

• The Maurya Dynasty(324/322BC-185BC)

RK BISWAS

• Rise of the Maurya Dynasty

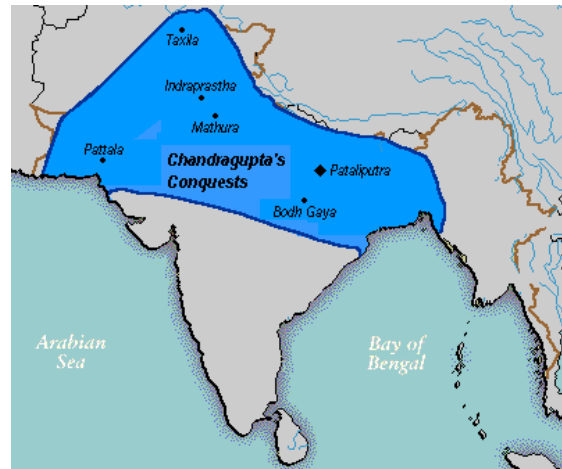
Chandragupta Maurya founded the Maurya Dynasty in 322 BC. The empire had its capital city at Pataliputra (modern Patna). According to several legends, Chanakya traveled to Magadha, a kingdom that was large and militarily powerful and feared by its neighbors, but was insulted by its king Dhana Nanda, of the Nanda Dynasty. Chanakya decided to take revenge and destroy the Nanda empire.

Chanakya encouraged the young Chandragupta Maurya and his army to take over the throne of Magadha. Using his intelligence network Chandragupta gathered many young men from across Magadha and other provinces, who were upset over the corrupt and oppressive rule of King Dhana, as well as the resources necessary for his army to fight a long series of battles. Finally Chandragupta Maurya attacked and defeated him.

Maurya Dynasty – Rulers

Chandragupta Maurya	(324/322- 298 B.C.)
Bindusara	(298 – 273 B.C.)
Asoka	(273 – 232 B.C.)

Chandragupta Maurya:



The Statue of Chandragupta Maurya at the Birla Mandir Hindu temple, Delhi and Maurya Dynasty in 320 BC.

- ❖ The founder of Maurya Dynasty, he lived from 340-298 BC.
- Kautilya provided the strategy and Chandragupta executed it. They had raised a mercenary army of their own.
- Then, they moved eastward into Magadha.
- In a series of battles, he defeated Dhana Nanda and laid the foundations of the Maurya Empire in about 322 BC.
- Chandragupta defeated the invasion led by Seleucus I, a Macedonian general from Alexander's army, and gained additional territory west of the Indus River.
- In its time, the Maurya dynasty was one of the largest empires of the world.

- Megasthenes was the Greek ambassador at Chandragupta's court.
- **Chandragupta Maurya was called the first all indian-emperor**
In its time, the Maurya Empire was one of the largest empires of the world. At its greatest extent, the empire stretched to the north along the natural boundaries of the Himalayas, to the east into Assam, to the west into Balochistan (southwest Pakistan and southeast Iran) and into the Hindu Kush mountains of what is now Afghanistan. He not only established political unity, but also made India free from the influence of foreign affairs. That's why he was called the first all Indian emperor.

Chanakya

- Teacher of Chandragupta Maurya, who was also his Chief Minister.
- He was a teacher and scholar. Other names are Vishnugupta and Kautilya.
- He was also a minister in the court of Bindusara.
- He is credited to be the master strategist behind the fall of the Nanda throne and the rise of the Mauryan Empire through his student, Chandragupta.
- He wrote Arthashastra which is a treatise on statecraft, economics, and military strategy. Arthashastra was rediscovered by R Shamasastry in 1905 after it had disappeared in the 12th century. The work contains 15 books and 180 chapters. The main theme is divided into:
 - i. King, Council of Ministers and Departments of the Government
 - ii. Civil and criminal law
 - iii. Diplomacy of war

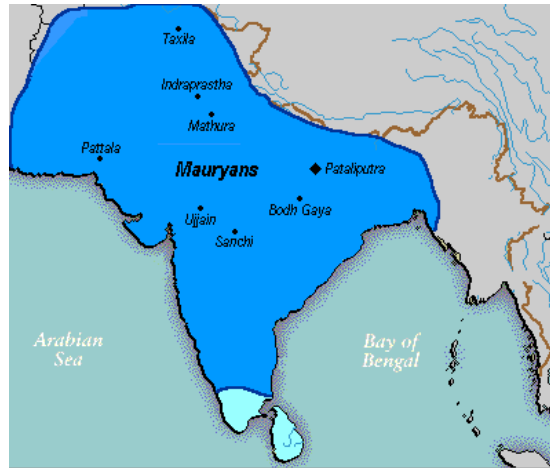
- It also contains information on trade and markets, a method to screen ministers, duties of a king, ethics, social welfare, agriculture, mining, medicine, forests, etc.
- Chanakya is also called 'Indian Machiavelli'.

• **Second Ruler of the Mauryan Dynasty Bindusara**

- Son of Chandragupta Maurya.
- He ruled from 298 BC to 273 BC.
- Also called Amitraghata
- He had appointed his son, Ashoka as the governor of Ujjain.
- Bindusara extended the Mauryan dynasty to Mysore as well.

Ashoka the Great

Bindusara died in 272 BCE, and was succeeded by his son, Ashoka the Great (304-232 BC). As a young prince, Ashoka (r. 273-232 BC) was a brilliant commander who crushed revolts in Ujjain. As monarch, he was ambitious and aggressive, reasserting the Empire's superiority in southern and western India. But it was his conquest of Kalinga (262-261 BC) that proved to be the pivotal event of his life. Although Ashoka's army succeeded in overwhelming Kalinga forces of royal soldiers and civilian units, an estimated 100,000 soldiers and civilians were killed in the furious warfare, including over 10,000 of Ashoka's own men. Hundreds of thousands of people were adversely affected by the destruction and fallout of war. When he personally witnessed the devastation, Ashoka began feeling remorse. Although the annexation of Kalinga was completed, Ashoka embraced the teachings of Buddhism, and renounced war and violence. He sent out missionaries to travel around Asia and to spread Buddhism in other countries.



Maurya Dynasty at its height in 261 BC during the Kalinga War.

Background of Kalinga War

While the early part of Ashoka's reign was apparently quite bloodthirsty, he became a follower of the Buddha's teachings after his conquest of Kalinga on the east coast of India in the present-day states of Odisha and North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. Kalinga was a state that prided itself on its sovereignty and democracy. With its monarchical parliamentary democracy, it was quite an exception in ancient Bharata where there existed the concept of Rajdharma. Rajdharma means the duty of the rulers, which was intrinsically entwined with the concept of bravery and dharma. The Kalinga War happened eight years after his coronation. From Ashoka's 13th inscription, we come to know that the battle was a massive one and caused the deaths of more than 100,000 soldiers and many civilians who rose up in defence; over 150,000 were deported.

Results of Kalinga war:

- Although Ashoka's army succeeded in overwhelming Kalinga war an estimated 100,000 soldiers and civilians were killed in the furious warfare, including over 10,000 of Ashoka's own men. Also 1,50,000 men and women were seriously injured and imprisoned under house.
- Seeing the terribility of the Kalinga war, Ashoka converted to Buddhism and began to do public welfare works, including planting trees, setting up wells, and build up hospitals. During this time he forbade the killing of animals. During his reign the Mauryan dynasty became a non-violent kingdom.
- While he maintained a large and powerful army to keep the peace, Ashoka expanded friendly relations with states across Asia and Europe, and sponsored Buddhist missions.
- As a Buddhist emperor, Ashoka believed that Buddhism is beneficial for all human beings, as well as animals and plants, so he built a number of stupas, Sangharama, viharas, chaitya, and residences for Buddhist monks all over South Asia and Central Asia. According to the Ashokavadana, he ordered the construction of 84,000 stupas to house the Buddhas relics. He gave donations to viharas and mathas. He sent his only daughter, Sanghamitra, and son, Mahindra, to spread Buddhism in Srilanka.

Decline of the Maurya Dynasty

- It declined for about 50 years after Ashoka's rule ended in 185 BC with the foundation of the Shunga Dynasty in Magadha.
- The enormity of the empire and its administrative weakness, the evils of non-violence, the lack of a competent ruler after Ashoka, etc. accelerated the decline of Maurya Dynasty.

- Another reason was Cost of Kalinga war and the post-war campaign for the propagation of Buddhism creates a vast of economic crisis. As a result, this economic weakness accelerated the downfall of the Mauryan Dynasty.

Administration

The Mauryan Empire was divided into four provinces, with the imperial capital at Pataliputra, near the Ganges River in the modern state of Bihar in India. The Edicts of Ashoka, a collection of inscriptions made during Ashoka's reign from 269-232 BC, give the names of the Maurya Empire's four provincial capitals: Tosali in the east, Ujjain in the west, Suvarnagiri in the south, and in North Taxila.

The organizational structure began at the imperial level with the emperor and his Mantriparishad, or Council of Ministers. The head of the provincial administration was the Kumara, or royal prince, who governed the provinces as the king's representative, with the assistance of Mahamatyas, who were essentially regional prime ministers. Through this sophisticated system of bureaucracy, the empire governed all aspects of government at every level, from municipal hygiene to international trade. The Maurya Empire provided political stability.



❖ Frequently Asked Questions related to Maurya Dynasty.

Who is the founder of the Maurya dynasty?

Chandragupta Maurya is the founder of the Maurya dynasty.

Why did the Mauryan dynasty fall?

The decline of the Maurya Dynasty was rather rapid after the death of Ashoka/Asoka. One obvious reason for it was the succession of weak kings. Another immediate cause was the partition of the Empire into two. The Mauryan Empire began to decline after the death of Ashoka in 232 BC.

Is the Gupta Empire and Mauryan dynasty the same?

Maurya Dynasty was vaster as compared to the Gupta Empire. Mauryan rulers followed a centralized administration structure, whereas Gupta rulers followed a decentralized administrative structure. Mauryan rulers favoured and promoted mainly non-Hindu religions; whereas Gupta rulers followed and promoted Hinduism.

Who destroyed the Mauryan Dynasty?

The Maurya Dynasty was finally destroyed by Pushyamitra Shunga in 185 BC. The Shungas ruled in Pataliputra and central India.

❖ The Gupta Empire (275-551) AD

➤ Rise of the Gupta Empire:

Sri Gupta was the founder of the Gupta Empire. Famous historian Vincent Smith mentions that his reign was (275-300) AD. Chandragupta I was called the real founder of the Gupta Empire.

Gupta Empires – Rulers

- ❖ Sri Gupta (275-300) AD
- ❖ Ghatotkacha Gupta (300-320) AD
- ❖ Chandragupta I (320-340) AD
- ❖ Samudragupta (340-380) AD
- ❖ Chandragupta II (380-413) AD
- ❖ Kumara Gupta (415-455) AD
- ❖ Skanda Gupta (455-467) AD

The Reason behind the origin of the Gupta Empire:

Famous historian R.C Majumder, in his book “Ancient India” says that the reaction of slash invasion and civilization is seen in the Gupta empire.

Economically the Ganges-Jamuna valley was a very fertile region. So the influence of agriculture and trade was more in this region which helped the rise of Gupta empire.

Samudragupta (340-380) :

After the death of Chandragupta I, his worthy son Samudragupta ascended the throne. He was the best king of the Gupta dynasty. Historian Vincent A. Smith calls Samudragupta as the Napoleon of ancient India. Because he established political unity in India like Chandragupta Maurya. He extended the empire to the Himalayas and Kashmir in the north, the Narmada river in the south, the Brahmaputra river in the east, the eastern Punjab and Rajputana in the west. Because of his military powers, Vincent Smith referred to Samudragupta as Indian Napoleon.

Chandragupta II

After the death of Samudragupta, Chandragupta II ascended the throne of Magadha in about 380 AD. He was a patron of science and put an end to the shock rule in western India.

The Golden Age of India:

The prosperity of the Gupta Empire produced a golden age of cultural and scientific advancements. A period at the height of the Gupta Empire, marked by extensive inventions and discoveries that contributed to Hindu culture, in subjects such as science, technology, art, literature, logic, mathematics, astronomy, religion, and philosophy.

➤ **Formation of All India Empire**

After the fall of the Maurya Empire, a dark age began in India at Shunga and Kushan dynasty. The almost extinct Hindu Empire was revived in the Gupta period and was able to survive in India for about 200 years.

➤ **Mathematics**

One of the important developments was the decimal system notation. During the Gupta period, there was no symbol for denoting 'zero'. The mathematician Aryabhatta discovered the theory of 'zero'. Another important concept developed during this time was Trigonometry. Concepts like 'sine' were also known to the Gupta. New techniques also developed during this period to solve problems based on Aryabhatta Algorithm, Algebra and Geometry.

➤ **Astronomy**

The greatest scientists of the Gupta period were Aryabhatta and Brahmihir. During this period Aryabhatta discovered the diurnal and annual motions and Brahmihir wrote an astrology called Brihatsanghita.

➤ **Medicine**

During the Gupta period there was usage of mercury and iron in medicine. The use of these materials indicates the fact that the people belonging to the Gupta era had the knowledge of chemistry and they even practiced it. Doctors during that time

were aware of operations and also knew how to conduct one when required.

➤ **Literature**

Literature reached its pinnacle during the Gupta period. The primary themes of literature were poetry and romantic comedies. The literature work of the Gupta period related to human behavior more than the religious ideas. Sanskrit literature was very popular and was sponsored by many Gupta empire rulers. Chandragupta II had nine poets in his court. The supreme poet among these nine was Kalidasa.

➤ **Education**

Education played an important role in the Gupta period. Primary and higher education both exist in this period. Women could obtain education, unlike in other parts of the world. There were many educational institutions and universities set up in major cities.

Nalanda University was established by Kumaragupta I in the 5th century. The university was an important learning center and was one of the first universities which provided hostels for the students. The Takshila University was one of the first centers in the world which offered higher education.

➤ **Administrative System**

The Empire was classified into separate administrative divisions like Rajya, Rashtra, Desha, Mandala, etc. Thus, importance was given to decentralization of power. The administrative division helped the rulers to systematically control their territories. The

provinces were divided into numerous districts and a Vishayapati was appointed to control it. They were assisted in this work by his council of representatives.

➤ **Judicial System**

The Gupta Empire had a separate judicial system. At the lowest level of the judicial system was the village assembly or trade guild. These were the councils appointed to settle the disputes between the parties that appear before them.

The King presided over the highest court of appeal. In discharging his duty, the King was assisted by judges, ministers, priests, etc. The decision or the judgement of the court was based on the legal texts, the social customs prevailing during those times, or upon the decision of the King. It is believed that the punishments awarded to the guilty persons were mild.

➤ **Art, Sculpture & Architecture**

Significant progress was made in architecture, sculpture and painting during the Gupta period. Mathura, Varanasi and Pataliputra were centers of art during this period. During the Gupta period, Buddha statues, Shiva statues were made and Ajanta cave painting developed.

Why did the Gupta empire fall?

The Huna People, also known as Huns, invaded Gupta territory and caused significant damage to the empire. The Gupta Empire ended in 551 AD, when it disintegrated into regional kingdoms after a series of weak rulers and invasions from the east, west, and north.

Who ruled during the Golden Age of India?

The Gupta Empire, which ruled the Indian subcontinent from 275 to 551 AD, ruled in a golden age of Indian civilization.

CREATED BY ROKON

❖ The Gauda Kingdom (606-637) A.D

Rise of the Gauda Kingdom:

During the 7th century, the Gauda Kingdom was founded by King Sashanka, whose reign corresponds with the beginning of the Bengali calendar. Gauda became known as Lakhnauti during the gauda dynasty.

Taking advantage of the fall of the Gupta Empire, the Maukhari dynasty of Kanauj tried to occupy Gauda or North Bengal. But their efforts were not successful and the kings of the later Gupta dynasty retained the kingdom of Gauda.

Guptaraja Mahasengupta resisted the attack of the king of Kamrup and defended his power in Gauda, but later Mahasengupta was defeated by the Kalchuri force. As a result, the next Gupta dynasty in Gauda were weakened. In this situation Sashanka established the independent Gauda state in 606 AD. The independent state of Gauda was made up of North Bengal and West Bengal.

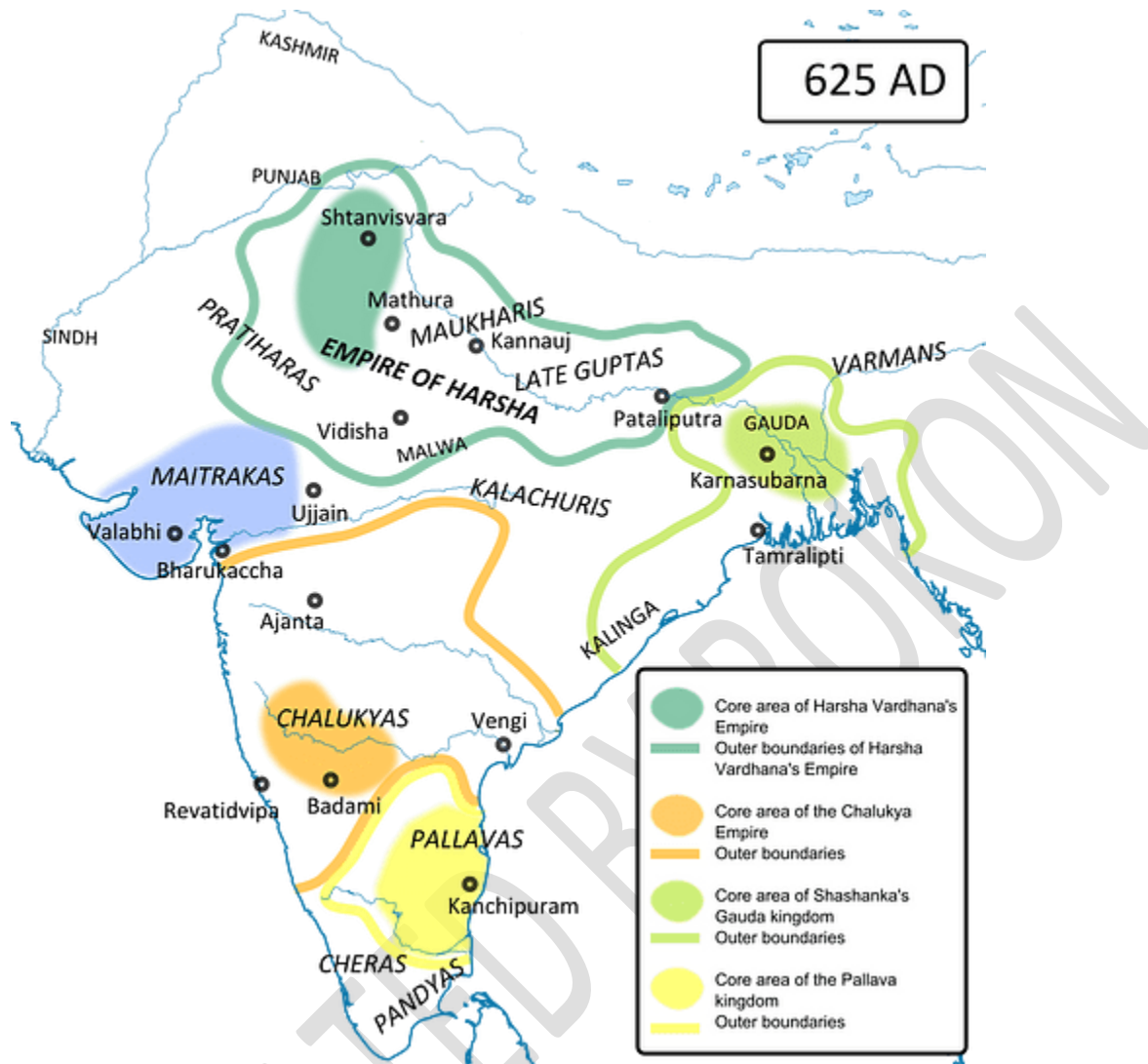
Gauda kingdom – Ruler

Sasanka :

Sashanka was the first independent and sovereign king of Bengal.

Sashanka's title was Mahasamanta and his capital was Karnasuvarna.

Sashanka established the independent kingdom of Gauda in the early 7th century, around 606 AD.



Ancient India in 625 AD

Sashanka's achievements:

1. He established the independent Gauda state.
2. He implantation efficient governance.
3. He maintain state unity and expansion of empire.

According to historian R. C. Majumdar, the Pala kings established a vast empire following the policy introduced by Sashanka by conquering his kingdom.

Decline of Gauda Kingdom :

Sasanka , the king of Bengal or Gauda ,was the contemporary of king Harshabardhan. It's considered that King Sashanka was defeated in a battle with Harshavardhana in 637 AD and fall of the independent kingdom of Gauda.

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❖ Matsyanayam:

After the death of Sasanka, almost 100 years there came a dark and disastrous age in the history of Bengal. Bengal remained without any competent ruler for a long time. As a result, there was anarchy, disorder and external enemy attacks continued in Bengal. At that time there was no system of government existed in Bengal. There was no one to take care of the central power with an iron hand. This period of anarchy has been called Matsyanayam.

According to Kautilya and Lama Taranath, Matsyanayam refers to a condition of anarchy and disorder like when the big fishes catch and swallow the small fishes in a pond. The powerful kings of Bengal took complete control over small regions in such a way. This period of anarchy lasted for one hundred years. In the middle of the eighth century this anarchy and disorder came to an end with the rise of the Pala reign.

The Pala Dynasty (750-1161) AD

Gopala was the founder of the Pala dynasty. The kings of Pala dynasty ruled this country for 400 years at a stretch. No other dynasty ruled this country so long as Pala Dynasty.

Pala Dynasty – Rulers

- ❖ **Gopala (750-770) AD**
- ❖ **Dharmapala (770-810) AD - He was the most famous of all Palaakings.**
- ❖ **Devapala (810-850) AD**
- ❖ **Mahipala I (988-1038) AD**
- ❖ **Mahipala II (1072-1077) AD**
- ❖ **Rampala (1077-1130) AD – Last powerful king.**
- ❖ **Madanpala (1144-1161) AD (Last Empire)**

Gopala (750 – 770 AD)

- First Pala king and founder of the dynasty.
- Was elected by a group of people.
- At the time of his death, Pala kingdom included Bengal and most of Bihar.
- Considered the first Buddhist king of Bengal.

Dharmapala (770 – 810 AD)

- Son and successor of Gopala.
- Founded the Vikramshila University at Bhagalpur, Bihar.
- He had frequent wars with the Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas.

- The Palas became the most powerful kingdom in northern and eastern India during his rule.

Devapala (810 – 850 AD)

- Son of Dharmapala.
- Extended the kingdom to Assam, Odisha and Kamarupa.
- Was a staunch Buddhist and built many monasteries and temples in Magadha.
- Defeated the Rashtrakuta ruler Amoghavarsha.

Mahipala I

- Ascended the throne in 988 AD.
- Recovered northern and eastern Bengal.

Ramapala

- The last strong Pala king.
- The kingdom disintegrated during his son Kumarapala's reign.

Madanapala (1144 – 1161 AD)

- After him, the Sena dynasty replaced the Palas.
- The 18th ruler of Pala dynasty and general considered the last ruler but he was succeeded by Govindapala whose lineage of this name is questionable.

The importance of the Pala dynasty:

- The pala kings increased their contact with the outside world.
- The incredible Buddhist complex of Paharpur was created under the Pala dynasty in Bengal.
- They built magnificent monasteries and temples: Somapura Mahavihara (in Bangladesh), Odantapuri Monastery.
- They also patronised Buddhist centres of learning like Nalanda University and the Vikramshila University.
- During this time, the Bengali language developed. The first Bengali literary work Charyapada is attributed to this period.
- Sanskrit scholars were also patronised by the Pala kings.
- The Pala art influence is seen in the art of Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burma and Java.

Administration :

The foundation of feudal system was very strong in Pala period. In the Pala period, land revenue was one sixth of the total crop. There was no constitutional control over the power of the king. In the Pala period, the ministers worked from generation to generation.

Frequently Asked Questions about Pala Empire

For how long did the Pala Empire rule the region of Bengal?

The Pala dynasty ruled the regions of Bengal and Bihar for about 400 years, from the 8th century until the end of the 11th century.

Who ended the Pala Dynasty?

Sena dynasty.

❖ The Sena Dynasty (1098-1204) AD

Taking advantage of the weakness of the Pala kings, the Sena dynasty established in Bengal. Samanta Sen was the ancestor of the Sena dynasty.

Sena Dynasty– Rulers

- ❖ Samanta Sena (Ancestor)
- ❖ Hemanta Sena (Real Founder)
- ❖ Bijoy Sena (1098-1160) AD – (First Independent King)
- ❖ Ballal Sena (1160-1178) AD
- ❖ Lakshmana Sena (1178-1205) AD (Last Independent King)

❖ Importance of the Senas

- The credit of safeguarding Bengal from anarchy after the fall of the Pala Dynasty goes to the Senas.
- Established political Unity.
- The Senas believed in Hinduism. They contributed towards the revival of Hinduism and Sanskrit literature in Bengal.
- Ballal Sena and Lakshmana Sena were great intellectuals and both patronized scholars and education.
- Jayadeva, the writer of Halayudha and Gita Govinda, was patronized by them.

Decline of Sena Dynasty :

In 1204 AD, Turkish general Ikhtiyar Uddin Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji invaded Bengal. At that time Lakshman Sen was the king of Sena dynasty. He could not defend the capital Nadia from Turkish invasion. When Bakhtiyar Khalji attacked Nadia, Laxman Sena and his family fled to East Bengal. After his death, his two sons, Bishwarup Sen and Keshabsen ruled for some time, but finally the Sena dynasty collapsed in 1206/1207 due to Turkish invasion and internal revolt.

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