chandragupta Maurya, with the guidance of his mentor Chanakya (Kautilya), founded the Mauryan Empire in 322 BCE after overthrowing the Nanda Dynasty. He is regarded as the first emperor of the Mauryan Empire.



2

Which of the following was the capital of the Mauryan Empire?

- A. Pataliputra
- B. Taxila
- C. Ujjain
- D. Sarnath

Correct Answer: A. Pataliputra

Explanation:

Pataliputra (modern Patna) was the capital of the Mauryan Empire. It was a well-planned city situated at the confluence of the Ganga, Son and Gandak rivers and was a major center of administration, trade and culture.



3

Who succeeded Chandragupta Maurya as the emperor of the Mauryan Empire?

- A. Ashoka
- B. Bindusara
- C. Brihadratha
- D. Dasharatha

Correct Answer: B. Bindusara

Explanation:

Bindusara, the son of Chandragupta Maurya, succeeded him and ruled the empire from c. 298 – 273 BCE. He is also known as Amitraghata.



4

The Kalinga War was fought during the reign of which Mauryan emperor?

- A. Chandragupta Maurya
- B. Bindusara
- C. Ashoka the Great
- D. Brihadratha

Correct Answer: C. Ashoka the Great

Explanation:

The Kalinga War was fought in 261 BCE during the reign of Ashoka. The immense bloodshed and suffering deeply influenced Ashoka and led him to adopt the path of Dhamma and non-violence.



5

Which of the following best describes Ashoka's policy of Dhamma?

- A. Promotion of Jainism
- B. Strict military expansion
- C. Moral code based on non-violence, tolerance and welfare
- D. Enforcement of Brahmanical rituals

Correct Answer: C. Moral code based on non-violence, tolerance and welfare

Explanation:

Ashoka's Dhamma was a moral code that emphasized non-violence, truthfulness, compassion, tolerance, respect for all religions and welfare of subjects. It was not a new religion but a way of righteous living.





MCQs



Page 2

6

Which of the following is NOT one of Ashoka's Rock Edicts?

- A. Edict I
- B. Edict V
- C. Edict XI
- D. Edict XVII

Correct Answer: D. Edict XVII

Explanation:

Ashoka's Major Rock Edicts are fourteen in number (Edicts I to XIV). Edict XVII does not exist among the Major Rock Edicts. Minor Rock Edicts and Pillar Edicts are separate categories.



7

Which of the following was the language used in most of Ashokan inscriptions?

- A. Sanskrit
- B. Prakrit
- C. Pali
- D. Tamil

Correct Answer: B. Prakrit

Explanation:

Ashoka's inscriptions were mostly written in Prakrit language using Brahmi script. In the North-Western region, Kharoshthi script was used. Some inscriptions are also found in Greek and Aramaic.



8

Which of the following was an important department under Mauryan administration responsible for trade and commerce?

- A. Samaharta
- B. Panyadhyaksha
- C. Senapati
- D. Dandanayaka

Correct Answer: B. Panyadhyaksha

Explanation:

Panyadhyaksha was the superintendent of trade and commerce. He regulated the prices of goods, quality, weights and measures and oversaw internal and external trade.



9

Which of the following caves were excavated during the Mauryan period?

- A. Ajanta Caves
- B. Barabar Caves
- C. Ellora Caves
- D. Elephanta Caves

Correct Answer: B. Barabar Caves

Explanation:

The Barabar Caves in Bihar were excavated during the Mauryan period (reign of Ashoka and his grandson Dasharatha). They are among the earliest examples of rock-cut architecture in India.



10

Which of the following factors is considered a major reason for the decline of the Mauryan Empire?

- A. Strong provincial administration
- B. Over-extension of the empire
- C. Efficient spy system
- D. Prosperous trade and economy

Correct Answer: B. Over-extension of the empire

Explanation:

The vast size of the empire made it difficult to administer and control. This over-extension, along with economic strain, weak successors and provincial revolts, contributed to the decline of the Mauryan Empire.





MCQs



Page 3

11

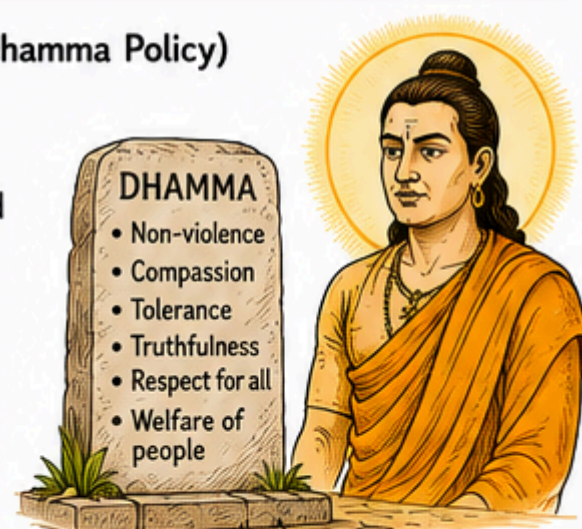
Which of the following was the official ideology promoted by Ashoka after the Kalinga War?

- A. Militarism
- B. Brahmanism
- C. Dhamma (Dhamma Policy)
- D. Jainism

Correct Answer: C. Dhamma (Dhamma Policy)

Explanation:

After the Kalinga War, Ashoka adopted Dhamma as his official policy. It was not a new religion but a moral code based on non-violence, compassion, tolerance, truthfulness, respect for all religions and welfare of the people.



12

Which of the following was NOT a feature of the Mauryan administration?

- A. Centralization of power
- B. Hereditary rule of officials
- C. Well-organized bureaucracy
- D. System of spies (Gudhapurusha)

Correct Answer: B. Hereditary rule of officials

Explanation:

The Mauryan administration was based on merit and ability, not heredity. Officials were appointed by the king and could be removed for misconduct. Centralization, bureaucracy and spy system were important features.



13

Which of the following describes the Mauryan revenue system?

- A. Land revenue was the main source
- B. Trade was the only source of income
- C. No taxation was levied
- D. Only customs were collected

Correct Answer: A. Land revenue was the main source

Explanation:

Land revenue was the main source of income for the Mauryan Empire. About one-sixth (1/6th) of the produce was taken as tax. Other sources included trade, customs, fines, mines, forests and state monopolies.



14

Which among the following is the National Emblem of India taken from the Mauryan period?

- A. Sanchi Stupa
- B. Ashokan Lion Capital (Sarnath)
- C. Barabar Caves
- D. Didarganj Yakshini

Correct Answer: B. Ashokan Lion Capital (Sarnath)

Explanation:

The Lion Capital of Ashoka from Sarnath was adopted as the National Emblem of India. It has four lions standing back to back, symbolizing courage, power, pride and confidence.



15

Which was the last Mauryan emperor?

- A. Ashoka the Great
- B. Brihadratha
- C. Bindusara
- D. Dasharatha

Correct Answer: B. Brihadratha

Explanation:

Brihadratha was the last ruler of the Mauryan Empire. He was assassinated by his general Pushyamitra Shunga in 185 BCE, which led to the end of Mauryan rule and the rise of the Shunga Dynasty.





MCQs



Page 4

16

Who succeeded Bindusara and became the third Mauryan emperor?

- A. Chandragupta Maurya
- B. Bindusara
- C. Ashoka the Great
- D. Brihadratha

Correct Answer: C. Ashoka the Great

Explanation:

Ashoka the Great, also known as Devanampriya Priyadarshi, succeeded Bindusara and became the third Mauryan emperor around 268 BCE.



17

Which of the following was the capital of the Mauryan Empire?

- A. Pataliputra
- B. Taxila
- C. Ujjain
- D. Kushinagara

Correct Answer: A. Pataliputra

Explanation:

Pataliputra, located on the banks of the Ganga and Son rivers, was the capital of the Mauryan Empire. It is modern-day Patna in Bihar.



18

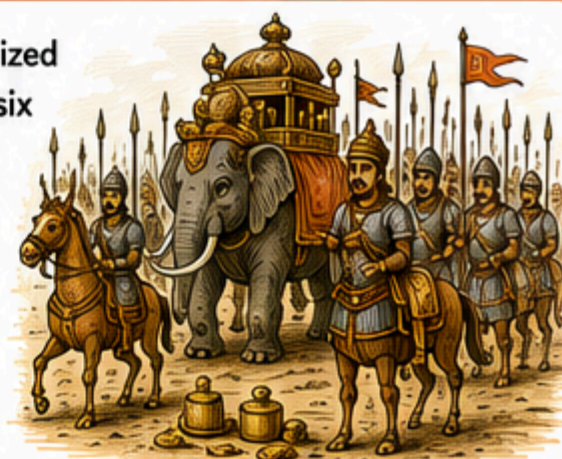
Which of the following best describes the Mauryan army?

- A. Small but highly skilled
- B. Large, well-organized and divided into six divisions
- C. Consisted only of cavalry
- D. Maintained by the village system

Correct Answer: B. Large, well-organized and divided into six divisions

Explanation:

The Mauryan army was one of the largest in the ancient world and was divided into six divisions – Infantry, Cavalry, Elephants, Chariots, Navy and Supply Train.



19

Which department was responsible for the collection of customs duties at the ports and trade routes?

- A. Samaharta
- B. Panyadhyaksha
- C. Sannidhata
- D. Dandapalika

Correct Answer: B. Panyadhyaksha

Explanation:

Panyadhyaksha was the superintendent of trade and commerce. He collected customs duties, regulated trade, fixed prices and ensured quality of goods.



20

Which among the following is a major reason for the decline of the Mauryan Empire?

- A. Strong succession policy
- B. Over-centralization of power
- C. Weak administration
- D. Effective provincial governance

Correct Answer: B. Over-centralization of power

Explanation:

Over-centralization of power in the hands of the emperor led to a weak provincial administration. After Ashoka, the central authority declined, leading to the fall of the empire.





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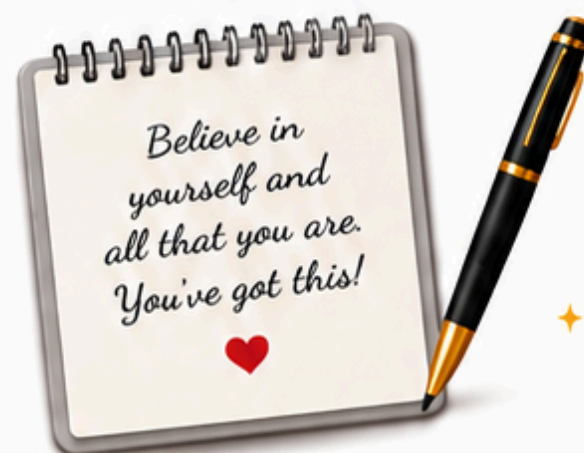
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