

## Pushyamitra Sunga

- Pushyamitra Sunga was Brahmin army chief of Brihadratha, the last king of the Mauryas.
- During a military parade, he killed Brihadratha and established himself on the throne in 185 or 186 BC.
- According to some historians, this was an internal revolt against the last Mauryan king. Some say it was a Brahminical reaction to the Mauryan overwhelming patronage of Buddhism.
- Pushyamitra Sunga's capital was at Pataliputra.
- He successfully countered attacks from two Greek kings namely, Menander and Demetrius.
- He also thwarted an attack from the Kalinga king Kharavela.
- He conquered Vidarbha.
- He followed Brahminism. Some accounts portray him as a persecutor of Buddhists and a destroyer of stupas but there has been no authoritative evidence to this claim.
- During his reign, the Stupas at Sanchi and Barhut were renovated. He built the sculptured stone gateway at Sanchi.
- He performed Vedic sacrifices such as Ashvamedha, Rajasuya and Vajapeya.
- Pushyamitra Sunga patronised the Sanskrit grammarian Patanjali.
- According to the Puranas, his reign lasted for 36 years. He died in 151 BC.

## Agnimitra

- Was Pushyamitra's son who succeeded him to the throne.
- His reign lasted from about 149 BC to 141 BC.
- By this time, Vidarbha broke away from the empire.
- Agnimitra is the hero of Kalidasa's poem, Malavikagnimitram.
- His son Vasumitra succeeded him as king.

## Last of the Sunga kings

- Vasumitra's successors are not clearly known. Different names crop up in several accounts such as Andhraka, Pulindaka, Vajramitra and Ghosha.
- The last Sunga king was Devabhuti. He was preceded by Bhagabhadra.
- Devabhuti was killed by his own minister, Vasudeva Kanva in around 73 BC. This established the Kanva dynasty at Magadha from 73 to 28 BC.

## Effects of Sunga rule

- Hinduism was revived under the Sungas.
- The caste system was also revived with the rise of the Brahmanas.
- Another important development during the Sunga reign was the emergence of various mixed castes and the integration of foreigners into Indian society.
- The language of Sanskrit gained more prominence during this time. Even some Buddhist works of this time were composed in Sanskrit.
- The Sungas patronised art and architecture. There was an increase in the usage of human figures and symbols in art during this period.