

# Satavahanas Dynasty

Special class

# **SATAVAHANA DYNASTY**

The **Satavahanas** also referred to as the **Andhras** in the mythological Puranas , were an ancient Indian dynasty based in the Deccan region. Most modern scholars believe that the Satavahana rule began in the late second century BCE and lasted until the early third century CE, although some assign the beginning of their rule to as early as the 3rd century BCE based on the Puranas, but uncorroborated by archaeological evidence. The Satavahana kingdom mainly comprised the present-day Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra. At different times, their rule extended to parts of modern Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka. The dynasty had different capital cities at different times, including Pratihthana (Paithan) and Amaravati (Dharanikota).

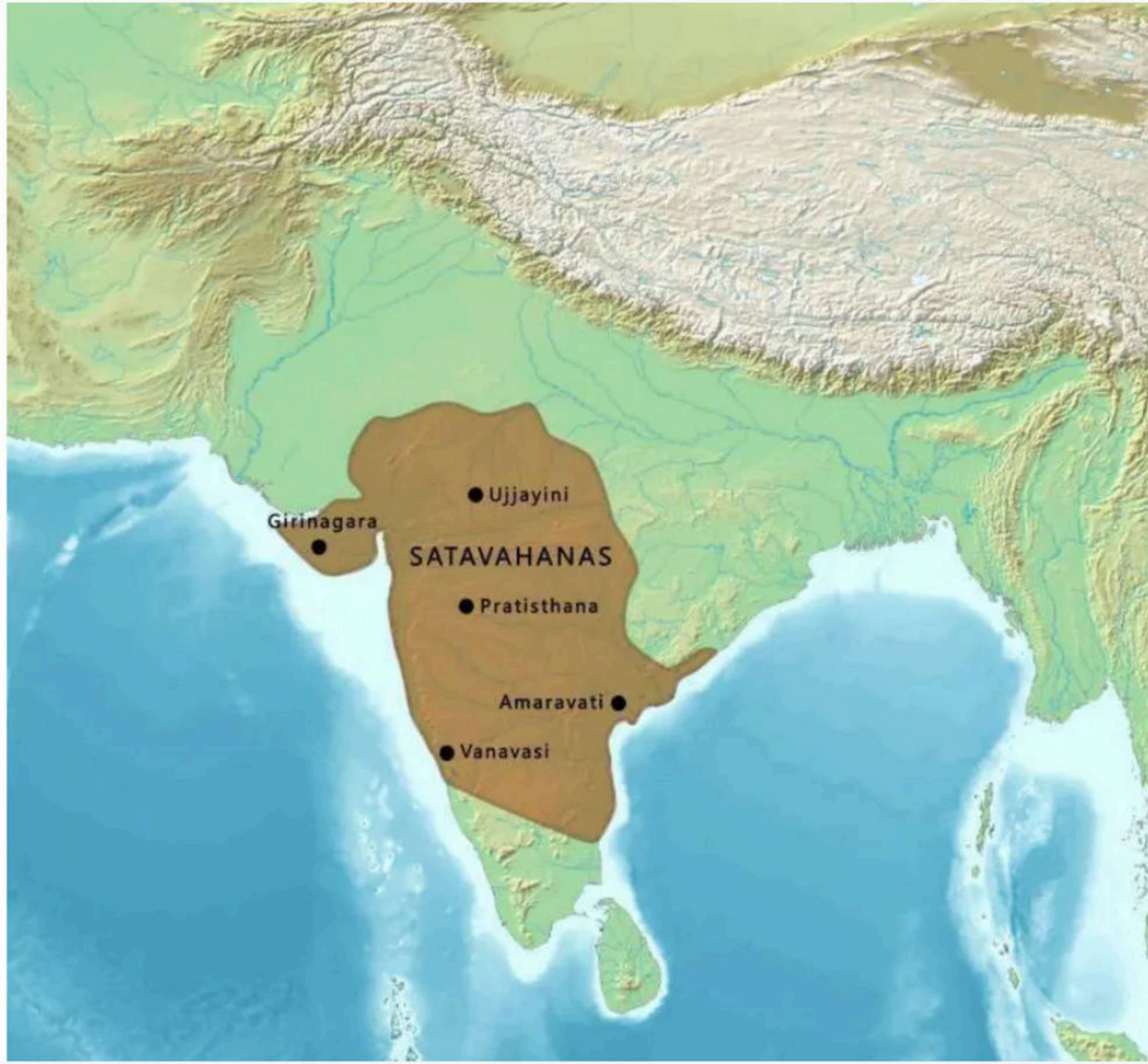
The origin of the dynasty is uncertain, but according to the Puranas, their first king overthrew the Kanva dynasty. In the post-Maurya era, the Satavahanas established peace in the Deccan region and resisted the onslaught of foreign invaders. In particular their struggles with the Saka Western Satraps went on for a long time. The dynasty reached its zenith under the rule of Gautamiputra Satakarni and his successor Vasisthiputra Pulamavi. The kingdom had fragmented into smaller states by the early 3rd century CE.. The Satavahanas were early issuers of Indian state coinage struck with images of their rulers. They formed a cultural bridge and played a vital role in trade and the transfer of ideas and culture to and from the Indo-Gangetic Plain to the southern tip of India. They supported Hinduism as well as Buddhism and patronised Maharashtri Prakrit literature.

## Origin of Satavahana Dynasty

The dynasty's origins are unknown, but their first king, according to the Puranas, overthrew the Kanva dynasty. The Satavahanas established peace in the Deccan region and resisted foreign invaders in the post-Maurya era. Their conflicts with the Saka Western Satraps, in particular, lasted a long time. Gautamiputra Satakarni and his successor Vasisthiputra Pulamavi led the dynasty to its pinnacle. By the early third century CE, the kingdom had disintegrated into smaller states. Simuka is mentioned as the first king in a list of royals discovered at Naneghat in a Satavahanas inscription, and he is referred to as such. According to numerous Puranas, the dynasty's first monarch reigned for 23 years. According to the Puranas, the first Andhra ruler ended the reign of the Kanva monarchs.

### Early History

Simuka is mentioned as the first king in a list of royals in a Satavahana inscription at Naneghat. The various Puranas state that the first king of the dynasty ruled for 23 years, and mention his name variously as Sishuka, Sindhuka, Chhismaka, Shipraka, etc. These are believed to be corrupted spellings of Simuka, resulting from copying and re-copying of manuscripts. Simuka cannot be dated with certainty based on available evidence. Based on the following theories, the beginning of the Satavahana rule is dated variously from 271 BCE to 30 BCE. According to the Puranas, the first Andhra king overthrew the Kanva rule. The *Matsya Purana* mentions that the Andhra dynasty ruled for around 450 years.



As the Satavahana rule ended in the early 3rd century, the beginning of their rule can be dated to the 3rd century BCE. The *Indica* of Megasthenes (350 – 290 BCE) mentions a powerful tribe named "Andarae", whose king maintained an army of 100,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants. If Andarae is identified with the Andhras, this can be considered additional evidence of Satavahana rule starting in the 3rd century BCE. The Brahmanda\_Purana states that "the four Kanvas will rule the earth for 45 years; *then* (it) will *again* go to the Andhras". Based on this statement, the proponents of this theory argue that the Satavahana rule began immediately after the Maurya rule, followed by a Kanva interregnum, and then, a revival of the Satavahana rule. According to one version of the theory Simuka succeeded the Mauryans. A variation of the theory is that Simuka was the person who restored the Satavahana rule by overthrowing the Kanvas; the compiler of the Puranas confused him with the founder of the dynasty.

Most modern scholars believe that the Satavahana ruler began in the first century BCE and lasted until the second century CE. This theory is based on Puranic records as well as archaeological and numismatic evidence. The theory that dates their rule to an earlier period is now largely discredited because the various Puranas contradict each other, and are not fully supported by epigraphic or numismatic evidence.

The oldest Satavahana inscription is the one found on a slab of the upper drum (medhi) of the Kanaganahalli Great Stupa mentioning year 16 of Vasisthiputra Sri Chimuka Satavahana's reign, which can be dated from ca. 110 BCE.

## Rulers of Satavahana Dynasty

### Simuka

Simuka founded the Satavahana Dynasty and is credited with destroying the Shunga Power. He accomplished this with the help of the Rathikas and Bhojakas. He reigned for approximately 23 years before being beheaded by his brother Kanha, who succeeded him.

### Krishna

Kanha was the Satavahana Dynasty's second ruler. Simuka was succeeded by his brother Kanha (also known as Krishna), who extended the kingdom up to Nashik in the west. The earliest extant Satavahana inscription is from Nashik Cave 19, which states that the cave was commissioned by **Mahamatra Saman** of Nashik during the reign of king Kanha. Kanha's Pandavleni mentions the term *maha-matra* (officer-in-charge), which indicates that the early Satavahanas followed the Mauryan administrative model.



(Cave No.19 of the Pandavleni Caves in Nashik district, which was issued during the reign of Kanha (100-70 BCE))



Inscription of king Kanha in cave No.19, Nasik Caves. This is one of the oldest known Satavahana inscription, circa 100-70 BCE. Brahmi script: Under King Kanha of the Satavahana family this cave has been caused to be made by the officer in charge of the Sramanas at Nasik".

## Satakarni I (70-60 BC)

Satakarni-I, also known as Sri Satkarni, was a great ruler among the Early Satavahanas and the son of Simuka. His queen's name was Naganika, and he was known as the Lord of Dakshinpatha. Kanha expanded his empire to the south, to the Malwa and Narmada valleys.

Satakarni I conquered western Malwa, Anupa (Narmada valley) and Vidarbha, taking advantage of the turmoil caused by Greek invasions of northern India. He performed Vedic sacrifices including Ashvamedha and Rajasuya. Instead of the Buddhists, he patronised Brahmins and donated a substantial amount of wealth to them. The **Hathigumpha inscription** of the Kalinga king Kharavela mentions a king named "Satakani" or "Satakamini", who some identify with Satakarni I. The inscription describes dispatching of an army and Kharavela's threat to a city. According to Bhagwal Lal, Satakarni wanted to avoid an invasion of his kingdom by Kharavela. So, he sent horses, elephants, chariots and men to Kharavela as a tribute. Satakarni captured eastern Malwa from the Shungas. This allowed him access to the Buddhist site of Sanchi, in which he is credited with the building of the decorated gateways around the original Mauryan Empire and Sunga stupas.

The Nanaghat Inscription of the Satavahana queen Naganika is one of the dynasty's oldest and most historically significant inscriptions. She was the consort of King Satakarni. The Nanaghat inscriptions are the principal sources for specific information on the Satavahana kingdom. This inscription is extremely important in terms of the origins of Satavahana rule because it records the governance and prowess of the third



**The southern gateway of the Great Stupa at Sanchi was, according to an inscription (see arrow), donated under the rule of "King Satakarni" . "Gift of Ananda, the son of Vasithi, the foreman of the artisans of rajan Siri Satakarni.**

Satavahana king, Satakarni I, as well as his performance of various sacrifices.

### **Nanaghat Inscription - Features**

- The inscription was carved on the left and right sidewalls of a rock-cut cave in Nanaghat. Scholars have identified this rock-cut cave as the Pratimaghara, or Statue Sanctuary of the Satavahanas, because it once housed statues of some of the early Satavahana kings and princes. This inscription's engravings are in Brahmi Script, and the language is Prakrit. The inscriptions in the caves indicate that they were created by Satavahana rulers who rose to prominence after the Mauryan empire fell. The cave, statues, and inscriptions are thought to have been commissioned by Naganika, the wife of Satakarni (180–170 BCE) of the Satavahana family. Inscriptions in the cave refer to her and her family. The inscription's central figure is Naganika, who may be the first woman in recorded Indian history to have determined a state's political affairs, even having her own coinage. In Maharashtra's history, Queen Naganika is the earliest known queen. She was the wife of King Satakarni and the mother of Princess Skandari, Hakusiri, and Kumra Satavahana, according to the inscription. The Nanaghat Inscription of Queen Naganika sheds important light on the prevalence of Vaidika Dharma in the Deccan Region in the first century BCE. This inscription chronicles the several Vaidika Yajnas conducted by the royal pair and the generous contributions they gave on these occasions, in addition to depicting the details of Queen Naganika and King Satakarni. The inscriptions on the cave also include accounts of no less than 18 sacrifices performed by Satakarni and Naganika together, including two Ashwamedhas, a Rajsuya, and a Vajpeya sacrifice, as well as



## **Hala**

Hala, the 17th King of the Satavahana line, was another great Satavahana king. He had compiled the "**Gatha saptasati**" or Gaha Sattasai, which was primarily a love text. He is also mentioned in the Lilavati text. These rulers were only minor rulers who were subject to Kanvas' suzerainty. The Satavahanas' expansion was checked shortly after Satakarni. The Shakas drove them south, and the western Deccan was taken over by Shaka King Nahapana

### **First Western Satraps invasion under Nahapana**

Epigraphic and numismatic evidence suggests that the Satavahanas earlier controlled the northern Deccan Plateau, the northern Konkan coastal plains, and the mountain passes connecting these two regions. During 15-40 CE, their northern neighbours - the Western Kshatrapas - extended their influence into these regions. The Western Kshatrapa ruler Nahapana is known to have ruled the former Satavahana territory, as attested by the inscriptions of his governor and son-in-law, Rishabhadatta.

### **Gautamiputra Satakarni**

Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi was a ruler of the Satavahana Empire in present-day Deccan region of India. He was mentioned as the important and greatest ruler of Satavahana Dynasty. He ruled in the 1st or 2nd century CE. The information available about Gautamiputra Satakarni comes from his coins, the Satavahana inscriptions, and the royal genealogies in the various Puranas. The best known of these is the Nashik prashasti inscription of his mother Gautami Balashri, which credits him with extensive military conquests. Historical evidence suggests that Gautamiputra revived the Satavahana power after a decline caused by Saka invasions.



## **Imperial extent according to Nashik prashasti**

The Nashik\_prashasti\_inscription of Gautamiputra's mother, located in the Nasik Caves, calls him the "king of kings", and states that his orders were obeyed by the circle of all kings. It indicates that his rule extended from Malwa and Saurashtra in the north to Krishna river in the south; and from Konkan in the west to Vidarbha (Berar) in the east. It states that he ruled the following regions,

- Asika (area in Godavari valley)
- Aśmaka (Ashmaka in Godavari valley)
- Muḍhaka or Mulaka (area around Paithan)
- Surāṣṭra (Saurashtra)
- Kukura North part of the Kathiyavad and western Rajputana
- Aparanta (north Konkan)
- Anupa (area around Mahishmati in Narmada valley)
- Vidarbha (Berar)
- Akara-Avanti (eastern and western Malwa)

The inscription also calls Gautamiputra the lord of following mountains: Vindhyāvat (part of Vindhya)

- Pāriyātra (part of Vindhya)
- Sahya (Western Ghats)
- Krishnagiri (Kanhagiri)
- Malaya (southern portion of Western Ghats)
- Mahendra
- Sreshtha-giri or Setagiri
- Chakora

## Vasishthiputra Pulumayi

He was the son of **Gautamiputra Satakarni** and a Satavahana king. The new consensus dates his reign as 85–125 CE, though it was previously dated as 110–138 CE or 130–159 CE. Vasishthiputra Sri Pulumavi is another name for him. Ptolemy, who lived in the second century, refers to Pulumavi as Siroptolemaios, a contemporary of the Western satrap, Chastana. Paithan is said to have been the capital of Sri Pulumavi. Vasishthiputra Pulumavi, the successor of Gautamiputra Satakarni, expanded the Satavahana Empire's borders. His coins can be found all over south India. Vasishthi Putra Pulumayi's inscriptions and coins have been discovered in Andhra Pradesh. According to the inscriptions in Junagadh, he married Rudradaman I's daughter. Because of eastern engagements, the Shaka-Kshatrapas were able to reclaim a few territories and lands.

He was not as religiously orthodox as his father. While Gautamiputra forbade marriages between the four traditional Varnas, his son Vasishthaputra did not hesitate to marry Sakas of a foreign race. The Saka Satraps (Kshatrapas) were the most powerful rulers in various parts of Western India during his reign. Saka Mahakshatrapa Rudradaman, the ruler of Ujjayini, grew so powerful that he reclaimed the territories of Malwa, Kathiawad, and northern Konkan, which had been annexed to the Satavahana Empire by Gautamiputra Satakarni. In light of the Saka King's increasing aggression, Vasishthaputra Satakarni decided to establish a matrimonial relationship with that foreign ruler and married a daughter of

King Rudradaman. The hostility between the Satavahanas and the Sakas was reduced as a result of that marriage. The Saka Raja Rudradaman could boast that despite defeating the Lord of the Deccan (Dakshinapatha-pati) in battle, he did not end Satavahana rule in the South due to family ties between the two royal families. In other words, Vasishthaputra's marriage to the Sakas appears to be a political alliance rather than a social or racial friendship. Vasishthaputra was unable to defeat the Sakas in the north. On the other hand, he solidified his control over the Andhra territory bounded in the south by the rivers Godavari and Krishna.

### **Vasishthaputra Pulumavi - Coinage**

Some Pulumavi lead coins depict **two-masted Indian ships**, attesting to the Satavahanas' seafaring and trading capabilities during the first and second centuries CE. During his reign, Gautami Balasri, Gautamiputra Satakarni's mother, laid an inscription at Nashik. Vasishthaputra Satakarni, Pulumavi's younger brother, succeeded him.



**(Indian ship on lead coin of Vasishthaputra Pulumavi)**



**Bilingual coinage** of Sri Vasishthiputra Pulumavi in **Prakrit and Dravidian**, and transcription of the obverse Prakrit legend.

**Obverse:** Portrait of the king. Legend in Prakrit in the Brahmi script

**Reverse:** Ujjain and arched-hill symbols. Legend in Dravidian (close to Telugu and Tamil) and the Dravidian script similar to the Brahmi script

## **Yajna Sri Satakarni (c. 165 – 194 CE)**

Yajna Sri Satakarni, also known as Gautamiputra Yajna Sri, was a Satavahana dynasty Indian ruler. He was Vashishtiputra Satakarni's brother. He is regarded as the Satavahana dynasty's final great king. He reclaimed some of the territory lost to the Shakas (Western Satraps) during the reign of Vashishtiputra Satakarni. He defeated the Western Satraps and took back their southern territories in western and central India. After Yajna Sri Satakarni, the Satavahana began to decline, while the Western Satraps prospered for another two centuries. Sri Yajna Satakarni, the last person belonging to the main Satavahana dynastic line, briefly revived the Satavahana rule. According to S. N. Sen, he ruled during 170–199 CE. Charles Higham dates the end of his reign to 181 CE. His coins feature images of ships, which suggest naval and marine trade success. Wide distribution of his coins, and inscriptions at Nashik, Kanheri and Guntur indicate that his rule extended over both eastern and western parts of Deccan. He recovered much of the territory lost to the Western Kshatrapas, and issued silver coinage, imitating them. During the last years of his reign, the Abhiras captured the northern parts of the kingdom, around Nashik region.

After Yajna Satakarni, the dynasty was soon extinguished following the rise of its feudatories, perhaps on account of a decline in central power. On the other hand, the Western Satraps would continue to prosper for the next two centuries, until their extinction by the Gupta Empire. Yajna Sri was succeeded by Madhariputra Swami Isvarasena. The next king Vijaya ruled for 6 years. His son Vasishthiputra Sri Chadha Satakarni ruled for 10 years. Pulumavi IV, the last king of the main line, ruled until c. 225 CE. During his reign, several Buddhist monuments were constructed at sites including -

–Nagarjunkonda and Amravati. Madhya Pradesh was also part of his kingdom. After the death of Pulumavi IV, the Satavahana empire fragmented into five smaller kingdoms:

1. Northern part, ruled by a collateral branch of the Satavahanas (which ended in early 4th century)
2. Western part around Nashik, ruled by the Abhira dynasty
3. Eastern part (Krishna-Guntur region), ruled by the Andhra Ikshvakus
4. South-western parts (northern Karnataka), ruled by the Chutus of Banavasi
5. South-eastern part, ruled by the Pallavas.

### **Administration**

The Satavahanas followed the administration guidelines of the Shastras. Their government was less top-heavy than that of the Mauryans, and featured several levels of feudatories. The Satavahana empire's districts were referred to as ahara, and its rulers were known as mahamatras and amatyas. Several inscriptions refer to *aharas* named after the governors appointed to rule them (e.g. **Govardhanahara, Mamalahara, Satavanihara and Kapurahara**).

The province governor was named as Senapathi. The military unit had 45 cavalry, 9 elephants, 9 chariots, and 25 horses. **Gaulmika**, who oversaw the rural districts, was the regiment's commander. The use of words like kataka and skandhavaras indicates that the Satavahana monarchy had a military bent. Three levels of feudatories existed in the kingdom. The King established the first grade, while Mahabhoja established the second. Senapati created the third grade. The towns and farms that were given to the Brahmanas and Buddhist monks were exempt from taxes and later developed into separate islands within the monarchy. Varna system enforcement helped to stabilise the social order.

inscriptions of Gautamiputra Satakarni suggest the existence of a bureaucratic structure, although it is not certain how stable and effective this structure was. For example, two inscriptions from Nashik Cave 11 record donations of agricultural land to ascetic communities. They state that the ascetics would enjoy tax exemption and non-interference from the royal officials. The first inscription states that the grant was approved by Gautamiputra's minister Sivagupta on the king's verbal orders, and preserved by the "great lords". The second inscription records a grant by Gautamiputra and his mother, and mentions Syamaka as the minister of the Govardhana *ahara*. It states that the charter was approved by a woman named Lota, who was the chief lady-in-waiting of Gautamiputra's mother.

### **Social structure under Satavahanas:**

During this period, the people were familiar with the Vedic four fold division of society into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. Outside the four fold influence were the indigenous tribes with independent ways of life and thought. People were known according to their professions such as the Halika (cultivator), the Sethi (merchant), the Kolika (Weaver) and the Gadhika (druggist). The Buddhists and the Saka-Pahlavas influenced the social structure considerably. The foreigners were becoming absorbed into the indigenous society by adopting the faith and customs here and also through inter marriages with the people. Gautamiputra Satakarni attempted in restoring the balance by stopping the contamination of the locals with the foreigners. Yet rules of castes were not observed strictly. Inscriptions and other records indicate the prominence of women in their social life. Their lavish charity and assumption of the titles of their husbands like Mahatalavari signifies their economic and social status. The sculptures of the period reveal their scanty dresses and profuse ornamentation. Joint family system was another normal feature of society in the Vedic patriarchal mould.

The prevalence of polygamy among the princes was revealed by the metronymic titles (calling sons after their mothers), which some of the later Satavahanas bore along with the personal name.

Mixed marriages were considered obnoxious though there are some instances of such marriages. Vashishthiputra Pulumavi himself married the daughter of the Saka ruler Rudradaman thus giving respectability to such marriages. In this period, inter marriages among the Hindus and foreign tribes of the Sakas, the Parthians and the Greeks were freely consummated so that these foreigners were absorbed forever in the Hindu social order .

**Condition of women:** The condition of women was good during the reign of Satavahanas. Their status was pretty high in the society. In times of emergency they took upon themselves the task of looking after the administration of the kingdom as well. Several names of the sons, such as Gautamputra Satkarni, Vasisthiputra Satkarni etc., which were after the name of their mothers, indicate the high and respectable position of women in the society. Probably women were imparted education from the beginning. Besides administrative works, women also participated in religious activities. Naganika performed two Asvamedha yajna along with husband. Widows were not subjected to sufferings and were respected as mothers. No such example is found which may indicate that there was purdah system among the women.

### **Religion**

The Satavahanas were Hindus and claimed Brahmanical status, although they also made generous donations to Buddhist monasteries. The lay people in the Satavahana period perhaps generally did not exclusively support a particular religious group . The Naneghat inscription of Nayanika, recorded on the wall of a cave, mentions that her husband Satakarni- I performed

several Vedic sacrifices, including *ashvamedha* (horse sacrifice), *rajasuya* (royal consecration), and *agnyadheya* (fire ceremony). The inscription also records substantial fees paid to Brahmin priests and attendees for these sacrifices. For example, 10,001 cows were granted for the *Bhagala-Dasaratra* sacrifice; and 24,400 coins were granted for another sacrifice, whose name is not clear.

A number of Buddhist monastic sites emerged in the Deccan region during the Satavahana period. However, the exact relations between these monasteries and the Satavahana government is not clear. The Pandavleni Caves inscription issued during the reign of Kanha states that the cave was excavated by *maha-matra* (officer-in-charge) of the shramanas (non-Vedic ascetics). Based on this, Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya concludes that Kanha favoured Buddhism, and had an administrative department dedicated to the welfare of Buddhist monks. However, Carla M. Sinopoli notes that although there are some records of donations to the Buddhist monasteries by the Satavahana royals, the vast majority of the donations were made by the non-royals. The most common among these donors were merchants, and many of the monasteries were located along the important trade routes. The merchants probably donated to the monasteries, because these sites facilitated trade by serving as rest houses, and possibly by directly participating in the trade. The monasteries appear to have been an important venue for displaying charitable donations, including the donations made to non-Buddhists (especially Brahmins).

## **Economic Condition:**

Agriculture and trade were prosperous. Life of the common man was happy as he was well-provided with all facilities of life. They were economically well-off. They inherited many traits of the material culture of the Mauryas and made their life better and well off. There was a free fusion of local elements and northern ingredients under them. They learnt the use of coins, burnt bricks and ring wells from the Mauryas and added much to the advancement of their material life. Under the Satavahanas, agriculture was prosperous and the village's economy was developed. Rice was cultivated in the territory between the Krishna and Godavari rivers. Cotton was also produced. The peasants used implements made of iron which were extensively used particularly in Carnatic. There were also wells for irrigation. Encouragement was given to trade and industry. The traders and those engaged in other professions had their own guilds or 'sanghas'. Coin dealers, potters, oil pressers and metal workers had their own guilds. These guilds looked after the collective interests of their trade and worked for their common uplift. These guilds were recognized by the Government and worked as bankers also. The external or foreign trade was carried through the famous ports of Supara, Broach and Kalyan. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea mentions two important Satavahana trade centres: Pratihthana and Tagara India and trade relations with countries like Arabia, Egypt and Rome. In the far eastern countries, Indian traders established their own settlements and preach Indian culture. They referred to these countries as 'Swargabhoomi' or paradise. India exported cotton, textiles, spices etc. India imported wine, glass and items of luxury. The inland trade was also prosperous. Travel between the north and south of India were much easy as the roads and transport were better. Several towns sprang up in Maharashtra during this period. Paithan, Nasik and Junar were big markets and centers of trade. In the south-east Vijaypur and Narsela were well-known trade centers. There were guilds of traders as well and they carried trade in

## Language

Most of the Satavahana inscriptions and coin legends are in a Middle Indo-Aryan language. This language has been termed "Prakrit" by some modern scholars, but this terminology can be considered correct only if the term "Prakrit" is defined broadly to include every Middle Indo-Aryan language that is "not exactly Sanskrit". The language of the inscriptions is actually closer to Sanskrit than to the literary Prakrit used in the *Gaha Sattasai* anthology attributed to the Satavahana king Hala. According to Gunadya, besides Sanskrit and Prakrit there is another language called 'Desi' which may mean the native language or the language of common man.

Sarvavarman, probably a minister of Hala, composed the Katantra on Sanskrit grammar for the use of the King. Gunadhyā made over his Brihatkatha in Paisachi Prakrit to the same king Hala. The Satavahanas also used Sanskrit in political inscriptions, but rarely. A fragmentary inscription found close to the Nashik prashasti of Gautamiputra Satakarni uses Sanskrit verses in *vasanta-tilaka* metre to describe a deceased king (probably Gautamiputra). A **Sanskrit inscription** found at **Sannati** probably refers to Gautamiputra Shri Satakarni, one of whose coins also features a Sanskrit legend. The Satavahanas also issued **bilingual coins** featuring Middle Indo-Aryan language on one side, and Desi language (possibly Old Tamil) on the other side.

## Art and Architecture

The sculptures of the Amaravati Stupa and the wider Amaravati style represent the architectural development of the Satavahana periods. They built Buddhist stupas in Amravati (95 feet high). They also constructed a large number of stupas at Goli, Jagghahpeta, Gantasala, Amravati Bhattiprolu, and Shri Parvatam. Caves IX and X, containing Ajanta paintings, were patronised by Satavahana, and the painting throughout the caves appear to have started with them. Ashokan Stupas were enlarged, the earlier bricks and wood works being replaced with stone works. The most famous of these monuments are the stupas, the most famous among them being the Amravati Stupa and the Nagarjunakonda Stupa.

## Paintings

The Satavahana paintings are the earliest surviving specimens—excluding prehistoric rock art in India, and they are to be found only at the **Ajanta Caves**. There were two phases of artistic activity of Ajanta: the first occurring in the 2nd to 1st centuries BC, when Hinayana caves were excavated during Satavahana rule; the later in the second half of the 5th century under the Vakatakas. Vagaries of nature and some vandalism have taken a heavy toll on the Ajanta Caves. Only a few fragments related to the Satavahanas have survived in **Caves No. 9 and 10**, both of which are chaitya-grihas with stupas.

The most important surviving painting of the Satavahana period at Ajanta is the **Chhadanta Jataka in Cave No. 10**, but that, too, is only fragmentary. It is a painting of an **elephant** named Bodhisattva with six tusks, related to a mythological story. The human figures, both male and female, are typically Satavahanas, almost identical with their counterparts on the Sanchi Gateways so far as their physiognomy, costumes, and jewellery are concerned. The only difference is that the Sanchi figures have shed some of their weight.

## Art of Amravati



The Satavahana rulers made significant contributions to Buddhist art and architecture. They constructed magnificent stupas in the Krishna River Valley, including the Amaravati stupa in Andhra Pradesh. The stupas were adorned with marble slabs and sculpted with scenes from the Buddha's life, depicted in a characteristic slim and elegant style. The Amaravati style of sculpture influenced Southeast Asian sculpture as well.



**(Depiction of the Stupa Amaravati)**



**(Amaravati\_Marbles, fragments of Buddhist stupa)**



**Stupa Amaravati)**



The sculptures of the Amaravati Stupa represent the Satavahana periods' architectural development. They constructed Buddhist stupas in Amravati (95 feet high). They also built many stupas in Goli, Jaggiahpetta, Gantasala, Amravati Bhattiprolu, and Shri Parvatam. The earlier bricks and woodwork on Ashokan Stupas were replaced with stonework. The stupas are the most well-known of these monuments, with the Amravati Stupa and the Nagarjunakonda Stupa being the most well-known.

**Karle Chaitya's sculpture** is another example of Satavahana architecture's magnificence. The hall is over 124 feet long, 46 feet wide, and 46 feet tall. It was also associated with the construction of the garbhagriha, pradakshinapatha, and mandapa. Along with the doorway, the elegant chaitya window encasing the woodwork of sculptures has survived to this day. Kanehri's sculpture is also modelled after the style in which other Satavahana sculptures have been carved.



Karle Chaitya



Satavahana architecture in Nashik's Pandavleni Caves, Cave No. 3

**THE END**