

Satavahanas

- **The Satavahanas**, also known in the Puranas as the **Andhras**, were an ancient South Asian dynasty based in Deccan
- **The Satavahana kingdom** included modern-day Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra.
- At various times, they ruled over parts of modern Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka.
- At various times, the dynasty's capital cities included Pratishthana (Paithan) and Amaravati (Dharanikota).

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.

Rulers of Satavahana Dynasty

Simuka (230 – 207 BC)

- 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.
- Kanha was the Satavahana Dynasty's second ruler.
- He expanded the empire southward. Satkarni-I, Simuka's son, succeeded him.

Satakarni I (70-60 BC)

- Satakarni-I, also known as Sri Satakarni, 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.
- He performed the Ashvamedha and Rajsuya Yajnas.

Hala (20–24 CE)

- 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 II.
- The Shakas drove them south, and the western Deccan was taken over by Shaka King Nahapana.

Gautamiputra Satakarni(106 – 130 AD)

- Gautamiputra Satakarni, known as the Destroyer of Shaka, Pahalava, and Yavana Power, resurrected Satavahana's lost power.
- Gautamiputra Satakarni is known to have recovered the Satvahans completely and sharply.
- His mother Gautami mentioned his accomplishments in the Nasik Inscription.
- His empire spanned Eastern and Western Malwa, the Narmada Valley, Vidarbha, Western Rajputana, Saurashtra, and even Kalinga.
- Gautamiputra is described in Nasik Prasasti as the ruler of the Aparanta, Anupa, Saurashtra, Kukura, Akara, and Avanti.

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- In the south, his reign extended all the way to Kanchi.
- He took the titles of Raja-raja and Maharaja.
- The Puranic inscription names other Satavahanas after Gautamiputra Satakarni, including Pulumayi, Sri Satakarni, Shiva Sri, Shivaskanda Satakarni, Madhariptra Sakasena, and Sri Yajna Satakarni.

Vashishtiputra Pulumayi (c. 130 – 154 CE)

- Vasishthiputra Pulumavi, the successor of Gautamiputra Satakarni, expanded the Satavahana Empire's borders.
- His coins can be found all over south India.
- Yagnashri Satakarni was another famous ruler who issued coins with a ship motif, indicating the importance of overseas trade during his reign.
- Vashishti 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.

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.

Administration

- The Satavahana Dynasty's government was based on the Dharmashastras.

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- The Satavahana empire's districts were referred to as ahara, and its rulers were known as mahamatras and amatyas.
- 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.

Economy

- The Satavahanas contributed to and benefited from economic growth through agricultural intensification, increased production of other commodities, and trade within and beyond the Indian subcontinent.
- Several large settlements arose in the fertile areas, particularly along the major rivers, during the Satavahana period.
- As a result of forest clearance and the construction of irrigation reservoirs, the amount of land under agricultural use has also increased significantly.
- The exploitation of mineral resource sites may have increased during the Satavahana period, resulting in the formation of new settlements in these areas.
- Such locations aided commerce and crafts (such as ceramic ware).
- Archaeological discoveries at sites such as Kotalingala, as well as epigraphic references to artisans and guilds, show that craft production increased during the Satavahana period.
- The Satavahanas dominated the expanding Indian trade with the Roman Empire because they controlled the Indian sea coast.

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- The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea mentions two important Satavahana trade centres: Pratishthana and Tagara.
- Kondapur, Banavasi, and Madhavpur were also significant urban centres.
- Nanaghat was the location of an important pass that connected the Satavahana capital Pratishthana to the sea.

Religion

- The Satavahanas were Hindus who claimed Brahmanical status, but they also made generous donations to Buddhist monasteries.
- In general, lay people in the Satavahana period did not support a single religious group.
- The Naneghat inscription of Nayanika, written on the walls of a Buddhist monastic 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 large fees paid to Brahmin priests and attendees for these sacrifices.
- In the Nashik inscription of Gautami Balashri, her son Gautamiputra Satakarni is called "ekabamhana," which some interpret as "unrivalled Brahmana," indicating a Brahmin origin.

Language

- The majority of Satavahana inscriptions and coin legends are written in a Middle Indo-Aryan language.
- Some modern scholars refer to this language as "Prakrit," but this terminology is only correct if the term "Prakrit" is defined broadly to include any Middle Indo-Aryan language that is "not exactly Sanskrit."
- The inscriptions' language is actually closer to Sanskrit than to the literary Prakrit used in the Gaha Sattasai anthology, which is attributed to Satavahana king Hala.
- Apart from Sanskrit and Prakrit, there is another language known as 'Desi,' which may refer to the native language or the language of the common man.

- Later Satavahana kings such as Gauthamiputra Satakarni, Vastistiputra Pulamovi, and Yajna Satakarni had names in both Prakrit and Desi, a native language.
- The Satvahanas used Sanskrit in political inscriptions on occasion.
- A fragmentary inscription discovered near Gautamiputra Satakarni's Nashik prashasti uses Sanskrit verses in vasanta-tilaka metre to describe a deceased king (probably Gautamiputra).
- A Sanskrit inscription discovered at Sannati most likely refers to Gautamiputra Shri Satakarni, one of whose coins also bears a Sanskrit legend.
- The Satavahanas also issued bilingual coins with Middle Indo-Aryan on one side and Tamil on the other.

Architecture

- 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.
- Satavahana patronised Caves IX and X, which contain Ajanta paintings, and the painting throughout the caves appears to have begun with them.
- 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.

Decline of Satavahanas

- Pulamavi IV is regarded as the final king of the Satavahana line.
- He reigned until the year 225 AD. Following his death, the empire was divided into five smaller kingdoms.
- The entire kingdom was split into five lesser dynasties once the Satavahana Dynasty fell.
- The Ikshvakus replaced the Satavahanas in the eastern region at the beginning of the third century A.D.
- The west was ruled by the Abhiras, the south-west by the Chutus, the south-east by the Pallavas, and the northern provinces by a collateral branch of the Satavahanas.

