

# The Satavahanas

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In the north-western Deccan on the ruins of the Mauryan empire arose the kingdom of the Satavahanas in the first century B.C., with its centre at Pratishtana (modern Paithan in Maharashtra). The Puranas speak only of the Andhra rule and not of the Satavahana rule. On the other hand the name Andhra does not occur in the Satavahana inscriptions. There is a lot of controversy regarding the original home of the Satavahanas. The kings represented in epigraphic records are mentioned in the Puranas as Andhras, Andhra – bhrityah and Andhrajiyah.

1. The Satavahana kingdom mainly comprised the present day Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

1. 2. At different times, their rule extended to parts of modern Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

1. The dynasty had different capital cities at different times, including Kotilingala, Pratishthana, and Amaravati





1. The use of the names "Andhra" and "Andhra-Jatiya" in the Puranas has led some scholars, such as E.J Rapson and R.G Bhandarkar
2. Epigraphist and numismatist P. V. P. Sastry initially identified Chimuka with the dynasty's founder Simuka.
3. Ajay Mitra Shastri, D. R. Reddy, S. Reddy and Shankar R. Goyal theorised that Kotlingala was the original home of the Satavahanas.
4. P. L. Gupta and I. K. Sarma, who identified Chimuka as a later ruler. P.V.P. Sastry also later changed his view, and stated that the two kings were different.

The earliest known Satavahana inscription was that found at Cave No 19 of the Pandavleni Caves in Nashik district, which was issued during the reign of Kanha (100-70 BCE)

the Kanaganahalli mahastupa mentioning year 16 of Vasisthiputra Sri Chimuka Satavahana's reign, which can be dated from ca. 110 BCE.

An inscription found at Naneghat was issued by Nayanika (or Naganika), the widow of Satakarni I; another inscription found at Naneghat has been dated to the same period on a paleographic basis

Satakarni II has been found at Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh, located to the north of Maharashtra.

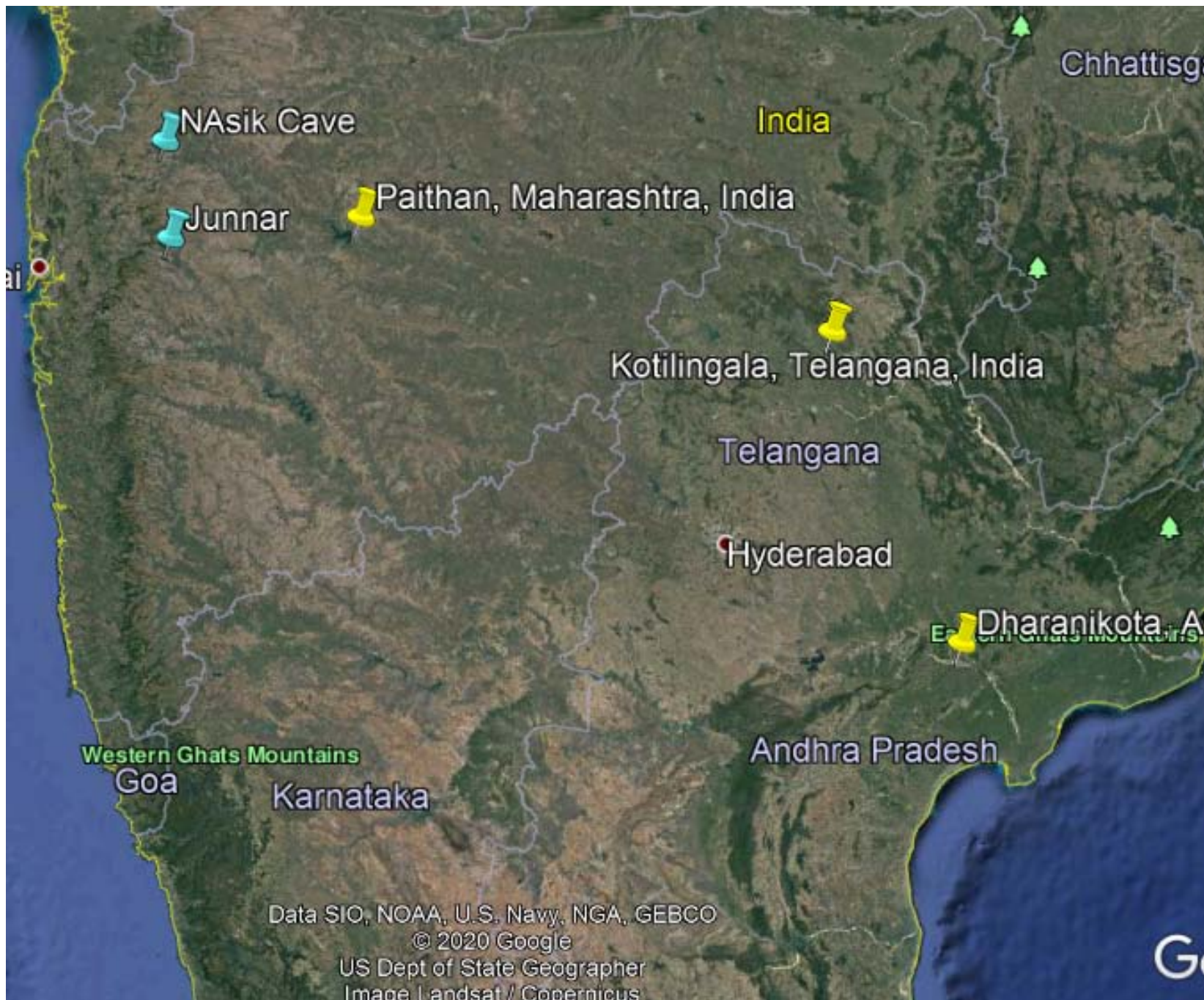




Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO  
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Imagery Date: 12/14/2015 14°28'28.02" N 86°41'11.90" E elev -9706 ft eye alt 1416.56 mi



NAsik Cave

Junnar

Paithan, Maharashtra, India

Kotilingala, Telangana, India

Telangana

Hyderabad

Dharanikota, A

Eastern Ghats Mountains

Western Ghats Mountains

Goa

Karnataka

Andhra Pradesh

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

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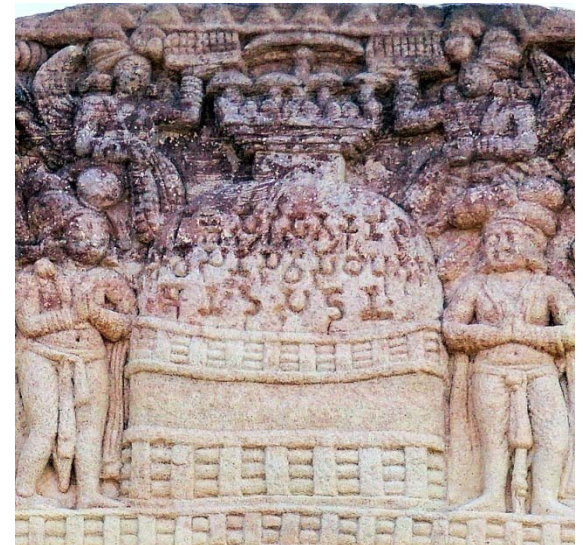
[Pandavleni Caves](#)



[Kanaganahalli](#) mahastupa



Nanaghat cave inscription



The [Siri-Satakani inscription](#) on the top [architraves](#) of the Southern Gateway by the artisans of the Satavahana king Satakarni II:



## Founder: Simuka



Epigraphical evidence strongly suggests a 1st century BCE date for Simuka: Simuka seems to be mentioned as the father the acting king Satakarni In the Naneghat inscription dated to 70-60 BCE. Kanha (Krishna) (probably Simuka's brother) in Cave no 19, dated to 100-70 BCE. Recent analysis of sources puts Simuka's reign possibly around 120 - 96 BCE.

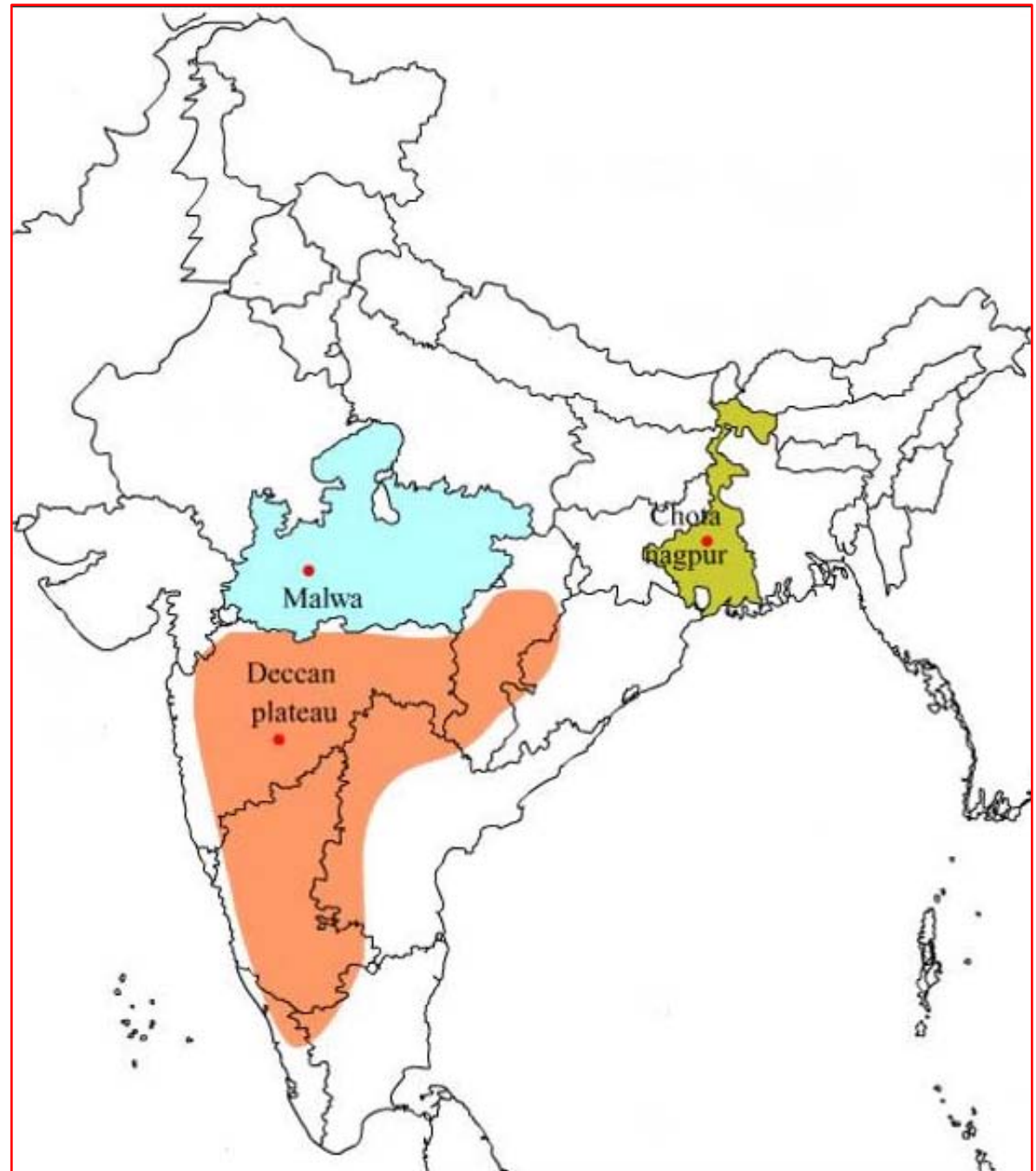
The various Puranans have different names for the founder of the Andhra dynasty: Shishuka in Matsya Purana, Sivraka in Vishnu Purana, Sindhuka in Vayu Purana, Chhesmaka in Brahmanda Purana, and Shudraka or Suraka in Kumarika Khanda of Skanda Purana.

# Satakarni / Satakarni - I

(dated to 88-42 BCE)

Satakarni/ Satakarni I enjoyed a long reign of about 50 years. He seems to have conquered Western Malwa region from the Shungas.

Satakarni I conquered Western Malwa, Anupa (Narmada Valley) and Vidarbha, taking advantage of the turmoil caused by Greek invasions of northern India.



The Naneghat inscription is thought to have been made during the reign of Satakarni I. According to the inscription, he married Nayanika (Naganika), daughter of the Maharathi Tranakayiro Kalalaya, scion of the Amgiya (Ambhiya) family. She wrote the Naneghat inscription, in which she describes Satakarni as "Lord of Dakshinapatha, wielder of the unchecked wheel of Sovereignty". The Naneghat inscription of Naganika suggests that Satakarni performed two horse sacrifices (Aswamedha), to proclaim his sovereignty.

Satakarni's successor Satakarni II ruled for 56 years, during which he captured eastern Malwa from the Shungas. This allowed him access to the Buddhist site of Sanchi, in which he is credited with the building of the decorated gateways around the original Mauryan Empire and Sunga. Satakarni II is known from a dedicatory inscription at Sanchi.

The reign of Satakarni II was followed by the collapse of the Satavahan empire, and the victories of the Western Satrapa ruler Nahapana. The Satavahana Empire would later revive under the rule of Gautimiputra Satakarni.

## Gautamiputra Satakarni (60-85 CE).

The information available about Gautamiputra Satakarni comes from his coins, the Satavahana inscriptions, and the royal genealogies in the various Purana. The best known of these is the Nashik Prasasti (eulogy) inscription of his mother Gautami Balashri, which credits him with extensive military conquests. Historical evidence suggests that Gautamiputra revived the Satavahana power after a decline caused by Shaka invasions.



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*Rāṇo Gotamiputasa Siri-Sātakaṇisa*

The Nashik Prasasti (eulogy) inscription of Gautamiputra's mother, located in the Nashik Caves, calls him the "king of kings", and states that his orders were obeyed by the circle of all kings. It indicates that his rule extended from Malwa and Saurashtra in the north of Krishna river in the south; and from Konkan in the west to Vidarbha (Berar) in the east.

## **Gautamiputra and Nahapana conflict**

Caves excavated by Gautamiputra Satakarni as well as the Western Kshatrapa king Nahapana are located at Nashik. The *Nashik prashasti* inscription states that Gautamiputra uprooted the Kshaharata (or Khagarata) family, to which Nahapana belonged. The Nashik inscription dated to the 18th year of Gautamiputra's reign states that he reaffirmed a grant of land to Buddhist monks living at the Triraśmi peak. This land was earlier in the possession of Nahapana's son-in-law Rishabjadatta (also known as Ushavadata), who had donated it to the monks.

A hoard of Nahapana's coins, discovered at Jogalthambi in Nashik district, includes coins re-struck by Gautamiputra. These coins feature an arched chaitya (Buddhist shrine) and the "Ujjain symbol" (a cross with four circles at the end).

Most historians now agree that Gautamiputra and Nahapana were contemporaries, and that Gautamiputra defeated Nahapana. M. K. Dhavalikar dates this event to c. 124 CE, which according to him, was the 18th regnal year of Gautamiputra. R.C.C. Fynes dates the event to sometime after 71 CE, in the same line, Shailendra Bhandare places the victory of Gautamiputra and the end of Nahapana's reign to the start of Saka era, 78 CE, in the year of Castana's accession, and considers Gautamiputra's whole reign to ca. 60-85 CE.

## Vasishthiputra Pulumavi



**Vasishthiputra Pulumavi** (85-125CE) He is also referred to as **Vasishthiputra Sri Pulumavi**. Ptolemy, the second century writer, refers to Pulumavi as *Siriptolemaios*, a contemporary of the Western Satrap, Chastana. The capital of Sri Pulumavi is reported to have been at Paithan.

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*Raño Vāsīṭhiputasa Siri-Puḷumāvisa*

# Vashishtiputra Satakarni

He was the brother of Vasisthiputra Sri Pulumavi, his regnal successor, and the son of the great Satavahana conqueror Gautamiputra Satakarni. His reign is dated variously: 138-145 CE, or 158-165 CE.

Vashishtiputra Satakarni was in great conflict with the Scythian Western Kshatrapas in the West, but he eventually married the daughter of Rudradaman I of the Western Kshatrapa dynasty, in order to forge an alliance. The inscription relating the marriage between Rudradaman I's daughter and Vashishtiputra Satakarni appears in a cave at Kanheri.



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*Raño Vāsiṭhiputasa Siva-Siri-Sātakaṃṇisa*

## Shivaskanda Satakarni

**Shivaskanda Satakarni** was one of the last rulers of the Satavahana dynasty in India. He succeeded Vashisthiputra Satakarni in 145 CE. His reign is dated variously: 154-161 CE, or 145-152 CE. He was defeated twice in battle by his Western Satrapa enemy Rudradaman.



# Administration

The Satavahana administration was very simple and was according to the principle laid down in Dharmashastras. The king laid no claim of divine right. They had only the most modest title of rajan. They had no absolute power. Their power was checked in practice by customs and shastras. The king was the commander of war and of threw himself into the thickest of the frays.

A peculiar feature of the Satavahana administration was the presence of feudatories of different grade.

1. Raja/princes bearing the kingly title raja and striking coins in their own names.
2. Mahabhoja, primarily located in western Deccan
3. Next in rank was the maharathi
4. Mahasenapathi and them mahataralavara. (later phase)

The empire was divided into janapadas and aharas, the latter corresponding to modern districts. The division below that of ahara was grama. Non-hereditary governors were subject to periodical transfers. There were other functionaries like great chamberlain store-keepers treasurers and dutakas who carried royal orders.

There were separate organization to look after the administration of the towns and the villages. The towns were administered by a body called the 'Nagarsabha' while in villages there were 'Gram Sabhas'. These organizations carried their functions independently without any interference.

Name of Satavahana Rulers	Contribution (s)
<b>Simuka</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Founder of the dynasty</li> <li>2. Succeeded by his brother Krishna (Kanha)</li> </ol>
<b>Kanha</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He is identified with the "Kanha-rajā" (King Kanha) of "Satavahana-kula" (Satavahana family) mentioned in a Nashik cave inscription</li> <li>2. He extended the empire to further south and was succeeded by Simuka's son Satkarni-I.</li> </ol>
<b>Satakarni</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He was the third of the Satavahana kings and was the first powerful Satavahans ruler.</li> <li>2. His achievements in details are describes in the Nanaghat inscription.</li> <li>3. Reffered to as 'lord of Dakshinpatha'</li> <li>4. His name is inscribed on one of the gateways of <b>Sanchi Stupa</b>.</li> </ol>
<b>Sivasvati</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. During his reign that the Western Satraps invaded Northern Maharashtra and Vidarbha and occupied the districts of Pune and Nashik, forcing the Satavahanas to abandon their capital Junnar and to move to Prastisthana (modern Paithan) in the vicinity of Aurangabad.</li> <li>2. His Queen was probably <b>Gautami Balashri</b> (mother of Gautamiputra Satakarni) who appears in an inscription at Nasik caves as the donator of Cave Number three.</li> </ol>
<b>Gautamiputra Satakarni</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information about him comes from his <b>coins, the Satavahana inscriptions</b> and the royal genealogies in the various <b>Puranas</b>.</li> <li>2. Best known inscription is the <b>Nashik prashasti (eulogy) inscription</b> of his mother Gautami Balashri, which credits him with extensive military conquests</li> <li>3. The Nashik prashasti inscription of Gautamiputra's mother calls him the "<b>king of kings</b>", and states that his orders were obeyed by the circle of all kings.</li> <li>4. He was the first king bearing matronym (Mothers name)</li> </ol>
<b>Vasishthiputra Pulumavi</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Referred to as <b>Vasishthiputra Sri Pulumavi</b></li> <li>2. Set up his capital at Paithan or Paristhan on the bank of Godavari river.</li> <li>3. He extended his borders to eastern Deccan and started <b>trade with Java and Sumatra</b>.</li> </ol>
<b>Vashishtiputra Satakarni</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He had great conflict with the Scythian Western Kshatrapas in the West, but he eventually married the daughter of Rudradaman I of the Western Kshatrapa dynasty, in order to forge an alliance.</li> <li>2. Inscription in a cave at Kanheri witnesses the marriage between Rudradaman I's daughter and Vashishtiputra Satakarni.</li> <li>3. He was defeated by his father-in-law in the battle that causes a serious effect on Satavahana power and prestige.</li> </ol>
<b>Shivaskanda Satakarni</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He succeeded Vashishtiputra Satakarni in 145 AD.</li> <li>2. He was defeated twice in battle by his Western Satrap enemy Rudradaman.</li> </ol>
<b>Yajna Sri Satakarni</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He was lover of trade and navigation.</li> <li>2. He issued coins in which ships were depicted.</li> </ol>
<b>Vijaya</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He was the last ruler of Satvahanas dynasty</li> </ol>