

Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi and his Successors

- The Sāvāhanas made a complete recovery under Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi, aptly called 'the greatest of the Sāvāhanas'.
- The main source of information about him is the Nasik cave inscription of the nineteenth regnal year of his son and successor, Vāsishṭhīputra Pulumāvi.

- After consolidating his power in the initial years of his reign, Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi made a concerted effort to destroy the power of the Kshaharāta Kshatrapas.
- The Nasik cave inscription informs us that he uprooted the Śaka rulers.
- This information is corroborated by literary and numismatic evidence.
- The commentary on a *gāthā* in the Jaina *Āvaśyakasūtra* relates that the Sāvāhana king, through one of his ministers, induced the Śaka ruler to spend all his wealth on charity.
- When the royal treasury was empty, he attacked the Śaka ruler, and defeated and killed him.
- That the defeated Kshaharāta ruler was Nahapāna, is shown by the Jogeltembi hoard, which has some 9,000 silver coins of Nahapāna, struck by Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi.

- The Nasik cave inscription also states that Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi put to the sword, or drove out the Śakas, Yavanas, and Pahlavas.
- The Śakas might have belonged to the Kshaharāta family.
- But it seems more likely that these Śakas, mentioned together with the Yavanas and the Pahlavas, belonged to the Vidarbha or Kārddamaka branch of the Western Kshatrapas.
- The Yavanas appear to be a people of Greek origin, who had settled in Maharashtra, and whose donations are recorded in some inscriptions from places like Kanheri.
- Nothing definite is known about the identity of the Pahlavas mentioned in this inscription.
- The Nasik cave inscription also refers to the victory of Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi over some confederacies of his enemies.
- It has been suggested that the Śakas, Yavanas, and Pahlavas, all of foreign stock, had made common cause with the Kshaharāta Kshatrapas.
- Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi defeated them in the course of his struggle against the Kshaharāta Kshatrapas.

- In the Nasik cave inscription, Gotamī Balaśrī gives a list of the provinces, over which her son exercised authority.
- These include :
 - ✓ Ākara (eastern Malwa)
 - ✓ Avanti (western Malwa)
 - ✓ Anūpa (Narmada valley)

- ✓ Vidarbha (Berar)
 - ✓ Asika-Asaka-Mulaka (all in northern Maharashtra)
 - ✓ Aparānta (northern Konkan)
 - ✓ Kukura (western Rajasthan), and
 - ✓ Surāṭha (Saurashtra).
- Thus, it appears that, as a result of his successes against the Kshaharāta Kshatrapas, Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi not only re-established Sātavāhana authority over the territories of Ākara, Avanti, Anūpa, Vidarbha, Asika-Asaka-Mulaka, Aparānta, which had been wrested from them by the Western Kshatrapas, but also added to the Sātavāhana kingdom, the Kshaharāta provinces of Kukura and Surāṭha.
- The Nasik cave inscription also lists the hills and mountains situated within the dominions of Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi.
- These include :
- ✓ Vijha (eastern part of the Vindhya)
 - ✓ Achchhavata (Rikshavat)
 - ✓ Pārīchāta (the Aravali and the western part of the Vindhya)
 - ✓ Sahya (the northern parts of the Western Ghats)
 - ✓ Macha-Siriṭana-Malaya (the southern part of the Western Ghats)
 - ✓ Mahīda (Mahendra in the Western Ghats), and
 - ✓ Chakora (the southern part of the Eastern Ghats).
- Interestingly, by mentioning Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi as lord of Mahīda, Gotamī Balaśrī seems to be claiming her son's authority over Kaliṅga, and by mentioning her son as lord of Chakora, Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi's authority over the Andhradeśa.
- The inscription also claims that 'his chargers had drunk the waters of the three oceans'.
- The Nasik cave inscription praises Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi in conventional style.
- ✓ It compares him to Rāma, Keśava, Arjuna, and Bhīmasena in prowess; to Nābhāga, Nahusha, Janamejaya, Sagara, Yayāti, and Ambarīsha in lustre, and to Vāyu, *garuḍa*, the *siddhas*, the yakshas, the rākshasas, the *chāraṇas*, the moon, the sun, the asterisms, and the planets in his battle skills.
- He administered his kingdom along the guidelines laid down by the śāstras.
- He maintained *varṇāśramadharmā*.
- He worked tirelessly for the welfare of his subjects.

Successors of Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi

- According to the purāṇas, Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi was succeeded by his son, Vāsishṭhīputra Pulumāvi, who ruled for 28 or 29 years.
- The findspots of his inscriptions—Nasik, Karle, and Amaravati, give us an idea of the extent of his dominions.
- The Sātavāhanas had lost some of the northern provinces of their empire to the Kārdamaka Kshatrapas during the reign of Vāsishṭhīputra Pulumāvi, or even towards the close of the reign of Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi.
- But the discovery of the inscription of Vāsishṭhīputra Pulumāvi at Amaravati, and that of a large number of his coins at the same site and in its surroundings, testifies to the extension of Sātavāhana authority towards the south, as far as the river Krishna, during his reign.
- The next Sātavāhana rulers in the puranic lists are Śivaśrī Sātakarṇi and Śivaskanda Sātakarṇi.

- The last great Sātavāhana ruler was Yajña Sātakarṇi.
- His inscriptions have been discovered from Nasik, Kanheri, and Chinna Ganjam in the Krishna district.
- His coins are reported from the districts of Krishna and Godavari in Tamil Nadu, Chandrapur (earlier, Chanda) in Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, northern Konkan, Baroda, and Saurashtra.
- This shows that he ruled over most of the territories he had inherited from his predecessors.
- According to the purāṇas, he ruled for 19 years.

- The Sātavāhana empire seems to have disintegrated after the reign of Yajña Sātakarṇi.
- Purāṇas, epigraphs, and coins reveal the existence of some Sātavāhana rulers, like Vijaya Sātakarṇi, Chandraśrī, Rudra Sātakarṇi, and Pulomā.
- They seem to have ruled in the period, when the power of their family was on the decline.