

6. Also Magadha had **ruthless and ambitious kings** of whom Bimbisara, Ajatasatru and Mahapadma Nanda are the best known. During the reign of Bimbisara and Ajatasatru, the prosperity of Magadha reached its zenith.

Mauryan art and architecture

1. Before **Ashoka** the tradition largely consisted of working in **wood and clay**. **India has the brick ruins of Mohenjodaro**. Buildings of **Vedic and Buddhist era** were of **wood**. Before Ashoka **wooden pillars** were regularly erected.
2. Ashoka is known to have built **84,000 stupas** to **commemorate various events of Buddha's life**. According to **Megasthenes**, **Pataliputra's grandeur** matched that of the cities of **Persia**.
3. **Ashokan edicts** were **inscribed on stone pillars** that were made of single columns of **polished sandstone** and had **capitals on their top**. The best preserved of all Ashokan edicts stands at **Lauriya Nandangarh** (Bihar). The **bull capital from Rampurwa** is also another fine example of **Mauryan sculpture**. The most famous capital is the one at **Sarnath**, which shows four lions and the **Dharmachakra**.
4. **Besides pillars**, few **Mauryan figures** have also come to light. The most well known of these is the **Yakshi** from **Didarganj**. The beauty of these figures lies in the **exactness of their workmanship** and in the fact that they appear to be made from one single stone.
5. Another noteworthy aspect of Mauryan architecture is the **rock-cut caves**. The **Lomash Rishi** and the **Sudama caves** are examples of such architecture. These caves cut from solid rock were provided by **Ashoka for non-Buddhist monks**. These **caves marked the beginning** of the rock cut architecture which was patronised by later rulers too. His rock edicts were **inscribed in the local language** and the local script.

Mauryan administration

1. **Megasthenes was the Greek ambassador** in the court of Chandragupta Maurya. **Asoka's inscriptions** mention the southernmost kingdoms such as Cholas, Pandyas, Satyaputras and Keralaputras as border states.