

LESSON - 1

INDIA - GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES AND THEIR IMPACT ON HISTORY

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. The geographical features of India*
- 2. The Himalayan Mountains and their impact on Indian history*
- 3. The Gangetic plains and their role in Indian history*
- 4. The Southern Peninsula and its effects on South Indian history*
- 5. India's unity in diversity*

It is generally said that history has two eyes - one is chronology and the other is geography. In other words time and space are significant factors in determining the historical process. In particular, a country's geography largely determines its historical events. The history of India is also influenced by its geography. Hence, the study of Indian geographical features contributes to the better understanding of its history.

The Indian subcontinent is a well - defined geographical unit. It may be divided into three major regions: the Himalayan Mountains, the Indo-Gangetic plains and the Southern Peninsula. There are five countries in the subcontinent - India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. India is the largest among them and it comprises twenty-nine states and seven Union Territories. According to the 2011 Census, the population of India is over 121 crores.

The Himalayan Mountains

The Himalayan Mountains are situated on the north of India starting from the Pamir in the extreme northwest of India, the mighty Himalayan range extends towards northeast. It has a length of nearly 2560 kilometres with an average breadth of 240 to 320 kilometres. The highest peak of the Himalayas is known as Mount Everest with its height being 8848 metres. It acts as a natural wall and protects the country against the cold arctic winds blowing from Siberia through Central Asia. This keeps the climate of northern India fairly warm throughout the year. The Himalayan region is mostly inhospitable in winter and generally covered with snow.

It was considered for a long time that the Himalayas stood as a natural barrier to protect India against invasions. But, the passes in the northwest mountains such as the Khyber, Bolan, Kurram and Gomal provided easy routes between India and Central Asia. These passes are situated in the Hindukush, Sulaiman and Kirthar ranges. From prehistoric times, there was a continuous flow of traffic through these passes. Many

people came to India through these passes as invaders and immigrants. The Indo-Aryans, the IndoGreeks, Parthians Sakas, Kushanas, Hunas and Turks entered India through these passes. The Swat valley in this region formed another important route. Alexander of Macedon came to India through this route. Apart from invading armies, missionaries and merchants came to India using these routes. Therefore, these passes in the northwest mountains had facilitated trade as well as cultural contacts between India and the Central Asia.

In the north of Kashmir is Karakoram Range. The second highest peak in the world, Mount Godwin Austen is situated here. This part of the Himalayas and its passes are high and snow-covered in the winter. The Karakoram highway via Gilgit is connected to Central Asia but there was little communication through this route. The valley of Kashmir is surrounded by high mountains. However, it could be reached through several passes. The Kashmir valley remains unique for its tradition and culture. Nepal is also a small valley under the foot of the Himalayas and it is accessible from Gangetic plains through a number of passes.

In the east, the Himalayas extend up to Assam. The important mountains in this region are Pat Koi, Nagai and Lushai ranges. These hills are covered with thick forests due to heavy rains and mostly remain inhospitable. The mountains of northeast India is difficult to cross and many parts of this region had remained in relative isolation.

The Indo-Gangetic Plain

The Indo-Gangetic plain is irrigated by three important rivers, the Ganges, Indus and Brahmaputra. This vast plain is most fertile and productive because of the alluvial soil brought by the streams of the rivers and its tributaries.

The Indus river rises beyond the Himalayas and its major tributaries are the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Sutlej and Beas. The Punjab plains are benefited by the Indus river system. The literal meaning of the term 'Punjab' is the land of five rivers. Sind is situated at the lower valley of the Indus. The Indus plain is known for its fertile soil.

The Thar Desert and Aravalli hills are situated in between the Indus and Gangetic plains. Mount Abu is the highest point (5650 ft.) in the Aravalli hills. The Ganges river rises in the Himalayas, flows south and then towards the east. The river Yamuna flows almost parallel to the Ganges and then joins it. The area between these two rivers is called doab – meaning the land between two rivers. The important tributaries of the Ganges are the Gomati, Sarayu, Ghagra and Gandak.



Thar Desert

In the east of India, the Ganges plain merges into the plains of Brahmaputra. The river Brahmaputra rises beyond the Himalayas, flows across Tibet and then continues through the plains of northeast India. In the plains, it is a vast but a slow-moving river forming several islands.

The Indo-Gangetic plain has contributed to the rise of urban centres, particularly on the river banks or at the confluence of rivers. The Harappan culture flourished in the Indus valley. The Vedic culture prospered in the western Gangetic plain. Banares, Allahabad, Agra, Delhi and Pataliputra are some of the important cities of the Gangetic plain. The city of Pataliputra was situated at the confluence of Son river with the Ganges. In the ancient period Pataliputra had remained the capital for the Mauryas, Sungas, Guptas and other kingdoms.

The most important city on the western side of the Gangetic plain is Delhi. Most of the decisive battles of Indian history such as the Kurukshetra, Tarain and Panipat were fought near Delhi. Also, this plain had always been a source of temptation and attraction for the foreign invaders due to its fertility and productive wealth. Important powers fought for the possession of these plains and valleys. Especially the Ganga-Yamuna doab proved to be the most coveted and contested area.

The rivers in this region served as arteries of commerce and communication. In ancient times it was difficult to make roads, and so men and material were moved by boat. The importance of rivers for communication continued till the days of the East India Company.

The Southern Peninsula

The Vindhya and Satpura mountains along with Narmada and the Tapti rivers form the great dividing line between northern and southern India. The plateau to the south of the Vindhya Mountains is known as the Deccan plateau. It consists of volcanic rock, which is different from the northern mountains. As these rocks are easier to cut into, we find a number of rock-cut monasteries and temples in the Deccan.

The Deccan plateau is flanked by the Eastern Ghats and Western Ghats. The Coramandal Coast stands between the Eastern Ghats and the Bay of Bengal. The Western Ghats runs along the Arabian sea and the lands between these are known as Konkan up to Goa and beyond that as Kanara. The southern most part is known as Malabar Coast. The passes in the Western Ghats like Junnar, Kanheri and Karle linked the trade routes to the western ports. The Deccan plateau acted as a bridge between the north and south India. However, the dense forests in the Vindhya Mountains makes this region isolated from the north. The language and culture in the southern peninsula are preserved in tact for a long time due to this geographical isolation.

In the southern end remains the famous Palghat Pass. It is the passage across the Ghats from the Kaveri valley to the Malabar Coast. The Palghat Pass was an important trade route for the Indo-Roman trade in the ancient times. The Anaimudi

is the highest peak in the southern peninsula. Doddapetta is another highest peak in the Western Ghats. The Eastern Ghats are not very high and have several openings caused by the eastward flow of the rivers into the Bay of Bengal. The port cities of Arikamedu, Mamallapuram and Kaveripattanam were situated on the Coromandal coast.

The major rivers of the southern peninsula are almost running parallel. Mahanadhi is at the eastern end of the peninsula. Narmadha and Tapti run from east to west. Other rivers like the Godavari, Krishna, Tungabhadra and Kaveri flow from west to east. These rivers make the plateau into a fertile rice producing soil. Throughout history, the region between Krishna and Tungabhadra (Raichur Doab) remained a bone of contention between the major kingdoms of the south. The deltaic plains formed by these two rivers at their mouths became famous under the Satavahanas. A number of towns and ports flourished in these plains in the beginning of the Christian era.

The Kaveri delta constitutes a distinct geographical zone in the far south. It became the seat of the Chola power. The Kaveri basin with its rich tradition, language and culture has flourished from the ancient times.

As the southern peninsula is gifted with a long coastline, the people of this region took keen interest in the maritime activities. A great deal of trade and commerce went on through the seaways from the earliest times. In the east, mariners reached countries like Jawa, Sumatra, Burma and Cambodia. Apart from trade, they spread Indian art, religion and culture in these parts of the world. The commercial contacts between south India and the Greco-Roman countries flourished along with cultural relations.

India – A Land of Unity in Diversity

The history of ancient India is interesting because India proved to be a melting pot of numerous races. The pre-Aryans, the Indo- Aryans, the Greeks, the Scythians, the Hunas, the Turks, etc., made India their home. Each ethnic group contributed its might to the making of Indian culture. All these peoples mixed up so inextricably with one another that at present none of them can be identified in their original form. Different cultures mingled with one another through the ages. Many pre-Aryan or Dravidian terms occur in the Vedic texts. Similarly, many Pali and Sanskrit terms appear in the Sangam literature.

Since ancient times, India has been the land of several religions. Ancient India witnessed the birth of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. But all these cultures and religions intermingled with one another. Although Indians people speak different languages, practice different religions, and observe different social customs, they follow certain common styles of life throughout the country. Therefore, our country shows a deep underlying unity in spite of great diversity.

In fact, the ancients strove for unity. They looked upon this vast subcontinent as one land. The name Bharatavarsha or the land of Bharata was given to the whole country, after the name of an ancient tribe called the Bharatas. Our ancient poets, philosophers and writers viewed the country as an integral unit. This kind of political unity was attained at least twice during the Mauryan and Gupta Empires.

The unity of India was also recognized by foreigners. They first came into contact with the people living on the *Sindhu* or the Indus, and so they named the whole country after this river. The word Hind is derived from the Sanskrit term Sindhu, and in course of time the country came to be known as 'India' in Greek, and 'Hind' in Persian and Arabic languages.

Efforts for the linguistic and cultural unity of the country were made through the ages. In the third century B.C., Prakrit language served as the *lingua franca* of the country. Throughout the major portion of India, Asoka's inscriptions were written in the Prakrit language. Also, the ancient epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, were studied with the same zeal and devotion throughout the country. Originally composed in Sanskrit, these epics came to be presented in different local languages. Although the Indian cultural values and ideas were expressed in different forms, the substance remained the same throughout the country.

Hence, India has emerged a multi-religious and multi-cultural society. However, the underlying unity and integrity and the plural character of Indian society remain the real strength for the development of the country.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

- 1. The geographical features of India.*
- 2. The details of the Himalayan Mountains, the passes in the northwest and how they were used by the foreign invaders, traders and migrants.*
- 3. The river systems of the Indo-Gangetic Gangetic valley and their impact on the historical events such as battles and emergence of urban centres.*
- 4. The southern peninsula, the long coasts which contributed to a lot of maritime activities.*
- 5. How India emerged as a multicultural society and the same is successfully sustained over the centuries.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

- Alexander of Macedon came to India through
(a) Deccan Plateau (b) Kharakoram range
(c) Swat valley (d) Aravalli hills
- The region between two rivers is called
(a) Plateau (b) Peninsula
(c) Doab (d) Peak

II. Fill in the blanks.

- The river Ganges rises in
- The highest peak in the southern peninsula is

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Mount Everest | a) Aravalli hills |
| 2. Mount Abu | b) Kharakoram |
| 3. Doddabetta | c) Himalayas |
| 4. Godwin Austin | d) Western Ghats |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- Narmada river runs from east to west.
- Kaveri river runs from south to north.
- Yamuna river merges with Tapti.
- Maha Nadhi river irrigates the Punjab region.

V. State whether the following statements are true or False.

- The city of Pataliputra was situated at the confluence of Ganges with Brahmaputra.
- The long coast line in the southern peninsula contributed to the growth of maritime trade.
- The Palghat Pass is situated on the Western Ghats.
- India is a multi-cultural society.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

1. Himalayan Mountains.
2. Deccan Plateau.
3. Rivers of southern peninsula
4. Multi-cultural society.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

1. Write a note on the impact of the Indo-Gangetic Plains on the history of India.
2. Briefly describe the geography of South India.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

1. Assess the impact of geography on the history of India.
2. 'India is a land of unity in diversity' – Elucidate.

LESSON 2

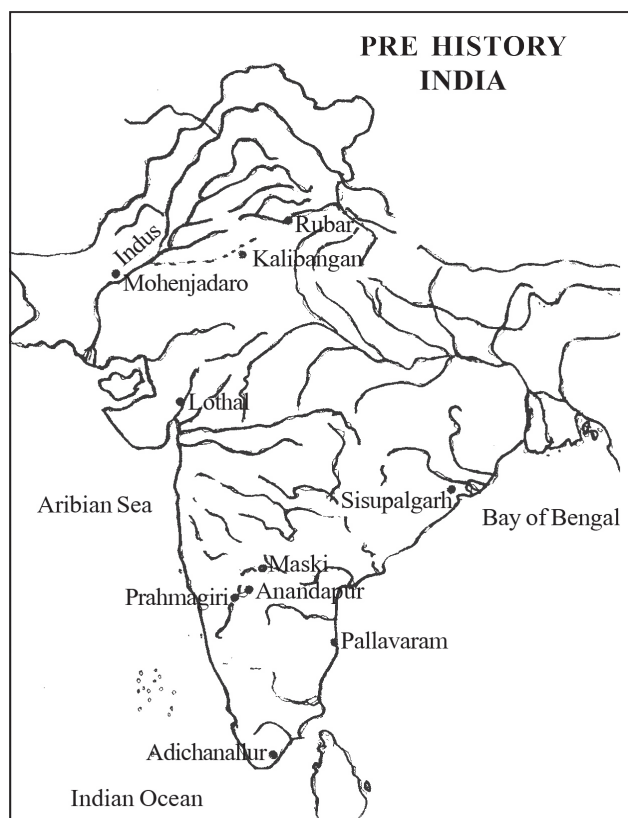
PRE-HISTORIC INDIA AND THE HARAPPAN CULTURE

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. The Pre-historic period.*
- 2. Origin and evolution of the Harappan Civilization.*
- 3. Socio-economic condition of the Harappan people.*
- 4. Cultural life of the Harappans.*
- 5. The Decline of the Harappan Civilization.*

The history of human settlements in India goes back to prehistoric times. No written records are available for the prehistoric period. However, plenty of archaeological remains are found in different parts of India to reconstruct the history of this period. They include the stone tools, pottery, artifacts and metal implements used by pre-historic people. The development of archaeology helps much to understand the life and culture of the people who lived in this period.



In India, the prehistoric period is divided into the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age), Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age), Neolithic (New Stone Age) and the Metal Age. However, these periods were not uniform throughout the Indian subcontinent. The dating of the prehistoric period is done scientifically. The technique of radio-carbon dating is commonly used for this purpose. It is based on measuring the loss of carbon in organic materials over a period of time. Another dating method is known as dendro-chronology. It refers to the number of tree rings in wood. By counting the number of tree rings in the wood, the date of the wood is arrived at.

Paleolithic or Old Stone Age

The Old Stone Age sites are widely found in various parts of the Indian subcontinent. These sites are generally located near water sources. Several rock shelters and caves used by the Paleolithic people are scattered across the subcontinent. They also lived rarely in huts made of leaves. Some of the famous sites of Old Stone Age in India are:

- a. The Soan valley and Potwar Plateau on the northwest India.
- b. The Siwalik hills on the north India.
- c. Bhimpetka in Madhya Pradesh.
- d. Adamgarh hill in Narmada valley.
- e. Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh and
- f. Attirampakkam near Chennai.



old stone Age Tools

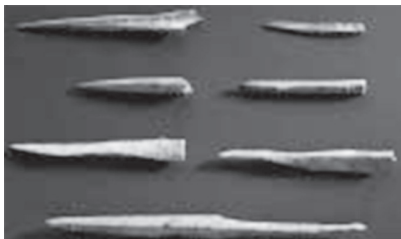
In the Old Stone Age, food was obtained by hunting animals and gathering edible plants and tubers. Therefore, these people are called as hunter-gatherers. They used stone tools, hand-sized and flaked-off large pebbles for hunting animals. Stone implements are made of a hard rock known as quartzite. Large pebbles are often found in river terraces. The hunting of large animals would have required the combined effort of a group of people with large stone axes. We have little knowledge about their language and communication. Their way of life became modified with the passage of time since they made attempts to domesticate animals, make crude pots and grow some plants. A few Old Stone Age paintings have also been found on rocks at Bhimbetka and other places. The period before 10000 B.C. is assigned to the Old Stone Age.

Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age

The next stage of human life is called Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age which falls roughly from 10000 B.C. to 6000 B.C. It was the transitional phase between the Paleolithic Age and Neolithic Age. Mesolithic remains are found in Langhanj in Gujarat, Adamgarh in Madhya Pradesh and also in some places of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh

and Bihar. The paintings and engravings found at the rock shelters give an idea about the social life and economic activities of Mesolithic people. In the sites of Mesolithic Age, a different type of stone tools is found. These are tiny stone artifacts, often not more than five centimeters in size, and therefore called microliths. The hunting-gathering pattern of life continued during this period. However, there seems to have been a shift from big animal hunting to small animal hunting and fishing. The use of bow and arrow also began during this period. Also, there began a tendency to settle for longer periods in an area. Therefore, domestication of animals, horticulture and primitive cultivation started. Animal bones are found in these sites and these include dog, deer, boar and ostrich. Occasionally, burials of the dead along with some microliths and shells seem to have been practiced.

Neolithic Age



New Stone Age Tools

A remarkable progress is noticed in human civilization in the Neolithic Age. It is approximately dated from 6000 B.C to 4000 B.C. Neolithic remains are found in various parts of India. These include the Kashmir valley, Chirand in Bihar, Belan valley in Uttar Pradesh and in several places of the Deccan. The important Neolithic sites excavated in south India are Maski, Brahmagiri, Hallur and Kodekal in Karnataka, Paiyampalli in Tamil Nadu and Utnur in Andhra Pradesh.

The chief characteristic features of the Neolithic culture are the practice of agriculture, domestication of animals, polishing of stone tools and the manufacture of pottery. In fact, the cultivation of plants and domestication of animals led to the emergence of village communities based on sedentary life.

There was a great improvement in technology of making tools and other equipments used by man. Stone tools were now polished. The polished axes were found to be more effective tools for hunting and cutting trees. Mud brick houses were built instead of grass huts. Wheels were used to make pottery. Pottery was used for cooking as well as storage of food grains. Large urns were used as coffins for the burial of the dead. There was also improvement in agriculture. Wheat, barely, rice, millet were cultivated in different areas at different points of time. Rice cultivation was extensive in eastern India. Domestication of sheep, goats and cattle was widely prevalent. Cattle were used for cultivation and for transport. The people of Neolithic Age used clothes made of cotton and wool.

Metal Age

The Neolithic period is followed by Chalcolithic (copper-stone) period when copper and bronze came to be used. The new technology of smelting metal ore and crafting metal artifacts is an important development in human civilization. But the use

of stone tools was not given up. Some of the micro-lithic tools continued to be essential items. People began to travel for a long distance to obtain metal ores. This led to a network of Chalcolithic cultures and the Chalcolithic cultures were found in many parts of India.

Generally, Chalcolithic cultures had grown in river valleys. Most importantly, the Harappan culture is considered as a part of Chalcolithic culture. In South India the river valleys of the Godavari, Krishna, Tungabhadra, Pennar and Kaveri were settled by farming communities during this period. Although they were not using metals in the beginning of the Metal Age, there is evidence of copper and bronze artifacts by the end of second millennium B.C. Several bronze and copper objects, beads, terracotta figurines and pottery were found at Paiyampalli in Tamil Nadu.

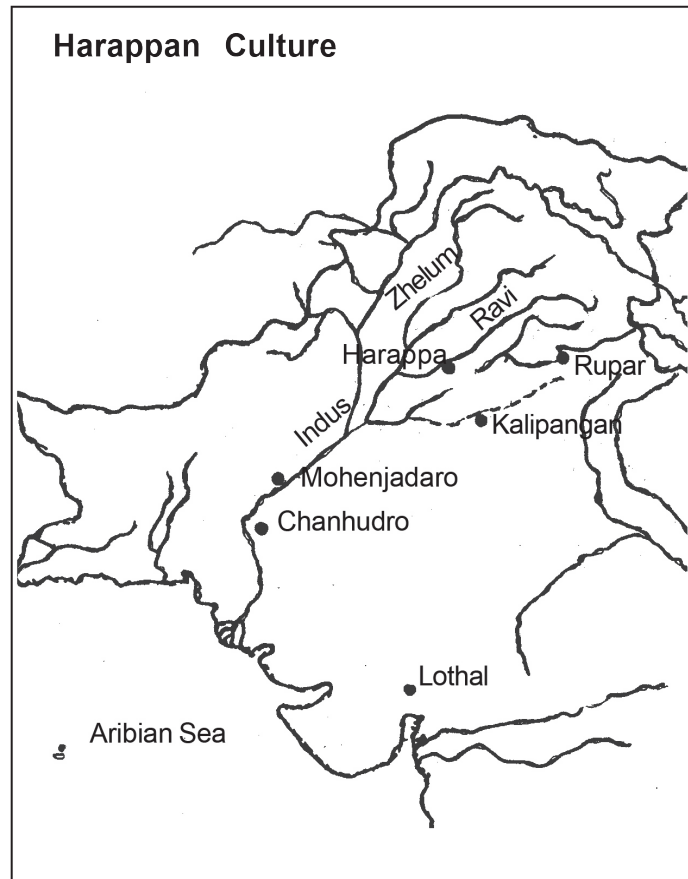
The Chalcolithic age is followed by Iron Age. Iron is frequently referred to in the Vedas. The Iron Age of the southern peninsula is often related to Megalithic Burials. Megalith means Large Stone. The burial pits were covered with these stones. Such graves are extensively found in South India. Some of the important megalithic sites are Hallur and Maski in Karnataka, Nagarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh and Adichchanallur in Tamil Nadu. Black and red pottery, iron artifacts such as hoes and sickles and small weapons were found in the burial pits.

The Harappan Civilization

The earliest excavations in the Indus valley were done at Harappa in the West Punjab and Mohenjodaro in Sind. Both places are now in Pakistan. The findings in these two cities brought to light a civilization. It was first called the 'The Indus Valley Civilization'. But this civilization was later named as the 'Indus Civilization' due to the discovery of more and more sites far away from the Indus valley. Also, it has come to be called the 'Harappan Civilization' after the name of its first discovered site.

Important Sites

Among the many other sites excavated, the most important are Kot Diji in Sind, Kalibangan in Rajasthan, Rupar in the Punjab, Banawali in Haryana, Lothal, Surkotada and Dholavira, all the three in Gujarat. The larger cities are approximately a hundred hectares in size. Mohenjodara is the largest of all the Indus cities and it is estimated to have spread over an area of 200 hectares.



Origin and Evolution

The archaeological findings excavated for the last eight decades reveal the gradual development of the Harappan culture. There are four important stages or phases of evolution and they are named as pre-Harappan, early-Harappan, mature-Harappan and late Harappan.

The pre-Harappan stage is located in eastern Baluchistan. The excavations at Mehrgarh 150 miles to the northwest of Mohenjodaro reveal the existence of pre-Harappan culture. In this stage, the nomadic people began to lead a settled agricultural life.

In the early-Harappan stage, the people lived in large villages in the plains. There was a gradual growth of towns in the Indus valley. Also, the transition from rural to urban life took place during this period. The sites of Amri and Kot Diji remain the evidence for early-Harappan stage.

In the mature-Harappan stage, great cities emerged. The excavations at Kalibangan with its elaborate town planning and urban features prove this phase of evolution.

In the late-Harappan stage, the decline of the Indus culture started. The excavations at Lothal reveal this stage of evolution. Lothal with its port was founded

much later. It was surrounded by a massive brick wall as flood protection. Lothal remained an emporium of trade between the Harappan civilization and the remaining part of India as well as Mesopotamia.

Date of the Harappan Culture

In 1931, Sir John Marshall estimated the duration of the occupation of Mohenjodaro between 3250 and 2750 B.C. Subsequently, as and when new sites were discovered, the dating of the Harappan culture is modified. The advent of the radiocarbon method paves way for fixing almost accurate dates. By 1956, Fairervis brought down the dating of the Harappan culture to between 2000 and 1500 B.C. on the basis of radiocarbon dates of his findings. In 1964, D.P. Agarwal came to the conclusion that the total span of this culture should be between 2300 and 1750 B.C. Yet, there is further scope of modification of these dates.

Salient Features of the Harappan Culture

Town Planning

The Harappan culture was distinguished by its system of townplanning on the lines of the grid system – that is streets and lanes cutting across one another almost at



Great Bath at Mohenjodaro

right angles thus dividing the city into several rectangular blocks. Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Kalibangan each had its own citadel built on a high podium of mud brick. Below the citadel in each city lay a lower town containing brick houses, which were inhabited by the common people. The large-scale use of burnt bricks in almost all kinds of constructions and the absence of stone buildings are the important characteristics of the Harappan culture.

Another remarkable feature was the underground drainage system connecting all houses to the street drains which were covered by stone slabs or bricks.

The most important public place of Mohenjodaro is the Great Bath measuring 39 feet length, 23 feet breadth and 8 feet depth. Flights of steps at either end lead to the surface. There are side rooms for changing clothes. The floor of the Bath was made of burnt bricks. Water was drawn from a large well in an adjacent room, and an outlet from one corner of the Bath led to a drain. It must have served as a ritual bathing site. The largest building in Mohenjodaro is a granary measuring 150 feet length and 50 feet breadth. But in the citadel of Harappa we find as many as six granaries.

Economic life

There was a great progress in all spheres of economic activity such as agriculture, industry and crafts and trade. Wheat and barley were the main crops grown besides sesame, mustard and cotton. Surplus grain is stored in granaries. Animals like sheep, goats and buffalo were domesticated. The use of horse is not yet firmly established. A number of other animals were hunted for food including deer.



Specialized groups of artisans include goldsmiths, brick makers, stone cutters, weavers, boat-builders and terracotta manufacturers. Bronze and copper vessels are the outstanding examples of the Harappan metal craft. Gold and silver ornaments are found in many places. Pottery remains plain and in some places red and black painted pottery is found. Beads were manufactured from a wide variety of semi-precious stones.

HARAPPAN SEAL

Internal trade was extensive with other parts of India. Foreign trade was mainly conducted with Mesopotamia, Afghanistan and Iran. Gold, copper, tin and several semi-precious stones were imported. Main exports were several agricultural products such as wheat, barley, peas, oil seeds and a variety of finished products including cotton goods, pottery, beads, terracotta figures and ivory products. There is much evidence to prove the trade links between the Indus and Sumerian people. Many seals of Indus valley have been found in Mesopotamia. Trade was of the barter type. The seals and the terracotta models of the Indus valley reveal the use of bullock carts and oxen for land transport and boats and ships for river and sea transport.

Social Life

Much evidence is available to understand the social life of the Harappans. The dress of both men and women consisted of two pieces of cloth, one upper garment and the other lower garment. Beads were worn by men and women. Jewellery such as bangles, bracelets, fillets, girdles, anklets, ear-rings and fingerings were worn by women. These ornaments were made of gold, silver, copper, bronze and semi precious stones. The use of cosmetics was common. Various household articles made of pottery, stone, shells, ivory and metal have been found at Mohenjodaro. Spindles, needles, combs, fishhooks, knives are made of copper. Children's toys include little clay carts. Marbles, balls and dice were used for games. Fishing was a regular occupation while hunting and bull fighting were other pastimes. There were numerous specimens of weapons of war such as axes, spearheads, daggers, bows, arrows made of copper and bronze.



ORNAMENTS USED BY THE HARAPPANS

Arts

The Harappan sculpture revealed a high degree of workmanship. Figures of men and women, animals and birds made of terracotta and the carvings on the seals show the degree of proficiency attained by the sculptor. The figure of a dancing girl from Mohenjodaro made of bronze is remarkable for its workmanship. Its right hand rests

on the hip, while the left arm, covered with bangles, hangs loosely in a relaxed posture. Two stone statues from Harappa, one representing the back view of a man and the other of a dancer are also specimens of their sculpture. The pottery from Harappa is another specimen of the fine arts of the Indus people. The pots and jars were painted with various designs and colours. Painted pottery is of better quality. The pictorial motifs consisted of geometrical patterns like horizontal lines, circles, leaves, plants and trees. On some pottery pieces we find figures of fish or peacock.

Script

The Harappan script has still to be fully deciphered. The number of signs is between 400 and 600 of which 40 or 60 are basic and the rest are their variants. The script was mostly



HARAPPAN SCRIPT

written from right to left. In a few long seals the boustrophedon method – writing in the reverse direction in alternative lines - was adopted. Parpola and his Scandinavian colleagues came to the conclusion that the language of the Harappans was Dravidian. A group of Soviet scholars accepts this view. Other scholars provide different view connecting the Harappan script with that of Brahmi. The mystery of the Harappan script still exists and there is no doubt that the decipherment of Harappan script will throw much light on this culture.



TERRACOTTA FIGURINE

Religion

From the seals, terracotta figurines and copper tablets we get an idea on the religious life of the Harappans. The chief male deity was Pasupati, (proto-Siva) represented in seals as sitting in a yogic posture with three faces and two horns. He is surrounded by four animals (elephant, tiger, rhino, and buffalo each facing a different direction). Two deer appear on his feet. The chief female deity was the Mother Goddess represented in terracotta figurines. In latter times, Linga worship was prevalent. Trees and animals were also worshipped by the Harappans. They believed in ghosts and evil forces and used amulets as protection against them.

Burial Methods

The cemeteries discovered around the cities like Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Kalibangan, Lothal and Rupar throw light on the burial practices of the Harappans. Complete burial and post-cremation burial were popular at Mohenjodaro. At Lothal the burial pit was lined with burnt bricks indicating the use of coffins. Wooden coffins were also found at Harappa. The practice of pot burials is found at Lothal sometimes with pairs of skeletons. However, there is no clear evidence for the practice of Sati.

Decline of the Harappan Culture

There is no unanimous view pertaining to the cause for the decline of the Harappan culture. Various theories have been postulated. Natural calamities like recurring floods, drying up of rivers, decreasing fertility of the soil due to excessive exploitation and occasional earthquakes might have caused the decline of the Harappan cities. According to some scholars the final blow was delivered by the invasion of Aryans. The destruction of forts is mentioned in the Rig Veda. Also, the discovery of human skeletons huddled together at Mohenjodaro indicates that the city was invaded by foreigners. The Aryans had superior weapons as well as swift horses which might have enabled them to become masters of this region.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be to explain

- 1. The findings of the Paleolithic, Neolithic and Metal Age and the socio-economic life of the people during these periods.*
- 2. The origin and evolution of the Harappan culture and the important sites of excavations.*
- 3. The salient features of the Harappan civilization such as town planning, social life and economic condition of the Harappans.*
- 4. The date of the Harappan culture as well as the religious beliefs and the art of the Harappans.*
- 5. Different views on the decline of the Harappan civilization.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. The Chalcolithic age was followed by
 - (a) Old Stone age
 - (b) New Stone age
 - (c) Iron age
 - (d) Mesolithic age
2. The port city of the Harappan culture
 - (a) Kalibangan
 - (b) Lothal
 - (c) Banawali
 - (d) Rupar

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. The most important Megalithic site in Tamil Nadu is
2. The chief female deity of the Harappan culture was

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Kot Diji | a) Haryana |
| 2. Dholavira | b) Rajasthan |
| 3. Kalibangan | c) Sind |
| 4. Banawali | d) Gujarat |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) There are three stages in the evolution of Harappan culture.
- b) Parpola concluded that the language of Harappan people is Sanskrit.
- c) Sir John Marshal used the radio-carbon dating method.
- d) The Harappan people believed in ghosts and used amulets as protection against them.

V. State whether the following statements are true or False.

- 1. The Old Stone Age people practiced agriculture.
- 2. Microliths were used by the Mesolithic people.
- 3. Trade links existed between the Indus and Sumerian people.
- 4. The Harappan people did not know the art of writing.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

- 1. Chalcolithic Age
- 2. Megaliths.
- 3. Great Bath.
- 4. Date of the Harappan Culture.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

- 1. Write a note on the Old Stone Age.
- 2. Trace the origin and evolution of the Harappan Culture.
- 3. Name the important sites of the Harappan Culture.
- 4. Mention the probable causes for the decline of the Harappan culture.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

- 1. Write a brief essay on the pre-historic period in India.
- 2. Describe the socio-economic condition of the Harappan civilization.

LESSON 3

THE VEDIC CULTURE

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. The original home of the Aryans.*
- 2. The Vedic Literature and their importance.*
- 3. The Rig Vedic Age and its culture.*
- 4. The Later Vedic Age and its culture.*

The cities of the Harappan Culture had declined by 1500 B.C. Consequently, their economic and administrative system had slowly declined. Around this period, the speakers of Indo-Aryan language, Sanskrit, entered the north-west India from the Indo-Iranian region. Initially they would have come in small numbers through the passes in the northwestern mountains. Their initial settlements were in the valleys of the north-west and the plains of the Punjab. Later, they moved into Indo-Gangetic plains. As they were mainly a cattle-keeping people, they were mainly in search of pastures. By 6th century B.C., they occupied the whole of North India, which was referred to as Aryavarta. This period between 1500 B.C and 600 B.C may be divided into the Early Vedic Period or Rig Vedic Period (1500 B.C - 1000 B.C) and the Later Vedic Period (1000 B.C - 600 B.C).

Original Home of the Aryans

The original home of the Aryans is a debatable question and there are several views. Different scholars have identified different regions as the original home of the Aryans. They include the Arctic region, Germany, Central Asia and southern Russia. Bala Gangadhara Tilak argues that the Aryans came from the Arctic region on astronomical calculations. However, the theory of southern Russia appears to be more probable and widely accepted by historians. From there, the Aryans moved to different parts of Asia and Europe. They entered India in about 1500 B.C. and came to be known as Indo-Aryans. They spoke the Indo-Aryan language, Sanskrit.

Vedic Literature

The word 'Veda' is derived from the root 'vid', which means to know. In other words, the term 'Veda' signifies 'superior knowledge'. The Vedic literature consists of the four Vedas – Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva. The Rig Veda is the earliest of the four Vedas and it consists of 1028 hymns. The hymns were sung in praise of various gods. The Yajur Veda consists of various details of rules to be observed at the time of sacrifice. The Sama Veda is set to tune for the purpose of chanting during sacrifice. It is called the book of chants and the origins of Indian music are traced in it. The Atharva Veda contains details of rituals.

Besides the Vedas, there are other sacred works like the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, the Aranyakas and the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. The Brahmanas are the treatises relating to prayer and sacrificial ceremony. The Upanishads are philosophical texts dealing with topics like the soul, the absolute, the origin of the world and the mysteries of nature. The Aranyakas are called forest books and they deal with mysticism, rites, rituals and sacrifices. The author of Ramayana was Valmiki and that of Mahabharata was Vedavyas.

Rig Vedic Age or Early Vedic Period (1500 - 1000 B.C.)

During the Rig Vedic period, the Aryans were mostly confined to the Indus region. The Rig Veda refers to Saptasindhu or the land of seven rivers. This includes the five rivers of Punjab, namely Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej along with the Indus and Saraswathi. The political, social and cultural life of the Rig Vedic people can be traced from the hymns of the Rig Veda.

Political Organization

The basic unit of political organization was *kula* or family. Several families joined together on the basis of their kinship to form a village or grama. The leader of grama was known as gramani. A group of villages constituted a larger unit called *visu*. It was headed by vishayapati. The highest political unit was called jana or tribe. There were several tribal kingdoms during the Rig Vedic period such as Bharatas, Matsyas, Yadus and Purus. The head of the kingdom was called as *rajan* or king. The Rig Vedic polity was normally monarchical and the succession was hereditary. The king was assisted by *purohita* or priest and *senani* or commander of the army in his administration. There were two popular bodies called the *Sabha* and *Samiti*. The former seems to have been a council of elders and the latter, a general assembly of the entire people.

Social Life

The Rig Vedic society was patriarchal. The basic unit of society was family or *graham*. The head of the family was known as *grahapathi*. Monogamy was generally practiced while polygamy was prevalent among the royal and noble families. The wife took care of the household and participated in all the major ceremonies. Women were given equal opportunities as men for their spiritual and intellectual development. There were women poets like Apala, Viswavara, Ghosa and Lopamudra during the Rig Vedic period. Women could even attend the popular assemblies. There was no child marriage and the practice of sati was absent.

Both men and women wore upper and lower garments made of cotton and wool. A variety of ornaments were used by both men and women. Wheat and barley, milk and its products like curd and ghee, vegetables and fruits were the chief articles of food. The eating of cow's meat was prohibited since it was a sacred animal. Chariot racing, horse racing, dicing, music and dance were the favourite pastimes. The social divisions were not rigid during the Rig Vedic period as it was in the later Vedic period.

Economic Condition

The Rig Vedic Aryans were pastoral people and their main occupation was cattle rearing. Their wealth was estimated in terms of their cattle. When they permanently settled in North India they began to practice agriculture. With the knowledge and use of iron they were able to clear forests and bring more lands under cultivation. Carpentry was another important profession and the availability of wood from the forests cleared made the profession profitable. Carpenters produced chariots and ploughs. Workers in metal made a variety of articles with copper, bronze and iron. Spinning was another important occupation and cotton and woolen fabrics were made. Goldsmiths were active in making ornaments. The potters made various kinds of vessels for domestic use.

Trade was another important economic activity and rivers served as important means of transport. Trade was conducted on barter system. In the later times, gold coins called nishka were used as media of exchange in large transactions.

Religion

The Rig Vedic Aryans worshiped the natural forces like earth, fire, wind, rain and thunder. They personified these natural forces into many gods and worshipped them. The important Rig Vedic gods were Prithvi (Earth), Agni (Fire), Vayu (Wind), Varuna (Rain) and Indra (Thunder). Indra was the most popular among them during the early Vedic period. Next in importance to Indra was Agni who was regarded as an intermediary between the gods and people. Varuna was supposed to be the upholder of the natural order. There were also female gods like Aditi and Ushas. There were no temples and no idol worship during the early Vedic period. Prayers were offered to the gods in the expectation of rewards. Ghee, milk and grain were given as offerings. Elaborate rituals were followed during the worship.

Later Vedic Period (1000 – 600 B.C.)

The Aryans further moved towards east in the Later Vedic Period. The Satapatha Brahmana refers to the expansion of Aryans to the eastern Gangetic plains. Several tribal groups and kingdoms are mentioned in the later Vedic literature. One important development during this period is the growth of large kingdoms. Kuru and Panchala kingdoms flourished in the beginning. Parikshat and Janamejaya were the famous rulers of Kuru kingdom. Pravahana Jaivali was a popular king of the Panchalas. He was a patron of learning. After the fall of Kurus and Panchalas, other kingdoms like Kosala, Kasi and Videha came into prominence. The famous ruler of Kasi was Ajatasatru. Janaka was the king of Videha with its capital at Mithila. His court was adorned by scholar Yajnavalkya. Magadha, Anga and Vanga seem to be the easternmost tribal kingdoms. The later Vedic texts also refer to the three divisions of India – Aryavarta (northern India), Madhyadesa (central India) and Dakshinapatha (southern India).

Political Organization

Larger kingdoms were formed during the later Vedic period. Many *jana* or tribes were amalgamated to form *janapadas* or *rashttras* in the later Vedic period. Hence the royal power had increased along with the increase in the size of kingdom. The king performed various rituals and sacrifices to strengthen his position. They include *Rajasuya* (consecration ceremony), *Asvamedha* (horse sacrifice) and *Vajpeya* (chariot race). The kings also assumed titles like *Rajavisvajanan*, *Ahlabhuvanapathi*, (lord of all earth), *Ekrat* and *Samrat* (sole ruler).

In the later Vedic period, a large number of new officials were involved in the administration in addition to the existing *purohita*, *senani* and *gramani*. They include the treasury officer, tax collector and royal messenger. At the lower levels, the administration was carried on by the village assemblies. The importance of the *Samiti* and the *Sabha* had diminished during the later Vedic period.

Economic Condition

Iron was used extensively in this period and this enabled the people to clear forests and to bring more land under cultivation. Agriculture became the chief occupation. Improved types of implements were used for cultivation. Besides barley, rice and wheat were grown. Knowledge of manure was another improvement. Industrial activity became more varied and there was greater specialization. Metal work, leather work, carpentry and pottery made great progress. In addition to internal trade, foreign trade became extensive. The Later Vedic people were familiar with the sea and they traded with countries like Babylon. A class of hereditary merchants (*vaniya*) came into existence. Vaisyas also carried on trade and commerce. They organized themselves into guilds known as *ganas*. Besides *nishka* of the Rig Vedic period, gold and silver coins like *satamana* and *krishnala* were used as media of exchange.

Social Life

The four divisions of society (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras) or the Varna system was thoroughly established during the Later Vedic period. The two higher classes - Brahmana, and Kshatriya enjoyed privileges that were denied to the Vaisya and Sudra. A Brahmin occupied a higher position than a Kshatriya but sometimes Kshatriyas claimed a higher status over the Brahmins. Many sub-castes on the basis of their occupation appeared in this period.

In the family, the power of the father increased during the Later Vedic period. There was no improvement in the status of women. They were still considered inferior and subordinate to men. Women also lost their political rights of attending assemblies. Child marriages had become common. According to the *Aitreya Brahmana* a daughter has been described as a source of misery. However, the women in the royal household enjoyed certain privileges.

Religion

Gods of the Early Vedic period like Indra and Agni lost their importance. Prajapathi (the creator), Vishnu (the protector) and Rudra (the destroyer) became prominent during the Later Vedic period. Sacrifices were still important and the rituals connected with them became more elaborate. The importance of prayers declined and that of sacrifices increased. Priesthood became a profession and a hereditary one. The formulae for sacrifices were invented and elaborated by the priestly class. Therefore, towards the end of this period there was a strong reaction against priestly domination and against sacrifices and rituals. The rise of Buddhism and Jainism was the direct result of these elaborate sacrifices. Also, the authors of the Upanishads, which is the essence of Hindu philosophy, turned away from the useless rituals and insisted on true knowledge (*jnana*) for peace and salvation.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

1. *The Vedic Literature such as the four Vedas and the Brahmanas and other later Vedic literature.*
2. *The Rig Vedic polity, society and economy.*
3. *Religious life of the Rig Vedic people.*
4. *The changes during the Later Vedic period in the sphere of polity and society.*
5. *The increasing rites and rituals in the religious life of the Later Vedic people.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. The earliest of the Vedas
(a) Rig (b) Yajur
(c) Sama (d) Atharva
2. Pravahana Jaivali was a popular king of
(a) Videha (b) Kasi
(c) Kuru (d) Panchalas

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. The author of Ramayana was _____
2. The Arctic home for the Aryans was suggested by _____

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 1. Nishka | a) Later Vedic coin |
| 2. Ushas | b) Rig Vedic coin |
| 3. Apala | c) Goddess |
| 4. Krishnala | d) Woman poet |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) Indra and Varuna were the important gods during the Later Vedic period.
- b) The position of women improved during the Later Vedic period.
- c) The caste system was not rigid during the Later Vedic period.
- d) The importance of Samiti and Sabha declined during the Later Vedic period.

V. State whether the following statements are true or False.

- 1. The Aranyakas constitute the essence of Hindu philosophy.
- 2. The power of the kings had increased during the Later Vedic period.
- 3. Iron was not known to the Rig Vedic people.
- 4. The Varna system was thoroughly established during the Rig Vedic period.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

- 1. Vedic literature.
- 2. Original Home of the Aryans.
- 3. Position of women during the Rig Vedic period.
- 4. Religion of Rig Vedic period.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

- 1. Write a note on the Rig Vedic polity.
- 2. Mention the religious life of Later Vedic people.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

- 1. Give a brief account of the socio-economic life of the Rig Vedic Aryans.
- 2. Assess the political and social conditions during the Later Vedic period.

LESSON 4

JAINISM AND BUDDHISM

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. The causes for the rise of Buddhism and Jainism.*
- 2. Early life of Mahavira and his teachings.*
- 3. Early life of Buddha and his teachings.*
- 4. The spread of Buddhism.*
- 5. Causes for the decline of Buddhism in India*

The sixth century B.C. is considered a wonderful century in history. Great thinkers like Buddha, Mahavira, Heraclitus, Zoroaster, Confucius and Lao Tse lived and preached their ideas in this century. In India, the republican institutions were strong in the 6th century B.C. This enabled rise of heterodox sects against the orthodox religion dominated by rites and rituals. Among them the most successful were Jainism and Buddhism whose impact on the Indian society was remarkable.

Causes for the Rise of Jainism and Buddhism

The primary cause for the rise of Jainism and Buddhism was the religious unrest in India in the 6th century B.C. The complex rituals and sacrifices advocated in the Later Vedic period were not acceptable to the common people. The sacrificial ceremonies were also found to be too expensive. The superstitious beliefs and mantras confused the people. The teachings of Upanishads, an alternative to the system of sacrifices, were highly philosophical in nature and therefore not easily understood by all. Therefore, what was needed in the larger interests of the people was a simple, short and intelligible way to salvation for all people. Such religious teaching should also be in a language known to them. This need was fulfilled by the teachings of Buddha and Mahavira.

Other than the religious factor, social and economic factors also contributed to the rise of these two religions. The rigid caste system prevalent in India generated tensions in the society. Higher classes enjoyed certain privileges which were denied to the lower classes. Also, the Kshatriyas had resented the domination of the priestly class. It should also be noted that both Buddha and Mahavira belonged to Kshatriya origin. The growth of trade led to the improvement in the economic conditions of the Vaisyas. As a result, they wanted to enhance their social status but the orthodox Varna system did not allow this. Therefore, they began to extend support to Buddhism and Jainism. It was this merchant class that extended the chief support to these new religions.

Jainism

Life of Vardhamana Mahavira (539 - 467 B.C.)

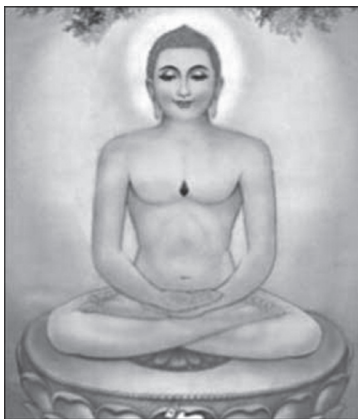
Vardhamana Mahavira was the 24th Tirthankara of the Jain tradition. He was born at Kundagrama near Vaisali to Kshatriya parents Siddhartha and Trisala. He married Yasoda and gave birth to a daughter. At the age of thirty he became an ascetic and wandered for twelve years. In the 13th year of his penance, he attained the highest spiritual knowledge called Kevala Gnana. Thereafter, he was called Mahavira and Jina. His followers were called Jains and his religion Jainism. He preached his doctrines for 30 years and died at the age of 72 at Pava near Rajagriha.

Teachings of Mahavira

The three principles of Jainism, also known as Triratnas (three gems), are:

- right faith
- right knowledge
- right conduct.

Right faith is the belief in the teachings and wisdom of Mahavira. Right Knowledge is the acceptance of the theory that there is no God and that the world has been existing without a creator and that all objects possess a soul. Right conduct refers to the observance of the five great vows:



MAHAVIRA

- not to injure life
- not to lie
- not to steal
- not to acquire property
- not to lead immoral life.

Both the clergy and laymen had to strictly follow the doctrine of *ahimsa*. Mahavira regarded all objects, both animate and inanimate, have souls and various degrees of consciousness. They possess life and feel pain when they are injured. Mahavira rejected the authority of the Vedas and objected to the Vedic rituals. He advocated a very holy and ethical code of life. Even the practice of agriculture was considered sinful as it causes injury to the earth, worms and animals. Similarly the doctrine of asceticism and renunciation was also carried to extreme lengths by the practice of starvation, nudity and other forms of self-torture.

Spread of Jainism

Mahavira organised the *Sangha* to spread his teachings. He admitted both men and women in the *Sangha*, which consisted of both monks and lay followers. The rapid spread of Jainism was due to the dedicated work of the members of the *Sangha*. It spread rapidly in Western India and Karnataka. Chandragupta Maurya, Kharavela of Kalinga and the royal dynasties of south India such as the Gangas, the Kadambas, the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas patronized Jainism.

By the end of the fourth century B.C., there was a serious famine in the Ganges valley. Many Jain monks led by Bhadrabagu and Chandragupta Maurya came to Sravana Belgola in Karnataka. Those who stayed back in north India were led by a monk named Sthulabahu who changed the code of conduct for the monks. This led to the division of Jainism into two sects *Svetambaras* (whiteclad) and *Digambaras* (Sky-clad or Naked).

The first Jain Council was convened at Pataliputra by Sthulabahu, the leader of the Digambaras, in the beginning of the 3rd century B.C. The second Jain Council was held at Valabhi in 5th century A.D. The final compilation of Jain literature called Twelve Angas was completed in this council.

Buddhism

Life of Gautama Buddha (567- 487 B.C.)

Gautama or Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism, was born in 567 B.C. in Lumbini Garden near Kapilavastu. His father was Suddodhana of the Sakya clan and mother Mayadevi. As his mother died at child birth, he was brought up by his aunt Prajapati Gautami. At the age of sixteen he married Yasodhara and gave birth to a son, Rahula. The sight of an old man, a diseased man, a corpse and an ascetic turned him away from worldly life. He left home at the age of twenty nine in search of Truth. He wandered



GAUTAMA BUDDHA

for seven years and met several teachers but could not get enlightenment. At last, he sat under a *bodhi* tree at Bodh Gaya and did intense penance, after which he got Enlightenment (Nirvana) at the age of thirty five. Since then he became known as the *Buddha* or 'the Enlightened One'. He delivered his first sermon at Sarnath near Benares and for the next forty five years he led the life of a preacher. He died at the age of eighty at Kusinagara.

The most important disciples of Buddha were Sariputta, Moggallanna, Ananda, Kassapa and Upali. Kings like Prasenajit of Kosala and Bimbisara and Ajatasatru of Magadha accepted his doctrines and became his disciples. Buddha in his lifetime spread his message far and wide in north India and visited places like Benares, Rajagriha, Sravasti, Vaisali, Nalanda and Pataligrama. It should be noted that he did not involve

himself in fruitless controversies regarding metaphysical questions like god, soul, karma, rebirth, etc., and concerned himself with the practical problems confronting man.

Teachings of Buddha

The Four Noble Truths of Buddha are:

- The world is full of suffering.
- The cause of suffering is desire.
- If desires are get rid off, suffering can be removed.
- This can be done by following the Eightfold Path.

The Eightfold Path consists of right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. Buddha neither accepts god nor rejects the existence of god. He laid great emphasis on the law of karma. He argued that the condition of man in this life depends upon his own deeds. He taught that the soul does not exist. However, he emphasized Ahimsa. By his love for human beings and all living creatures, he endeared himself to all. Even under the gravest provocation he did not show the least anger or hatred and instead conquered everyone by his love and compassion. His religion was identical with morality and it emphasized purity of thought, word and deed. He was a rationalist who tried to explain things in the light of reason and not on the basis of blind faith. Though he did not make a direct attack on the caste system, he was against any social distinctions and threw open his order to all. Therefore, Buddhism was more a social than religious revolution. It taught the code of practical ethics and laid down the principle of social equality.

Spread of Buddhism

Buddha had two kinds of disciples – monks (bhikshus) and lay worshippers (upasikas). The monks were organized into the *Sangha* for the purpose of spreading his teachings. The membership was open to all persons, male or female and without any caste restrictions. There was a special code for nuns restricting their residence and movement. Sariputta, Moggallana and Ananda were some of the famous monks. The *Sangha* was governed on democratic lines and was empowered to enforce discipline among its members. Owing to the organised efforts made by the *Sangha*, Buddhism made rapid progress in North India even during Buddha's life time. Magadha, Kosala, Kausambi and several republican states of North India embraced this religion. About two hundred years after the death of Buddha, the famous Mauryan Emperor Asoka embraced Buddhism. Through his missionary effort Asoka spread Buddhism into West Asia and Ceylon. Thus a local religious sect was transformed into a world religion.

Buddhist Councils

The first Buddhist Council was held at Rajagraha under the chairmanship of Mahakasapa immediately after the death of Buddha. Its purpose was to maintain the

purity of the teachings of the Buddha. The second Buddhist Council was convened at Vaisali around 383 B.C. The third Buddhist Council was held at Pataliputra under the patronage of Asoka. Moggaliputta Tissa presided over it. The final version of Tripitakas was completed in this council. The fourth Buddhist Council was convened in Kashmir by Kanishka under the chairmanship of Vasumitra. Asvagosha participated in this council. The new school of Buddhism called Mahayana Buddhism came into existence during this council. The Buddhism preached by the Buddha and propagated by Asoka was known as *Hinayana*.

The Buddhist texts were collected and compiled some five hundred years after the death of the Buddha. They are known as the *Tripitakas*, namely the *Sutta*, the *Vinaya* and the *Abhidhamma Pitakas*. They are written in the Pali language.

Causes for the Decline of Buddhism in India

The revival of Brahmanism and the rise of Bhagavatism led to the fall of popularity of Buddhism. The use of Pali, the language of the masses as the language of Buddhism was given up from the 1st century A.D. The Buddhists began to adopt Sanskrit, the language of the elite. After the birth of Mahayana Buddhism, the practice of idol worship and making offerings led to the deterioration of moral standards. Moreover, the attack of the Huns in 5th and 6th centuries and the Turkish invaders in 12th century destroyed the monasteries. All these factors contributed to the decline of Buddhism in India.

Contribution of Buddhism to Indian Culture

Buddhism has made a remarkable contribution to the development of Indian culture.

- The concept of ahimsa was its chief contribution. Later, it became one of the cherished values of our nation.

- Its contribution to the art and architecture of India was notable. The stupas at Sanchi, Bharhut and Gaya are wonderful pieces of architecture. Buddhism takes the credit for the chaityas and viharas in different parts of India.

- It promoted education through residential universities like those at Taxila, Nalanda and Vikramasila.

- The language of Pali and other local languages developed through the teachings of Buddhism.

- It had also promoted the spread of Indian culture to other parts of Asia.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be to explain

- 1. The religious and other causes for the rise of Buddhism and Jainism.*
- 2. Early life of Mahavira and his principles of Triratna.*
- 3. Early life of Gautama Buddha and his important principles like the four truths and eightfold path.*
- 4. The patrons of Buddhism and the formation of the Sangha as well as the spread of Buddhism.*
- 5. Causes for the decline of Buddhism in India and its contribution to Indian culture.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. Vardhamana Mahavira was born at
(a) Kapilavastu (b) Pataliputra
(c) Kundagrama (d) Kusumapura
2. The Tripitakas are written in the language of
(a) Sanskrit (b) Prakrit
(c) Pali (d) Hindi

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. The first Jain Council was convened at _____ by _____
2. The final compilation of Jain literature was called _____
3. The Buddhism preached by Asoka was known as _____

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. First Buddhist Council | a) Vaisali |
| 2. Second Buddhist Council | b) Kashmir |
| 3. Third Buddhist Council | c) Rajagriha |
| 4. Fourth Buddhist Council | d) Pataliputra |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

1. The Four Noble Truths were the teachings of Mahavira.
2. The adoption of Pali language led to the decline of Buddhism.
3. Idol worship was followed by the followers of Mahayana Buddhism.
4. Buddha involved himself into controversial philosophical arguments.

V. State whether the following statements are True or False.

1. Buddha neither accepts nor rejects the existence of God.
2. Mahavira asked his followers to strictly observe four great vows.
3. The first Buddhist Council was convened by Kanishka at Kashmir.
4. Buddhism contributed to the spread of Indian culture to other parts of the world.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

1. Triratnas
2. Split in Jainism
3. Tripitakas
4. Third Buddhist Council

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

1. Discuss the spread of Jainism in various parts India.
2. Account for the decline of Buddhism in India.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

1. Sketch the life and teachings of Mahavira.
2. Give a brief account of the life and teachings of Buddha.
3. How did Buddhism become a world religion?

LESSON 5

THE RISE OF MAGADHA AND ALEXANDER'S INVASION

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. The rise of Magadha under the Haryanka, Saisunaga and Nanda dynasties.*
- 2. The achievements of Bimbisara and Ajatasatru.*
- 3. The Persian invasions and their impact.*
- 4. Causes and course of Alexander's invasion.*
- 5. Effects of Alexander's invasion.*

In the beginning of the 6th century B.C., the northern India consisted of a large number of independent kingdoms. Some of them had monarchical forms of government, while some others were republics. While there was a concentration of monarchies on the Gangetic plain, the republics were scattered in the foothills of the Himalayas and in northwestern India. Some of the republics consisted of only one tribe like the Sakyas, Licchavis and Mallas. In the republics, the power of decision in all matters of state vested with the Public Assembly which was composed of the tribal representatives or heads of families. All decisions were by a majority vote.

The Buddhist literature Anguttara Nikaya gives a list of sixteen great kingdoms called 'Sixteen Mahajanapadas'. They were Anga, Magadha, Kasi, Kosala, Vajji, Malla, Chedi, Vatsa, Kuru, Panchala, Matsya, Surasena, Asmaka, Avanti, Gandhara and Kambhoja. The Jain texts also contain references to the existence of sixteen kingdoms. In course of time, the small and weak kingdoms either submitted to the stronger rulers or gradually got eliminated. Finally in the mid 6th century B.C., only four kingdoms – Vatsa, Avanti, Kosala and Magadha survived.

Vatsa

The Vatsa kingdom was situated on the banks of the river Yamuna. Its capital was Kausambi near modern Allahabad. Its most popular ruler was Udayana. He strengthened his position by entering into matrimonial alliances with Avanti, Anga and Magadha. After his death, Vatsa was annexed to the Avanti kingdom.

Avanti

The capital of Avanti was Ujjain. The most important ruler of this kingdom was Pradyota. He became powerful by marrying Vasavadatta, the daughter of Udayana. He patronized Buddhism. The successors of Pradyota were weak and later this kingdom was taken over by the rulers of Magadha.

Kosala

Ayodhya was the capital of Kosala. King Prasenajit was its famous ruler. He was highly educated. His position was further strengthened by the matrimonial alliance with Magadha. His sister was married to Bimbisara and Kasi was given to her as dowry. Subsequently there was a dispute with Ajatasatru. After the end of the conflict, Prasenajit married the daughter of Bimbisara. After the death of this powerful king, Kosala became part of the Magadha.

Magadha

Of all the kingdoms of north India, Magadha emerged powerful and prosperous. It became the nerve centre of political activity in north India. Magadha was endowed by nature with certain geographical and strategic advantages. These made her to rise to imperial greatness. Her strategic position between the upper and lower part of the Gangetic valley was a great advantage. It had a fertile soil. The iron ores in the hills near Rajgir and copper and iron deposits near Gaya added to its natural assets. Her location at the centre of the highways of trade of those days contributed to her wealth. Rajagriha was the capital of Magadha. During the reign of Bimbisara and Ajatasatru, the prosperity of Magadha reached its zenith.

Bimbisara (546 - 494 B.C.)

Bimbisara belonged to the Haryanka dynasty. He consolidated his position by matrimonial alliances. His first matrimonial alliance was with the ruling family of Kosala. He married Kosaladevi, sister of Prasenajit. He was given the Kasi region as dowry which yielded large revenue. Bimbisara married Chellana, a princess of the Licchavi family of Vaisali. This matrimonial alliance secured for him the safety of the northern frontier. Moreover, it facilitated the expansion of Magadha northwards to the borders of Nepal. He also married Khema of the royal house of Madra in central Punjab. Bimbisara also undertook many expeditions and added more territories to his empire. He defeated Brahmadatta of Anga and annexed that kingdom. He maintained friendly relations with Avanti. He had also efficiently reorganized the administration of his kingdom.

Bimbisara was a contemporary of both Vardhamana Mahavira and Gautama Buddha. However, both religions claim him as their supporter and devotee. He seems to have made numerous gifts to the Buddhist *Sangha*.

Ajatasatru (494 - 462 B.C.)

The reign of Ajatasatru was remarkable for his military conquests. He fought against Kosala and Vaisali. He won a great success against a formidable confederacy led by the Lichchavis of Vaisali. This had increased his power and prestige. This war lasted for about sixteen years. It was at this time that Ajatasatru realised the strategic importance of the small village, Pataligrama (future Pataliputra). He fortified it to serve as a convenient base of operations against Vaisali.

Buddhists and Jains both claim that Ajatasatru was a follower of their religion. But it is generally believed that in the beginning he was a follower of Jainism and subsequently embraced Buddhism. He is said to have met Gautama Buddha. This scene is also depicted in the sculptures of Barhut. According to the Mahavamsa, he constructed several *chaityas* and *viharas*. He was also instrumental in convening the First Buddhist Council at Rajagriha soon after the death of the Buddha.

The immediate successor of Ajatasatru was Udayin. He laid the foundation of the new capital at Pataliputra situated at the confluence of the two rivers, the Ganges and the Son. Later it became famous as the imperial capital of the Mauryas. Udayin's successors were weak rulers and hence Magadha was captured by Saisunaga. Thus the Haryanka dynasty came to an end and the Saisunaga dynasty came to power.

Saisunaga dynasty

The genealogy and chronology of the Saisunagas are not clear. Saisunaga defeated the king of Avanti which was made part of the Magadhan Empire. After Saisunaga, the mighty empire began to collapse. His successor was Kakavarman or Kalasoka. During his reign the second Buddhist Council was held at Vaisali. Kalasoka was killed by the founder of the Nanda dynasty.

Nandas

The fame of Magadha scaled new heights under the Nanda dynasty. Their conquests went beyond the boundaries of the Gangetic basin and in North India they carved a well-knit and vast empire.

Mahapadma Nanda was a powerful ruler of the Nanda dynasty. He uprooted the *kshatriya* dynasties in north India and assumed the title *ekarat*. The Puranas speak of the extensive conquests made by Mahapadma. The Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga refers to the conquest of Kalinga by the Nandas. Many historians believe that a considerable portion of the Deccan was also under the control of the Nandas. Therefore, Mahapadma Nanda may be regarded as a great empire builder.

According to the Buddhist tradition, Mahapadma Nanda ruled about ten years. He was succeeded by his eight sons, who ruled successively. The last Nanda ruler was Dhana Nanda. He kept the Magadhan empire intact and possessed a powerful army and enormous wealth. The fabulous wealth of the Nandas is also mentioned by several sources. The enormous wealth of the Nandas is also referred to in the Tamil Sangam work *Ahananuru* by the poet Mamulanar. The flourishing state of agriculture in the Nanda dominions and the general prosperity of the country must have brought to the royal treasury enormous revenue. The oppressive way of tax collection by Dhana Nanda was resented by the people. Taking advantage of this, Chandragupta Maurya and Kautilya initiated a popular movement against the Nanda rule. It was during this time that Alexander invaded India.

PERSIAN AND GREEK INVASIONS

Persian Invasions

Cyrus (558 – 530 B.C)

Cyrus the Great was the greatest conqueror of the Achaemenian Empire. He was the first conqueror who led an expedition and entered into India. He captured the Gandhara region. All Indian tribes to the west of the Indus river submitted to him and paid tribute. His son Cambyses had no time to pay attention towards India.

Darius I (522 – 486 B.C.)

Darius I, the grandson of Cyrus, conquered the Indus valley in 518 B.C. and annexed the Punjab and Sindh. This region became the 20th Satrapy of his empire. It was the most fertile and populous province of the Achaemenian Empire. Darius sent a naval expedition under Skylas to explore the Indus.

Xerxes (465-456 B.C.)

Xerxes utilized his Indian province to strengthen his position. He deployed Indian infantry and cavalry to Greece to fight his opponents. But they retreated after Xerxes faced a defeat in Greece. After this failure, the Achaemenians could not follow a forward policy in India. However, the Indian province was still under their control. Darius III enlisted Indian soldiers to fight against Alexander in 330 B.C. It is evident that the control of Persians slackened on the eve of Alexander's invasion of India.

Effects of the Persian Invasion

The Persian invasion provided an impetus to the growth of Indo-Iranian commerce. Also, it prepared the ground for Alexander's invasion. The use of the Kharoshti script, a form of Iranian writing became popular in northwestern India and some of Asoka's edicts were written in that script. We are able to see the influence of Persian art on the art of the Mauryas, particularly the monolithic pillars of Asoka and the sculptures found on them. The very idea of issuing edicts by Asoka and the wording used in the edicts are traced to Iranian influence. In short, the Iranian connection with India proved more fruitful than the short-lived Indo- Macedonian contact.

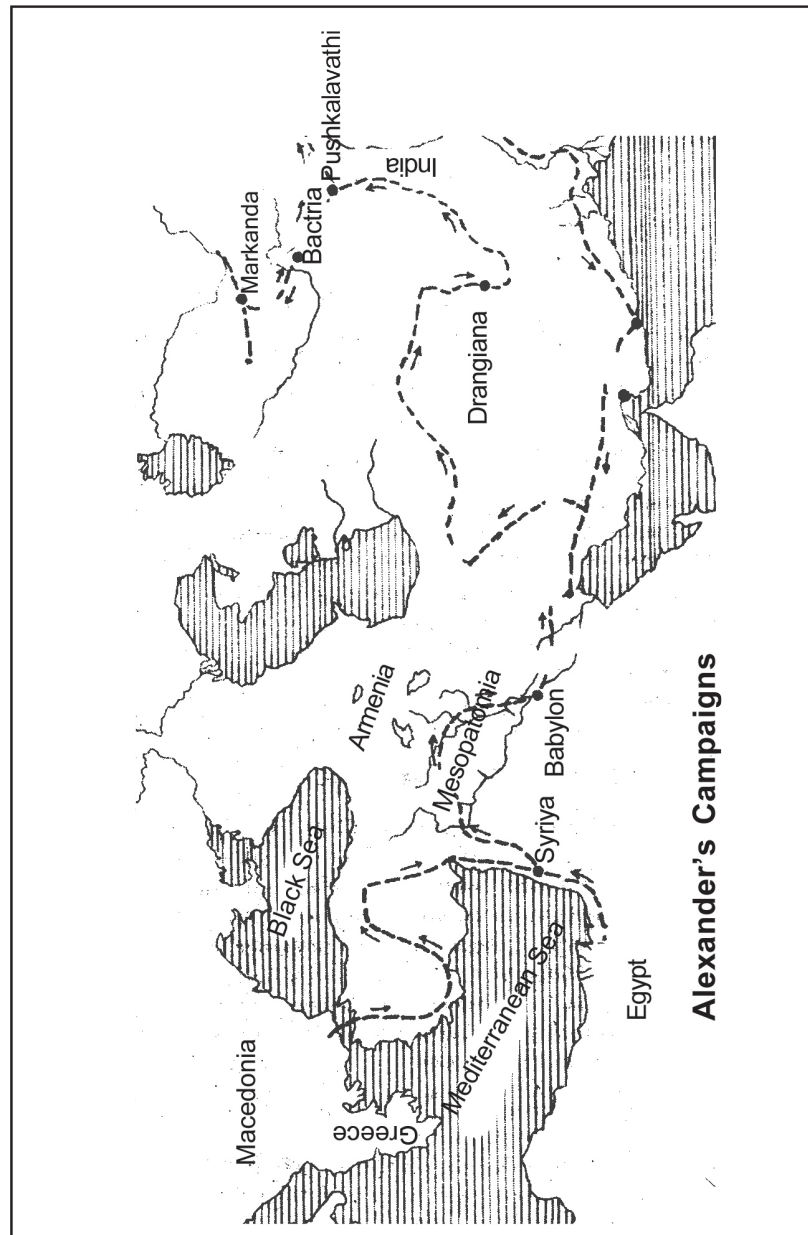
Alexander's Invasion of India (327-325 B.C.)

Political Condition on the eve of Alexander's Invasion

After two centuries of the Persian invasion, Alexander from Macedonia invaded India. On the eve of his invasion, there were a number of small kingdoms in northwestern India. The leading kings were Ambhi of Taxila, the ruler of Abhisara and Porus who ruled the region between the rivers of Jhelum and Chenab. There were many republican states like Nysa. In short, the northwestern India remained the most disunited part of India and the rulers were fighting with one another. They never come together against common enemy. Yet, it was not easy for Alexander to overcome so many sources of opposition.

Causes of the Invasion

Alexander ascended the throne of Macedonia after the death of his father Philip in 334 B.C. He conquered the whole of Persia by defeating Darius III in the battle of Arbela in 330 B.C. He also aimed at further conquest eastwards and wanted to recover the lost Persian Satrapy of India. The writings of Greek authors like Herodotus about the fabulous wealth of India attracted Alexander. Moreover, his interest in geographical enquiry and love of natural history urged him to undertake an invasion of India. He believed that on the eastern side of India there was the continuation of the sea, according to the geographical knowledge of his period. So, he thought that by conquering India, he would also conquer the eastern boundary of the world.



Battle of Hydaspes

In 327 B.C. Alexander crossed the Hindukush Mountains and spent nearly ten months in fighting with the tribes. He crossed the Indus in February 326 B.C. with the help of the bridge of boats. He was warmly received by Ambhi, the ruler of Taxila. From there Alexander sent a message to Porus to submit. But Porus refused and decided to fight against Alexander. Then Alexander marched from Taxila to the banks of the river Hydaspes (Jhelum). On the other side of the river he saw the vast army of Porus. As there were heavy floods in the river, Alexander was not able to cross it. After a few days, he crossed the river and the famous battle of Hydaspes was fought on the plains of Karri. It was a well-contested battle. Although Porus had a strong army, he lost the battle. Alexander was impressed by the courage and heroism of this Indian prince, treated him generously and reinstated him on his throne.

Alexander continued his march as far as the river Beas encountering opposition from the local tribes. He wanted to proceed still further eastwards towards the Gangetic valley. But he could not do so because his soldiers refused to fight. Hardships of prolonged warfare made them tired and they wanted to return home. Alexander could not persuade them and therefore decided to return. He made arrangements to look after his conquered territories in India. He divided the whole territory from the Indus to the Beas into three provinces and put them under his governors. His retreat began in October 326 B.C. and the return journey was not free from ordeals. Many republican tribes attacked his army. Anyhow he managed to reach beyond the Indus. On his way he reached Babylon where he fell seriously ill and died in 323 B.C.

Effects of Alexander's invasion

The immediate effect of Alexander's invasion was that it encouraged political unification of north India under the Mauryas. The system of small independent states came to an end. Alexander's invasion had also paved the way for direct contact between India and Greece. The routes opened by him and his naval explorations increased the existing facilities for trade between India and West Asia. However, his aim of annexing the northwestern India to his empire was not fulfilled due his premature death. His authority in the Indus valley was a short-lived one because of the expansion of Mauryan Empire under Chandragupta Maurya.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

- 1. The rise of Magadha and the different dynasties ruled over it.*
- 2. The achievements of Bimbisara, Mahapadma Nanda and other kings.*
- 3. Persian invasions and their occupation of northwest India.*
- 4. Effects of Persian invasion and occupation.*
- 5. Causes and course of Alexander's invasion of India.*
- 6. Effects of Alexander's invasion.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. The capital of Magadha was
(a) Rajagriha (b) Ujjain
(c) Kosala (d) Kausambi
2. Nanda dynasty was preceded by
(a) Mauryas (b) Sisunagas
(c) Haryankas (d) Guptas

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. Ajatasatru belonged to _____ dynasty.
2. The last ruler of Nanda dynasty was _____
3. The second Buddhist Council was held at _____
4. Alexander died at _____ in the year _____

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. Udayana | a) Kosala |
| 2. Pradyota | b) Avanti |
| 3. Prasenajit | c) Magadha |
| 4. Bimbisara | d) Vatsa |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) Alexander defeated Porus and annexed his kingdom.
- b) Alexander defeated Porus and treated him generously.
- c) Alexander could not win the army of Porus.
- d) Alexander defeated Ambhi of Taxila with the help of Porus.

V. State whether the following statements are true or False.

- 1. Xerxes was the first Greek conqueror to enter into India.
- 2. The battle of Hydaspes was fought on the Karri plain.
- 3. Alexander annexed some portions of Gangetic valley before his departure.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

- 1. Sixteen Mahajanapadas.
- 2. Cyrus
- 3. Battle of Hydaspes.
- 4. Effects of Alexander's invasion.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

- 1. Write briefly the achievements of Bimbisara.
- 2. Assess the impact of Persian invasions on India.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

- 1. Describe the rise of Magadha and the achievements of its rulers.
- 2. Give an account of Alexander's invasion of India.

LESSON 6

THE MAURYAN EMPIRE

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. The sources for the study of the Mauryas.*
- 2. Chandragupta Maurya and his achievements.*
- 3. Asoka and his achievements and the spread of Asoka's Dhamma.*
- 4. The salient features of the Mauryan administration.*
- 5. Art and architecture of the Mauryas.*
- 6. Causes for the decline of the Mauryan empire.*

The foundation of the Mauryan Empire opens a new era in the history of India. For the first time, the political unity was achieved in India. Moreover, the history writing has also become clear from this period due to accuracy in chronology and sources. Besides plenty of indigenous and foreign literary sources, a number of epigraphical records are also available to write the history of this period.

Literary Sources

Kautilya's Arthashastra

This book in Sanskrit was written by Kautilya, a contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya. Kautilya was also called 'Indian Machiavelli'. The manuscript of Arthashastra was first discovered by R. Shama Sastri in 1904. The Arthashastra contains 15 books and 180 chapters but it can be divided into three parts: the first deals with the king and his council and the departments of government; the second with civil and criminal law; and the third with diplomacy and war. It is the most important literary source for the history of the Mauryas.

Visakadatta's Mudrarakshasa

The Mudrarakshasa written by Visakadatta is a drama in Sanskrit. Although written during the Gupta period, it describes how Chandragupta with the assistance of Kautilya overthrew the Nandas. It also gives a picture on the socio-economic condition under the Mauryas.

Megasthenes' Indica

Megasthenes was the Greek ambassador in the court of Chandragupta Maurya. His book Indica has survived only in fragments. Yet, his account gives details about the Mauryan administration, particularly the administration of the capital city of Pataliputra

and also the military organization. His picture on contemporary social life is notable. Certain unbelievable information provided by him has to be treated with caution.

Other Literature

Apart from these three important works, the Puranas and the Buddhist literature such as Jatakas provide information on the Mauryas. The Ceylonese Chronicles Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa throw light on the role Asoka in spreading Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

Archaeological Sources

Edicts of Asoka

The inscriptions of Asoka were first deciphered by James Princep in 1837. They are written in Pali language and in some places Prakrit was used. The Brahmi script was employed for writing. In the northwestern India Asokan inscriptions were found in Karoshti script. There are fourteen Major Rock Edicts. The two Kalinga Edicts are found in the newly conquered territory. The major pillar Edicts were erected in important cities. There are minor Rock Edicts and minor pillar Edicts. These Edicts of Asoka deal with Asoka's Dhamma and also instructions given to his officials. The XIII Rock Edict gives details about his war with Kalinga. The Pillar Edict VII gives a summary of his efforts to promote the Dhamma within his kingdom. Thus the Asokan inscriptions remain valuable sources for the study of Asoka and the Mauryan Empire.

POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE MAURYAS

Chandragupta Maurya (322 – 298 B.C.)

Chandragupta Maurya was the founder of the Mauryan Empire. He, at the young age of 25, captured Pataliputra from the last ruler of the Nanda dynasty, Dhanananda. In this task he was assisted by Kautilya, who was also known as Chanakya or Vishnugupta. After firmly establishing his power in the Gangetic valley, he marched to the northwest and subdued the territories up to the Indus. Then he moved to central India and occupied the region north of Narmada river.

In 305 B.C., he marched against Selukas Niketar, who was Alexander's General controlling the northwestern India. Chandragupta Maurya defeated him and a treaty was signed. By this treaty, Selukas Niketar ceded the trans-Indus territories – namely Aria, Arakosia and Gedrosia – to the Mauryan Empire. He also gave his daughter in marriage to the Mauryan prince. Chandragupta made a gift of 500 elephants to Selukas. Megasthenes was sent to the Mauryan court as Greek ambassador.

Chandragupta embraced Jainism towards the end of his life and stepped down from the throne in favour of his son Bindusara. Then he went to Sravana Belgola, near Mysore along with Jain monks led by Bhadrabhagu and starved himself to death.

Bindusara (298 – 273 B.C.)

Bindusara was called by the Greeks as “Amitragatha” meaning slayer of enemies. He is said to have conquered the Deccan up to Mysore. Taranatha, the Tibetan monk states that Bindusara conquered 16 states comprising ‘the land between the two seas’. The Sangam Tamil literature also confirms the Mauryan invasion of the far south. Therefore, it can be said that the Mauryan Empire under Bindusara extended up to Mysore.

Bindusara received Deimachus as ambassador from the Syrian king Antiochus I. Bindusara wrote to Antiochus I asking for sweet wine, dried figs and a sophist. The latter sent all but a sophist because the Greek law prohibited sending a sophist. Bindusara supported the Ajivikas, a religious sect. Bindusara appointed his son Asoka as the governor of Ujjain.

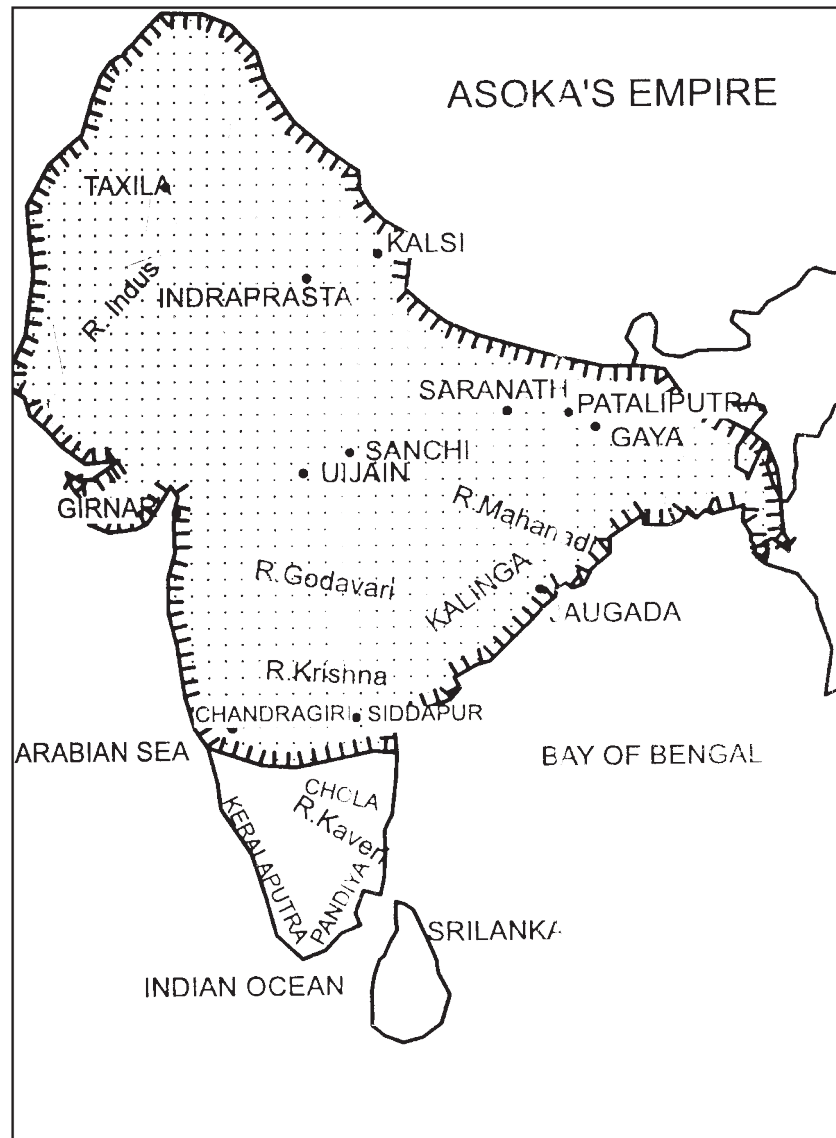
Asoka the Great (273 – 232 B.C.)

There is little information regarding the early life of Asoka. He acted as Governor of Ujjain and also suppressed a revolt in Taxila during his father Bindusara’s reign. There was an interval of four years between Asoka’s accession to the throne (273 B.C.) and his actual coronation (269 B.C.). Therefore, it appears from the available evidence that there was a struggle for the throne after Bindusara’s death. The Ceylonese Chronicles, Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa state that Asoka captured power after killing his ninety nine brothers including the his elder brother Susima. The youngest brother Tissa was spared. But according to Taranatha of Tibet, Asoka killed only six of his brothers. Asoka’s Edict also refers to his brothers acting as officers in his administration. However, it is clear that the succession of Asoka was a disputed one.

The most important event of Asoka’s reign was his victorious war with Kalinga in 261 B.C. Although there is no detail about the cause and course of the war, the effects of the war were described by Asoka himself in the Rock edict XIII: “A hundred and fifty thousand were killed and many times that number perished...” After the war he annexed Kalinga to the Mauryan Empire. Another most important effect of the Kalinga war was that Asoka embraced Buddhism under the influence of Buddhist monk, Upagupta.

Asoka and Buddhism

According some scholars, his conversion to Buddhism was gradual and not immediate. About 261 B.C. Asoka became a Sakya Upasaka (lay dsicple) and two and a half years later, a Bikshu (monk). Then he gave up hunting, visited Bodh-Gaya, and organized missions. He appointed special officers called Dharma Mahamatras to speed up the progress of Dhamma. In 241 B.C., he visited the birth place of Buddha, the Lumbini Garden, near Kapilavastu. He also visited other holy places of Buddhism like Sarnath, Sravasti and Kusinagara. He sent a mission to Sri Lanka under his son Mahendra and daughter Sangamitra who planted there the branch of the original Bodhi tree. Asoka convened the Third Buddhist Council at Pataliputra in 240 B.C. in order to strengthen the *Sangha*. It was presided over by Moggaliputta Tissa.



Extent of Asoka's Empire

Asoka's inscriptions mention the southernmost kingdoms – Cholas, Pandyas, Satyaputras and Keralaputras – as border-states. Therefore these states remained outside the Mauryan Empire. According to Rajatarangini, Kashmir was a part of the Mauryan Empire. Nepal was also within the Mauryan empire. The northwestern frontier was already demarcated by Chandragupta Maurya.

Asoka's Dhamma

Although Asoka embraced Buddhism and took efforts to spread Buddhism, his policy of Dhamma was a still broad concept. It was a way of life, a code of conduct and a set of principles to be adopted and practiced by the people at large. His principles of Dhamma were clearly stated in his Edicts. The main features of Asoka's Dhamma as mentioned in his various Edicts may be summed as follows:

1. Service to father and mother, practice of ahimsa, love of truth, reverence to teachers and good treatment of relatives.
2. Prohibition of animal sacrifices and festive gatherings and avoiding expensive and meaningless ceremonies and rituals.
3. Efficient organization of administration in the direction of social welfare and maintenance of constant contact with people through the system of Dhammayatras.
4. Humane treatment of servants by masters and prisoners by government officials.
5. Consideration and non-violence to animals and courtesy to relations and liberality to Brahmins.
6. Tolerance among all the religious sects.
7. Conquest through Dhamma instead of through war.

The concept of non-violence and other similar ideas of Asoka's Dhamma are identical with the teachings of Buddha. But he did not equate Dhamma with Buddhist teachings. Buddhism remained his personal belief. His Dhamma signifies a general code of conduct. Asoka wished that his Dhamma should spread through all social levels.

Estimate of Asoka

Asoka was "the greatest of kings" surpassing Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar and other renowned Emperors of the world. According to H.G. Wells "Amidst the tens and thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, the name of Asoka shines and shines almost alone, a star". Asoka was true to his ideals. He was not a dreamer but a man of practical genius. His Dhamma is so universal that it appeals to humanity even today. He was an example in history for his benevolent administration and also for following the policy of non-aggression even after his victory in the war. His central ideal was to promote the welfare of humanity.

Later Mauryas

Asoka's death in 232 B.C. was followed by the division of the Mauryan Empire into two parts – western and eastern. The western part was ruled by Kunala, son of Asoka and the eastern part by Dasaratha, one of the grand sons of Asoka. Due to the Bactrian invasions, the western part of the empire collapsed. The eastern part was intact under Samprati successor of Dasaratha. The last Mauryan king was Brihadratha, who was assassinated by Pushyamitra Sunga.

Mauryan Administration

Central Government

The ascendancy of the Mauryas had resulted in the triumph of monarchy in India. Other systems like republics and oligarchies that were prevalent in the pre-

Mauryan India had collapsed. Although Kautilya the foremost political theorist of ancient India supported the monarchical form of government, he did not stand for royal absolutism. He advocated that the king should take the advice of his ministry in running the administration. Therefore, a council of ministers called Mantriparishad assisted the king in administrative matters. It consisted of Purohita, Mahamantri, Senapati and Yuvaraja. There were civil servants called Amatyas to look after the day-to-day administration. These officers were similar to the IAS officers of independent India. The method of selection of Amatyas was elaborately given by Kautilya. Asoka appointed Dhamma Mahamatras to supervise the spread of Dhamma. Thus the Mauryan state had a well organized civil service.

Revenue Department

Samharta, the chief of the Revenue Department, was in charge of the collection of all revenues of the empire. The revenues came from land, irrigation, customs, shop tax, ferry tax, forests, mines and pastures, license fee from craftsmen, and fines collected in the law courts. The land revenue was normally fixed as one sixth of the produce. The main items of expenditure of the state related to king and his household, army, government servants, public works, poor relief, religion, etc.

Army

The Mauryan army was well organized and it was under the control of Senapati. The salaries were paid in cash. Kautilya refers to the salaries of different ranks of military officers. According to Greek author Pliny, the Mauryan army consisted of six lakh infantry, thirty thousand cavalry, nine thousand elephants and eight thousand chariots. In addition to these four wings, there were the Navy and Transport and Supply wings. Each wing was under the control of Adyakshas or Superintendents. Megasthenes mentions six boards of five members each to control the six wings of the military.

Department of Commerce and Industry

This department had controlled the retail and wholesale prices of goods and tried to ensure their steady supply through its officers called Adyakshas. It also controlled weights and measures, levied custom duties and regulated foreign trade.

Judicial and Police Departments

Kautilya mentions the existence of both civil and criminal courts. The chief justice of the Supreme Court at the capital was called Dharmathikarin. There were also subordinate courts at the provincial capitals and districts under Amatyas. Different kinds of punishment such as fines, imprisonment, mutilation and death were given to the offenders. Torture was employed to extract truth. Police stations were found in all principal centres. Both Kautilya and Asoka's Edicts mention about jails and jail officials. The Dhamma Mahamatras were asked by Asoka to take steps against unjust imprisonment. Remission of sentences is also mentioned in Asoka's inscriptions.

Census

The taking of Census was regular during the Mauryan period. The village officials were to number the people along with other details like their caste and occupation. They were also to count the animals in each house. The census in the towns was taken by municipal officials to track the movement of population both foreign and indigenous. The data collected were cross checked by the spies. The Census appears to be a permanent institution in the Mauryan administration.

Provincial and Local Administration

The Mauryan Empire was divided into four provinces with their capitals at Taxila, Ujjain, Suvarnagiri and Kalinga. The provincial governors were mostly appointed from the members of royal family. They were responsible the maintenance of law and order and collection of taxes for the empire. The district administration was under the charge of Rajukas, whose position and functions are similar to modern collectors. He was assisted by Yuktas or subordinate officials. Village administration was in the hands of Gramani and his official superior was called Gopa who was in charge of ten or fifteen villages.

Both Kautilya and Megasthenes provided the system of Municipal administration. Arthashastra contains a full chapter on the role of Nagarika or city superintendent. His chief duty was to maintain law and order. Megasthenes refers to the six committees of five members each to look after the administration of Pataliputra. These committees looked after: 1. Industries 2. Foreigners 3. Registration of birth and deaths 4. Trade 5. Manufacture and sale of goods 6. Collection of sales tax.

Mauryan Art and Architecture

The monuments before the period of Asoka were mostly made of wood and therefore perished. The use of stone started from the time of Asoka. Even of the numerous monuments of Asoka, only a few have remained. His palace and monasteries and most of his stupas have disappeared. The only remaining stupa is at Sanchi. The artistic remains of the Mauryan period can be seen in the following heads:

Pillars

The pillars erected by Asoka furnish the finest specimen of the Mauryan art. Asokan pillars with inscriptions were found in places like Delhi, Allahabad, Rummindei, Sanchi and Saranath. Their tops were crowned with figures of animals like lion, elephant and bull. The Saranath pillar with four lions standing back to back is the most magnificent. The Indian government adopted this capital with some modifications as its state emblem.



Saranath Pillar

Stupas

Asoka built a number of stupas throughout his empire but majority of them were destroyed during foreign invasions. Only a few have survived. The best example is the famous Sanchi stupa with massive dimensions. It was originally built with bricks but later enlarged after the time of Asoka.



SANCHI STUPA

Caves



The caves presented to the Ajivikas by Asoka and his son Dasaratha remain important heritage of the Mauryas. Their interior walls are polished like mirror. These were meant to be residences of monks. The caves at Barabar hills near Bodh Gaya are wonderful pieces of Mauryan architecture.

Causes for the Decline of the Mauryas

The causes for the decline of the Mauryan empire have been widely debated by scholars. The traditional approach attributes the decline to Asoka's policies and his weak successors. Another approach holds the inadequate political and economic institutions to sustain such a vast empire.

Four Lions

It was said that Asoka's pro-Buddhist policies antagonized the Brahmins who brought about a revolution led by Pushyamitra Sunga. But Asoka was never acted against Brahmins. That Asoka's policy of non-violence reduced the fighting spirit of his army was another charge against him. But Asoka had never slackened his control over his empire despite following a pacifist policy. Therefore solely blaming Asoka for the decline of the Mauryan empire may not be correct because Asoka was more a pragmatist than an idealist.

There are multiple causes for the decline of the Mauryan empire such as weak successors, partition of empire and administrative abuses after Asoka's reign. The combination of these factors speeded up the breakup of the Mauryan empire and facilitated Pushyamitra Sunga to drive away the Mauryan power and establish the Sunga dynasty.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

- 1. The literary and epigraphical sources for the study of the Mauryas.*
- 2. The accession of Chandragupta Maurya and his achievements.*
- 3. Bindusara's military achievements.*
- 4. Asoka's spread of Dhamma through various means such as issuing Edicts and appointing officers like Dhamma Mahamatras.*
- 5. The salient features of the Mauryan art such as pillars, caves and stupas.*
- 6. Causes for the decline of the Mauryan empire.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. The details of Asoka's war with Kalinga is given in the
(a) Kalinga Edict (b) XIII Rock Edict
(c) Saranath Pillar (d) Arthashastra
2. The language mostly employed in the Edicts of Asoka is
(a) Pali (b) Sanskrit
(c) Karoshti (d) Brahmi

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Asokan Edicts were first deciphered by _____
2. The last Mauryan king was _____
3. Asoka embraced Buddhism under the influence of _____
4. The state emblem of India was adopted from _____ pillar.

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Dharmamahamatras | a) Village administration |
| 2. Gopa | b) Revenue administration |
| 3. Nagarika | c) Spread of Dhamma |
| 4. Samharta | d) City administration |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) The first part of Kautilya's Arthashastra tells about war and diplomacy.
- b) Visakadatta's Mudrarakshasa was written in the style of drama.
- c) The Indika written by Megasthenes gives details about the Kalinga War.
- d) Asoka's Edicts provide information on the decline of the Mauryan empire.

V. State whether the following statements are true or False.

- 1. Chandragupta Maurya became a follower of Buddhism at the end of his reign.
- 2. Tamil Nadu was included in the Mauryan empire.
- 3. Asoka presented caves to the Ajivikas.
- 4. Pushyamitra Sunga put an end to the Mauryan rule.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

- 1. Kautilya's Arthashastra.
- 2. Kalinga War.
- 3. Megasthenes.
- 4. Bindusara.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

- 1. Write a note on the achievements of Chandragupta Maurya.
- 2. Mention the efforts taken by Asoka for the spread of Buddhism.
- 3. Assess the significance of the Mauryan art.
- 4. Analyse the causes for the decline of the Mauryan empire.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

- 1. Give an account of Asoka's achievements and his policy of Dhamma.
- 2. Write in detail the salient features of the Mauryan administration.

LESSON 7

POST - MAURYAN INDIA

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. The Sunga rule and its importance.*
- 2. The Satavahana rule and their contributions to culture.*
- 3. The Sakas and Bactrians.*
- 4. Kanishka and his achievements.*
- 5. Gandhara art and its salient features.*

After the death of Asoka, his successors were not able to keep the vast Mauryan Empire intact. The provinces started declaring their independence. The northwest India slipped out of the control of the Mauryas and a series of foreign invasions affected this region. Kalinga declared its independence and in the further south the Satavahanas established their independent rule. As a result, the Mauryan rule was confined to the Gangetic valley and it was soon replaced by the Sunga dynasty.

Sungas

The founder of the Sunga dynasty was Pushyamitra Sunga, who was the commander-in-chief under the Mauryas. He assassinated the last Mauryan ruler and usurped the throne. The most important challenge to the Sunga rule was to protect north India against the invasions of the Bactrian Greeks from the northwest. The Greeks advanced up to Pataliputra and occupied it for sometime. However, Pushyamitra succeeded in regaining the lost territory. He also fought a campaign against Kharavela of Kalinga who invaded north India.

Pushyamitra was a staunch follower of Brahmanism. He performed two asvamedha sacrifices. Buddhist sources refer him as a persecutor of Buddhism. But there is enough evidence to show that Pushyamitra patronised Buddhist art. During his reign the Buddhist monuments at Bharhut and Sanchi were renovated and further improved.

After the death of Pushyamitra, his son Agnimitra became the ruler. The last Sunga ruler was Devabhuti, who was murdered by his minister Vasudeva Kanva, the founder of the Kanva dynasty. The Kanva dynasty ruled for 45 years. After the fall of the Kanvas, the history of Magadha was a blank until the establishment of the Gupta dynasty.

The rule of the Sungas was important because they defended the Gangetic valley from foreign invasions. In the cultural sphere, the Sungas revived Brahmanism

and horse sacrifice. They also promoted the growth of Vaishnavism and the Sanskrit language. In short, the Sunga rule was a brilliant anticipation of the golden age of the Guptas.

Satavahanas

In the Deccan, the Satavahanas established their independent rule after the decline of the Mauryas. Their rule lasted for about 450 years. They were also known as the Andhras. The Puranas and inscriptions remain important sources for the history of Satavahanas. Among the inscriptions, the Nasik and Nanaghad inscriptions



COINS OF SATAVAHANAS

throw much light on the reign of Gautamiputra Satakarni. The coins issued by the Satavahanas are also helpful in knowing the economic conditions of that period.

The founder of the Satavahana dynasty was Simuka. He was succeeded by Krishna, who extended the kingdom up to Nasik in the west. The third king was Sri Satakarni. He conquered western Malwa and Berar. He also performed asvamedha sacrifices. The seventeenth king of the Satavahana dynasty was Hala. He reigned for a period of five years. Hala became famous for his book Gathasaptasati, also called Sattasai. It contains 700 verses in Prakrit language.

The greatest ruler of the Satavahana dynasty was Gautamiputra Satakarni. He ruled for a period of 24 years from 106 to 130 A.D. His achievements were recorded in the Nasik inscription by his mother Gautami Balasri. Gautamiputra Satakarni captured the whole of Deccan and expanded his empire. His victory over Nagapana, the ruler of Malwa was remarkable. He patronized Brahmanism. Yet, he also gave donations to Buddhists.

Gautamiputra Satakarni was succeeded by his son Vashishtaputra Pulamayi. He extended the Satavahana power up to the mouth of the Krishna river. He issued coins on which the image of ships was inscribed. They reveal the naval power and maritime trade of the Satavahanas. The last great ruler of Satavahanas was Yajna Sri Satakarni.

Economic Condition

There was a remarkable progress in the fields of trade and industry during the Satavahana rule. Merchants organized guilds to increase their activities. The craft guilds organized by different craftsmen such as potters, weavers and oil pressers also came into existence. Silver coins called Karshapanas were used for trade. The Satavahana period also witnessed overseas commercial activity. Ptolemy mentions many ports in the Deccan. The greatest port of the Satavahanas was Kalyani on the west Deccan. Gandakasela and Ganjam on the east coast were the other important seaports.

Cultural Contributions

The Satavahanas patronized Buddhism and Brahmanism. They built chaityas and viharas. They also made grants of villages and lands to Buddhist monks. Vashishtaputra Pulamayi repaired the old Amaravathi stupa. Their architecture in Nagarjunakonda was also notable. Brahmanism was revived by the Satavahanas along with the performance of asvamedha and rajasuya sacrifices. They also patronized the Prakrit language and literature. Hala's Sattasai is an excellent piece of Prakrit literature.

Foreign Invasions of Northwest India

Bactrians

Bactria and Parthia became independent from the Syrian empire in the middle of the third century B.C. Demetrius, the Greek ruler of Bactria invaded Afghanistan and Punjab and occupied them. From Taxila, he sent two of his commanders, Appolodotus and Menander for further conquests. Appolodotus conquered the Sindh and marched up to Ujjain. Menander extended his rule up to Mathura and from there he made attempts to capture Pataliputra. But he was stopped by the army of Vasumitra, the grandson of Pushyamitra Sunga.

Menander was also known as Milinda and the capital of his kingdom was Sakala (Sialcot). He evinced much interest in Buddhism and his dialogues with the Buddhist monk Nagasena was compiled in the Pali work, Milindapanho (Questions of Milinda). He also embraced Buddhism. A Greek ambassador Heliodorus became a Vaishnavite and erected the Garuda Pillar at Besnagar. The Greek influence in India lasted for more than a century after the death Menander.

Sakas

The Sakas or the Scythians attacked Bactria and Parthia and captured them from the Greek rulers. Following the footsteps of the Greeks, the Sakas gradually extended their rule over northwestern India. There were two different groups of Sakas – the Northern Satraps ruling from Taxila and the Western satraps ruling over Maharashtra.

The founder the Saka rule in India in the first century B.C. was Maues. His son and successor was Azes I, who was considered to be the founder of the Vikrama era.

Sakas rulers of Taxila were overthrown by the Parthians.

Kushanas

The Kushanas were a branch of Yuchi tribe, whose original home was central Asia. They first came to Bactria displacing the Sakas. Then they gradually moved to the Kabul valley and seized the Gandhara region. The founder of the Kushana dynasty was Kujula Kadphises or Kadphises I.

He occupied the Kabul valley and issued coins in his name. His son Wima Kadphises



**Gold coins of
kushanas**

or Kadphises II conquered the whole of northwestern India as far as Mathura. He issued gold coins with high-sounding titles like the 'Lord of the Whole World'. He was a devotee of Lord Siva.

Kanishka (78 – 120 A.D.)

Kanishka was the most important ruler of the Kushana dynasty. He was the founder of the Saka era which starts from 78 A.D. He was not only a great conqueror but also a patron of religion and art.

Kanishka's Conquests

At the time of his accession his empire included Afghanistan, Gandhara, Sind and Punjab. Subsequently he conquered Magadha and extended his power as far as Pataliputra and Bodh Gaya. According to Kalhana, Kanishka invaded Kashmir and occupied it. His coins are found in many places like Mathura, Sravasti, Kausambi and Benares and therefore, he must have conquered the greater part of the Gangetic plain.

He also fought against the Chinese and acquired some territories from them. During the first expedition he was defeated by the Chinese general Pancho. He undertook a second expedition in which he was successful and he scored a victory over Panyang, the son of Pancho. Kanishka annexed the territories of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan into his empire.

The empire of Kanishka was a vast one extending from Gandhara in the west to Benares in the east, and from Kashmir in the north to Malwa in the south. His capital was Purushapura or modern day Peshawar. Mathura was another important city in his empire.

Kanishka and Buddhism

Kanishka embraced Buddhism in the early part of his reign. However, his coins exhibit the images of not only Buddha but also Greek and Hindu gods. It reflects the Kanishka's toleration towards other religions. In the age of Kanishka the Mahayana Buddhism came into vogue. It is different in many respects from the religion taught by the Buddha and propagated by Asoka. The Buddha came to be worshipped with flowers, garments, perfumes and lamps. Thus image worship and rituals developed in Mahayana Buddhism.

Kanishka also sent missionaries to Central Asia and China for the propagation of the new faith. Buddhist chaityas and viharas were built in different places. He patronised Buddhist scholars like Vasumitra, Asvagosha and Nagarjuna. He also convened the Fourth Buddhist Council to discuss matters relating to Buddhist theology



**Headless statue
of Kanishka**

and doctrine. It was held at the Kundalavana monastery near Srinagar in Kashmir under the presidentship of Vasumitra. About 500 monks attended the Council. The Council prepared an authoritative commentary on the Tripitakas and the *Mahayana* doctrine was given final shape. Asvagosha was a great philosopher, poet and dramatist. He was the author of Buddhacharita. Nagarjuna from south India adorned the court of Kanishka. The famous physician of ancient India Charaka was also patronized by him.

Gandhara Art

The home of the Gandhara school of art is the territory in and around Peshawar in northwestern India. The best of the Gandhara sculpture was produced during the first and second centuries A.D. It originated during the reign of Indo-Greek rulers but the real patrons of this school of art were the Sakas and the Kushanas, particularly Kanishka. Gandhara art was a blend of Indian and Graeco-Roman elements. Specimens of Gandhara sculpture have been found in Taxila, Peshawar and in several places of northwest India. The Gandhara school made sculptures of the Buddha in various sizes, shapes and postures. The reliefs depict Buddha's birth, his renunciation and his preaching. The salient features of Gandhara art are:



**REPRESENTATION OF
THE BUDDHA IN
GANDHARA ART**

- Moulding human body in a realistic manner with minute attention to physical features like muscles, moustache and curly hair.
- Thick drapery with large and bold fold lines.
- Rich carving, elaborate ornamentation and symbolic expressions.
- The main theme was the new form of Buddhism – Mahayanism
- and the evolution of an image of Buddha.

A large number of monasteries were also built from first to fourth centuries A.D. Ruins of about fifteen monasteries were found in and around Peshawar and Rawalpindi. The Buddhist stupas erected during this period had Graeco-Roman architectural impact. The height of the stupa was raised and ornamentation was added to the structure of the stupa. These changes made the stupa more attractive.

Mathura School of Art

The school of art that developed at Mathura in modern Uttar Pradesh is called the Mathura art. It flourished in the first century A.D. In its early phase, the Mathura school of art developed on indigenous lines. The Buddha images exhibit the spiritual feeling in his face which was largely absent in the Gandhara school. The Mathura school also carved out the images of Siva and Vishnu along with their consorts Parvathi and Lakshmi. The female figures of yakshinis and apsaras of the Mathura school were beautifully carved.

Successors of Kanishka and end of Kushana Rule

The successors of Kanishka ruled for another one hundred and fifty years. Huvishka was the son of Kanishka and he kept the empire intact. Mathura became an important city under his rule. Like Kanishka he was also a patron of Buddhism. The last important Kushana ruler was Vasudeva. The Kushana empire was very much reduced in his rule. Most of his inscriptions are found in and around Mathura. He seems to have been a worshipper of Siva. After Vasudeva, petty Kushan princes ruled for sometime in northwestern India.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

1. *The reign of Pushyamitra and the importance of Sunga rule.*
2. *The Satavahana rule and Gautami Putra Satakarni's achievements.*
3. *The socio-economic conditions of the Satavahana period and also their cultural contributions.*
4. *Kanishka and his military achievements.*
5. *The role of Kanishka in the spread of Mahayana Buddhism.*
6. *The salient features of the Gandhara art and also Mathura art.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. The Sungas were succeeded by
 - (a) Mauryas
 - (b) Kushanas
 - (c) Kanvas
 - (d) Satavahanas
2. Nasik inscription describes the achievements of
 - (a) Pushyamitra Sunga
 - (b) Gautamiputra Satakarni
 - (c) Kanishka
 - (d) Menander
3. The author of Buddhacharita was
 - (a) Nagarjuna
 - (b) Asvagosha
 - (c) Vasumitra
 - (d) Nagasena

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. The founder of the Satavahana dynasty was _____
2. The famous Prakrit book Sattasai was written by _____
3. _____ was considered to be the founder of the Vikrama era.
4. Saka era was founded by _____ in the year _____
5. The Garuda pillar at Besnagar was erected by _____
6. The Chinese General who was defeated by Kanishka was _____

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Sakala | a) Azes I |
| 2. Purushapura | b) Pushyamitra Sunga |
| 3. Pataliputra | c) Menander |
| 4. Taxila | d) Kanishka |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) The Sungas promoted the Sanskrit language.
- b) The Satavahanas patronized Telugu language.
- c) The Mahayana Buddhism adopted Pali as its language.
- d) The Mathura school of art developed on Indo-Greek style.

V. State whether the following statements are True or False.

1. The Sungas revived Brahmanism and horse sacrifice.
2. Menander was a Bactrian ruler.
3. Nasik was a great port on the east coast during the rule of Satavahanas.
4. Gandhara art was a blend of Indian and Graeco-Roman elements.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

1. Gautamiputra Satakarni.
2. Menander.
3. Asvagosha.
4. Mathura School of art.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

1. Assess the importance of the rule of Sungas.
2. Mention the cultural contributions of Satavahanas.
3. Examine the salient features of the Gandhara art.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

1. Give an account of the history of the Satavahanas.
2. Assess the achievements of Kanishka.

LESSON 8

SANGAM AGE

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. The Sangam literature and other sources for the Sangam period.*
- 2. The political history of the Sangam period.*
- 3. The Sangam polity and society.*
- 4. Religion and the position of women in the Sangam period.*
- 5. The economic condition of the Sangam age.*

The Sangam Age constitutes an important chapter in the history of South India. According to Tamil legends, there existed three Sangams (Academy of Tamil poets) in ancient Tamil Nadu popularly called Muchchangam. These Sangams flourished under the royal patronage of the Pandyas. The first Sangam, held at Then Madurai, was attended by gods and legendary sages but no literary work of this Sangam was available. The second Sangam was held at Kapadapuram but the all the literary works had perished except *Tolkappiyam*. The third Sangam at Madurai was founded by Mudathirumaran. It was attended by a large number of poets who produced voluminous literature but only a few had survived. These Tamil literary works remain useful sources to reconstruct the history of the Sangam Age.

Sangam Literature

The corpus of Sangam literature includes *Tolkappiyam*, *Ettutogai*, *Pattuppattu*, *Pathinenkilkanakku*, and the two epics – *Silappathigaram* and *Manimegalai*. *Tolkappiyam* authored by Tolkappiyar is the earliest of the Tamil literature. It is a work on Tamil grammar but it provides information on the political and socio economic conditions of the Sangam period. The *Ettutogai* or Eight Anthologies consist of eight works – *Aingurunooru*, *Narrinai*, *Aganaooru*, *Purananooru*, *Kuruntogai*, *Kalittogai*, *Paripadal* and *Padirrupattu*. The *Pattuppattu* or Ten Idylls consist of ten works – *Thirumurugarruppadai*, *Porunararruppadai*, *Sirupanarruppadai*, *Perumpanarruppadai*, *Mullaippattu*, *Nedunalvadai*, *Maduraikkanji*, *Kurinjippattu*, *Pattinappalai* and *Malaipadukadam*. Both *Ettutogai* and *Pattuppattu* were divided into two main groups – Aham (love) and Puram (valour). *Pathinenkilkanakku* contains eighteen works mostly dealing with ethics and morals. The most important among them is *Tirukkural* authored by Thiruvalluvar. *Silappathigaram* written by Elango Adigal and *Manimegalai* by Sittalai Sattanar also provides valuable information on the Sangam polity and society.

Other Sources

In addition to the Sangam literature, the Greek authors like Megasthenes, Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy mention the commercial contacts between the West and South India. The Asokan inscriptions mention the Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers on the south of the Mauryan empire. The Hathikumbha inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga also mentions about Tamil kingdoms. The excavations at Arikamedu, Poompuhar, Kodumanal and other places reveal the overseas commercial activities of the Tamils.

Period of Sangam Literature

The chronology of the Sangam literature is still a disputed topic among the scholars. The sheet anchor of Sangam chronology lies in the fact that Gajabhagu II of Sri Lanka and Cheran Senguttuvan of the Chera dynasty were contemporaries. This is confirmed by *Silappathigaram* as well as the *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa*. Also the Roman coins issued by Roman emperors of the first century A.D were found in plenty in various places of Tamil Nadu. Therefore, the most probable date of the Sangam literature has been fixed between the third century B.C. to third century A.D. on the basis of literary, archaeological and numismatic evidences.

Political History

The Tamil country was ruled by three dynasties namely the Chera, Chola and Pandyas during the Sangam Age. The political history of these dynasties can be traced from the literary references.

Cheras

The Cheras ruled over parts of modern Kerala. Their capital was Vanji and their important seaports were Tondi and Musiri. They had the palmyra flowers as their garland. The Pugalur inscription of the first century A.D refers to three generations of Chera rulers. *Padirrupattu* also provides information on Chera kings. Perum Sorru Udhiyan Cheralathan, Imayavaramban Nedum Cheralathan and Cheran Senguttuvan were the famous rulers of this dynasty.

Cheran Senguttuvan belonged to 2nd century A.D. His younger brother was Elango Adigal, the author of *Silappathigaram*. Among his military achievements, his expedition to the Himalayas was remarkable. He defeated many north Indian monarchs. Senguttuvan introduced the Pattini cult or the worship of Kannagi as the ideal wife in Tamil Nadu. The stone for making the idol of Kannagi was brought by him after his Himalayan expedition. The consecration ceremony was attended by many princes including Gajabhagu II from Sri Lanka.

Cholas

The Chola kingdom of the Sangam period extended from modern Tiruchi district to southern Andhra Pradesh. Their capital was first located at Uraiur and then shifted

to Puhar. Karikala was a famous king of the Sangam Cholas. *Pattinappalai* portrays his early life and his military conquests. In the Battle of Venni he defeated the mighty confederacy consisting of the Cheras, Pandyas and eleven minor chieftains. This event is mentioned in many Sangam poems. Vahaipparandalai was another important battle fought by him in which nine enemy chieftains submitted before him. Karikala's military achievements made him the overlord of the whole Tamil country. Trade and commerce flourished during his reign period. He was responsible for the reclamation of forest lands and brought them under cultivation thus adding prosperity to the people. He also built Kallanai across the river Kaveri and also constructed many irrigation tanks.

Pandyas

The Pandyas ruled over the present day southern Tamil Nadu. Their capital was Madurai. The earliest kings of the Pandyan dynasty were Nediyan, Palyagasalai Mudukudumi Peruvaludhi and Mudathirumaran. There were two Nedunchelians. The first one was known as Aryappadai Kadantha Neduncheliam (one who won victories over the Aryan forces). He was responsible for the execution of Kovalan for which Kannagi burnt Madurai. The other was Talaiyalanganattu Cheruvenra (He who won the battle at Talaiyalanganam) Neduncheliam. He was praised by Nakkirar and Mangudi Maruthanar. He wore this title after defeating his enemies at the Battle of Talaiyalanganam, which is located in the Tanjore district. By this victory Neduncheliam gained control over the entire Tamil Nadu. *Maduraikkanji* written by Mangudi Maruthanar describes the socio-economic condition of the Pandya country including the flourishing seaport of Korkai. The last famous Pandyan king was Uggira Peruvaludhi. The Pandyan rule during the Sangam Age began to decline due to the invasion of the Kalabhras.

Minor Chieftains

The minor chieftains played a significant role in the Sangam period. Among them Pari, Kari, Ori, Nalli, Pegan, Ay and Adiyaman were popular for their philanthropy and patronage of Tamil poets. Therefore, they were known as Kadai Yelu Vallalgal. Although they were subordinate to the Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers, they were powerful and popular in their respective regions.

Sangam Polity

Hereditary monarchy was the form of government during the Sangam period. The king had also taken the advice of his minister, court-poet and the imperial court or avai. The Chera kings assumed titles like Vanavaramban, Vanavan, Kuttuvan, Irumporai and Villavar, the Chola kings like Senni, Valavan and Killi and the Pandya kings Thennavar and Minavar. Each of the Sangam dynasties had a royal emblem – carp for the Pandyas, tiger for the Cholas and bow for the Cheras. The imperial court or avai was attended by a number of chiefs and officials. The king was assisted by a large body of officials who were divided into five councils. They were ministers (amaichar), priests (anthanar), military commanders (senapathi), envoys (thuthar)

and spies (orarr). The military administration was also efficiently organized during the Sangam Age. Each ruler had a regular army and their respective Kodimaram (tutelary tree).

Land revenue was the chief source of state's income while custom duty was also imposed on foreign trade. The Pattinappalai refers to the custom officials employed in the seaport of Puhar. Booty captured in wars was also a major income to the royal treasury. Roads and highways were well maintained and guarded night and day to prevent robbery and smuggling.

Sangam Society

Tolkappiyam refers to the five - fold division of lands - Kurinji (hilly tracks), Mullai (pastoral), Marudam (agricultural), Neydal (coastal) and Palai (desert). The people living in these five divisions had their respective chief occupations as well as gods for worship.

- Kurinji – chief deity was Murugan – chief occupation, hunting and honey collection.
- Mullai – chief deity Mayon (Vishnu) – chief occupation, cattle-rearing and dealing with dairy products.
- Marudam – chief deity Indira – chief occupation, agriculture.
- Neydal – chief deity Varunan – chief occupation fishing and salt manufacturing.
- Palai – chief deity Korravai – chief occupation robbery.

Tolkappiyam also refers to four castes namely arasar, anthanar, vanigar and vellalar. The ruling class was called arasar. Anthanars played a significant role in the Sangam polity and religion. Vanigars carried on trade and commerce. The vellalas were agriculturists. Other tribal groups like Parathavar, Panar, Eyinar, Kadambar, Maravar and Pulaiyar were also found in the Sangam society. Ancient primitive tribes like Thodas, Irulas, Nagas and Vedars lived in this period.

Religion

The primary deity of the Sangam period was Seyon or Murugan, who is hailed as Tamil God. The worship of Murugan was having an ancient origin and the festivals relating to God Murugan was mentioned in the Sangam literature. He was honoured with six abodes known as Arupadai Veedu. Other gods worshipped during the Sangam period were Mayon (Vishnu), Vendan (Indiran), Varunan and Korravai. The Hero Stone or Nadu Kal worship was significant in the Sangam period. The Hero Stone was erected in memory of the bravery shown by the warrior in battle. Many hero stones with legends inscribed on them were found in different parts of Tamil Nadu. This kind of worshipping the deceased has a great antiquity.

Position of Women

There is a plenty of information in the Sangam literature to trace the position of women during the Sangam age. Women poets like Avvaiyar, Nachchellaiyar, and Kakkaipadiniyar flourished in this period and contributed to Tamil literature. The courage of women was also appreciated in many poems. Karpu or Chaste life was considered the highest virtue of women. Love marriage was a common practice. Women were allowed to choose their life partners. However, the life of widows was miserable. The practice of Sati was also prevalent in the higher strata of society. The class of dancers was patronized by the kings and nobles.

Fine Arts

Poetry, music and dancing were popular among the people of the Sangam age. Liberal donations were given to poets by the kings, chieftains and nobles. The royal courts were crowded with singing bards called Panar and Viraliyar. They were experts in folk songs and folk dances. The arts of music and dancing were highly developed. A variety of Yazhs and drums are referred to in the Sangam literature. Dancing was performed by Kanigaiyar. Koothu was the most popular entertainment of the people.

Economy of the Sangam Age

Agriculture was the chief occupation. Rice was the common crop. Ragi, sugarcane, cotton, pepper, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon and a variety of fruits were the other crops. Jack fruit and pepper were famous in the Chera country. Paddy was the chief crop in the Chola and Pandya country.

The handicrafts of the Sangam period were popular. They include weaving, metal works and carpentry, ship building and making of ornaments using beads, stones and ivory. There was a great demand for these products, as the internal and external trade was at its peak during the Sangam period. Spinning and weaving of cotton and silk clothes attained a high quality. The poems mention the cotton clothes as thin as a cloud of steam or a slough of a snake. There was a great demand in the western world for the cotton clothes woven at Uraiyur.

Both internal and foreign trade was well organized and briskly carried on in the Sangam Age. The Sangam literature, Greek and Roman accounts and the archaeological evidences provide detailed information on this subject. Merchants carried the goods on the carts and on animal-back from place to place. Internal trade was mostly based on the barter system.

External trade was carried between South India and the Greek kingdoms. After the ascendancy of the Roman Empire, the Roman trade assumed importance. The port city of Puhar became an emporium of foreign trade, as big ships entered this port with precious goods. Other ports of commercial activity include Tondi, Musiri, Korkai, Arikkamedu and Marakkanam. The author of Periplus provides the most valuable

information on foreign trade. Plenty of gold and silver coins issued by the Roman Emperors like Augustus, Tiberius and Nero were found in all parts of Tamil Nadu. They reveal the extent of the trade and the presence of Roman traders in the Tamil country. The main exports of the Sangam age were cotton fabrics, spices like pepper, ginger, cardamom, cinnamon and turmeric, ivory products, pearls and precious stones. Gold, horses and sweet wine were the chief imports.

End of the Sangam Age

Towards the end of the third century A.D., the Sangam period slowly witnessed its decline. The Kalabhras occupied the Tamil country for about two and a half centuries. We have little information about the Kalabhra rule. Jainism and Buddhism became prominent during this period. The Pallavas in the northern Tamil Nadu and Pandyas in southern Tamil Nadu drove the Kalabhras out of the Tamil country and established their rule.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

- 1. The Sources for the study of the Sangam period including the Sangam literature.*
- 2. The Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers of the Sangam period and their achievements.*
- 3. The Sangam polity including the administrative system and other details.*
- 4. The Sangam society, the five divisions of landscape, their religious life and the position of women.*
- 5. The economy during the Sangam period, particularly the overseas commercial contacts during the Sangam period.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. Pattini cult in Tamil Nadu was introduced by
(a) Pandyan Nedunchelivan (b) Chera Senguttuvan
(c) Elango Adigal (d) Mudathirumaran
2. The Pandyan rule of the Sangam age declined due to the invasion of
(a) Satavahanas (b) Cholas
(c) Kalabhras (d) Pallavas

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Battle of Venni was won by _____
2. The earliest Tamil grammar work of the Sangam period was _____
3. The two Tamil epics of the Sangam period are _____ and _____

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Thennavar | a) Cheras |
| 2. Vanavar | b) Cholas |
| 3. Senni | c) Tribes |
| 4. Eyinar | d) Pandyas |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) Coins issued by ancient Chinese kings are found in several parts of Tamil Nadu.
- b) Cotton textiles constitute the chief export to the Roman empire.
- c) Horses and wine were the chief exports from Tamil Nadu.
- d) Madurai was the port-city of the Sangam Pandyas.

V. State whether the following statements are true or False.

1. Arikamedu was a seaport during the Sangam period.
2. Lord Murugan was the primary deity of the Sangam age.
3. Uraiyur was famous for pearls.
4. The singing bards of the Sangam age were called as Irular.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

1. Pattupattu.
2. Ettutogai.
3. Kadaiyelu Vallalgal
4. Women poets of the Sangam period.
5. Muchchangam.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

1. Assess the achievements of Cheran Senguttuvan.
2. Give an estimate of Karikala.
3. Write a note on the Pandya rulers of the Sangam period.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

1. Give an account of the political administration of the Sangam period.
2. Discuss the socio-economic condition of ancient Tamil Nadu.
3. Assess the significance of the overseas commerce during the Sangam age.

LESSON 9

GUPTA EMPIRE

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. The sources for the study of Guptas.*
- 2. Samudragupta's achievements.*
- 3. The achievements of Chandragupta II.*
- 4. The importance of Fahien's visit to India.*
- 5. Gupta administration, society and economy.*
- 6. Literature, art, architecture and scientific development during the Gupta period.*

Sources

There are plenty of source materials to reconstruct the history of the Gupta period. They include literary, epigraphical and *numismatic* sources. The *Puranas* throw light on the royal genealogy of the Gupta kings. Contemporary literary works like the *Devichandraguptam* and the *Mudhrakshasam* written by *Visakadatta* provide information regarding the rise of the Guptas. The Chinese traveler Fahien, who visited India during the reign of Chandragupta II, has left a valuable account of the social, economic and religious conditions of the Gupta empire.

Apart from these literary sources, there are inscriptions like the Meherauli Iron Pillar Inscription and the Allahabad Pillar inscription. The first refers to the achievements of Chandragupta I. The most important source for the reign of Samudragupta is the Allahabad Pillar inscription. It describes his personality and achievements. This inscription is engraved on an Asokan pillar. It is written in classical Sanskrit, using the Nagari script. It consists of 33 lines composed by Harisena. It describes the circumstances of *Samudragupta's* accession, his military campaigns in north India and the Deccan, his relationship with other contemporary rulers, and his accomplishments as a poet and scholar.



**Allahabad Pillar
Inscription**

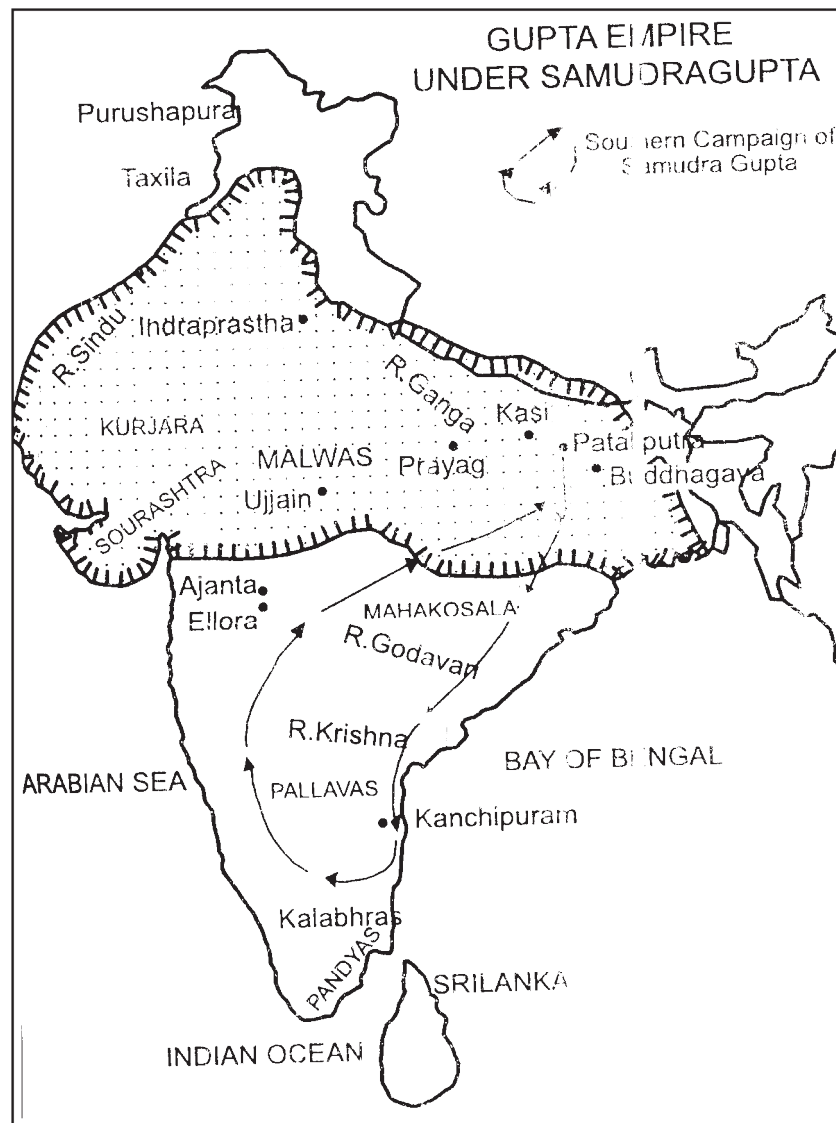
The coins issued by Gupta kings contain legends and figures. These coins provide interesting details about the titles and sacrifices performed by the Gupta monarchs.

Chandragupta I (320 – 330 A.D.)

The founder of the Gupta dynasty was Sri Gupta. He was succeeded by Ghatotkacha. These two were called *Maharajas*. Much information was not available about their rule. The next ruler was Chandragupta I and he was the first to be called *Maharajadhiraja* (the great king of kings). This title indicates his extensive conquests. He strengthened his position by a matrimonial alliance with the Licchavis. He married Kumaradevi, a princess of that family. This added to the power and prestige of the Gupta family. The Meherauli Iron Pillar inscription mentions his extensive conquests. Chandragupta I is considered to be the founder of the Gupta era which starts with his accession in A.D. 320.

Samudragupta (330-380 A.D.)

Samudragupta was the greatest of the rulers of the Gupta dynasty. The Allahabad Pillar inscription provides a detailed account of his reign. It refers to three stages in his military campaign:



1. Against some rulers of North India
2. His famous *Dakshinapatha* expedition against South Indian rulers
3. A second campaign against some other rulers of North India.

In the first campaign Samudragupta defeated Achyuta and Nagasena. Achyuta was probably a Naga ruler. Nagasena belonged to the Kota family which was ruling over the upper Gangetic valley. They were defeated and their states were annexed. As a result of this short campaign, Samudragupta had gained complete mastery over the upper Gangetic valley.

Then Samudragupta marched against the South Indian monarchs. The Allahabad Pillar inscription mentions that Samudragupta defeated twelve rulers in his South Indian Expedition. They were Mahendra of Kosala, Vyaghraraja of Mahakanthara, Mantaraja of Kaurala, Mahendragiri of Pishtapura, Swamidatta of Kottura, Damana of Erandapalla, Vishnugupta of Kanchi, Nilaraja of Avamukta, Hastivarman of Vengi, Ugrasena of Palakka, Kubera of Devarashtra and Dhananjaya of Kushtalapura. Samudragupta's policy in South India was different. He did not destroy and annex those kingdoms. Instead, he defeated the rulers but gave them back their kingdoms. He only insisted on them to acknowledge his suzerainty.

The third stage of Samudragupta's campaign was to eliminate his remaining north Indian rivals. He fought against nine kings, uprooted them and annexed their territories. They were Rudradeva, Matila, Nagadatta, Chandravarman, Ganapathinaga, Nagasena, Achyuta, Nandin and Balavarman. Most of these rulers were members of the Naga family, then ruling over different parts of north India.

After these military victories, Samudragupta performed the *asvamedha* sacrifice. He issued gold and silver coins with the legend 'restorer of the *asvamedha*'. It is because of his military achievements Samudragupta was hailed as 'Indian Napoleon'.



GOLD COINS OF SAMUDRAGUPTA

Extant of Samudragupta's Empire

After these conquests, Samudragupta's rule extended over the upper Gangetic valley, the greater part of modern U.P., a portion of central India and the southwestern part of Bengal. These territories were directly administered by him. In the south there were tributary states. The Saka and Kushana principalities on the west and northwest were within the sphere of his influence. The kingdoms on the east coast of the Deccan, as far as the Pallava Kingdom, acknowledged his suzerainty.

Estimate of Samudragupta

Samudragupta's military achievements remain remarkable in the annals of history. He was equally great in his other personal accomplishments. The Allahabad Pillar inscription speaks of his magnanimity to his foes, his polished intellect, his poetic skill and his proficiency in music. It calls him Kaviraja because of his ability in composing verses. His image depicting him with Veena is found in the coins issued by him. It is the proof of his proficiency and interest in music. He was also a patron of many poets and scholars, one of whom was Harisena. Thus he must be credited with a share in the promotion of Sanskrit literature and learning, characteristic of his dynasty. He was an ardent follower of Vaishnavism but was tolerant of other creeds. He evinced keen interest in Buddhism and was the patron of the great Buddhist scholar Vasubandhu.

Chandragupta II (380-415 A.D.)

Samudragupta was succeeded by his son Chandragupta II Vikramaditya. But according to some scholars, the immediate successor of Samudragupta was Ramagupta, the elder brother of Chandragupta II. But there is little historical proof for this. Chandragupta II inherited the military genius of his father and extended the Gupta Empire by his own conquests.

He achieved this by a judicious combination of the policy of diplomacy and warfare. Through matrimonial alliances he strengthened his political power. He married Kubera, a Naga princess of central India. He gave his daughter Prabhavati in marriage to the Vakataka prince Rudrasena II. The political importance of this marriage lies in the fact that the Vakatakas occupied a geographically strategic position in the Deccan. This alliance served a useful purpose when Chandragupta-II undertook his campaign in western India against the Sakas.

Conquest of Western India

The greatest of the military achievements of Chandragupta II was his war against the Saka *satraps* of western India. Rudrasimha III, the last ruler of the Saka satrap was defeated, dethroned and killed. His territories in western Malwa and the Kathiawar Peninsula were annexed into the Gupta Empire. After this victory he performed the horse sacrifice and assumed the title *Sakari*, meaning, 'destroyer of Sakas'. He also called himself *Vikramaditya*.

As a result of the conquest of western India, the western boundary of the Empire reached to the Arabian Sea gaining access to Broach, Sopara, Cambay and other sea ports. This enabled the Gupta empire to control trade with the western countries. Ujjain became an important commercial city and soon became the alternative capital of the Guptas. The fine cotton clothes of Bengal, Indigo from Bihar, silk from Banares, the scents of the Himalayas and the sandal and species from the south were brought to these ports without any interference. The western traders poured Roman gold into India in return for Indian products. The great wealth of the Gupta Empire was manifest in the variety of gold coins issued by Chandragupta II.

Other Conquests

Chandragupta II defeated a confederacy of enemy chiefs in Vanga. He also crossed the river Sindh and conquered Bactria. The Kushanas ruling in this region were subdued by him. With these conquests, the Gupta empire extended in the west as far as western Malwa, Gujarat and Kathiawar. In the northwest it extended beyond the Hindukush up to Bactria. In the east, it included even eastern Bengal and in the south the Narmada river formed the boundary.

Fahien's Visit

The famous Chinese pilgrim, Fahien visited India during the reign of Chandragupta II. Out of his nine years stay in India, he spent six years in the Gupta empire. He came to India by the land route through Khotan, Kashgar, Gandhara and Punjab. He visited Peshawar, Mathura, Kanauj, Sravasti, Kapilavastu, Kusinagara, Pataliputra, Kasi and Bodh Gaya among other places. He returned by the sea route, visiting on the way Ceylon and Java. The main purpose of his visit was to see the land of the Buddha and to collect Buddhist manuscripts from India. He stayed in Pataliputra for three years studying Sanskrit and copying Buddhist texts.

Fahien provides valuable information on the religious, social and economic condition of the Gupta empire. According to him, Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in the northwestern India but in the Gangetic valley it was in a state of neglect. He refers to the Gangetic valley as the 'land of Brahmanism'. Fahien mentions the unsatisfactory state of some of the Buddhist holy places like Kapilavastu and Kusinagara. According to him the economic condition of the empire was prosperous.

Although his account is valuable in many respects, he did not mention the name of Chandragupta II. He was not interested in political affairs. His interest was primarily religion. He assessed everything from the Buddhist angle. His observations on social conditions are found to be exaggerated. Yet, his accounts are useful to know the general condition of the country.

Estimate of Chandragupta II

The power and glory of Gupta empire reached its peak under the rule Chandragupta II Vikramaditya. He also contributed to the general cultural progress of the age and patronized great literary figures like Kalidasa. He promoted artistic activity. Because of the high level of cultural progress that was achieved during this period, the Gupta period is generally referred to as a golden age. A detailed account of the cultural progress in the Gupta age is given below.

Successors of Chandragupta II

Kumaragupta was the son and successor of Chandragupta II. His reign was marked by general peace and prosperity. He issued a number of coins and his inscriptions are found all over the Gupta empire. He also performed an asvamedha

sacrifice. Most importantly, he laid the foundation of the Nalanda University which emerged an institution of international reputation. At the end of his reign, a powerful wealthy tribe called the 'Pushyamitras' defeated the Gupta army. A branch of the Huns from Central Asia made attempts to cross the Hindukush mountains and invade India.

But it was his successor Skandagupta who really faced the Hun invasion. He fought successfully against the Huns and saved the empire. This war must have been a great strain on the government's resources. After Skandagupta's death, many of his successors like Purugupta, Narasimhagupta, Buddhagupta and Baladitya could not save the Gupta empire from the Huns. Ultimately, the Gupta power totally disappeared due to the Hun invasions and later by the rise of Yasodharman in Malwa.

Gupta Administration

According to inscriptions, the Gupta kings assumed titles like *Paramabhattacharaka*, *Maharajadhiraja*, *Parameswara*, *Samrat* and *Chakravartin*. The king was assisted in his administration by a council consisting of a chief minister, a Senapati or commander in - chief of the army and other important officials. A high official called *Sandivigraha* was mentioned in the Gupta inscriptions, most probably minister for foreign affairs.

The king maintained a close contact with the provincial administration through a class of officials called *Kumaramatyas* and *Ayuktas*. Provinces in the Gupta Empire were known as Bhuktis and provincial governors as *Uparikas*. They were mostly chosen from among the princes. Bhuktis were subdivided into *Vishyas* or districts. They were governed by *Vishyapatis*. *Nagara Sreshtis* were the officers looking after the city administration. The villages in the district were under the control of *Gramikas*.

Fahien's account on the Gupta administration provides useful information. He characterises the Gupta administration as mild and benevolent. There were no restrictions on people's movements and they enjoyed a large degree of personal freedom. There was no state interference in the individual's life. Punishments were not severe. Imposing a fine was a common punishment. There was no spy system. The administration was so efficient that the roads were kept safe for travelers, and there was no fear of thieves. He mentioned that people were generally prosperous and the crimes were negligible. Fahien had also appreciated the efficiency of the Gupta administration as he was able to travel without any fear throughout the Gangetic valley. On the whole the administration was more liberal than that of the Mauryas.

Social Life

The pre-Gupta period in India witnessed a series of foreign invasions. Indian society had given way to those foreigners who had become permanent residents here. But during the Gupta period, the caste system became rigid. The Brahmins occupied the top ladder of the society. They were given enormous gifts by the rulers as well as other wealthy people. The practice of untouchability had slowly begun during this period. Fahien mentions that Chandalas were segregated from the society. Their miserable condition was elaborated by the Chinese traveler.

The position of women had also become miserable during the Gupta period. They were prohibited from studying the religious texts like the Puranas. The subjection of women to men was thoroughly regularized. But it was insisted that they should be protected and generously treated by men. The practice of *Swyamvara* was given up and the Manusmriti suggested the early marriage for girls.

In the sphere of religion, Brahmanism reigned supreme during the Gupta period. It had two branches - Vaishnavism and Saivism. Most of the Gupta kings were Vaishnavaites. They performed *Aswamedha* sacrifices. The worship of images and celebration of religious festivals with elaborate rituals made these two religions popular. Religious literature like the Puranas was composed during this period. The progress of Brahmanism led to the neglect of Buddhism and Jainism. Fahien refers to the decline of Buddhism in the Gangetic valley. But a few Buddhist scholars like Vasubandhu were patronized by Gupta kings. In western and southern India Jainism flourished. The great Jain Council was held at Valabhi during this period and the Jain Canon of the *Swetambras* was written.

Art and Culture

The Gupta period witnessed a tremendous progress in the field of art, science and literature and on account of this it has been called “a golden age”. A few scholars even call this period a period of renaissance. But it should be remembered that there was no dark period before the Gupta rule. Therefore the cultural progress witnessed during the Gupta period may be called the culmination of Indian intellectual activities.

Art and Architecture

In the history of Indian art and architecture, the Gupta period occupies an important place. Both the Nagara and Dravidian styles of art evolved during this period. But most of the architecture of this period had been lost due to foreign invasions like that of Huns. Yet, the remaining temples, sculptures and cave paintings provide an idea about the grandeur of the Gupta art.

The temple at Deogarh near Jhansi and the sculptures in the temple at Garhwas near Allahabad remain important specimen of the Gupta art. There was no influence of Gandhara style. But the beautiful statue of standing Buddha at Mathura reveals a little Greek style. The Buddha statue unearthed at Saranath was unique piece of Gupta art. The Bhitari monolithic pillar of Skandagupta is also remarkable.



TEMPLE AT DEOGARH

Metallurgy had also made a wonderful progress during the Gupta period. The craftsmen were efficient in the art of casting metal statues and pillars. The gigantic copper statue of Buddha, originally found at Sultanganj now kept at Birmingham museum, was about seven and a half feet height and nearly a ton

weight. The Delhi Iron pillar of the Gupta period is still free from rust though completely exposed to sun and rain for so many centuries.



**A PAINTING AT
BAGH CAVE**

The paintings of the Gupta period are seen at Bagh caves near Gwalior. The mural paintings of Ajantha mostly illustrate the life of the Buddha as depicted in the Jataka stories. The paintings at Sigiriya in Sri Lanka were highly influenced by the Ajantha style.

The Gupta coinage was also remarkable. Samudragupta issued eight types of gold coins. The legends on them throw much light on the achievements of that marvelous king. The figures inscribed on them are illustrative of the skill and greatness of Gupta numismatic art. Chandragupta II and his successors had also issued gold, silver and copper coins of different varieties.

Literature

The Sanskrit language became prominent during the Gupta period. Nagari script had evolved from the Brahmi script. Numerous works in classical Sanskrit came to be written in the forms of epic, lyrics, drama and prose. The best of the Sanskrit literature belonged to the Gupta age.

Himself a great poet, Samudragupta patronized a number of scholars including Harisena. The court of Chandragupta II was adorned by the celebrated Navratnas. Kalidasa remain the foremost among them. His master-piece was the Sanskrit drama *Shakuntala*. It is considered one among the 'hundred best books of the world'. He wrote two other plays - the *Malavikagnimitra* and *Vikramorvasiya*. His two well-known epics are *Raghuvamsa* and *Kumarasambhava*. *Ritusamhara* and *Meghaduta* are his two lyrics.

Visakadatta was another celebrated author of this period. He was the author of two Sanskrit dramas, *Mudrarakshasa* and *Devichandraguptam*. Sudraka was a renowned poet of this age and his book *Mrichchakatika* is rich in humour and pathos. Bharavi's *Kritarjuniya* is the story of the conflict between Arjuna and Siva. Dandin was the author of *Kavyadarsa* and *Dasakumaracharita*. Another important work of this period was Vasavadatta written by *Subhandhu*. The *Panchatantra* stories were composed by *Vishnusarma* during the Gupta period. The Buddhist author Amarasimha compiled a lexicon called *Amarakosa*.

The Puranas in their present form were composed during this period. There are eighteen Puranas. The most important among them are the *Bhagavatha*, *Vishnu*, Vayu and *Matsya* Puranas. The Mahabharatha and the Ramayana were given final touches and written in the present form during this period.

Science

The Gupta period witnessed a brilliant activity in the sphere of mathematics, astronomy, astrology and medicine. *Aryabhatta* was a great mathematician and astronomer. He wrote the book *Aryabhatiya* in 499 A.D. It deals with mathematics and astronomy. It explains scientifically the occurrence of solar and lunar eclipses. *Aryabhatta* was the first to declare that the earth was spherical in shape and that it rotates on its own axis. However, these views were rejected by later astronomers like *Varahamihira* and *Brahmagupta*.

Varahamihira composed *Pancha Siddhantika*, the five astronomical systems. He was also a great authority on astrology. His work *Brihadsamhita* is a great work in Sanskrit literature. It deals with a variety of subjects like astronomy, astrology, geography, architecture, weather, animals, marriage and omens. His *Brihadjataka* is considered to be a standard work on astrology.

In the field of medicine, *Vagbhata* lived during this period. He was the last of the great medical trio of ancient India. The other two scholars *Charaka* and *Susruta* lived before the Gupta age. *Vagbhata* was the author *Ashtangasamgraha* (Summary of the eight branches of medicine).

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

- 1. The sources for the history of Guptas like the Allahabad Pillar inscription and their importance.*
- 2. Samudragupta's military achievements as well as his personal accomplishments.*
- 3. The conquests of Chandragupta II and his other qualities including patron of art and literature.*
- 4. Gupta administration, society and economic progress as described by Fahien, who visited India during this period.*
- 5. The growth of Sanskrit literature and the contribution of scholars like Kalidasa and Visakadatta.*
- 6. The art and architecture of the Gupta period as well as the progress in science including the contribution of Aryabhatta and others.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. The Gupta era starts from the year
(a) 310 A.D. (b) 320 A.D.
(c) 330 A.D. (d) 300 A.D.
2. The founder of the Nalanda University
(a) Samudragupta (b) Chandragupta II
(c) Kumaragupta (d) Skandagupta
3. The physician who lived during the Gupta age
(a) Varahamihira (b) Vagbatha
(c) Charaka (d) Susruta

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. The founder of the Gupta dynasty was _____
2. The Buddhist scholar Vasubandhu was patronized by _____
3. The title 'Sakari' was assumed by _____
4. The epics written by Kalidasa are _____ and _____
5. The author of Brihatsamhita was _____

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Meghaduta | a) Dandin |
| 2. <i>Devichandraguptam</i> | b) Sudraka |
| 3. <i>Dasakumaracharita</i> | c) Kalidasa |
| 4. <i>Mrichchakatika</i> | d) Visakadatta |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) Samudragupta annexed all his conquered territories of South India.
- b) The Dakshinapatha expedition of Samudragupta was mentioned by Fahien.
- c) Samudragupta defeated the South Indian kings but gave them back their kingdoms.
- d) The North Indian conquests of Samudragupta did not result in the expansion of the Gupta empire.

V. State whether the following statements are true or False.

1. The scholars known as Navratnas lived during the reign of Samudragupta.
2. The Gupta empire declined due to the invasion of the Huns.
3. The Gupta art adopted both the Nagara and Dravidian styles.
4. The Guptas patronized the Sanskrit language.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

1. Allahabad Pillar Inscription.
2. Dakshinapatha expedition of Samudragupta.
3. Aryabhatta.
4. Metal artifacts under the Guptas.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

1. Evaluate the impact of the conquest of western India by Chandragupta II.
2. Write a brief account of Fahien's visit to India and his observation on India.
3. Examine the salient features of the Gupta administration.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

1. Give an account of the achievements of Samudragupta.
2. Describe the socio-economic life under the rule of Guptas.
3. Examine the cultural contributions of the Guptas.

LESSON 10

HARSHAVARDHANA (606 – 647 A.D.)

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. Sources for the study of Harsha.*
- 2. The early life of Harsha.*
- 3. The military activities of Harsha.*
- 4. Harsha's contribution to Buddhism.*
- 5. Nalanda University.*

The decline of the Gupta Empire was followed by a period of political disorder and disunity in North India. It was only in the beginning of the seventh century A.D. that Harshvardhana succeeded in establishing a larger kingdom in north India.

The chief sources for tracing the history of Harsha and his times are the *Harshacharita* written by Bana and the Travel accounts of Hiuen Tsang. Bana was the court poet of Harsha. Hiuen Tsang was the Chinese traveler who visited India in the seventh century A.D. Besides these two sources, the dramas written by Harsha, namely *Ratnavali*, *Nagananda* and *Priyadarsika* also provide useful information. The Madhuben plate inscription and the Sonpat inscription are also helpful to know the chronology of Harsha. The Banskhera inscription contains the signature of Harsha.

Early Life of Harsha

The founder of the family of Harsha was Pushyabhuti. Pushyabhutis were the feudatories of the Guptas. They called themselves *Vardhanas*. After the Hun invasions they assumed independence. The first important king of Pushyabhuti dynasty was Prabhakaravardhana. His capital was Thaneshwar, north of Delhi. He assumed the title Maharajadhiraja and Paramabhataraka.

After Prabhakaravardhana's death, his elder son Rajyavardhana came to the throne. He had to face problems right from the time of his accession. His sister, Rajyasri had married the Maukhari ruler called Grihavarman. The ruler of Malwa, Devagupta in league with Sasanka, the ruler of Bengal had killed Grihavarman. Immediately on hearing this news, Rajyavardhana marched against the king of Malwa and routed his army. But before he could return to his capital, he was treacherously murdered by Sasanka. In the meantime, Rajyasri escaped into forests. Harsha now succeeded his brother at Thaneshwar. His first responsibility was to rescue his sister and to avenge the killings of his brother and brother-in-law. He first rescued his sister when she was about to immolate herself.

Harsha's Military Conquests

In his first expedition, Harsha drove out Sasanka from Kanauj. He made Kanauj his new capital. This made him the most powerful ruler of north India. Harsha fought against Dhruvasena II of Valabhi and defeated him. Dhruvasena II became a vassal.

The most important military campaign of Harsha was against the Western Chalukya ruler Pulakesin II. Both the accounts of Hiuen Tsang and the inscriptions of Pulakesin II provide the details of this campaign. Harsha with an ambition to extend his kingdom south of the Narmada river marched against the Chalukya ruler. But the Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II mentions the defeat of Harsha by Pulakesin, who after this achievement assumed the title *Paramesvara*. Hiuen Tsang's accounts also confirm the victory of Pulakesin.

Harsha led another campaign against the ruler of Sindh, which was an independent kingdom. But, it is doubtful whether his Sind campaign was a successful one. Nepal had accepted Harsha's overlordship. Harsha established his control over Kashmir and its ruler sent tributes to him. He also maintained cordial relations with Bhaskaravarman, the ruler of Assam. Harsha's last military campaign was against the kingdom of Kalinga in Orissa and it was a success.

Thus Harsha established his hold over the whole of north India. The regions modern Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa were under his direct control. But his sphere of influence was much more extensive. The peripheral states such as Kashmir, Sind, Valabhi and Kamarupa acknowledged his sovereignty.

Harsha and Buddhism

In his early life, Harsha was a devout Saiva but later he became an ardent Hinayana Buddhist. Hiuen Tsang converted him to Mahayana Buddhism. Harsha prohibited the use of animal food in his kingdom and punished those who kill any living being. He erected thousands of stupas and established travellers' rests all over his kingdom. He also erected monasteries at the sacred places of Buddhists. Once in five years he convened a gathering of representatives of all religions and honoured them with gifts and costly presents. He brought the Buddhist monks together frequently to discuss and examine the Buddhist doctrine.



HIUEN TSANG

Kanauj Assembly

Harsha organized a religious assembly at Kanauj to honour the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang towards the close of his reign. He invited representatives of all religious sects. It was attended by 20 kings, 1000 scholars from the Nalanda University, 3000 Hinayanists and Mahayanists, 3000 Brahmins and Jains. The Assembly went on continuously for 23 days. Hiuen Tsang explained the values of Mahayana doctrine and

established its superiority over others. However, violence broke out and there were acts of arson. There was also an attempt on the life of Harsha. Soon, it was brought under control and the guilty were punished. On the final day of the Assembly, Hiuen Tsang was honoured with costly presents.

Allahabad Conference

Hiuen Tsang mentions in his account about the conference held at Allahabad, known as Prayag. It was the one among the conferences routinely convened by Harsha once in five years. Harsha gave away his enormous wealth as gifts to the members of all religious sects. According to Hiuen Tsang, Harsha was so lavish that he emptied the treasury and even gave away the clothes and jewels he was wearing. His statement might be one of admiring exaggeration.

Harsha's Administration

The administration of Harsha was organized on the same lines as the Guptas did. Hiuen Tsang gives a detailed picture about this. The king was just in his administration and punctual in discharging his duties. He made frequent visits of inspection throughout his dominion. The day was too short for him. Taxation was also light and forced labour was also rare. One sixth of the produce was collected as land tax. Cruel punishments of the Mauryan period continued in the times of Harsha. Hiuen Tsang condemned the trials as barbarous and superstitious. Harsha's army consisted of the traditional four divisions – foot, horse, chariot and elephant. The number of cavalry was more than one lakh and the elephants more than sixty thousands. This was much more than that of the Mauryan army. The maintenance of public records was the salient feature of Harsha's administration. The archive of the Harsha period was known as *nilopitu* and it was under the control of special officers. Both good and bad events happened during his time had been recorded.

Society and Economy under Harsha

Both Bana and Hiuen Tsang portray the social life in the times of Harsha. The fourfold division of the society – Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vysya and Sudra – was prevalent. The Brahmins were the privileged section of the society and they were given land grants by the kings. The Kshatriyas were the ruling class. The Vysyas were mainly traders. Hiuen Tsang mentions that the Sudras practiced agriculture. There existed many sub castes. The position of women was not satisfactory. The institution of Swyamvara (the choice of choosing her husband) had declined. Remarriage of widows was not permitted, particularly among the higher castes. The system of dowry had also become common. The practice of sati was also prevalent. Hiuen Tsang mentions three ways of disposal of the dead – cremation, water burial and exposure in the woods.

The trade and commerce had declined during Harsha's period. This is evident from the decline of trade centres, less number of coins, and slow activities of merchant guilds. The decline of trade in turn affected the handicrafts industry and agriculture.

Since there was no large scale demand for goods, the farmers began to produce only in a limited way. This led to the rise of self-sufficient village economy. In short, there was a sharp economic decline as compared to the economy of the Gupta period.

Cultural Progress

The art and architecture of Harsha's period are very few and mostly followed the Gupta style. Hiuen Tsang describes the glory of the monastery with many storeys built by Harsha at Nalanda. He also speaks of a copper statue of Buddha with eight feet in height. The brick temple of Lakshmana at Sirpur with its rich architecture is assigned to the period of Harsha.

Harsha was a great patron of learning. His biographer Banabhatta adorned his royal court. Besides *Harshacharita*, he wrote *Kadambari*. Other literary figures in Harsha's court were Matanga Divakara and the famous Barthrihari, who was the poet, philosopher and grammarian. Harsha himself authored three plays - *Ratnavali*, *Priyadarsika* and *Nagananda*. Harsha patronised the Nalanda University by his liberal endowments. It attained international reputation as a centre of learning during his reign. Hiuen Tsang visited the Nalanda University and remained as a student for some time.

Nalanda University

The Chinese travelers of ancient India mentioned a number of educational institutions. The most famous among them were the Hinayana University of Valabhi and the Mahayana University of Nalanda. Hiuen Tsang gives a very valuable account of the Nalanda University. The term Nalanda means "giver of knowledge". It was founded by Kumaragupta I during the Gupta period. It was patronised by his successors and later by Harsha. The professors of the University were called *panditas*. Some of its renowned professors were Dingnaga, Dharmapala, Sthiramati and Silabadhra. Dharmapala was a native of Kanchipuram and he became the head of the Nalanda University.



RUINS OF NALANDA UNIVERSITY

Nalanda University was a residential university and education was free including the boarding and lodging. It was maintained with the revenue derived from 100 to 200 villages endowed by different rulers. Though it was a Mahayana University, different religious subjects like the Vedas, Hinayana doctrine, Sankhya and Yoga philosophies were also taught. In addition to that, general subjects like logic, grammar, astronomy, medicine and art were in the syllabus. It attracted students not only from different parts of India but from different countries of the east. Admission was made by means of an entrance examination. The entrance test was so difficult that not more than thirty percent of the candidates were successful. Discipline was very strict. More than lectures, discussion played an important part and the medium of instruction was Sanskrit.

Recent archeological excavations have brought to light the ruins of the Nalanda University. It shows the grandeur of this centre of learning and confirms the account given by the Chinese pilgrims. It had numerous classrooms and a hostel attached to it. According to Itsing, the Chinese pilgrim, there were 3000 students on its rolls. It had an observatory and a great library housed in three buildings. Its fame rests on the fact that it attracted scholars from various parts of the world. It was an institution of advanced learning and research.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

- 1. The sources for the study of Harsha such as Harshacharita and the travel accounts of Hiuen Tsang.*
- 2. Harsha's early life and his military adventures.*
- 3. Harsha and his services to Buddhism like the Kanauj Assembly and Allahabad Conference.*
- 4. Socio-economic condition and cultural development under the rule of Harsha.*
- 5. The Nalanda University and its international reputation.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. The original capital of Harshavardhana was
(a) Pataliputra (b) Peshavar
(c) Thaneshwar (d) Delhi
2. The Banskhera inscription contains the signature of
(a) Hiuen Tsang (b) Bana
(c) Harsha (d) Pulakesin II

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. The new capital established by Harsha was _____
2. The archive of the Harsha period was known as _____
3. Dhruvasena II was the ruler of _____

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Bana | a) Author of three plays |
| 2. Dharmapala | b) Poet and philosopher |
| 3. Bharthrihari | c) Biographer of Harsha |
| 4. Harsha | d) Head of the Nalanda University |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) The Kanauj assembly was organized by Harsha to honour Hiuen Tsang.
- b) Representatives of Mahayana Buddhism were alone invited to the Kanauj assembly.
- c) Kanauj assembly was an assembly convened by Harsha once in five years.
- d) The Kanauj assembly went on peacefully without any religious strife.

V. State whether the following statements are True or False.

- 1. Baskaravarman was the ruler of Kashmir.
- 2. Harsha patronized the Hinayana sect of Buddhism.
- 3. There was all-round economic prosperity during the reign of Harsha.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

- 1. Sources for the study of Harsha.
- 2. Travel accounts of Hiuen Tsang.
- 3. Kanauj Assembly.
- 4. Allahabad Conference.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

- 1. Bring out the cultural progress under the rule of Harsha.
- 2. Write a brief account of the Nalanda University.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

- 1. Give an account of the life and achievements of Harshavardhana.
- 2. Estimate the contributions of Harsha to Buddhism.
- 3. Describe the administration and society under Harsha as explained by Hiuen Tsang.

LESSON 11

SOUTH INDIAN KINGDOMS – I

PALLAVAS

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. Origin of the Pallavas.*
- 2. Achievements of Mahendravarman I, Narasimhavarman I and Rajasimha.*
- 3. Administration of the Pallavas.*
- 4. Education and Literature under the Pallavas.*
- 5. Art and architecture of the Pallavas.*

After the decline of the Sangam Age in the Tamil country, the Kalabhra rule lasted for about 250 years. Thereafter, the Pallavas established their kingdom in Tondaimandalam with its capital at Kanchipuram. Their rule continued till Tondaimandalam was captured and annexed by the Imperial Cholas in the beginning of the tenth century A.D.

Origin of the Pallavas

There are different views on the origin of the Pallavas. They were equated with the Parthians, the foreigners who ruled western India. Another view was that the Pallavas were a branch of the Brahmin royal dynasty of the Vakatakas of the Deccan. The third view relates the Pallavas with the descendents of the Chola prince and a Naga princess whose native was the island of Manipallavam. But these theories on the origin of the Pallavas were not supported by adequate evidences.

Therefore, the view that the Pallavas were the natives of Tondaimandalam itself was widely accepted by scholars. They are also identical with the Pulindas mentioned in the inscriptions of Asoka. When Tondaimandalam was conquered by the Satavahanas, the Pallavas became their feudatories. After the fall of the Satavahanas in the third century A.D., they became independent. The Pallavas issued their earlier inscriptions in Prakrit and Sanskrit because of their Satavahana connections, and also patronised Brahmanism.

Political History

The early Pallava rulers from 250 A.D. to 350 A.D. issued their charters in Prakrit. Important among them were Sivaskandavarman and Vijayaskandavarman. The second line of Pallava rulers who ruled between 350 A.D. and 550 A.D. issued

their charters in Sanskrit. The most important ruler of this line was Vishnugopa who was defeated by Samudragupta during his South Indian expedition. The rulers of the third line who ruled from 575 A.D. to their ultimate fall in the ninth century issued their charters both in Sanskrit and Tamil. Simhavishnu was the first ruler of this line. He destroyed the Kalabhras and firmly established the Pallava rule in Tondaimandalam. He also defeated the Cholas and extended the Pallava territory up to the river Kaveri. Other great Pallava rulers of this line were Mahendravarman I, Narasimhavarman I, and Narasimhavarman II.

Mahendravarman I (600 – 630 A.D.)

The long-drawn Pallava – Chalukya Conflict began during his period. Pulakesin II marched against the Pallavas and captured the northern part of their kingdom. Although a Pallava inscription refers to the victory of Mahendravarman I at Pullalur, he was not able to recover the lost territory.

Mahendravarman I was a follower of Jainism in the early part of his career. He was converted to Saivism by the influence of the Saiva saint, Thirunavukkarasar alias Appar. He built a Siva temple at Tiruvadi. He assumed a number of titles like Gunabhara, Satyasandha, Chettakari (builder of temples) Chitrakarapuli, Vichitrachitta and Mattavilasa.

He was a great builder of cave temples. The Mandagappattu inscription hails him as Vichitrachitta who constructed a temple for Brahma, Vishnu and Siva without the use of bricks, timber, metal and mortar. His rock-cut temples are found in a number of places like Vallam, Mahendravadi, Dalavanur, Pallavaram, Mandagappattu and Tiruchirappalli. He had also authored the Sanskrit work Mattavilasa Prahasanam. His title Chitrakarapuli reveals his talents in painting. He is also regarded as an expert in music. The music inscription at Kudumianmalai is ascribed to him.

Narasimhavarman I (630-668 A.D.)

Narasimhavarman I was also known as Mamalla, which means ‘great wrestler’. He wanted to take revenge the defeat of his father at the hands of Chalukyan ruler Pulakesin II. His victory over Pulakesin II in the Battle of Manimangalam near Kanchi is mentioned in Kuram copper plates. The Pallava army under General Paranjothi pursued the retreating Chalukya army, entered Chalukya territory, captured and destroyed the capital city of Vatapi. Narasimhavarman I assumed the title ‘Vatapikonda’. He regained the lost territory. Another notable achievement of Narasimhavarman I was his naval expedition to Sri Lanka. He restored the throne to his friend and Sri Lankan prince Manavarma.

During his reign, Hiuen Tsang visited the Pallava capital Kanchipuram. His description of Kanchi is vivid. He calls it a big and beautiful city, six miles in circumference. It had 100 Buddhist monasteries in which about 10,000 Buddhist monks lived. According to his account the people of Kanchi esteemed great learning and the

Ghatika at Kanchi served as a great centre of learning. Narasimhavarman I was the founder of Mamallapuram and the monolithic rathas were erected during his reign.

Narasimhavarman II or Rajasimha (695 -722 A.D.)

Narasimhavarman I was succeeded by Mahendravarman II and Parameswaravarman I and the Pallava – Chalukya conflict continued during their reign. Thereafter, Narasimhavarman II became the ruler of the Pallava kingdom. He was also known as Rajasimha. His regime was peaceful and he evinced more interest in developing the art and architecture. The Shore temple at Mamallapuram and the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram were built in this period. He was also a great patron of art and letters. The famous Sanskrit scholar Dandin is said to have adorned his court. He sent embassies to China and the maritime trade flourished during his reign. Rajasimha assumed titles like Sankarabhakta, Vadhyavidyadhara and Agamapriya.

He was succeeded by Parameswaravarman II and Nandivarman II. The Pallava rule lasted till the end of the ninth century A.D. The Chola king Aditya I defeated the last Pallava ruler Aparajita and seized the Kanchi region. With this, the rule of Pallava dynasty came to an end.

Administration of the Pallavas

The Pallavas had a well organized administrative system. The Pallava state was divided into *Kottams*. The *Kottam* was administered by officers appointed by the king. The king was at the centre of administration in which he was assisted by able ministers. He was the fountain of justice. He maintained a well-trained army. He provided land-grants to the temples known as *Devadhana* and also to the Brahmans known as *Brahmadeya*. It was also the responsibility of the central government to provide irrigation facilities to the lands. A number of irrigation tanks were dug by the Pallava kings. The irrigation tanks at Mahendravadi and Mamandoor were dug during the reign of Mahendravarman I. Detailed information on the tax system could also be traced from the Pallava inscriptions. Land tax was the primary source of the government revenue. The *Brahmadeya* and *Devadhana* lands were exempted from tax. Traders and artisans such as carpenters, goldsmiths, washer-men, oil-pressers and weavers paid taxes to the government. The Pallava inscriptions throw much light on the village assemblies called *sabhas* and their committees. They maintained records of all village lands, looked after local affairs and managed temples.

Society under the Pallavas

The Tamil society witnessed a great change during the Pallava period. The caste system became rigid. The Brahmins occupied a high place in the society. They were given land-grants by the kings and nobles. They were also given the responsibility of looking after the temples. The Pallava period also witnessed the rise of Saivism and Vaishnavism and also the decline of Buddhism and Jainism. The Saiva Nayanmars and the Vaishnava Alvars contributed to the growth of Saivism and Vaishnavism. This

is known as the Bakthi Movement. They composed their hymns in the Tamil language. These hymns revealed the importance of devotion or Bakthi. The construction of temples by the Pallava kings paved the way for the spread of these two religions.

Education and Literature

The Pallavas were great patrons of learning. Their capital Kanchi was an ancient centre of learning. The *Ghatika* at Kanchi was popular and it attracted students from all parts of India and abroad. The founder of the Kadamba dynasty, Mayurasarman studied Vedas at Kanchi. Dinganaga, a Buddhist writer came to study at Kanchi. Dharmapala, who later became the Head of the Nalanada University, belonged to Kanchi. Bharavi, the great Sanskrit scholar lived in the time of Simhavishnu. Dandin, another Sanskrit writer adorned the court of Narasimhavarman II. Mahendravarman I composed the Sanskrit play *Mattavilasaprahasanam*. Tamil literature had also developed. The Nayanmars and Alvars composed religious hymns in Tamil. The *Devarnam* composed by Nayanmars and the *Nalayradivyaprabandam* composed by Alvars represent the religious literature of the Pallava period. Perundevanar was patronized by Nandivarman II and he translated the Mahabharata as Bharathavenba in Tamil. *Nandikkalambagam* was another important work but the name of the author of this work is not known. Music and dance also developed during this period.

Pallava Art and Architecture

It was a great age of temple building. The Pallavas introduced the art of excavating temples from the rock. In fact, the Dravidian style of temple architecture began with the Pallava rule. It was a gradual evolution starting from the cave temples to monolithic *rathas* and culminated in structural temples. The development of temple architecture under the Pallavas can be seen in four stages.



Rathas at Mamallapuram

Mahendravarman I introduced the rock-cut temples. This style of Pallava temples are seen at places like Mandagappattu, Mahendravadi, Mamandur, Dalavanur, Tiruchirappalli, Vallam, Siyamangalam and Tirukalukkunram.

The second stage of Pallava architecture is represented by the monolithic *rathas* and Mandapas found at Mamallapuram. Narasimhavarman I took the credit for these wonderful architectural monuments. The five *rathas*, popularly called as the *Panchapanadava rathas*, signifies five different styles of temple architecture. The mandapas contain beautiful sculptures on its walls. The most popular of these mandapas are Mahishasuramardhini Mandapa, Tirumurthi Mandapam and Varaha Madapam.

In the next stage, Rajasimha introduced the structural temples. These temples were built by using the soft sand rocks. The Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi



**Kailasanatha temple at
Kanchipuram**

and the Shore temple at Mamallapuram remain the finest examples of the early structural temples of the Pallavas. The Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi is the greatest architectural master piece of the Pallava art.

The last stage of the Pallava art is also represented by structural temples built by the later Pallavas. The Vaikundaperumal temple, Muktheeswara temple and Matagenswara temples at Kanchipuram belong to this stage of architecture.

The Pallavas had also contributed to the development of sculpture. Apart from the sculptures found in the temples, the 'Open Art Gallery' at Mamallapuram remains an important monument bearing the sculptural beauty of this period. The Descent of the



**Shore Temple at
Mamallapuram**

Ganges or the Penance of Arjuna is called a fresco painting in stone. The minute details as well as the theme of these sculptures such as the figures of lice-picking monkey, elephants of huge size and the figure of the 'ascetic cat' standing erect remain the proof for the talent of the sculptor.



The Fall of Ganges

Fine Arts

Music, dance and painting had also developed under the patronage of the Pallavas. The Mamandur inscription contains a note on the notation of vocal music. The Kudumianmalai inscription referred to musical notes and instruments. The Alvars and Nayanmars composed their hymns in various musical notes. Dance and drama also developed during this period. The sculptures of this period depict many dancing postures. The Sittannavasal paintings belonged to this period. The commentary called *Dakshinchitra* was compiled during the reign of Mahendravarman I, who had the title Chittirakkarapuli.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

- 1. The different theories about the origin of the Pallavas.*
- 2. The political history of the Pallavas and their military accomplishments*
- 3. Administrative system under the Pallavas.*
- 4. Their cultural contributions.*
- 5. Architectural achievements of the Pallavas.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. The Pallava ruler who destroyed the Kalabhras
(a) Vishnugopa (b) Simhavishnu
(c) Mahendravarman I (d) Rajasimha
2. Hiuen Tsang visited Kanchi during the reign of
(a) Mahendravarman I (b) Narasimhavarman I
(c) Rajasimha (d) Nandivarman III

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Saiva saint who converted Mahendravarman I to Saivism was _____
2. The commander of the Pallava army who destroyed Vatapi _____
3. The title Mamalla was assumed by _____

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Perundevanar | a) Nalayiradivya Prabandam |
| 2. Alvars | b) Devaram |
| 3. Nayanmars | c) Mattavilasaprakasanam |
| 4. Mahendravarman I | d) Bharathavenba |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) Pallava period witnessed the decline of the Sanskrit language.
- b) Rajasimha destroyed Vatapi and assumed the title Vatapikondan.

- c) Mahendravarman introduced the style of building structural temples.
- d) Both Vaishnavism and Saivism flourished during Pallava period.

V. State whether the following statements are True or False.

- 1. The Sangam age was followed by the Pallava rule.
- 2. Mahendravarman I was a follower of Jainism in the early part of his career.
- 3. Monolithic rathas were erected at Kanchipuram by Narasimhavarman I.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

- 1. Origin of the Pallavas.
- 2. Ghatika at Kanchi.
- 3. Pallava Chalukya conflict.
- 4. Bakthi Movement.
- 5. Fine arts under the Pallavas.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

- 1. Give an account of the reign of Mahendravarman I.
- 2. Write a brief account on the military accomplishments of Narasimhavarman I.
- 3. Examine the administration system of the Pallavas.
- 4. Write a note on the social life under the Pallavas.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

- 1. Give an account of the political history of the Pallavas.
- 2. Assess the cultural contributions of the Pallavas.
- 3. Mention the salient features of the Pallava art.

LESSON 12

SOUTH INDIAN KINGDOMS – II

CHALUKYAS AND RASHTRAKUTAS

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. The achievements of Chalukya ruler Pulakesin II.*
- 2. Administration, social life and art and architecture under the Chalukyas.*
- 3. Political history of the Rashtrakutas.*
- 4. Administration and society under the Rashtrakutas.*
- 5. Art and architecture of the Rashtrakutas.*

Besides the Pallavas, the Western Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas in the Deccan constitute important political forces. Both these kingdoms had their rivals in the far south, namely the Pallavas and later the Cholas. Their period has also been important in the history of India for their cultural contributions.

Chalukyas (543 – 755 A.D.)

The Western Chalukyas ruled over an extensive area in the Deccan for about two centuries after which the Rashtrakutas became powerful. The family of Western Chalukyas had its offshoots like the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi and the Chalukyas of Kalyani. Pulakesin I was the founder of the Chalukya dynasty. He established a small kingdom with Vatapi or Badami as its capital.

Pulakesin II (608-642 A.D.)

The most important ruler of this dynasty was Pulakesin II. The Aihole inscription issued by him gives the details of his reign. He fought with the Kadambas of Banavasi and the Gangas of Mysore and established his suzerainty. Durvinita, the Ganga ruler accepted his overlordship and even gave his daughter in marriage to Pulakesin II. Another notable achievement of Pulakesin II was the defeat of Harshavardhana on the banks of the river Narmada. He put a check to the ambition of Harsha to conquer the south. In his first expedition against the Pallavas, Pulakesin II emerged victorious. But he suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of Narasimhavarman I near Kanchi. Subsequently, the Chalukya capital Vatapi was captured and destroyed by the Pallavas. The most important event in the reign of Pulakesin II was the visit of Hiuen Tsang to his kingdom.

The successor of Pulakesin II was Vikramaditya. He once again consolidated the Chalukya kingdom and plundered the Pallava capital, Kanchi. Thus he had avenged his father's defeat and death at the hands of the Pallavas. Kirtivarman II was the last of the rulers of the Chalukyas. He was defeated by Dantidurga, the founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty.

Administration and Social Life under the Chalukyas

The Chalukya administration was highly centralized unlike that of the Pallavas and the Cholas. Village autonomy was absent under the Chalukyas. The Chalukyas had a great maritime power. Pulakesin II had 100 ships in his navy. They also had a small standing army.

The Badami Chalukyas were Brahmanical Hindus but they gave respect to other religions. Importance was given to Vedic rites and rituals. The founder of the dynasty Pulakesin I performed the *asvamedha* sacrifice. A number of temples in honour of Vishnu, Siva and other gods were also built during this period. Hiuen Tsang mentioned about the decline of Buddhism in western Deccan. But Jainism was steadily on the path of progress in this region. Ravikirti, the court poet of Pulakesin II who composed the Aihole inscription was a Jain.

Art and Architecture

The Chalukyas were great patrons of art. They developed the *vesara* style in the building of structural temples. However, the *vesara* style reached its culmination only under the Rashtrakutas and the Hoysalas. The structural temples of the Chalukyas exist at Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal. Cave temple architecture was also famous under the Chalukyas. Their cave temples are found in Ajanta, Ellora and Nasik. The best specimens of Chalukya paintings can be seen in the Badami cave temple and in the Ajanta caves. The reception given to a Persian embassy by Pulakesin II is depicted in a painting at Ajantha.



**CAVE TEMPLE
AT AJANTA**

The Chalukya temples may be divided into two stages. The first stage is represented by the temples at Aihole and Badami. Among the seventy temples found at Aihole, four are important.

1. Ladh Khan temple is a low, flat-roofed structure consisting of a pillared hall.
2. Durga temple resembles a Buddha *Chaitya*.
3. Huchimalligudi temple.
4. The Jain temple at Meguti.



Cave Temple at Badami

Among the temples at Badami, the Muktheeswara temple and the Melagutti Sivalaya are notable for their architectural beauty. A group of four rock-cut temples at Badami are marked by high workmanship. The walls and pillared halls are adorned by beautiful images of gods and human beings.

The second stage is represented by the temples at Pattadakal.

There are ten temples here, four in the northern style and the remaining six in the Dravidian style. The Papanatha temple is the most notable in the northern style. The Sangamesvara temple and the Virupaksha temple are famous for their Dravidian style. The Virupaksha temple is built on the model of the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram. It was built by one of the queens of Vikramaditya II. Sculptors brought from Kanchi were employed in its construction.



Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal

Rashtrakutas (755 – 975 A.D.)

The Rashtrakutas were of Kannada origin and Kannada language was their mother tongue. Dantidurga was the founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. He defeated the Gurjaras and captured Malwa from them. Then he annexed the Chalukya kingdom by defeating Kirtivarman II. Thus, the Rashtrakutas became a paramount power in the Deccan.

His successor Krishna I was also a great conqueror. He defeated the Gangas and the eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. He built the magnificent rock-cut monolithic Kailasa temple at Ellora. The next important king of this dynasty was Govinda III. He achieved victories over north Indian kingdoms.

His successor Amoghavarsha I (815- 880 A.D.) ruled for a long period of 64 years. He had lost control over Malwa and Gangavadi. Yet, his reign was popular for the cultural development. He was a follower of Jainism. Jinasena was his chief preceptor. He was also a patron of letters and he himself wrote the famous Kannada work, Kavirajamarga. He had also built the Rashtrakuta capital, the city of Malkhed or Manyakheda.

Among the successors of Amoghavarsha I, Krishna III (936- 968 A.D.) was famous for his expeditions. He marched against the Cholas and defeated them at Takkolam. He marched further south and captured Tanjore. He went as far as Rameswaram and occupied it for sometime. He built several temples in the conquered

territories including the Krishneswara temple at Rameswaram. Throughout his reign he possessed the Tondaimandalam region including the capital Kanchi. After his death, the power of the Rashtrakutas declined.

Administration

The Rashtrakuta Empire was divided into several provinces called *rashtras* under the control of *rashtrapatis*. They were further divided into *vishayas* or districts governed by *vishayapatis*. The next subdivision was *bhukti* consisting of 50 to 70 villages under the control of *bhogapatis*. These officers were directly appointed by the central government. The village administration was carried on by the village headmen. However, the village assemblies played a significant role in the village administration.

Society and Economy

The Hindu sects of Vaishnavism and Saivism flourished during the period of Rashtrakutas. Yet, they did not affect the progress of Jainism under the patronage of Rashtrakuta kings and officers. Almost one third of the population of the Deccan were Jains. There were some prosperous Buddhist settlements at places like Kanheri, Sholapur and Dharwar. There was harmony among various religions. There was a college at Salatogi, situated in modern Bijapur district. An inscription gives details of this educational centre. It was run by the income from the endowments made by the rich as well as by all the villagers on occasions of functions and festivals.

The economy was also in a flourishing condition. There was an active commerce between the Deccan and the Arabs. The Rashtrakuta kings promoted the Arab trade by maintaining friendship with them.

Cultural Contributions

The Rashtrakutas widely patronized the Sanskrit literature. There were many scholars in the Rashtrakuta court. Trivikrama wrote *Nalachampu* and the *Kavirahasya* was composed by Halayudha during the reign of Krishna III. The Jain literature flourished under the patronage of the Rashtrakutas. Amogavarsha I, who was a Jain patronized many Jain scholars. His teacher Jinasena composed *Parsvabhudaya*, a biography of Parsva in verses. Another scholar Gunabhadra wrote the *Adipurana*, the life stories of various Jain saints. Sakatayana wrote the grammar work called *Amogavritti*. The great mathematician of this period, Viracharya was the author of *Ganitasaram*.

The Kannada literature saw its beginning during the period of the Rashtrakutas. Amogavarsha's *Kavirajamarga* was the first poetic work in Kannada language. Pampa was the greatest of the Kannada poets. His famous work was *Vikramasenavijaya*. Ponna was another famous Kannada poet and he wrote *Santipurana*.

Art and Architecture

The art and architecture of the Rashtrakutas were found at Ellora and Elephanta. At Ellora, the most remarkable temple is the Kailasa temple. It was excavated during the reign of Krishna I. It is carved out of a massive block of rock 200 feet long, and 100 feet in breadth and height. The temple consists of four parts - the main shrine, the entrance gateway, an intermediate shrine for Nandi and mandapa surrounding the courtyard. The temple stands on a lofty plinth 25 feet high. The central face of the plinth has imposing figures of elephants and lions giving the impression that the entire structure rests on their back. It has a three-tiered *sikhara* or tower resembling the *sikhara* of the Mamallapuram *rathas*. In the interior of the temple there is a pillared hall which has sixteen square pillars. The Kailasa temple is an architectural marvel with its beautiful sculptures. The sculpture of the Goddess Durga is shown as slaying the Buffalo demon. In another sculpture Ravana was making attempts to lift Mount Kailasa, the abode of Siva. The scenes of Ramayana were also depicted on the walls. The general characteristics of the Kailasa temple are more Dravidian.



**KAILASA TEMPLE
AT ELLORA**

Elephanta is an island near Bombay. It was originally called Sripuri. The Portuguese after seeing the large figure of an elephant named it Elephanta. The sculptural art of the Rashtrakutas reached its zenith in this place. There is a close similarity between the sculptures at Ellora and those in Elephanta. They might have been carved by the same craftsmen. At the entrance to the sanctum there are huge figures of *dwara-palakas*. In the walls of the prakara around the sanctum there are niches containing the images of Shiva in various forms - Nataraja, Gangadhara, Ardhanareesvara and Somaskanda. The most imposing figure of this temple is *Trimurthi*. The sculpture is six metre high. It is said to represent the three aspects of Shiva as Creator, Preserver and Destroyer.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

- 1. The political history of the Chalukyas of Badami.*
- 2. Art and architecture of the Chalukyas.*
- 3. Achievements of the Rashtrakuta rulers.*
- 4. Cultural contributions of the Rashtrakutas.*
- 5. Literary developments during the Rashtrakuta rule.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. Aihole inscription was issued by
(a) Amoghavarsha I (b) Pulakesin II
(c) Govinda III (d) Dantidurga
2. Who among the following defeated the Cholas at Takkolam?
(a) Pulakesin II (b) Amoghavarsha I
(c) Vikramaditya I (d) Krishna III

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. _____ was the capital of Rashtrakutas.
2. The founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty was _____
3. Sripuri was renamed as Elephanta by _____

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Ravikirti | a) Vikramasenavijaya |
| 2. Amoghavarsha I | b) Ganitasaram |
| 3. Pampa | c) Aihole inscription |
| 4. Viracharya | d) Kavirajamarga |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) Ellora is an island near Bombay.
- b) The Kailasa temple is at Ellora.
- c) The temples at Ellora were built during the Chalukya rule.
- d) The Kailasa temple at Ellora was built by Pulakesin II.

V. State whether the following statements are True or False.

1. iuen Tsang visited the Deccan during the reign of Amoghavarsha I.
2. The beginning of Kannada literature commenced during the Rashtrakuta rule.
3. Dantidurga was the last ruler of the Chalukyas.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

1. Aihole inscription
2. Pattadakal
3. Ellora
4. Elephanta

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

1. Give a brief account of the achievements of Pulakesin II.
2. Give an estimate of Amoghavarsha I.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

1. Give an account of the development of art and architecture under the Chalukyas of Badami.
2. Evaluate the cultural contributions of the Rashtrakutas.

LESSON 13

IMPERIAL CHOLAS

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. A brief history of early Cholas.*
- 2. Military conquests and other achievements of Rajaraja I.*
- 3. Campaigns of Rajendra I and his accomplishments.*
- 4. Salient features of the Chola administration.*
- 5. Literature, Art and architecture of the Cholas.*

After the decline of the Sangam period, the Cholas became feudatories in Uraiyur. They became prominent in the ninth century and established an empire comprising the major portion of South India. Their capital was Tanjore. They also extended their sway in Sri Lanka and the Malay Peninsula. Therefore, they are called as the Imperial Cholas. Thousands of inscriptions found in the temples provide detailed information regarding the administration, society, economy and culture of the Chola period.

The founder of the Imperial Chola line was Vijayalaya. He captured Tanjore from Muttaraiyars in 815 A.D. and built a temple for Durga. His son Aditya put an end to the Pallava kingdom by defeating Aparajita and annexed Tondaimandalam. Parantaka I was one of the important early Chola rulers. He defeated the Pandyas and the ruler of Ceylon. But he suffered a defeat at the hands of the Rashtrakutas in the famous battle of Takkolam. Parantaka I was a great builder of temples. He also provided the *vimana* of the famous Nataraja temple at Chidambaram with a golden roof. The two famous Uttiramerur inscriptions that give a detailed account of the village administration under the Cholas belong to his reign. After a gap of thirty years, the Cholas regained their supremacy under Rajaraja I.

Rajaraja I (985 – 1014 A.D.)

It was under Rajaraja I and his son Rajendra I that the Chola power reached its highest point of glory. His military conquests were:

1. The defeat of the Chera ruler Bhaskararavivarman in the naval battle of Kandalursalai and the destruction of the Chera navy.
2. The defeat of the Pandya ruler, Amarabhujanga and establishment of Chola authority in the Pandya country.
3. The conquest of Gangavadi, Tadigaipadi and Nolambapadi located in the Mysore region.

4. The invasion of Sri Lanka which was entrusted to his son Rajendra I. As the Sri Lankan king Mahinda V fled away from his country, the Cholas annexed the northern Sri Lanka. The capital was shifted from Anuradhapura to Polanaruva where a Shiva temple was built
5. The Chola victory over the growing power of the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani. Satyasraya was defeated and Rajaraja I captured the Raichur Doab, Banavasi and other places. Hence the Chola power extended up to the river Tungabhadra.
6. The restoration of Vengi throne to its rulers Saktivarman and Vimaladitya by defeating the Telugu Chodas. Rajaraja gave his daughter Kundavai in marriage to Vimaladitya.
7. Rajaraja's last military achievement was a naval expedition against the Maldiv Islands which were conquered.

By these conquests, the extent of the Chola empire under Rajaraja I included the Pandya, Chera and the Tondaimandalam regions of Tamil Nadu and the Gangavadi, Nolambapadi and the Telugu Choda territories in the Deccan and the northern part of Ceylon and the Maldiv Islands beyond India. Rajaraja assumed a number of titles like Mummidi Chola, Jayankonda and Sivapadasekara. He was a devout follower of Saivism. He completed the construction of the famous Rajarajeswara temple or Brihadeeswara temple at Tanjore in 1010 A.D. He also helped in the construction of a Buddhist monastery at Nagapattinam.



**STATUTE OF
RAJARAJA**

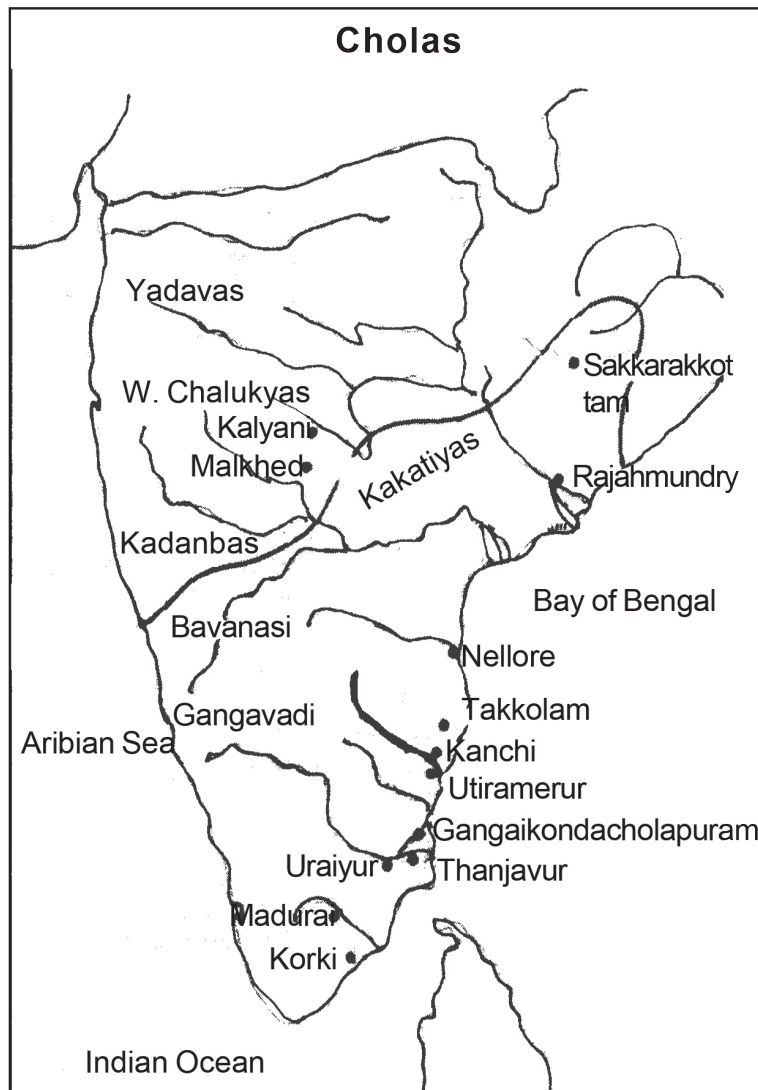
Rajendra I (1012-1044 A.D.)

Rajendra had demonstrated his military ability by participating in his father's campaigns. He continued his father's policy of aggressive conquests and expansion. His important wars were:

1. Mahinda V, the king of Sri Lanka attempted to recover from the Cholas the northern part of Ceylon. Rajendra defeated him and seized the southern Sri Lanka. Thus the whole of Sri Lanka was made part of the Chola Empire.
2. He reasserted the Chola authority over the Chera and Pandya countries.
3. He defeated Jayasimha II, the Western Chalukya king and the river Tungabhadra was recognised as the boundary between the Cholas and Chalukyas.
4. His most famous military enterprise was his expedition to north India. The Chola army crossed the Ganges by defeating a number of rulers on its way. Rajendra defeated Mahipala I of Bengal. To commemorate this successful north-Indian campaign Rajendra founded the city of Gangaikondacholapuram and constructed

the famous Rajesvaram temple in that city. He also excavated a large irrigation tank called Cholagangam on the western side of the city.

5. Another famous venture of Rajendra was his naval expedition to Kadaram or Sri Vijaya. It is difficult to pin point the real object of the expedition. Whatever its objects were, the naval expedition was a complete success. A number of places were occupied by Chola forces. But it was only temporary and no permanent annexation of these places was contemplated. He assumed the title Kadaramkondan.
6. Rajendra I had put down all rebellions and kept his empire in tact.



At the death of Rajendra I the extent of the Chola Empire was at its peak. The river Tungabhadra was the northern boundary. The Pandya, Kerala and Mysore regions and also Sri Lanka formed part of the empire. He gave his daughter Ammangadevi to the Vengi Chalukya prince and further continued the matrimonial alliance initiated by his father. Rajendra I assumed a number of titles, the most famous being Mudikondan, Gangaikondan, Kadaram Kondan and Pandita Cholan. Like his father he was also a devout Saiva and built a temple for that god at the new capital Gangaikondacholapuram.

He made liberal endowments to this temple and to the Lord Nataraja temple at Chidambaram. He was also tolerant towards the Vaishnava and Buddhist sects.

After Rajendra I, the greatness of the Chola power was preserved by rulers like Kulottunga I and Kulottunga III. Kulottunga I was the grandson of Rajendra I through his daughter Ammangadevi. He succeeded the Chola throne and thus united the Vengi kingdom with the Chola Empire. During his reign Sri Lanka became independent. Subsequently, Vengi and the Mysore region were captured by the western Chalukyas. Kulottunga I sent a large embassy of 72 merchants to China and maintained cordial relations with the kingdom of Sri Vijaya. Under Kulottunga III the central authority became weak. The rise of the feudatories like the Kadavarayas and the emergence of the Pandya power as a challenge to Chola supremacy contributed to the ultimate downfall of the Chola Empire. Rajendra III was the last Chola king who was defeated by Jatavarman Sundarapandya II. The Chola country was absorbed into the Pandya Empire.

Chola Administration

Central Government

The Cholas had an excellent system of administration. The emperor or king was at the top of the administration. The extent and resources of the Chola Empire increased the power and prestige of monarchy. The big capital cities like Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram, the large royal courts and extensive grants to the temples reveal the authority of the king. They undertook royal tours to increase the efficiency of the administration. There was elaborate administrative machinery comprising various officials called *perundanam* and *sirudanam*.

Revenue

The land revenue department was well organized. It was called as *puravuvarithinaikkalam*. All lands were carefully surveyed and classified for assessment of revenue. The residential portion of the village was called *ur nattam*. These and other lands such as the lands belonging to temples were exempted from tax. Besides land revenue, there were tolls and customs on goods taken from one place to another, various kinds of professional taxes, dues levied on ceremonial occasions like marriages and judicial fines. During the hard times, there were remission of taxes and Kulottunga I became famous by abolishing tolls and earned the title – *Sungam Tavirtta Cholan*. The main items of government expenditure were the king and his court, army and navy, roads, irrigation tanks and canals.

Military Administration

The Cholas maintained a regular standing army consisting of elephants, cavalry, infantry and navy. About seventy regiments were mentioned in the inscriptions. The royal troops were called *Kaikkolaperumpadai*. Within this there was a personal troop

to defend the king known as *Velaikkarar*. Attention was given to the training of the army and military cantonments called *kadagams* existed. The Cholas paid special attention to their navy. The naval achievements of the Tamils reached its climax under the Cholas. They controlled the Malabar and Coromandal coasts. In fact, the Bay of Bengal became a Chola lake for sometime.

Provincial Administration

The Chola Empire was divided into *mandalams* and each *mandalam* into *valanadus* and *nadus*. In each *nadu* there were a number of autonomous villages. The royal princes or officers were in charge of *mandalams*. The *valanadu* was under *periyannattar* and *nadu* under *nattar*. The town was known as *nagaram* and it was under the administration of a council called *nagarattar*.

Village Assemblies

The system of village autonomy with *sabhas* and their committees developed through the ages and reached its culmination during the Chola rule. Two inscriptions belonging to the period of Parantaka I found at Uttiramerur provide details of the formation and functions of village councils. That village was divided into thirty wards and each was to nominate its members to the village council. The qualifications to become a ward member were:

- a. Ownership of at least one fourth *veli* of land.
- b. Own residence.
- c. Above thirty years and below seventy years of age.
- d. Knowledge of Vedas.

However, certain norms of disqualification were also mentioned in the inscriptions. They were:

- a. Those who had been members of the committees for the past three years.
- b. Those who had failed to submit accounts as committee members.
- c. Those who had committed sins.
- d. Those who had stolen the property of others.

From the persons duly nominated, one was to be chosen for each ward by *kudavolai* system for a year. The names of eligible persons were written on palm-leaves and put into a pot. A young boy or girl would take out thirty names each for one ward. They were divided into six *variya*ms such as *samvatsaravariyam*, *erivariyam*, *thotta variyam*, *pancha variyam*, *pon variyam* and *puravuvuvari variyam* to take up six different functions of the village administration. The committee members were called *variapperumakkal*. They usually met in the temple or under a tree and passed resolutions. The number of committees and ward members varied from village to village.

Socio-economic Life

Caste system was widely prevalent during the Chola period. Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed special privileges. The inscriptions of the later period of the Chola rule mention about two major divisions among the castes – *Valangai* and *Idangai* castes. However, there was cooperation among various castes and sub-castes in social and religious life. The position of women did not improve. The practice of 'sati' was prevalent among the royal families. The *devadasi* system or dancing girls attached to temples emerged during this period.

Both Saivism and Vaishnavism continued to flourish during the Chola period. A number of temples were built with the patronage of Chola kings and queens. The temples remained centres of economic activity during this period. The *mathas* had great influence during this period. Both agriculture and industry flourished. Reclamation of forest lands and the construction and maintenance of irrigation tanks led to agricultural prosperity. The weaving industry, particularly the silk-weaving at Kanchi flourished. The metal works developed owing to great demand of images for temples and utensils. Commerce and trade were brisk with trunk roads or *peruvazhis* and merchant guilds. Gold, silver and copper coins were issued in plenty at various denominations. Commercial contacts between the Chola Empire and China, Sumatra, Java and Arabia were extensively prevalent. Arabian horses were imported in large numbers to strengthen the cavalry.



**GOLD COIN OF
RAJARAJA CHOLA**

Education and Literature

Education was also given importance. Besides the temples and *mathas* as educational centres, several educational institutions also flourished. The inscription at Ennayiram, Thirumukkudal and Thirubhuvanai provide details of the colleges existed in these places.

Apart from the Vedas and Epics, subjects like mathematics and medicine were taught in these institutions. Endowment of lands was made to run these institutions.

The development of Tamil literature reached its peak during the Chola period. *Sivakasintamani* written by Thiruthakkadevar and Kundalakesi belonged to 10th century. The Ramayana composed by Kampan and the *Periyapuram* or *Tiruttondarpuranam* by Sekkilar are the two master-pieces of this age. Jayankondar's *Kalingattupparani* describes the Kalinga war fought by Kulotunga I. The *Moovarula* written by Ottakuthar depicts the life of three Chola kings. The *Nalavenba* was written by Pugalendi. The works on Tamil grammar like *Kalladam* by Kalladanar, *Yapperungalam* by Amirthasagarar, a Jain, *Nannul* by Pavanandhi and *Virasoliyam* by Buddhhamitra were the products of the Chola age.

Art and Architecture

The Dravidian style of art and architecture reached its perfection under the Cholas. They built enormous temples. The chief feature of the Chola temple is the vimana. The early Chola temples



**Chola Bronze
Nataraja**

were found at Narthamalai and Kodumbalur in Pudukottai district and at Srinivasanallur in Tiruchirappalli district. The Big Temple at Tanjore built by Rajaraja I is a master-piece of South

Indian art and architecture. It consists of the *vimana*, *ardhamandapa*, *mahamandapa* and a large pavilion in the front known as the *Nandimandapa*. Another notable contribution made by the Cholas to temple architecture is the Siva temple at Gangaikondacholapuram built by Rajendra I. The Airavathesvara temple at Darasuram in

Tanjore District and the Kampaharesvara temple at Tribhuvanam are examples of later Chola temples.



Darasuram Sculptures

The Cholas also made rich contributions to the art of sculpture. The walls of the Chola temples such as the Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram temples contain numerous icons of large size with fine execution. The bronzes of the Chola period are world-famous.

The bronze statues of Nataraja or dancing Siva are master pieces. The Chola paintings were found on the walls of Narthamalai and Tanjore temples.



**Pragadeeswara Temple,
Tanjore**



**Gangaikonda
Cholapuram Temple**

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

- 1. The rise of the Imperial Cholas.*
- 2. The military accomplishments of Rajaraja I and his personality.*
- 3. Rajendra I and his military conquests.*
- 4. Village administration of the Cholas and its significance.*
- 5. Cultural achievements of the Imperial Cholas.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. The Chola ruler who faced a defeat at the Battle of Takkolam
(a) Aditya I (b) Rajaraja II
(c) Vijayalaya (d) Parantaka I
2. Author of the book Virasoliyam
(a) Bhavanandhi (b) Buddhamitra
(c) Pugalendi (d) Ottakuttar

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. The naval battle of Kandalursalai took place during the reign of _____
2. The irrigation tank Cholagangam was constructed at _____ by _____
3. Kudavolai system was described in the inscriptions found at _____

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Uttiramerur inscriptions | a) Rajaraja I |
| 2. Sungam Tavirtta Chola | b) Rajendra I |
| 3. Mudikondan | c) Kulottunga I |
| 4. Jayankondan | d) Parantaka I |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) Rajaraja I took an expedition to Sri Vijaya.
- b) Rajaraja I shifted his capital to Gangaikondacholapuram.
- c) Southern part of Sri Lanka was annexed by Rajaraja I.
- d) Sri Lanka declared its independence during the reign of Rajendra I.

V. State whether the following statements are True or False.

1. Rajaraja I helped to construct a Buddhist monastery at Tanjore.
2. Rajendra I captured the kingdom of Sri Vijaya.
3. Jayankondar's *Kalingattupparani* describes the Kalinga war fought by Kulotunga I

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

1. Brihadeeswaram.
2. Gangaikondacholapuram.
3. Kudavolai system.
4. Development of educational institutions under the Cholas.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

1. Describe the society and economy under the Imperial Cholas.
2. Write the development of Tamil literature under the Cholas.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

1. Examine the achievements of Rajaraja I.
2. Assess the military conquests of Rajendra I.
3. Describe the salient features of the Chola's administration.

LESSON 14

THE SPREAD OF INDIAN CULTURE IN OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES

Learning Objectives

Students will acquire knowledge about

- 1. The spread of Indian culture in central Asia.*
- 2. Indian cultural influence in China, Tibet and Sri Lanka.*
- 3. Indian cultural influence over the South East Asia.*
- 4. Cultural contacts between India and Myanmar.*
- 5. Art and architecture in the countries of South East Asia.*

The spread of Indian culture and civilization to the other parts of Asia constitutes an important chapter in the history of India. India had established commercial contacts with other countries from the earliest times. It had inevitably resulted in the spread of Indian languages, religions, art and architecture, philosophy, beliefs, customs and manners. Indian political adventurers even established Hindu kingdoms in some parts of South East Asia. However, this did not lead to any kind of colonialism or imperialism in the modern sense. On the other hand these colonies in the new lands were free from the control of the mother country. But they were brought under her cultural influence.

Central Asia

Central Asia was a great centre of Indian culture in the early centuries of the Christian era. Several monuments have been unearthed in the eastern part of Afghanistan. Khotan and Kashkar remained the most important centres of Indian culture. Several Sanskrit texts and Buddhist monasteries were found in these places. Indian cultural influence continued in this region till eighth century. Indian culture had also spread to Tibet and China through Central Asia.

India and China

China was influenced both by land route passing through Central Asia and the sea route through Burma. Buddhism reached China in the beginning of the first century A.D. A number of Chinese pilgrims like Fahien and Hiuen Tsang visited India. On the other side, hundreds of Buddhist monks like Gunabhadra, Vajrabodhi, Dharmadeva and Dharmagupta visited China. Indian scholars translated many Sanskrit works at the request of Chinese emperors. This contact with China continued even in the thirteenth century when the Mongols established their empire in China. Chinese art had also been influenced by Indian art.

India and Tibet

Tibet was influenced by India from the seventh century. The famous Buddhist king Gampo founded the city of Lhasa and introduced Buddhism. The Tibetan alphabet was devised with the help of Indian scholars. Later, the Indian scholars helped for the establishment of Lamaism in Tibet. In the eleventh century the Pala dynasty of Bengal had close contacts with Tibet. When Bengal was attacked by the Muslim rulers, many Buddhist monks sought shelter in Tibet.

India and Sri Lanka

Despite having different political history, Sri Lanka experienced a great cultural influence from India. Buddhist missionaries had spread not only the religious faith but also cultural traditions. The art of stone carving went to Sri Lanka from India. In the fifth century, Buddha Ghosha visited Sri Lanka and consolidated there the Hinayana Buddhism. The famous paintings of Sigiriya were modeled on the Ajantha paintings.



SIGIRIYA PAINTING

Indian Culture in South East Asia

Indian culture had extended its mighty influence in the South East Asian region consisting of the Malay Archipelago and Indo- China. They are located across the Bay of Bengal. Being fertile and rich in minerals, these lands attracted the attention of the Indians. Moreover, the east coast of India is studded with numerous ports and Indians undertook frequent voyages to these lands. The ancient traditions refer to traders' voyages to *Suvarnabhumi*, (the land of gold) a name generally given to all the countries of the East Asia. Indians began to colonize the East Asia in the Gupta period. It was further encouraged by the Pallavas. The Indian colonists established great kingdoms and some of them lasted for more than a thousand years. A number of dynasties with Indian names ruled in various parts. Till the arrival of Islam in the fifteenth century, Indian culture dominated this region.

Cambodia (Kamboja)

Cambodia was colonised by Indians in the first century A.D. They influenced the native people called the Khemers. The ruling dynasty was known as Kambojas and their country was Kamboja or modern Cambodia. Under the early rulers Saivism and Vaishnavism made steady progress. The Kamboja empire at its greatest extent included Laos, Siam, part of Burma and the Malay peninsula. Numerous Sanskrit inscriptions give us a detailed history of its kings. A number of Hindu literary works like the Vedas, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, Panini's grammar, Hindu philosophical treatises were all known to the people of Cambodia.



ANGKORWAT TEMPLE

Like the Pallava kings, they were called Varmans. Yasovarman and Suryavarman II were two well-known rulers. Temples were built in South Indian style. There are plenty of Sanskrit inscriptions. The most famous of these temples was the temple (wat) of Vishnu built by Suryavarman II in his capital city Angkor. It was popularly called as the Angkorwat Temple. It is standing on top of a terraced structure. Each terrace is a sort of a covered gallery which contains numerous relief sculptures. The temple is constructed on the Dravidian style and the sculptures depict episodes from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The Kambhoja kingdom declined only in fifteenth century.

Champa

Champa or South Annam is situated to the east of Cambodia. The first Hindu dynasty was established by Sri Mara in the second century A.D. A number of Sanskrit inscriptions throw light on the history of Champa. Twelve Indian dynasties ruled over Champa and by the thirteenth century Champa was annexed to Cambodia. Under its Hindu rulers the Hindu religion and culture, customs and manners were introduced in Champa. Saivism and Vaishnavism flourished. Buddhism also existed side by side. Various works on Hindu philosophy, grammar, fine arts and astrology were written.

Siam or Thailand

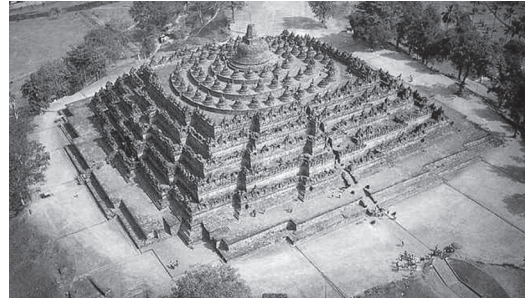
There were several states in Siam following Indian culture. Thai script was developed with the help of Indian scholars. The traditional laws of that country were composed on the model of *Dharmasastras*. The temples at Bangkok contain many sculptures depicting the *Ramayana*.

Sumatra and Java

The Malay Archipelago had remained an important link between India and the Far East. Several Hindu kingdoms existed here between fifth to fifteenth centuries A.D. The most important Hindu kingdom in the big island of Sumatra was Sri Vijaya. It was a great centre of trade and culture in the seventh century. Subsequently, the Sri Vijaya kingdom developed into a powerful maritime and commercial power known as the Sailendra empire extending its sway over the neighbouring islands of Java, Bali, Borneo and over Cambodia. The Sailendra rulers were Mahayana Buddhists and maintained cordial relations with the Indian kingdoms of the Palas of Bengal and the Cholas of Tamil Nadu. Rajaraja Chola allowed the Sailendra king Maravijayottungavarman to build a Buddhist monastery at Nagapattinam. His son Rajendra conquered the Sailendra kingdom for sometime. Later they became independent. The Sailendra empire continued intact till the eleventh century A.D.

A Hindu kingdom was established in Java as early as the fourth century A.D. In Central Java arose the kingdom of Mataram which became a strong centre of Hindu religion and culture. It was conquered by the Sailendras of Sumatra. Till the ninth century Java continued to be a part of the Sailendra empire. Later it regained its independence. Java attained greatness and splendour in art under Sailendra rule.

The greatest monument of Indo- Java art is the *Borobudur* which was built during A.D. 750-850 under the patronage of the Sailendras. It is situated on the top of a hill. It consists of nine successive terraces, crowned by a bell-shaped stupa at the centre of the topmost terrace. The open galleries in the terraces contain 2000 bas-reliefs (small carved stone figures) illustrating various incidents in the life of the Buddha. The lower parts are rich in decoration while the upper portions are plain and unadorned. Borobudur is described as an epic in stone, the most wonderful Buddhist stupa in the world.



BOROBUDUR MONUMENT

In the twelfth century, eastern Java with *Kadiri* as its capital developed into the leading kingdom of Java. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which marked the golden age of Javanese culture, Majapahit became the capital of the far-flung Javanese empire which included the neighbouring islands. Indian art and literature flourished in Java to an extent unknown elsewhere. Still, ruins of hundreds of temples and manuscripts based on the Sanskrit language are found in Java. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were popular and even today furnish the theme for their popular shadow-play. The fall of Majapahit brought to an end all artistic activity in Java.

Bali

Bali came under the rule of Hindu dynasties as early as the sixth century. I-Tsing refers to the prevalence of Buddhism there in the seventh century. The stone and copper plate inscriptions from that island show that it was colonised directly from India. Later it became subordinate to Java. Its people continue to be Hindus and even today we find the prevalence of the caste system there.

Myanmar

The cultural contacts between India and Burma (now Myanmar) dates back to the period of Asoka, who sent his missionaries there to preach Buddhism. Many Hindu kingdoms existed in Burma. Pali and Sanskrit were the languages of Burma till thirteenth century. Both Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism were followed by the Burmese.

Thus for nearly fifteen hundred years Hindu kings were ruling over numerous islands of the Malay Archipelago and over the Indo- China peninsula. Indian religions and Indian culture moulded the lives of the primitive inhabitants of these regions who were elevated to a higher plan of civilization.

Learning Outcome

After learning this lesson the students will be able to explain

1. *India's influence over Central Asia.*
2. *Cultural contacts between India and China.*
3. *India and Sri Lanka through the ages.*
4. *Spread of Indian culture in the Countries of South East Asia such as Indo-China, Malay Archipelago and Myanmar.*
5. *Hindu temples in South East Asia and their architecture.*

MODEL QUESTIONS

I. Choose the correct answer.

1. The Chola king who permitted the Sailendras to build monastery in Nagapattinam
(a) Vijayalaya (b) Rajaraja
(c) Kulottunga (d) Rajendra
2. The Hindu Kingdom in Sumatra Island was
(a) Khamboja (b) Sri Vijaya
(c) Champa (d) Annam

II. Fill in the blanks.

1. The city of Lhasa was founded by _____
2. The capital of eastern Java _____

III. Match the following.

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Angkorwat temple | a) Sailendras |
| 2. Borobudur | b) Sri Lanka |
| 3. Sigiriya | c) South Annam |
| 4. Champa | d) Suryavarman II |

IV. Find out the correct statement. One statement alone is right.

- a) Borobudur is the greatest monument of Indo-Java art.
- b) Borobudur was a Vashnavite temple.

- c) Sailendra rulers were Saivites.
- d) The scenes from Ramayana are carved in Borobudur.

V. State whether the following statements are True or False.

- 1. The first Hindu dynasty of Champa was established by Sri Mara.
- 2. The kingdom of Bali was influenced by Buddhism.

VI. Write short notes (Any three points).

- 1. Angkorwat
- 2. Borobudur
- 3. Cultural contacts between India and Myanmar
- 4. India and Bali.

VII. Answer briefly (100 words).

- 1. Trace the cultural contacts between India and China.
- 2. Write a short note on Indo-Java Art.

VIII. Answer in detail (200 words).

- 1. Give an account of the spread of Indian culture in South East Asia.
- 2. Assess the impact of Indian cultural influence in other parts of Asia