

# 101HI

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# **HISTORY OF ANCIENT INDIA (UP TO B.C.321)**

**M. A. History First Year**

**Semester – I, Paper-I**



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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY**  
**M.A. :: I SEMESER SYLLABUS**

**PAPER – I A/H I.1 (COMMON FOR HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY)**  
**101HI21 - HISTORY OF ANCIENT INDIA (FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO BC.323)**

- Unit I      Geographical Factors of Indian Sub-continent – Races and Physical Types of Indian Population – Unity in Diversity of Indian Culture.
- Unit II      Sources for the Study of Ancient Indian History – Archaeological – Literary.
- Unit III      Stone Age Hunter gatherers and Early Farming Communities of India – Harappan Culture Town Planning – Arts and Crafts- Economy-Trade-Religion
- Unit IV      The Rigvedic Society-Economy and Religion-Later Vedic Society-Polity – Economy Religion-Megalithic Culture of South India – Social Stratification. Unit V      Territorial States-Religious Movements – Buddhism and Jainism – Bhagavatism- courses      towards empire – The Nandas-Polity, Economy and Trade-Early Foreign incursions.

**Suggested Readings**

- |                                    |                                                                                                          |
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| 2. Allchin, Bridget and F. Raymond | Origins of a Civilization: The Pre-History and Early<br>Archaeology of South Asia (Oxford and IBH, 1994) |
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## Lesson-01

# 1.GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS OF INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT

A sub-continent is usually defined as <sup>23</sup> a large, relatively self-contained landmass forming a subdivision of a continent and signifies 'having a certain geographical or political independence' from rest of the continent, or 'a vast and more or less self-contained subdivision of a continent'. Indian Sub-Continent and South Asia are interchangeably used <sup>23</sup> for India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka as well as parts of Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and some Indian territory currently controlled by China. Sometimes Afghanistan and the Maldives <sup>15</sup> are also included in this part of the Asia. Geologically, the notion of a subcontinent is based on the fact that this region rests on a tectonic plate of its own, separate from the rest of Asia. The southern region of the subcontinent forms an enormous peninsula, while in the north it is separated from the colder regions of China and Mongolia by the Himalaya mountain range, which also acts as a cultural and geographical barrier between it and the rest of Asia. Politically, the term sub-continent refers to countries of a region as a group and being the largest part of Asia, this sub-continent is called as Indian Sub- continent and it is the only sub-continent in the world.

History is a record of all human activities that were performed in a definite geographical area, the product of interrelationship between man and environment. Certain epithets, for example the Europeans are great sailors, inhabitants of mountain regions are bold and warlike, the Marathas are experts in guerilla warfare, wheat is the staple food of North Indians, etc., denote certain important historical facts that have been occurred and notified in India. In the other hand the life ways of people and the history of a nation like India are largely influenced by the geographical factors. So, a student of History should have a clear and correct idea of geography of his/her country for a better understanding of past events in time and space. In this regard Richard Hakluyat rightly pointed out that 'geography and chronology are the sun and moon, the right eye and the left eye of history'.

<sup>6</sup> Historically, this vast landmass was known as Bharat-Varsha, or the land of Bharata, a famous king of Puranic tradition, was said to have formed part of a larger unit called Jambu-dvipa - the innermost of seven concentric island-continent into which the earth, conceived by the Hindu cosmographers, was supposed to have been divided. The name 'India' was

applied to the country by the Greeks. It corresponds to the 'Hi(n)du' of the old Persian epigraphs. The 'Sapta sindhavah' and "Hapta Hindu"- the appellations of Aryan country referred in the Veda and the Vedāṅg which is derived from Sindhu (Indus), the great river that constitutes the most imposing feature of the sub-continent. It is utmost important to know History of India and in view of this proper understanding of it's geographical conditions is essential.

<sup>27</sup> The Union of India is the seventh largest country in the world covering an area of <sup>7</sup> 32, 87,263 sq.km, an important country of South Asia and it is twelve times larger than U.K. and eight times larger than Japan. It stretches between the Northern Latitudes of 8°4' to 37°6' and Eastern Longitudes of 68°7' and 97°25' of Greenwich. Due to it's vast longitudinal extent, the time difference between the two extreme points in the east and west is of two hours and as such the standard meridian of India (<sup>22</sup> 82°30'E) passes through Allahabad is taken as the Standard Time for the whole country. It measures about 3,214 kilometers from north to south and <sup>7</sup> 2,933 kilometers from west to east. The Tropic of Cancer passes through its middle part and it is situated on the northern fringe of the Indian Ocean. At about 22° North Latitude, the country begins to taper and pierces through the Indian Ocean for a distance of about 1,600 kilometers in the form of a wedge and hence divide the ocean into two seas, the Bay of Bengal on the east and the Arabian Sea on the west. It occupies the south-central Peninsula of Asia and consists of the mainland and two groups of Islands namely Lakshadweep in the Arabian Sea and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal and as such lies in the midway between the Far East and the Middle East.

<sup>2</sup> India's border with Bangladesh runs 4,096.70 km. touching the <sup>7</sup> states of West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram <sup>8</sup> States. It's western border with Pakistan extends up to 3,323 km., dividing the Punjab region running along the boundaries of Thar Desert and the Ranna of Kutch, runs along the Indian states of Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Punjab and there is a border line known as Line of Control (LoC) to serve as the informal boundary between the Indian and Pakistan-administered areas of <sup>4</sup> Kashmir. It also shares a 106 km border with <sup>4</sup> Afghanistan in northwestern Kashmir, which is at present under Pakistani control. However, the Line of Actual control (LaC) effective border between India and the People's Republic of China, which traverse 4,057 km along the Indian states of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. The border with Burma (Myanmar) extends up to 1,643 km along the southern borders of India's northeastern states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. Amidst the Himalayan ranges, India's border with Bhutan runs 699 km. touching the states of Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The border with Nepal is

about 1,751 km. along the foothills of Himalayas and the states Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim share the border. The Siliguri Corridor is the narrowed and sharp land that borders with Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh and it connects peninsular India with the northeastern states.

Geographically, India can be mainly divided into five physical zones such as 1. The Northern Himalayas and Other Hills; 2. the Indo Gangetic Plains; 3. The High land Plateaus; 4. the Thar Desert and 5. the Coastal Plains but the Andaman and Nikobar Islands for the sixth but another geographical region as it is part of India.

## 8 THE NORTHERN MOUNTAINS:

A great arc of mountains, consisting of the Himalayas, Hindu Kush and Patkai ranges define the northern Indian sub-continent which were formed by the due to tectonic collisions Indian and Eurasian plates. The mountains in these ranges include some of the world's tallest mountains which act as a natural barrier to cold polar winds and they also facilitate the monsoon winds which in turn influence the climate in India. Rivers originating in these mountains flow through the fertile Indo-Gangetic plains. India has eight major mountain ranges having peaks of over 3,300 ft. The Himalayan range is considered the world's highest mountain range, with its tallest peak Mt. Everest (8,848) metres (29,029 ft) on the Nepal-China border. They form India's northeastern border, separating it from northeastern Asia. They are one of the world's youngest mountain ranges and extend almost uninterrupted for 2,500 km (1,600 miles), covering an area of 500,000 km<sup>2</sup> (190,000 sq mi). The Himalayas extend from Jammu and Kashmir in the north to Arunachal Pradesh in the east. These states along with Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim lie mostly in the Himalayan region. Numerous Himalayan peaks rise over 7,000 m (23,000 ft) and the snow line ranges between 6,000 m (20,000 ft.) in Sikkim to around 3,000 m (9,800 ft) in Kashmir. Kanchenjunga - on the Sikkim-Nepal border is the highest point in the area administered by India. Most peaks in the Himalayas remain snowbound throughout the year. The Himalayas act as a barrier to the frigid katabatic winds blowing down from Central Asia, hence North India is kept warm or only mildly cooled during winter; in summer, the same phenomenon makes India relatively hot.

10 The Vindhya ranges run across almost the central India, extending 1,050 km (650 miles). The average elevation of these hills is from 300 to 600 m (980 to 1,970 ft) and rarely goes above 700 metres (2,300 ft). They are believed to have been formed by the wastes created by the weathering of the ancient Aravali Mountains. Geographically, it

separates northern India from southern India. The western end of the range lies in eastern Gujarat, near its border with Madhya Pradesh, and runs east and north, almost meeting the Ganges at Mirzapur. Whereas, the Satpura Range, runs parallel to the Vindhya, in eastern Gujarat near the Arabian Sea coast runs east across Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and extends 900 km (560 mi) with many peaks rising above 1,000 m (3,300 ft). It is triangular in shape, with its apex at Ratnapuri and the two sides being parallel to the Tapi and Narmada rivers. These two east-west ranges divide the Indo-Gangetic plain from the Deccan Plateau located north of River Narmada.

Aravallis are the oldest mountain range in India, running across Rajasthan from northeast to southwest direction, extending approximately 800 km (500 miles). The northern end of the range continues as isolated hills and rocky ridges into Haryana, ending near Delhi and the highest peak in this range is Guru Shikhar at Mount Abu, rising to 1,722 m (5,650 ft), lying near the border with Gujarat. The Aravali Range is the eroded stub of an ancient fold mountain system. The range joins two of the ancient segments that make up the Indian craton, the Marwar segment to the northwest of the range, and the Bundelkhand segment to the southeast.

The Western Ghats or Sahyadri mountains run along the western edge of India's Deccan Plateau and separate it from a narrow coastal plain along the Arabian Sea and runs approximately 1,600 km (990 miles) from south of the Tapi river near the Gujarat-Maharashtra border and across Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu to the southern tip of the Deccan peninsula. The average elevation is around 1,000 m (3,300 ft). Anai Mudi in the Anaimalai Hills with an elevation of 2,695 m (8,842 ft) located in Kerala is the highest peak in the Western Ghats. Whereas, the Eastern Ghats are a discontinuous range of mountains, which have been eroded and vivisected by the four major rivers of southern India, the Godavari, Mahanadi, Krishna and Kaveri. They extend from West Bengal to Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, along the coast and parallel to the Bay of Bengal. Although not as tall as the Western Ghats, some of its peaks are over 1,000 m (3,300 ft) in height. The Nilgiri hills in Tamil Nadu lie at the junction of the Eastern and Western Ghats. Arma Konda 1,680 m (5,510 ft.) in Andhra Pradesh is the tallest peak in Eastern Ghats.

### INDO-GANGETIC PLAINS:

These are also known as the *Great Plains* which are alluvial plains dominated by three main rivers, the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra and they parallel to the Himalayas, from Jammu

and Kashmir in the west to Assam in the east, and drain most of northern and eastern India. These plains encompass an area of 700,000 km<sup>2</sup> (270,000 sq. miles). The major rivers in this region are the Ganges, Indus, and Brahmaputra along with their main tributaries—Yamuna, Chambal, Gomti, Ghaghara, Kosi, Sutlej, Ravi, Beas, Chenab, and Tista. These plains are sometimes classified into four divisions such as The Bhabar belt, The Terai belt, The Bangar and the Khadar belt. This belt is the world's most extensive expanse of uninterrupted alluvium formed by the deposition of silt by the numerous rivers.

## THE HIGHLAND PLATEAUS:

This physical division consists of three main plateaus - the Malwa plateau in the west, the Deccan plateau in the south, covering most of the Indian peninsula, and the Chota Nagpur plateau in the east. The Malwa plateau is spread across Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat and its average elevation is 500 m. and the landscape generally slopes towards the north. Most of the region is drained by the Chambal River and its tributaries and its western part is drained by the upper reaches of the Mahi River. The Deccan plateau is a large triangular plateau, bounded by the Vindhyas to the north and flanked by the Eastern and Western Ghats. It covers a total area of 1.9 million km<sup>2</sup> (735,000 mile<sup>2</sup>). It is mostly flat, with elevations ranging from 300 to 600 m (980 to 1,970 ft). The average elevation of the plateau is 2,000 feet (610 m) above sea level. The surface slopes from 3,000 feet (910 m) in the west to 1,500 feet (460 m) in the east. It slopes gently from west to east and gives rise to several peninsular rivers such as the Godavari, the Krishna, the Kaveri and the Mahanadi which drain into the Bay of Bengal. This region is mostly semi-arid as it lies on the leeward side of both Ghats. Much of the Deccan is covered by thorn scrub forest scattered with small regions of deciduous broadleaf forest. Climate in the Deccan ranges from hot summers to mild winters. The Chota Nagpur Plateau is situated in eastern India, covering much of Jharkhand and adjacent parts of Orissa, Bihar and Chhattisgarh. Its total area is approximately 65,000 km<sup>2</sup> (25,000 sq mi) and is made up of three smaller plateaus - the Ranchi, Hazaribagh, and Kodarma plateaus. The Ranchi plateau is the largest, with an average elevation of 700 m (2,300 ft). The Kathiawar peninsula in western Gujarat is bounded by the Gulf of Kutch and the Gulf of Khambat.

## THE THAR DESERT:

It is the world's seventh largest desert by some calculations and the tenth by some other experts. It forms a significant portion of western India and covers an area of 200,000 to 238,700 km<sup>2</sup> (77,200 to 92,200 sq. miles). The desert continues into Pakistan as the

Cholistan Desert and covers about 61 % of geographic area. About 10 % of this region comprises sand dunes, and the remaining 90 % consist of craggy rock forms, compacted salt-lake bottoms, and interdunal and fixed dune areas. Annual temperatures can range from 0 °C (32 °F) in the winter to over 50 °C (122 °F) during the summer. Most of the rainfall received in this region is associated with the short July–September southwest monsoon that brings 100 to 500 mm (3.9 to 19.7 in) of precipitation.

## THE COASTAL PLAINS:

This is mainly divided into two parts, i.e., a. the Eastern Coastal Plains, a wide stretch of land lying between the Eastern Ghats and the Bay of Bengal. It stretches from Tamilnadu in the south to West Bengal in the east. The Mahanadi, Godavari, Kaveri, and Krishna rivers drain these plains. The width of the plains varies between 100 and 130 km (62 and 81 mi). The plains are divided into six regions—the Mahanadi delta, the southern Andhra Pradesh plain, the Krishna-Godavari deltas, the Kanyakumari coast, the Coromandel Coast and sandy coastal and b. The Western Coastal Plains, a narrow strip of land sandwiched between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, ranging from 50 to 100 km. (31 to 62 miles) in width. It extends from Gujarat in the north and extends through Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, and Kerala. Numerous rivers and backwaters inundate the region. Mostly originating in the Western Ghats, the rivers are fast-flowing, usually perennial, and empty into estuaries. The Major rivers through these plains that merge the sea are the Tapi, Narmada, Mandavi and Zuari. These coastal Plains are divided into two parts, the Konkan and the Malabar Coast.

The Islands, which form part of Indian landmass, located in Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea are the Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, are classified as union territories. The Lakshadweep Islands lie 200 to 300 km (120 to 190 mi) off the coast of Kerala in the Arabian Sea with an area of 32 km<sup>2</sup> (12 sq mi). They consist of twelve atolls, three reefs, and five submerged banks, with a total of about 35 islands and islets. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are located between 6° and 14° north latitude and 92° and 94° east longitude, consist of 572 isles, lying in the Bay of Bengal near the Burmese coast. They are located 1,255 km (780 miles) from Calcutta and 193 km (120 miles) from Cape Negrals in Burma. Other significant islands in India include Diu daman, a former Portuguese enclave; Majuli, a river island of the Brahmaputra; Elephanta in Bombay harbour; and Sriharikota, a barrier island in Andhra Pradesh.

The above geographical features influenced the historical background of India and it is interesting to discuss in the following manner:

The Himalayas located in the northern most part of the country served the purpose of natural wall in order to prevent the cold winds coming from Tibet, hence the rivers of North India did not freeze so as to flow throughout the year. They act as major source of the rivers like the Indus, the Ganges, etc. and added fertility to the plains as they flow through the plains. They provided rains by checking the monsoon winds and formed as a natural boundary to prevent the foreign invasions from north. It is a known fact that no invader was able to send armies across the northern passes during ancient times as it is covered with snow for the most part of the year. Invariably it did not allow any Indian rulers as well to conquer the northern regions beyond Himalayas. However, there was a limited movement through these passes for few weeks in a year when the snow melted resulted in trade and cultural contact for example the mongoloids entered India who are noticed as the people living on the slopes of these ranges. Although India did not get influenced by the northern culture but the northern countries have had been deeply influenced by the Indian culture as Tibet stands the best example where Indian scholars and saints went to spread their religion and culture.

No doubt Himalayas made India a separate geographical unit from rest of Asia but they gave a false sense of security as the north-western ranges called Sulaiman and Hindukush, which are not very high, possess a number of passes through which many foreigners got an opportunity to enter India, for example, Khyber pass which connected Peshawar with Kabul served the purpose of foreign invasions through it and similarly the Bolan pass which is a wide one and it linked India with Kandhar. Other passes like Tochi, Kurram and Gomal easily connected India with Afghanistan. It is through these passes only the Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Kushans, Huns, Turks, Mughals and even invaders like Nadir Shah, Ahmed shah Abdali, etc. attacked India during medieval period. Hence, these passes have changed the fortunes of India and made the rulers of India to take precautionary measures against those attacks. Whenever the Indian rulers failed in their attempts they have paid overwhelmingly. But these passes also helped the growth of commerce and the spread of Indian culture abroad. Whereas, the north-eastern ranges of Himalayas did not allow any kind of contact with the eastern world (as these passes leading to Chindwin valley through Brahmaputra valley) which are impossible to cross and also due to the prevalence of bad climatic conditions. There is no wonder that neither any Indian king tried to invade Myanmar (Burma) through these passes or the vice versa. In this regard Roy Chowdhary has appropriately observed that the 'stupendous mountain chain, which fence



this country from the rest of Asia, while it continued India a world by itself favored the growth of a distinct type of civilization'.

The Vindhya and Satpura mountain ranges divided India into north and south and prevented the military campaigns of north Indian rulers to establish their control over the south till Malik Kafur to attempt. As a result of this the southern India received less foreign impact and developed its own history and culture distinct from North India. The flat surfaces of Western Ghats provided an opportunity for the construction hill-forts and served great security in the matter of military exercises, e.g. guerilla warfare of Marathas against Mughal ruler, Aurangzeb and others. Similarly, the Aravali Mountains fashioned the strategic position of Rajputs in their venerable wars against the Muslim invasions.

Another important influence of geographical factor on the Indian culture and people is the river system. In the north, the main rivers such as the Indus, the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and their tributaries helped in the foundation of early civilizations, establishment of major kingdoms that had profound impact on the administration, polity and economy of the region. It is on the banks of Indus the famous Harappan culture flourished. These rivers turned the northern plains into fertile regions that facilitated the establishment of big empires and hence great political, social, economic and philosophical ideas were generated. It is the birth place of Vedic civilization and origin of Sanskrit literature. Buddhism and Jainism flourished here which lead to the establishment of high learning such as Taxila, Nalanda, Saranath, etc. These rivers helped in the mean of cheap communication, protection and thus paved for trade and commerce. The fertile plains attracted the greedy invaders from outside and developed the ease and luxury habits of natives. Whereas, in South India the river system prevented the political unity because of well-marked divisions, especially the Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab became a bone of contention between many dynasties, for example, the Pallavas and the Chalukyas of Badami; the Pallavas and Rashtrakutas; the Cholas and the Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Rayas of Vijayanagar and the Bahmani Sultans. This prevented the unification of South Indian peninsula and also paved for the evolution of its own but independent style of sculpture, art and religious sections.

#### **River system of India:**

The Thar Desert, covering the southern part of north-western region of the country, effectively checked the aggression from the lower Indus by preventing the spread of Arab rulers and divided the plains of Sindhu and the Ganges into two distinct units.



The long coastal line of India promoted trade and maritime activities, especially the Europeans like the Portuguese, the French, the Dutch, the British, etc., which resulted in establishing centers that ultimately paved their zeal of political authority over our country. Before that the South Indian dynasties such as the Pallavas, the Cholas and others were able to maintain large naval force and to establish overseas empire, e.g., Rajendra Chola. North Indian dynasties could not demonstrate the naval power and was perhaps the main cause for the fall of the Mughal Empire according to V.A.Smith.

The diversified climatic conditions also had an immense effect on the physical and mental character of Indians. The hot climate made Indians weak which is unfit for hard work for a long time unlike cold countries. It also showed impact on the food-habits, dress, mental ability, etc. <sup>26</sup> differ from region to region. The natural barriers of hills and rivers favored the growth of local and regional spirit which fostered for separate tendencies among them.

The vast size of India made it to divide itself <sup>1</sup> into different regions by rivers, mountains, deserts, plains, <sup>1</sup> plateaus, forests, etc. made it impossible for a political unity before British even though this task was temporarily accomplished by the great kings like Asoka and Akbar. Its vast geography provided enough fields for the satisfaction of its ambitious rulers as most of their time they spent on conquering various parts within India and consequently could not go beyond the frontiers of their country which resulted in the aloofness and ignorance <sup>1</sup> what was happening outside India. This did not help them to attempt to keep in pace with the developments outside and hence India had to pay heavily both in the form of wealth and independence.

However, these geographical factors also showed its effect on cultural history in the following manner as <sup>18</sup> 1. it helped in the evolution of composite culture and facilitated for the growth of the spirit of religious toleration; 2. the fertile river valleys provided easy and cheap means of livelihood; 3. the absence of struggle for existence gave away an opportunity for intellectual pursuits and river valley basins became centers of civilization; 4. Its isolation developed into a distinctive political and cultural unit in view of racial and linguistic peculiarities; 5. Forests played an important role in the evolution of Indian culture, e.g., Aranyakas were written in jungles and they became ideal places for educational institutions like Rishikulas, Gurukulas, etc.; 6. Its natural beauty gave way to Indians a poetic and philosophical turn of mind; 7. the uncertainty of rains and uncontrollability of rivers developed an outlook of fatalism among Indians.

The above discussion provide us an idea that the geographical diversity has led to historical divisions in India, hence India possessed a long time history of various kingdoms belong to various religions thus exposing divergent traditions and customs since Ancient to subsequent periods of historical episodes.

Questions:

1. Discuss the geographical factors of India.
2. How far the history of India influenced by the Geographical factors.

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Lesson Writer  
**K.Srinivasulu**

## Lesson-02

### 2. RACIAL AND PHYSICAL TYPES OF INDIAN POPULATIONS

<sup>9</sup> The species known as *Ramapithecus* (Ape) was found in the Siwalik foothills of the northwestern Himalayas which is believed to be the first in the line of hominids (homosapiens) lived some 14 million years ago. Researches have found that a species resembling the *Australopithecus* lived in India probably some 2 million years ago, however, scientists have so far not been able to account for an evolutionary gap of as much as 12 million years since the appearance of *Ramapithecus*. India is rich in the traces of Lower Paleolithic culture, the earliest human inhabitants lived on with pebble-tools and hand axe-cleaver technology but so far there is no fossil evidence and palaeontologists and archaeologists concluded that the environmental conditions of India did not favored the preservation of this earliest human species. The first traces of a human being has been found, in the form of cranial pieces associated with the next stone age culture i.e., Middle Palaeolithic culture, at Hathnora in the river sections of Narmada valley dated to 2,00,000 yrs. B.P. belong to the ancestral of modern man and similar to the present human beings. Prehistoric and Proto historic archaeological research brought to light rich evidence of human culture began with hunting-gathering economy to food-production, the origin and evolution of present Indian population with distinct cultural feature since ages.

<sup>28</sup> India is a homeland of large and diverse population that has added to its vibrant character with about 3,000 communities which is wide and complex. <sup>6</sup> Two-thirds of her communities are found in the geographical boundaries of each of her states. They are a mingling of the Caucasoid, the Negrito, the Proto-Austroloids, the Mongoloid and the Mediterranean races. The tribes constitute eight percent of the total population of India. Based on their physical type and language, one can easily divide Indian people into four broad classes. First, a majority of high class Hindus, live in North India with the language derived from Sanskrit and secondly, the other population who live in the southern part of Vindhya with the <sup>6</sup> languages- Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam which are entirely different from Sanskrit known with the generic name of 'Dravidians' and thirdly, primitive tribes living in hills and jungles constitute eight percent of the total population, for example, the Kols, the Bhils, the Mundas, etc. and fourthly, the inhabitants of the slopes of Himalayan region and the northeastern states constitute a population who poses strong Mongolian features.

Despite the fractional, subdivided and diverse ethnic composition the Indian population makes up a single and united nation in an official point of view, fixed in the Constitution. And for example the Bengalese, the Marathas, the Telugus and many others are only a manifestation of cultural diversity of the consolidated Indian nation. In an anthropological point of view the image of Indians is exclusively variable and manifold. One can meet the representative of three main races of the world – the Equatorial, Caucasian and Mongoloid. The Equatorial race is represented by Negrito stock, the Andamanese – the aboriginals inhabiting the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal are very small, pigmy-like size (men of 148 cm. and women of 138 cm. in height) and whose skin is practically black in color. The other representatives of this race are veddoids, the tribes of Southern-Indian Mountains (the Yanadis, the Chenchus, the Kadars and others). Negro-Australoids are considered to be the most ancient inhabitants of Indian sub-continent. Features of Caucasian race are the most vivid in the population of the North-West and Northern parts of the country. The population of Kashmir, Punjab and some others are characterized by a relatively light-colored skin. They are tall, wear beards and moustache (by which the Indo-Afghani type is distinguished). The Mongoloid race, a sub-dude Southern-Mongoloid variant, is to be met predominantly among the peoples inhabiting the mountains of North-East India, include Naga (group of tribes inhabiting the Naga Hills of Nāgāland - a state in northeastern India), the Khāsi and others and their appearance is characterized by straight hair, flat face and presence of epicanthal or palpebronasal fold. Because of many centuries of racial integration there emerged several territorial anthropological types: North-Indian, Dravidian and others, as well as numerous contact and transitional anthropological types and groups. Study carried out by Reich (2009), the modern Indian population is composed of two genetically divergent and heterogeneous populations mixed in ancient times (C.1, 200-3,500 BC), known as Ancestral North Indians (ANI) and Ancestral South Indians (ASI).

According to B. S. Guha, the population of India is derived from six main ethnic groups:

(1) **The Negritos:** The Negritos or the brachycephalic (broad headed) from Africa were the earliest people to inhabit India who survived in their original habitat in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Jarewas, Onges, Sentelense and Great Andaman tribes are the examples. Anthropological studies have indicated that the Onges tribes have been living in Andamans for the last 60,000 years. Some hill tribes such as Irulas, Kodars, Paniyans and Kurumbas are found only in patches among the hills and hillocks of south India.

(2) **The Pro-Australoids or Austrics:** This group was the next to come to India after the Negritos and they represent a race of people, with plentiful hair distributed over

their brown bodies, long heads with low foreheads and prominent eye ridges, noses with low and broad roots, thick jaws, large palates and teeth and small chins. Austric tribes, which are spread all over India, Myanmar and the islands of South East Asia, are said to 'form the bedrock of people'. Whereas, Austrics were the main builders of the Indus Valley Civilisation who cultivated rice and vegetables and made sugar from sugarcane. Their language is survived in the Kol or Munda (Mundari) in Eastern and Central India.

(3) **The Mongoloids:** These people possess the features that are common to the people of Mongolia, China and Tibet and are located in the Northeastern part of India in states like Assam, Nagaland and Meghalaya and also in Ladakh and Sikkim. Generally, they are people of yellow complexion, high cheek bones, oblique eyes, sparse hair and medium height.

(4) **The Mediterranean or Dravidian:** This group perhaps came to India from the Southwest Asia and appears to be people of the same stock as the people of Asia Minor and Crete, reputed to have built the cities of Indus Valley. Their archaeological remains have been found at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa and other Indus cities. It is believed that these Dravidians might have spread whole of India, supplanting Austrics and Negritos alike. Dravidians comprise all the three sub-types, Palaeo-Mediterranean, the true Mediterranean and Oriental Mediterranean. This group constitutes the bulk of scheduled castes in North India which has a sub-type called *Oriental* group.

(5) **The Western Brachycephals:** include the Alpinoids, Dinaries and Armenoids into which the Coorgis and Parsis fall.

<sup>12</sup>  
(6) **Nordics:** Nordics or Indo-Aryans are the last immigrants to India. Nordic Aryans were a branch of Indo-Iranians, whose original home had been in Central Asia, but left their homes some 5000 years in Central Asia and had settled in Mesopotamia for some centuries. The Aryans might have come to India between 2000 and 1500 B.C. Their first home in India was western and northern Punjab, from where they spread to the Valley of the Ganga and beyond. These tribes are now mainly found in the Northwest and the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). Many of these tribes belong to 'upper castes'.

Questions:

1. Broadly discuss the Racial types of India.

Lesson Writer: K.Srinivasulu

### 3. UNITY IN DIVERSITY OF INDIAN CULTURE

#### A) DIVERSITIES:

The most important characteristic feature of India being the 'Unity in Diversity' was the outcome of Indian culture that reflected through the way of life of Indian people even though it is a composition of different languages, religions, philosophy, food-habits, festivals, fine arts, dress pattern, literature and customs, differ from place to place, within the country, hence often labeled as an amalgamation of several cultures, spans across the Indian sub-continent which has been influenced by its historical phenomena of several millennium old. Many elements of India's diverse cultures, i.e., Indian religions, yoga and Indian cuisine have profound impact across the world.

India is perhaps the only country in the world where people belong to different religions, castes and creeds, speaking different languages, having different cultural traditions that reflect in different modes of living, different clothing, different feeding habits, worshipping different gods and deities, live together in harmony and believe to be the children of one mother, i.e. MOTHER INDIA. Although it is one nation at large but it is governed by one central authority, have one Prime Minister, one president, one Supreme Court and one army chief, hence there existence unity in diversity.

The co-existence of Indian population with bewildering diversities has been due to freedom of notion, movement, and worship etc., which has been appraised by the outside world that 'India is a land of perplexing diversity'. The following basic characteristic features exemplify its diversities but have sustained the above said fundamental unity of India:

Geographically India is a vast country divided into four distinct regions representing diversity in their physical features. As a result certain parts are counted most fertile lands, whereas, others are absolutely unproductive and barren. Indo-Gangetic region falls under the former type and Rajasthan under the latter. This diversity accounts because of high, inaccessible mountains, plains, deep valleys, plateaus and table lands, thick forests, coastal strips and deserts, etc.

In climate, rainfall and vegetation there is a vast difference from one region to other region For example, the tropical Kerala and Tundraic Kashmir exhibit two extremes in

climate, Ramagundam in Telangana (part of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh) is famous for its scorching heat while Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu is known for its bitter cold. Similarly, Chirapunji in Assam receives highest rainfall on the other hand Rajasthan exhibits a contrast of receiving an annual rainfall below 5 inches. This explicit diversity is seen in the food production as well that Punjab excels in wheat, Assam in tea and Bengal in Jute production. <sup>2</sup> Based on the Koppen system, India hosts six major climatic sub-types, ranging from arid desert in the west, alpine tundra and glaciers in the north, and humid tropical regions supporting the rainforests in the southwest and island territories. The nation has four seasons: winter (January–February), summer (March–May), south-west monsoon season (June–September) and north-east post-monsoon season (October–December).

Racial diversity is another best example for diversity in India, as the Indian population do not belong to a single race, hence V.A. Smith rightly called India 'an ethnological museum' and according to Herbert Risley it comprises seven different races, possibly due to foreign invasions as they settled and merged themselves with the native population which is reflected in the physical beauty and complexion of the people differ from region to region. <sup>26</sup>

Linguistically India is a land of many spoken languages as each racial group possesses its own language and literature. Because of the existence of many races we find variety of languages such as Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Punjabi, etc. It has 22 official languages – 15 of which are Indo-European and according to 2001 census about 122 first languages are in active use, however, 18 regional languages spoken and 15 written are constitutionally recognized. Today it appears that nearly 200 languages and dialects are in India. <sup>14</sup>

India is considered as the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, collectively known as Indian religions, whereas Islam and Christianity are later additions, hence defined as a multi-religious state. <sup>11</sup> Today, Hinduism and Buddhism are the world's third and fourth-largest religions respectively, with over 2 billion followers altogether and possibly as many as 2.5 or 2.6 billion followers. At present India stands as one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world, with some of the most deeply religious societies and cultures as religions play a central and definitive role in the life of many of its people. According to 2001 census, <sup>14</sup> the religion of 80% of the people is Hinduism and Islam is practiced by around 13 %, over 23 million Christians, over 19 million Sikhs, about 8 million Buddhists, about 4 million Jains. Apart from the six major religions there are people belong to other faiths and communities such as Zoroastrians, Jews, and followers of the Baha'i faith,

hence a complete diversity is seen in India. Moreover, these religions are split up into various sects.

Different social organizations exist on account of diversity in climate, races and languages, therefore found economic diversity among the people. Interestingly, India is considered as a 'museum of cults and customs, creeds and cultures, faiths and tongues, racial types and social systems'. These differences arose due to lack of communication and the mountain barriers like Vindhyas, etc.

In a historical perspective the diversified factors like culture, race, language and religion, India could not be united politically since ancient and medieval times. Either the rulers or the people felt that it was their prime duty to protect their country from foreign invasion by possessing ideal political unity among them. Best example being when Alexander, the great attacked Purushottama or Porus. Ambi, the ruler of Taxila helped the invader with a selfish motive. Similarly, when Mohammad Ghori attacked Prithiviraj, Jayachandra of Kanauj proved to be a traitor, even now India has no political unity and political consciousnesses.

## **B) UNITY:**

In spite of these diversities India is fundamentally one and inseparable and in this connection Sir Herbert Risley rightly observed that 'beneath the manifold of diversity in physical and social type, language, customs and religions... there can still be discern certain understanding of uniformity of life from the North to south, i.e., from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. Since olden days, the people of India felt that their country is one unit, hence called it 'Bharat Varsha'.

As India is physiographically separated from the rest of the world due to its well defined boundaries, from Himalayas to Cape Comorin and a deep note of geographical unity can also be seen in our national anthem. Its fundamental unity is emphasized by the name 'Bharata Varsha'.

The political consciousness of Indian people could be expressed by them about their mother land as 'Bharatavarsha', by expressing their fundamental unity as the land of Bharata and this word is mentioned in the Epics and the Puranas, for example in Vishnu Purana we come across, i.e., "**uttaram yat Samudrasya; Himadreshchaiva dakshinam; Varsham tad Bharatam nama; Bharati yatra santatih.**" The Puranas also defined 'Bharata Varsha' as the country that lies north of the Ocean and the south of the snowy mountains



and its inhabitants are also known as Bharatiyas. Moreover, historical accounts give inform that the Indian kings performed the Aswamedha and Rajasuya sacrifices in view of achieving political unity. In this regard one take the examples of campaigns of Chandragupta Maurya, Samudragupta and Harshavardhana invading South India with the objective of giving a physical shape to the glorious concept of political unity in India. In fact it was the Hindu kings who considered India as a political unit under the measure of one sovereignty. Even the Muslim rulers, later on, strived for the centralized administrative system by bringing uniformity of laws and customs, etc. In order to achieve such unified India the British have achieved the credit of political unification of this great sub-continent.

Another remarkable character of India's past had been the capacity of absorption, assimilation and synthesis which is witnessed in the case of the composition of different races that had settled down, lived together for centuries and finally mixed up through constant living. Their spirit of thought and life achieved a common approach in the mode of life from the Himalayas in the north to Cape Camorin in the south, as they developed the ideals and instructions which are quite different from the rest of the world, hence Risley pointed out that 'an Indian personality cannot be generally resolved into it's component parts'.

Language is one important factor that promotes unity among people. In ancient India, Emperor Asoka achieved this through Prakrit language that was in vogue among the Indians known through his official inscriptions planted throughout the country, the first attempt in political unification of India. Similarly the Guptas through Sanskrit, Muslims through Persian and the British by the introduction of English language that unified the country. In continuation of this the Government of India took an important step of introducing Hindi as a national language to achieve national unity and another foremost step regarding the objective of unity being the declaration of several regional languages the classical status.

As said elsewhere, the basic character and fundamental feature of Hinduism being the religious tolerance and further India being called Hindustan stands for secularism by assimilating all religions and imbibing the religious tolerance into its lap. All the Hindu rulers exhibited a high sense of religious tolerance and liberalism. Today, India is a secular state, freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution of India as a fundamental right.

Another background of Indian unity is based upon the Hindu culture. Although, India consists of diverse racial elements but it developed a peculiar type of civilization known as Hinduism which is apparently quite different from all the other civilizations of the world. This civilization penetrated into the farthest corners of India by peaceful means and as a result of

this Hindu ideas and institutions have become the common heritage of all Indians irrespective of their language, religion or race. Hence, several historians remarked 'India and Hindus are originally related as body and soul'. While referring this remarkable character, Mrs. Annie Besant proclaimed that 'Hinduism is the soul into which India's roots are struck'; hence cultural unity is base of India's integrity.

People of India follow certain common practices that are embedded in their culture and they are further attached to traditional mythological stories, especially the two epics Ramayana and Mahabharata which are studied with great reverence though out India by all people from north to south. Further more, Vedas are regarded as a great authority by Hindus all over Indian soil. All the Hindus show their common devotion to pilgrimage centers like Badarinath, Rishikesh, Kasi, Triyambakeswar, Kedarnath, etc. Muslims pay their homage to their holy places like Ajmir,etc. signify religious independence. Christians usually visit churches as their devotion to Christ, hence reflect religious harmony. Certain festivals like Diwali, Dasara, and Holi are celebrated throughout India with all the gaiety in which all sections of people take part and in this regard Ganesh festival can be the best example. In spite of variant religious, political, economic and social factors certain limitations do exist among the Indians, however, Hindu culture as a whole signify it's unquestionable unity, the fundamental character of united India. Further more in the words of V.A.Smith it is true that 'India, beyond all doubts, posses a deep underlying fundamental unity - in the innumerable diversity/ties of ethnicity, language, dress, manner, behaviors and sect'.

Questions:

1. Highlight the Unity in Diversity of Indian Culture.

Lesson Writer:

K.Srinivasulu

## Unit II

### Lesson-04

# SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

History of any country is a record of the experiences of its people in the past and it is considered as store house of political, social, economic, religious and other aspects that have had occurred in a given period of time. It basically depends on two sources, i.e., Literary and Archaeological, the former being referred with the material evidence of the latter. While referring to the importance of sources of History Prof. K. A. N. Sastry rightly pointed out that 'History, as a subject of study, is more or less completely at the mercy of its sources'. Regarding the subject matter of Indian History, in particular, Alberuni denoted that 'the Hindus did not pay much attention to the historical order of things; they are careless in relating the chronological succession of things, and when they are pressed for information, are at a loss of knowing what to say and invariably take to tale-telling'. Similarly, R.C.Majumdar expressed his view that 'one of the gravest defects of Indian culture, which confront rational explanation, is the aversion of Indians to writing history who applied themselves to all conceivable branches of literature and excelled in many of them but never seriously took to writing of History'. Therefore, it has become a difficult task for the historians to reconstruct History, more particularly Ancient India History, as this process depends on number of sources for its systematic study.

These sources, being diverse in nature, help in the reconstruction of ancient Indian history in an objective way even though certain being descriptive in nature and throw a light on the political, social, economic and religious conditions of India which might have undergone changes from time to time. These sources are mainly divided into two groups, i.e., Indigenous and Foreign. The former group is further divided into two classes, viz., Literary (sacred and secular: biographical works, chronicles, etc) and Archaeological (coins, inscription, monuments, art and architecture), whereas the latter group has been the records of ambassadors' who happened to visit India as part of their educational or cultural tours. However, the sacred literary sources are utmost important as it denotes the very socio-political character of ancient Indian history associated to the significance of religion during that period.

## LITERARY SOURCES

**Vedic Literature:** Indian literature is partly sacred and partly secular, in which the Brahmanical literature is a vast store-house and it is very much useful in the reconstruction of the early History of India. Vedic literature is the earliest group of literature that deal with four Vedas, i.e., Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvanaveda and the first one, Rigveda being the earliest one and the oldest literary document, it gives a lot of information about the Aryan occupation of Indus region and their civilization, whereas, the other three supply an account of subsequent changes that occurred in the Aryan society. Brahmanas are a commentary on the Samhitas or Vedic hymns. The Aranyakas and the Upanishads comprised the philosophical meditations of learned sages on God, soul and the world and gives a comprehensive picture of the religious thought of the Aryans. Vedangas are other important part of Vedic texts that deal with phonetics, astronomy, ritual, grammar, etymology, and metrics and were intended to help our understanding of Vedic texts. In course of time special schools of thought came into existence for better understanding of various branches of Vedic knowledge, hence those schools generated special texts of their own are called the Sutras, i.e., the Kalpasutras, the Srautasutras, the Grihyasutras, the Dharmasutras and the Sulvasutras. Each one of these deal with the rule and regulations of rituals.

**Epics:** The two great Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the most famous books in Sanskrit literature and appeal to the people of every class of the Ancient Indian society. The former being composed by Valmiki and the latter by VedaVyas contained lot of historical information. Ramayana narrates the Aryan expansion into the South, whereas Mahabharata describes the struggle for supremacy among the Aryans, but both give us an insight into the political and social conditions of that period of time.

**Dharmasastras and Puranas:** The Dharmasastras like Smritis of Manu, Yajnavalkya, Vishnu, Brihaspati, Narada, etc. give lot of information about the social conditions of Hindu society and deal with certain rules and regulations for the conduct of Hindu way of life and also punishments for the breach of those rules. Whereas, the Puranas, on the other hand, are valuable to historians as a source material on political history on account of their genealogies, even though required to use with great caution and careful discrimination as they afford far greater insight into all aspects and phases of Hinduism- its mythology, its idol worship, its theism and pantheism, its love of God, its

philosophy and superstition, its festivals and ceremonies, etc. In all they are 18 in number but all of them are not equally important for historical purpose and only Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, Matsya Purana, Brahma Purana and Bhavishya Purana are useful and historically more significant, for example., Matsya Purana is useful for the history of Andhra Satavahanas, Vishnu Purana for Mauryas and Vayu Purana for Guptas. However, every Purana deals with five topics, viz., Sarga, Prati-Sarga, Vamsa, Manvantra and Vanshacharita and the last one is useful for students of History. Puranas are also used for the purpose of building up the history of ancient Indian geography in which we come across the names of many important cities that existed that time. According to Mukhopadhyaya, 'the Puranas form an important portion of the religious literature of the Hindus, and together with the Dharmasastras and Tantras, govern their conduct and regulate their religious observances at the present day.

**Buddhist Literature:** Buddhist Literature contains a lot of information regarding the period immediately preceded the accession of Bimbisara and it throws light on many topics that the Brahmanical writers did not deal with. It consists of Tripitakas which describe about the life and teachings of Buddha and also the conditions of India during 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. It is found in two languages, viz., Pali and Sanskrit. The Pali canon is divided into three Pitakas or Baskets, viz., the Vinaya Pitaka (contains Sutta Vibhaga, Khandakas and Parivara texts and the disciplinary rules and regulations for leading a monastic life), the Sutta Pitaka (the summary of Buddha's teachings divided into Digha Nikaya, Maajjhima Nikaya, Samyutta Nikaya, Anguttara Nikaya and Khuddaka Nikaya) and the Abhidhamma Pitaka contains seven texts dealing with the doctrines of the Buddha in a scholastic manner. The Jataka stories deal with the previous births of Buddha and the Buddhists chronicles like Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa also contain many historical and geographical references. Buddhaghosha was a great commentator of Buddhism in Pali and other famous commentators were Buddhadatta, Ananda, Dhammapala, Upasena, Kassapa, Dhammasiri and Mahasami. Nagarjunacharya was a great teacher of Buddhism and the author of Satasaharika, Prajnaparamita and Madhyamika Sutras.

Jain Literature mainly consists of Aryas and Upanyas are 12 in number containing the teachings of Lord Mahavira and also refers to the princes and kingdoms of North India during the time of Mahavira. Among them the most important work being the 'Parisistha Parvama' written by Hemachandra and deals with the historical information during the reign of Chandra Gupta Maurya.

Apart from the above mentioned sacred literature that help in the reconstruction of ancient Indian History there are several important secular literary works that include biographies, chronicles, works on politics and grammar and mention may be made of such writings like Mudrarakshas of Vishakhadatta that deals the story of Chandragupta Maurya and Chanakya and also explains how the Nandas were overthrown and Chandragupta became the king of Magadha. The Arthashastra of Kautilya contains a lot of information regarding the system of administration, social and religious life of that period. Patanjali's Mahabhasya and Panini's Ashtadhyayi on Sanskrit grammar, but there are some occasional references to kings, republics and other political events.

Several literary and other secular works supplement our knowledge of ancient India, for example., Harisena's, the court poet of Samudragupta, poetical works, especially the Prasasti on the Allahabad Pillar inscription throw a flood of light on the achievements of Samudragupta. The dramas of Kalidasa such as Shakuntala, etc., gives useful information in the form of poetry, prose and drama about the social life of the people but the dates of their composition is sometimes pretense to be dangerous to utilize that information. The two dramas of Bhasa known as Svapnavasavadatta and Pratijna Yaugandharayana supply interesting information about the political condition of India during the time of king Pradyota of Ujjain. The three dramatic works assigned to Harsha (Nagananda, Ratnavali and Priyadarsika) throw interesting light on the history of 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Bana's 'Harshacharita' in prose is useful not only in view of political history but also for depicting the economic, social and religious life of the people of 7<sup>th</sup> century. Bilhana described the achievements of Yasovarman and Vikramaditya in the Gaudavaho and Vikramankadeva Charita. The Ramcharit is the story of a king, Rampil of Bengal. The other biographical works are the Kumarapala Charita of Jayasimha, Kumarapala Charit of Hemachandra, Hammira Kavya of Naya Chandra, etc. While referring the importance of Rajatarangini of Kalhana, R.C.Majumdar pointed out that it is the only work in ancient Indian literature that can be regarded as historical text in true sense and considered as a reliable history of Kashmir which is trustworthy before 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. The chronicles of Gujarat contain the works such as Ras Mala and Kirti Kaumudi of Someshwar, Sukrita Samkirtana of Arisimha, Prabandha Chintamani of Merutunga, Prabandha Kosha of Rajasekhara, Mammiramad Mardana of Jaisimha, etc. Similarly, the Tamil works of the 'Sangam Age' describe the religious and cultural developments of that age, for example 'Silappadikaram' and 'Manimekhalai.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES**

The second source, but utmost important, for the reconstruction and aware of ancient Indian history being the Archaeological material culture which is considered to be

more authentic than the literary sources. K.A.N.Sastry considered that 'the archaeological sources are superior in authenticity to many written records' and it gives reliable support and acts as ready reference to theoretical deduction of the fact as a Historical event. In fact, the earliest stage of human culture such as hunting-gathering way of life, the beginning of village life and civilization in India is known only through archaeological remains and their study. It can be divided into three heads, i.e., Inscriptions (Epigraphy), Coins (Numismatics) and Monuments. Due to recent developments and adoption of scientific methods, especially in studying the prehistoric past, this field has progressed towards the scientific enquiry, hence changed from the antiquarian stage to scientific discipline. The study of Indian antiquities was initiated by European scholars, for e.g., Sir William Jones, who founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1774 followed by several others like James Prinsep, Alexander Cunningham, John Marshall, etc. in studying large number of Brahmi inscriptions, geography of ancient India, important ancient places like Bodh-Gaya, Bharhut, Sanchi, Sarnath, Taxila have been excavated to throw light on ancient Indian history and later on this task had been undertaken by prominent Indian scholars like Mazumdar, Banerjee, Mitra, etc.

**Epigraphical Sources:** The foremost informative material for the study of ancient Indian history being the inscriptions which are divided into several types according to the subject matter, viz., commercial (seals of Indus valley civilization and Mandasore stone inscription of Kumaragupta), magical (Harappan seals and amulets), religious (Edicts of Asoka), didactic (Edicts of Asoka), administrative (Sohgaura copper plate inscription, Junagadh rock inscription of Rudradaman-I and Banskhera copper plate inscription of Harsha), eulogistic (Edicts of Asoka and Hathigumpha inscription of king Kharavela), votive or dedicative (Besnagar Garuda pillar inscription of Heliodoros, Aihole inscription of Pulakesin-II), donatives (these inscriptions refer to donations of caves or other buildings for the residence of monks and ascetics), commemorative (record of birth, death and other important events) and literary (poetic and compositions and dramatic works). Inscriptions are generally found on stone and copper plates but also found on other materials like rims and lids of pottery but invariably and mostly on the former on pillars, slabs, prisms of crystal, walls of temples, pavements of pillars of colonnades, caves, etc., hence accordingly R.C. Mazumdar explains that "the inscriptions being contemporary records of a reliable character have helped us most and furnished with the names of kings. They sometimes together with dates and other necessary particulars have recorded many important events of history". Other than stone Copper was invariably used for issuing land grants and an inscription copper-plated was called *Tamrapata*, *Tamrapattra*, *Tamamrassana*, *Sasanapattra* or *Danapattra* according to its content and were handed over to the donee so that it may serve as title-deeds. Fahien accounts refer

the issue of many copper plates in connection to donations for Buddhist establishment, viz., Sohgaura copper plate of Mauryan period conform such donation. Another example being the refers of Hieun Tsang that Kanishka summoned Buddhist Council which prepared three commentaries engraved on copper plates and kept in stone caskets which were placed in the stupas built over them. Sometimes a document was inscribed not only on one copper plate but on many and in that case copper plates were fastened together by means of copper rings which make it looked like a book.

**Numismatic Sources:** Like Epigraphy, Numismatics (the study of coins) form an important source material for ancient Indian History and the material commonly used for making coins is copper, gold and silver. They are basically two types, viz., and cast and punch marked, the former contains legends and the latter poses simple marks. These help us to build up the history of the country in many ways, especially to fix Indian chronology in different periods and give us clue to the concerned ruler's personality, battles and achievements. For example, Samudra Gupta on his coinage referred himself as 'Parama Bhattaraka Maharajadhiraja' and some coins of him indicate his proficiency in music. Several important information could be gathered through coins such as to determine the extent of the territory of a king; names of kings who ruled at various times in different parts of the country; issue date; to fix the exact date of accession and death of a king; portraits of kings delineate the dress pattern; existence of script; hobbies and amusements of kings; deities represent the religious beliefs of the kings,; ship-marks denote the sea-born trade, etc. The discovery of large number of Roman coins in India confirm the fact that there was a vigorous trade between India and the Rome Empire which also refers to the economic prosperity of India and sea fare activities of Indian traders. Issue of gold or silver coins in a kingdom confirm the prosperity of that kingdom and issue of copper coins indicate the downgrading of the kingdom, hence understood that the kingdom was passing through abnormal conditions. The earliest coins had no legends only figures, devices or symbols and it was only after Greek invasion the practice of writing came into existence. A large number of coins issued by Indo-Bactrian rulers found in the north-western frontier confirm their control over that area which posses a high degree of artistic excellence and had an influence on Indian coinage, especially the adoption of minting the name and portrait of the ruler. This borrowed technique could be seen in almost all coins issued by different kings, eg., Kushanas, Satavahanas, Guptas, etc. However, punch marked coins represent a private coinage according to Rapson (obverse of the coin poses marks of the private money-changers and the marks on reverse denoted loalty in which the coins were issued) and Smith is of the opinion that they were issued by guilds and goldsmiths with the permission of the ruling authority.



The other important source material for the reconstruction of ancient Indian history is historical monuments which include buildings, sculptures on stone and metals, terra-cottas, ornaments and other decorative and non-decorative fragments unearthed from excavations. The excavations ancient sites, for example old towns like Mohenjodaro, Harappa and Taxila and other Buddhist monuments hidden in the form of mounds have given a lot of information hitherto unknown and changed the concept of ancient Indian history. It is after the discovery of Indus Valley sites only Indians began to talk of a civilization in India prior to that of the Aryans. Excavations at Taxila confirmed the history of Kushnas and Gandhara School of art. Mention may be made of many of such sites, viz., Pataliputra as the capital of Mauryas; temples of Deogadh and Bhitargaon near Kanpur indicate the artistic activities of the Guptas. Cave Temples and other important temples built in different periods of time under the patronage of various kings along with Buddhist stupas found in length and breadth of India throw much light on the religious activities belong to various schools of art and architecture supply rich information about the historical development of Indian Culture.

**Foreign Sources:** Apart from Indigenous sources, as mentioned above, the Foreign Accounts also highlight certain important information since ancient times as a result of the visits of foreigners belong to different periods of time and their records supplement the native evidence which can be divided into three classes, viz., 1. Classical or Greek, 2. the Chinese and 3. the Muslims. K.A.N. Sastry in his words emphasizes the importance of foreign accounts as that 'the accounts of any country and its people by foreign observers are of great interest to the historian of the country. For they enable him to know what impression it made upon the minds of such observers and to estimate with greater confidence the part played by it in the general history of the world. And whereas in the case of India, the native sources of history fail him partly or altogether at some points, the writings of foreigners gain great value in his eyes'.

Scylax, Herodotus and Ctesias were the early Greek writers who wrote about India. Scylax was the first classical writer to inform the west about India in his voyage between the Persian Gulf and Indus valley. Herodotus famous book 'Histories' give the information about the Persian and Greek wars and Indo-Persian relations and it also tells us about the political conditions of North-West India in his time as northern Indian was part of the Empire of Darius which constituted the 20<sup>th</sup> satrapy or province. The accounts of Nearchos, Aristobulus, Onesicritus and Clitarchus help us to know the wars that Alexander fought. The account of Ctesias is full of fables. Three ambassadors were sent by the Greek sovereigns to Pataliputra namely Megasthenes, Deimachus and

Dionysios. The former's accounts give us the time of Chandragupta Maurya. The work of Ptolemy gives a geographical account of India and the periplus of Erythrean Sea tells us about the exports and imports of the east and west coasts of India.

The Chinese sources mainly consists of the accounts of three travelers namely Fahien, Hiuen-Tsang and Itsing who made the long and toilsome pilgrimage and left valuable accounts about what they saw. Fahien, during the regin of Chandragupta Vikramaditya, Hieun-Tsang during Harshavardhana and Itsing in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Left their accounts which are of great sources to know the conditions of society and religion during that period. The Tibetan historian, Taranath's book 'History of Buddhism' is a treasure of valuable information about Biddhism.

Questions:

1. Discuss the archeological sources for the reconstruction of Indian History.
2. How far literary sources are useful in the re-construction of Indian History.

Lesson Writer:

K.Srinivasulu

**Unit – III**  
**Lesson-05**

## STONE AGE HUNTER GATHERERS

**Aim:** To understand the life of man in pre-historic age and the tools used by him in various stages, his development and the origins of stone age cultures in different areas.

Topics:

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Division of Stone age hunters
- .3 Paleolithic stages
  - .3.1 Lower Palaeolithic
    - .3.1.2 Hand Axe Traditions
      - .3.1.2.1 Pre Chellian culture
      - .3.1.2.2 Chellian culture
      - .3.1.2.3 Auchellan Culture
  - .3.2 Flake Traditions
    - .3.2.1 Clactonian Culture
    - .3.2.2 Levallosia Culture
    - .3.2.3 Lower Levallosia
    - .3.2.4 Middle Levallosia
    - .3.2.5 Upper Levallosia
    - .3.2.6 Final Levallosia
  - .3.3 Middle Paleolithic
    - .3.3.1 Mousterian Culture
    - .3.3.2 Typical Mousterian culture
    - .3.3.3 Denticulated Mousterian
  - .3.4. Upper Paleolithic stage
    - .3.4.1 Blade Tradition
      - .3.4.1.1 Perigordian culture
      - .3.4.1.2 Aurigancia culture
      - .3.4.1.3 Solutrean culture
      - .3.4.1.4 Types of Solutrean culture
      - .3.4.1.5 Magdalenian culture
- .3.5 Conclusion

**Introduction:**

In 1835, C.J.Thomsen had given the basic configuration to archaeology by well accepted sub division of past human society in terms of technological and chronological stages of stone, Bronze and Iron Age. In 1851, Daniel Wilson proposed the term 'Prehistory' and in 1865 Jhon Lubbock coined the terms palaeolithic and Neolithic. Even though the foundation of Asiatic society of Bengal by sir William Jones in 1784 ushered to an era of historical research with an organized pursuit of India's past, it was only after 1830s, historical heritage came to be increasingly reported with a systematic documentation and appreciation of India art. The post-1830 and pre-1861 discoveries further added to greater depth in archaeological discoveries in view of chronological susceptibility of India's past.

Emphasis on pre historic studies was not an agenda even after newly established archaeological survey of India. However, the documentation of evidence of lower palaeolithic in India began with the first discovery of a handaxe in the laterite gravel at Pallavaram near Madras by R.B. Foote in 1863. This was the actual initiation of stone age Archaeology followed by A.B. Wyne who picked up an agate flake from Paithan —on —Godavari along with animal fossils from Narmada river at Bhutra. These discoveries prompted Blandford to believe and arrive at a conclusion that India stands much earlier than Europe in the existence of man with the evidence of fossil fauna. Compared to South India the Lower Paleolithic survey in north India made a belated start as it was in the hands of geologists and paleontologists. The credit of knowing the earliest human culture goes to R.B. Foote who made efforts since late 1858 and launched the search for the earliest implement makers and whose work convinced that prehistoric survey of Asia was paramount to the study of human evolution. His pioneering work between 1863 and 1884 in major part of Madras Presidency and southern parts of Bombay Presidency by locating a large number of Lower Paleolithic sites between Krishna Basin in the north and Kaveri Basin in the south.

Based on Foote's work in view of fresh inferences on the climatic background and identification of time gap in the evolution of Stone Age cultures. L.A. Cammidge and M.C. Burkitt expanded the scope of recording the stone age cultures and propounded a four-fold scheme of classifying the stone age material into a series from 1 to 4 representing differences in typotechnology as series 1 includes bifaces. Series 2 flake artifacts series 3 blade and burins and series 4 microliths, all of pre-Neolithic subdivisions of stone age archaeology.

However, during the last three decades or so the paleoanthropological research overwhelmingly showed that there was a transition from an anthropoid to the hominid stage that took place first in Africa and later on spread to India which formed part of Asian continent. The earliest hominids, i.e., Australopithecines and Homo habilis dating from 4 to 2 million years ago evolved first in Africa and later on it was Homo erectus who appeared sometimes between 2 and 1.5 million years ago first colonized the warmer parts of Europe and other parts of Asia. Archaeologists have assigned the culture of this hominid "Acheulian" after the type of site of St. Acheul in France. Many fossils and certain absolute dates suggested that at least by a million years ago Homo Erectus was well established in Java and north China but reached these places traversed through the Indian sub-continent. However, neither fossil nor cultural remains of this early date so far been found anywhere in India due to environmental factors which did not cooperate the preservation process during Early Pleistocene period. Following is the description of socio-cultural aspects of different cultures that existed in India during Stone Age periods.

#### STONE AGE CULTURES:

It was basically hunting and food gathering culture. The first or the oldest prehistoric culture is known as Paleolithic or the Old Stone Age. The term comes from the Greek word 'palaios' means old and 'lithos' means stone. Therefore, epalaios+lithos=Palaeolithic. Although our knowledge regarding Paleolithic is very meagre and imperfect, still Paleolithic or Old Stone Age is very important as it provides a clear cut sequence of cultural development throughout the entire Pleistocene period, all over the world.

It is considered as a crucial period for all round human evolution; development of cultures can be traced out distinctively in this period. Palaeolithic can be further sub-divided into three phases—lower Palaeolithic, Middle Palaeolithic and Upper Palaeolithic.

#### Division of Palaeolithic into Three Phases:

##### Lower Paleolithic:

The time span of the Lower Palaeolithic was the maximum covering the whole of Lower Pleistocene and bulk of the Middle Pleistocene epoch. During this span many river valleys and terraces were formed. Early men preferred to live near the water supply, as the stone tools are found mainly in or adjacent to the river valleys.

On the basis of those valuable evidences, the tool-making traditions of the Lower Palaeolithic in India can be divided into two groups, such as Hand-axe traditions and Flake traditions basically the Hand-axe traditions contained the core tool cultures while the flake traditions consisted with the flake tool cultures.

Elementary feature of the hand-axe tradition is the bifacial tool that means a more or less pointed tool made on core where both the upper and lower surfaces are worked. Though the core tools are the principal element of this hand-axe tradition, the flake tools are also found to occur in all levels along with hand-axes.

These flake tools are relatively simple due to the utilization of waste materials resulting from the manufacture of hand-axes. But, in other cases, much more complicated flake tools have been found in this tradition. The characteristic feature of the flake traditions is the assemblages of flake tools that are of more complex type.

A few sites of flake traditions are devoid of hand-axes where the flake tools are produced by specific techniques to present definite forms and purposes. In fact, these two groups of tool traditions {hand-axe tradition and flake tradition} are further subdivided into different cultures. The hand-axe tradition is sub-divided into three cultures, such as Pre-Chellean, Chellean or Abbevillian and Acheulean while the flake tradition is sub-divided into two cultures' such as Clactonian and Levalloisian.

#### Hand-axe Traditions:

##### Pre-Chellean Culture:

This early culture was discovered from the Cromer forest bed in Norfolk, England. The Cromer sites were possibly the workshops as because no finished artefact is found there. Most of the tools of Cromerian industry have been derived from a stone bed which was lying just below the Weybourn crag in the cliffs behind, but in present day the stone bed and the crag are completely buried due to natural accumulation of environment.

Typologically, very crude type of hand-axes, including choppers, discs; scrapers, etc. have been collected as the chief findings. Occasionally more finished tools are found as rare specimens of core-tool type. Primary flakings are evident in these tools but no sign of secondary working has been observed, essentially, the major findings were the flakes. Although the finished tools are found rarely but the pebbly cortex is significantly present in all Pre-Chellean tools. The primary flakings have been worked out only at the working end. It is definitely an early form of core-tool culture of hand-axe tradition.

##### Chellean or Abbevillian culture:

It is apparently the oldest tool-making tradition of the core-tool culture in Western Europe. In the gravel terraces of the Somme Valley, a large number of sites have been discovered. Previously this culture was named as the Chellean, after the site Chelles on Somme Valley in northern France.

The Pleistocene deposits at Chelles are situated on a lower terrace. But in Abbeville the tools are found in situ at the higher terraces at Abbeville. The name Abbevillian takes its name from the site Abbeville on Somme Valley in northern France.

According to Prof. Breuil, Abbevillian is the combination of Pre-Chellean and Chellean cultures. But, Prof. A.L. Kroeber considered both the Chellean and the Abbevillian as the same culture where the Chellean being the older name and the Abbevillian is more modern nomenclature.

The biface have greater breadth than thickness and they are tapering to thin edges around the circumference. In this way, two faces i.e. dorsal and ventral sides of the tools are well marked. The characteristic tools are mostly hand-axes or picks; crudest types are found in the Lower Palaeolithic period. German scholars call them 'Faustkeil' or 'fist wedge' while the French have coined the term 'Coup-de-poing', a blow of the fist or a punch.

The forms are varied and flaking is generally irregular which produces sinuous cutting edges. In fact, these hand-axes coarsely flaked with zig-zag margins are probably manufactured either with a stone-hammer or on a stone anvil. So, it is clear that Block-on-Block technique was employed for releasing irregular flakes to manufacture of hand-axes.

Pear-shaped, tongue-shaped, and oval-shaped hand-axes are common types in Abbevillian culture, which is slightly evolved form of the Pre-Chellean culture. The pebbly cortex is slightly present in Abbevillian hand-axes. Besides, discs, scrapers, choppers and also knives on flakes are found in this culture. It can be accepted as the first tradition of the bifacial core-tools culture. (Fig. 11.5).

Acheulean culture:

In general the Acheulean may be divided into Lower, Middle and Upper though the actual sequence is more complex. In fact, the Acheulean culture is continued with bifacial core-tools and primarily focused on the manufacture of hand-axes which means the first tradition (hand-axe tradition) of the bifacial core-tools culture.

Lower Acheulean:

This level includes a proportion of roughly made hand-axes, but there are a larger proportion of ovate forms of hand-axes than in other levels. Besides, cleavers, the bifacial core-tool with square, or slightly convex, sharp cutting edge at one extremity is found abundant. This type is comparatively rare but found in all Acheulean levels.

Middle Acheulean:

This level is marked with ovate hand-axes where sinuous edge, known as the 'S-twist', stand as characteristic type. Apart from this, fossil human remains have been discovered in direct association with this cultural level.

Upper Acheulean:

This is the final level of Acheulean and also known as the Micoquian. This name has been accepted after the type-site.

The hand-axes of triangular, heart-shaped or cordiform, lanceolate form, pointed forms are found in all levels, but they are rare in earlier levels. A gradual development of technique has been observed between the early and late level of this culture.

Flake tools have occurred in all levels, but the number of tools increases in the Upper Acheulean. Most of the tools are made from the flakes struck off during the process of hand-axe manufacture and the side scrapers are the predominant types. In general, the lanceolate forms of hand-axes (core-tools) are found in association with a large number of flake-tools (including points with a triangular cross-section) in Upper Acheulean level.

The Acheulean hand-axes are trimmed all round as evident from the nature of flake-scars. This has made the tools flatter, more evenly flaked with uniform edge than the other varieties of Abbevillian tools; pebbly cortex is completely absent. The tools are invariably bilaterally symmetrical having thin lenticular cross-section.

The hand-axes marked with sinuous edge ('S or Z – twist') are typical to the Acheulean culture and suggest controlled or resolved flakings. Besides, some flake tools with faceted striking platform are found in association with these hand-axes (core-tools). Some flakes with Levalloisian influence have been observed in Upper Acheulean culture level.

Flake Tradition:

#### 1. Clactonian Culture:

The Clactonian culture is mainly a flake-tradition though some core-tools are found in association with them. These core-tools are the nodules of flint, either alternately worked or flaked along the upper surface of one side as choppers. The Clactonian flakes are rough and struck out unsystematically from the prepared cores.

It is suggested that most of these flakes are produced by striking the lump on the edge of an anvil. The manufacture of hand-axes produced some waste-flakes with Clactonian characteristics, but true Clactonian flakes came from the chopper-like cores where numerous flakes with wide, plain striking platforms and dressed edges were produced.

The Clactonian flakes generally exhibited large, massive, un-faceted striking platforms and prominent positive bulbs of percussion. The flake surface formed a wide angle, greater than 90° with the striking platform. These types of flake-tools are mostly crude, but in some cases, actual retouching or secondary working on the edges of the flakes is also found.

Small chopping tools, rough scrapers, discs, knives, blades on flint are the chief findings of this culture. Some flake-tools designed as bill-hook and types of long flake with concave cutting edge are found here. According to M.C. Burkitt, finely trimmed side scrapers and pointed tools obtained from this stage should be labeled as 'late and highly evolved Clactonian'.

#### 2. Levalloisian Culture:

This is a direct and indisputable association of Levalloisian flake tools with Middle Acheulean core-tools. In this way, the tortoise core technique or the technique of prepared striking platform can be pointed out as basic to Levalloisian culture which appeared first in the Middle Acheulean level. The technique was found to evolve during the Upper Acheulean or Micoquian level and its final expression was arrived in Proto-Mousterian and also in Levalloiso-Mousterian level.

It is predominantly a flake-tool culture of Flake-tradition. The technique of Levalloisian culture is quite different and it requires a careful preparation of the core. At first, the core is prepared to look like the back of tortoise. Thereafter, the flakes are detached from this specially prepared tortoise- core.

Each Levallois flake is meant for a tool, which is knocked off from the core by a direct blow. The flake, split-off from the tortoise-core, is oval in shape and flat in nature. They are finely worked for a hand-axe. In fact, true levalloisian flakes are thin, small and their ventral surfaces show the evidence of a single flat scar. Besides, the faceted striking platform makes an angle of 90° with the flake surface.

The striking platforms of most of these flakes exhibit a series of small, roughly parallel, vertical flake scars as the facets. They are the sign of initial preparation on the core before final detachment of the Levalloisian flakes.

The positive bulb of percussion is small and flat as because the impact was mild. The development of Levalloisian culture may be shown under four groups on the basis of stratigraphical divisions of the findings along with the technological advancements.

#### Lower Levalloisian:

This phase is characterized by heavy flakes and blades knocked off from tortoise-core or prepared-core. The striking platforms are normally and especially roughly faceted.

#### Middle Levalloisian:

This phase is characterized by smaller, thinner and better retouched flakes than those of the Lower Levalloisian flakes. Numerous blades and rectangular blade-core appeared for the first time in this phase. Another feature is the presence of faceted striking platform. This phase may be labeled as the Proto-Mousterian.

#### Upper Levalloisian:

This phase is characterized by the regular occurrence of the hand-axes, triangular in shape. They occur in association with large and oval flakes of similar size as found in Lower Levalloisian phase. But, Upper Levalloisian large and oval flakes are invariably more thinner and show better workmanship on them. This phase may be termed as early Levalloiso-Mousterian.

#### Final Levalloisian:

In this phase, the retouched blades and triangles are struck off very carefully from the well-prepared cores. Typologically, the tools do not show much difference from the previous phase, but this phase presents a high esteemed workmanship which denote the Final Levalloisian culture and may also be called as the developed Levalloiso-Mousterian.

## 2. Middle Palaeolithic:

The Middle Palaeolithic period is differentiated mainly from the typological point of view where the presence or absence of hand-axes or biface is critically important. The core-tool cultures have totally been transferred to the flake-tool cultures in this level. Therefore, Chellean-Acheulean hand-axes are no more found. Instead, implements have been made on flakes that are knocked off from the nodule.

Both Levalloisian and Mousterian cultures were developed on the flake tradition involving a higher technology. Levalloisian culture was started from the Middle Acheulean stage and its developed form is named as 'Proto Mousterian', which became further developed later with the name 'Levalloiso-Mousterian'. This indicates that the Mousterian also emerged from Middle Levalloisian stage.

#### Mousterian Culture:

These smaller flake hand-axes show at least one flat side along with a sharp, straight, or sweeping curved edge, which is usually retouched on one side only.

Though these flake implements are varied in shape and size, but all of them show retouches on one side only. In many sites, the tortoise-core technique for flaking is not found, rather the flakes have been detached by the discoidal core-technique (where the prepared core looks like a disc or round in shape) and then retouched. The typical tools of this culture are side-scrapers, points and discs.

Perhaps the Palaeolithic man in Lower Palaeolithic stage had fashioned bones into tools, but open-air sites were not favourable for preservation of these tools.

Mousterian bone tools are mostly made with the broken long bones of animals. Some selected dense bones also bear the traces of use as chopping blocks and compressors or anvils. The typical Mousterian culture was flourished when the climate was very cold. Because this



industry was always found confined to caves and rock-shelters. The first time evidence of regular use of fire also supports this fact.

#### Typical Mousterian:

It shows a sharp decline in the number of hand-axes and knives. The predominance of side scrapers and Levallois flakes were also reduced. This phenomenon is found in the site La Micoque in France.

#### Denticulated Mousterian:

In this level, hand-axes and backed knives are significantly absent. But, a huge number of tools such as the side-scrapers, end-scrapers, burins, borers and denticulates have appeared. The geological age of this culture has been ascribed as Middle Pleistocene period. It originated during the later part of third inter-glacial (RISS-WURM) period and continued up to early part of fourth glaciation (WURM).

Culturally Mousterian is in between of Lower Palaeolithic and Upper Palaeolithic and usually classed as the Middle Palaeolithic period.

### 3. Upper Palaeolithic:

The last part of the Old Stone Age gave rise to the Upper Palaeolithic culture, which covers approximately 1/10th of the time span of entire Palaeolithic period. During this short span of time, the prehistoric man made his greatest cultural progress.

This phase of Palaeolithic period shows diversified and specialized tools made on blades by replacement of the hand-axes and flake-tools of earlier cultures. It is also notable that, not only flint and similar rocks were used as tools bone was also taken as a material for making tools.

The ivory and antler were not spared. The culture has been referred as the Osteodontokeratic culture for the utilization of bone, teeth and horn at a time. Early man of primitive types disappeared at this cultural stage and the man of modern type came into existence. Earliest man-made dwellings have been discovered from this level.

This cultural stage also shows the beginning and flowering of the Palaeolithic art. The blade-tool tradition of Upper Palaeolithic comprises of three cultures mainly—the Aurignacian, Solutrean and Magdalenian, on the basis of one or more distinctive tool types. But a number of types are common in all cultures of Upper Palaeolithic they are gravers, end-scrapers, points, etc. Among these, the graver type is very important as it denotes an extensive working on bone and facilitated the development of art.

#### Blade Tradition:

##### 1. Perigordian Culture:

The characteristic tools are blades of flint with one edge straight (razor-like). The other side is curved back with steeply retouched edge. The hunters possibly used these blades as knife.

The Lower Perigordian is the early or the oldest Upper Palaeolithic culture and shows the abundance of large curved points with blunted back which have popularly been known as Chatelperron points.

The Upper Perigordian tools include the Gravette points and in addition, this stage notes the first occurrence of small human sculptures. The multi-angle gravers known as Noailles burins and tanged points made on blades called as Font Robert tanged points are also found in this level. Therefore, it is evident that as synonyms the Lower Perigordians replaces the Chatelperronian and Upper Perigordian appears at the place of Gravettian. The Middle Aurignacian or the true Aurignacian evolves, as it is to mark off the first main cultural tradition of Upper Palaeolithic.

## 2. Aurignacian Culture:

The leading tool types of this cultural stage include the steep-ended scrapers, nose scrapers, blade artefacts with heavy marginal retouch and split base bone points. The bone was extensively used in the Aurignacian, mainly for javelin points, chisels, perforators and arrow straighteners or batons-de-commandement. Artefacts of personal adornment for the first time appeared in this stage which probably included necklaces made of pierced teeth and shells, decorated bits of bone, ivory and stone.

Other significant tools are the points, beaked gravers or burins, and keeled scrapers on stone. Besides, novelties in bone tools include split-base lance points, pointed awls or pins. The Aurignacian people were artistic and fond of finery as shown by the evidences like decorated articles of ivory with geometric patterns, three dimensional miniature sculptures along with colored engravings and paintings. Along with these, some hollowed reindeer bones were found which seem to be used as tubes to hold the paint.

## 3. Solutrean Culture:

This culture is named after the type site located at Solutre near Macon (Saone-et-Loire) in East-Central France. This cultural phase is notable for the finest development of flint workmanship in the Paleolithic period. We have found a high esteem development of lithic industry as the Solutrean toolmakers put much emphasis on the manufacture of their stone tools.

The tools are more or less thin and flat, regular and come out as a result of parallel flaking. Though the parallel flaking technique first appears in upper Perigordian level, but it shows its best development in the Solutrean level by the creation of beautiful symmetrical laurel leaf and shouldered points. Along with these characteristic tools, many usual Upper Palaeolithic tools are found to be made on blades such as the gravers or burins, end-scrapers, points, etc. Many of these scrapers also show fine Solutrean chipping technique.

The Solutrean culture is recognized by three fold division in the following ways:

### Proto-Solutrean:

In this level we have seen the Leaf-points which are much crude where the percussion method was employed. These points are retouched mainly on the upper surface and the bulb on the lower surface has been removed by flat retouch. Usually such a point is shaped by delicate chipping on the lower surface only. These points are commonly known as proto-laurel leaves or proto-Solutrean points.

### Typical Solutrean:

Early leaf point is rough and thick. But, this level produces thin, regular and skillfully made leaf-points. These are characteristically true bifacial laurel leaves. These tools exhibit the excellence of pressure-flaking technique.

### Upper Solutrean:

The level produces the leaf-points with constricted sides. The tools include small and beautifully made laurel-leaves. In some cases, one side gets constricted which is characterized as shouldered point in this level. In general, the Solutrean tools are found as the end-scrapers, side-scrapers, points, gravers or burins, etc. The examples of Solutrean art are rare. But the bone tools are found in many sites. The culture has a limited distribution.

The geological age of this culture goes to the second part of Upper Pleistocene period and corresponds to the retreat of the second phase of last glaciation (Wurm-II or Buhl). No direct evidence of skeletal remains has yet been found for Solutrean culture.

#### 4. Magdalenian Culture:

The flint industry of the Magdalenian people bore a blade tool tradition and was proved ingenious as well as utilitarian but this flint industry went in a state of gradual decline; the bone industry became more elaborate at this stage and a considerable variety of artifacts made on bone, ivory and reindeer antler were found.

They included spearheads with link-shafts, barbed points and harpoons for spearing fish, hammers, etc. Besides, many other bone artefacts of uncertain use were also found. As an example, the baton-de-commandment was first introduced by the Aurignacians; probably it was used as a mending tool for straightening arrow-shaft or spear-shaft. The artifacts like batons-de-commandment were designed with a great artistic skill.

The different stages of the Magdalenian culture have been classified into seven sections in the following ways:

Magdalenian:

In this level, we find transverse burins or gravers. But, in bone tools, the harpoon heads are not traceable. The characteristic tools are made on bone as the javelin points which are flattened, conical with forked bases.

Magdalenian-I:

The flint tools of this level are found as the burins, end-scrapers, star-shaped borers. The bone tools include a large number of bone lance points (slightly convex) and bone needles. First appearance of batons-de-commandment has been noted during this stage.

Magdalenian-II:

The stone tools of this level are comprised of blade-lets, backed-knives, and denticulates. A large number of bone points characterize this level.

Magdalenian-III:

This level also shows the tools like backed-bladelets, triangular points and burins. A large number of bone tools, especially the lance-points continue to occur in this level.

Magdalenian-IV:

The flint tools similar to the tools of previous stages appear in this stage. The typical tools of this level are the primitive harpoons made of bone and antler having a single row of lateral barbs.

Magdalenian-V:

The main tools of this level are the harpoons with single row barbs, very long shouldered points with short heads and the gravettian points.

Magdalenian-VI:

The stone tools of this level are the parrot-beaked burins, fattish circular flakes, points and knife point. The characteristic tools of this level are the harpoons with double rows of lateral barbs.

In general, the typical magdalenian tools are the long and parallel-sided blade implements. Some tools of this period are found to serve dual purposes — scraper, perforators, double-ended scrapers and scraper burins.

It is the richest culture with regard to Upper Palaeolithic art where we have seen most bold outlines. The pigments as used are the black oxide of manganese and red and yellow oxides of iron. They were converted into paint by mixing with some fatty medium. The cave art of the Magdalenian people culminated in the production of polychrome paintings.

Conclusion:

Thus, these are the various Stone Age cultures spread over India which represent Different flake, blade and hand axe traditions from time to time.

Questions:

1. Write about different lower Paleolithic traditions.
2. Briefly explain about middle Paleolithic traditions.
3. Discuss about different upper Paleolithic traditions.
4. Write about different Magdalenian stages. Explain briefly.
5. Discuss about different Acheulean cultures.

### **STONE AGE HUNTER GATHERERS OF INDIA**

The Stone Age cultural succession in India is almost similar to what we see across parts of Europe and Africa. With the result in the recent times Indian pre-historians are adopting the European terminology for the Stone Age succession. Ever since the first stone tool was made till the advent of metal tools, the Stone Age cultural succession in India is divided as the Lower Palaeolithic, Middle Palaeolithic, Upper Palaeolithic, and Mesolithic for the Pre – Neolithic stages. The Neolithic stage in India was well studied in Kashmir region, Eastern India and Southern India. In Western parts of India the New Stone Age remains are yet to be discovered.

Robert Bruce Foote is considered to be the father of Indian Pre-History. He collected the first Palaeolithic tools from a gravel pit near Pallavaram close to Chennai. Later on a host of Indian and foreign scholars have explored the various regions of India and brought forth the Stone Age artifacts.

In India the Lower Palaeolithic culture is characterized by a number of hand axes, cleavers, discoids, spherical stones etc. In certain cases, particularly in the Punjab and Kashmir valleys, Choppers and Chopping tools have been recovered from the Lower Palaeolithic sites. In South India however, the hand axe and cleaver tradition prevails at almost all the Lower Palaeolithic sites. As such we have a number of sites in this Sohan valley, Beas and Banganga valley, the Nalaghar Industry in North India. In South India however, we have Lower Palaeolithic sites distributed across the Narmada valley, the Orissa region, the upper and lower reaches of the Godavari and Krishna, the Pennar river valley, parts of Tamilnadu etc. In Andhra Pradesh we have rich lower palaeolithic sites across the Krishna valley particularly at Nagarjuna Konda. In most of the cases the specimens were made on quartzites.

The Middle Palaeolithic horizons in India are identified at Nevasa on the river Pravara in Maharashtra, at Nagarjuna Konda in Andhra Pradesh, Kondapur of Telangana, Kibbana Halli and Jala Halli in Karnataka, and at various other locations. On typological grounds the specimens may be classified as scrapers, borers, points besides a number of other specimens made on flakes and fragments. In a majority of cases the specimens are made on quartzites of a range of colours and grain sizes. In general the specimens of the Lower Palaeolithic typology continue to occur.

In India the Upper Palaeolithic culture is represented only at a few locations. The prominent sites include the Bethamcherla caves, the Renigunta region, the Yerragondapalem etc., of Andhra Pradesh. Stray occurrence of Upper Palaeolithic artifacts below the levels of the Mesolithic are noticed at various places. It is interesting to note that the Bethamcherla caves preserved bone artifacts along with the remains of the hunted animal bones. In most of the cases the stone artifacts are made on a range of quartzites. However, in the Kadapa region we have artifacts made on lydianite. Quartz made artifacts are known from the Eleru valley.

The Mesolithic culture of India is having a wide distribution, spatial as well as temporal. In Gujarat we have a well explored site at Langhnaj. In Bengal the site at Birbhanpur in the Damodar valley is very important. In central India we have excellent Mesolithic sites in the rock shelters of Bimbetka and the cave site at Adamgarh. In the Bastar area we have a large number of Mesolithic sites across the Indravati valley. In the middle reaches and the lower reaches of the Godavari valley we have a number of Mesolithic locations at Albaka, Akaspur, Ramannagudem, Manchulurugudem etc. At Nagarjuna Konda in the Krishna valley we have an interesting Mesolithic site. At Kondapur in Telangana a Mesolithic site was identified. In far South of India in the Tirunelvalley district of Tamilnadu we have interesting Mesolithic sites close to the coast.

The Mesolithic artifacts are very small in size and therefore, they are called the microliths. They are usually made on crypto-crystalline and crystalline silicates like quartz, chert, jasper, chalcedony, agate etc. Typologically they constitute a variety of blade made tools, flake made tools etc. On morphological grounds they are classified as blade tools of a variety, lunates, trapezes, triangles, crescentic points, simple points etc. Fluted cores and amorphous cores constitute the other components.

The Mesolithic phase is considered to be a transition from the Palaeolithic nomadism to the Neolithic settled way of life. It is during this period man came in contact with the surrounding ecological niche and was able to identify potential domesticates and cultigens. The symbiotic relation led to the domestication of animals and early forming of useful cultigens. This makes the beginning of settled way of life leading to the Neolithic cultural phase. In some of the late Mesolithic cultures we find perforated stones which are known as mace-heads which were used mostly as food processing equipment. The late phase of the Mesolithic merges with the early forming communities of the Neolithic. The transition was very smooth and gradual.

Lesson Writer

V.V. Ramana

## Unit-III

### Lesson-06

# Early Farming Communities

**Aim:** To make the students know about the early food gathering communities  
And about their cultures and their life styles.

### Topics:

#### Introduction

Sawalda Culture (2500-2000 BC):

Late Harappa Culture (2200-2000 BC)

Malawa Culture (1700-1400B.C)

Jorwe Culture (1400-1200B.C)

Late Jorwe Culture (1200-900 B.C)

### 1. Introduction:

Early Stone Age tools have been found in different areas of the subcontinent the most notable among which are the Potwar plain in north-western Punjab; the Beas and Banganga valleys; Nevasa in the valley of Pravara, a tributary of the Godavary; Gudalur in Gundlakamma basin in Andhra Pradesh; Nagarjunakonda in the Krishna valley, a string of sites (Vadamadurai, Attirampakkam etc) in the coastal plain near Chennai and the districts along the north bank of the Mahanadi in Orissa. Primitive man used tools and implements of rough stone. Flint was commonly used as it is hard but flakes easily. Tools serve a variety of purposes such as skinning of dead animals, cutting their flesh and splitting bones etc. Man during this period was essentially a food gatherer. He was totally dependent on nature for his food supply; requirement of game animals and edible plants. In course of time he learnt to control fire which helped improve the pattern of living in many ways.

He used the skins of animals, barks of trees and large leaves as clothes. Men were organized in small wandering groups consisting of few men, women and children. It was towards the end of the Palaeolithic period that the modern human being (Homo Sapien) first appeared around 36,000 BC. The middle Stone Age cultures were around the date 33,000 BC to about 16,500 BC.

There are indications that in some regions like western Rajasthan and MP the flake making technique was of a more improved variety than in others. These regional variations in dates and the total cultural assemblage became more prominent in the Late Stone age heralded by the use of smaller tools the microliths. In MP, Gujarat, Rajasthan and several other areas a long time span of 8500 BC-1700 BC has been suggested for these cultures.

Microliths being compound tools suggest a substantial technological change being hafted in bone, wood or bamboo. At least in few areas along with the microliths the technique of pot making a technique of great significance in human history as it came to be closely associated with food production and settled life. Langhnaj in Gujarat and Adamgarh in MP suggest presence of domesticated animals and exchange of commodities between different areas and communities

Settled life based on food production first began in the northwest. Here man progressed from incipient food production to the foundation of Neolithic -Chalcolithic village cultures. In Ahar (Banas valley of Rajasthan), Maheshwar-Navdatoli in the Narmada valley, Nagda in the Chambal valley, Daimabad, Chandoli and various other sites of the northern Deccan early farmers were living in open villages and cultivating crops which included wheat, several kinds of legumes or rice as at Chirand in south Bihar.

In the south, in central and eastern Deccan the economy was predominantly pastoral and the Neolithic -Chalcolithic influence can be seen at Piklihal and Tekkalakota in Karnataka or Utnur and Nagarjunakonda in AP. This period continued from about 2000 BC to about the middle of the first millennium BC although in certain areas the advent of a new metallic technology seems to have taken place earlier.

#### EARLY FARMING COMMUNITIES:

The important early forming communities are Sawalda culture, Late Harappan Culture, Malawa Culture, Jorwe Culture and Late Jorwe Culture.

#### .2 Sawalda Culture (2500-2000 BC):

This culture emerged and developed in Tapi-Godavari Valley. Daimabad is the major site of this culture. The people of this culture lived in square houses, built with mud and mud-bricks. The floor properly rammed with thatched roof. The family was joint hence we find many rooms in these houses. Comparatively, simple folks lived in pits or small huts. However, these huts were mainly built for storing purpose, the courtyards used for regular duties. These people were settled farmers, growing wheat, barley, pulses etc. They were expert in crafts, too. They used to make black painted red wares with paintings and decorations. The mullers were made of stones. Besides, they used rings of copper and bronze, beads of carnelian and agate. They also made use of bone for tools. They used bone arrowheads and fishhooks for hunting and fishing. Their pots show drawing of fishhooks and fishes.

#### .3 Late Harappa Culture (2200-2000 BC)

These people migrated into Maharashtra through Gujarat. As they were experienced in civilized culture, they introduced planned settlements in Maharashtra. They also protected their settlements with mud fortifications. The rivers were also dammed for the protection from flood. They constructed large houses with many rooms. These rooms were utilized for various purposes like putting cattle, storing grains, kitchen etc. Some of houses were also fortified. They

were expert farmers. They, through wooden plough, grew many crops like wheat, barley, pulses, vegetables, fruits etc. Besides, they also followed alternative occupations like pastoralism, hunting, fishing etc. They were also expert artisans. This can be witnessed through bronze toys of bullock-cart, elephant, rhino, bison, discovered from Daimabad. They used to bury their dead, outside their settlements. Their settlement concentrated in Tapi-valley only.

#### .4 Malawa Culture (1700-1400 BC)

These people migrated from Madhya Pradesh. They settled in Maharashtra up to the Bhima valley. They were very prosperous. The farmers used to live in large rectangular houses made from mud-bricks. The houses and settlements were planned. Agriculture was their primary occupation, they used to grow wheat, barley, pulses, oil seeds etc. They were also good artisans. Black-on-red painted ware was their predominant pottery type. These red pots were painted in black, showing beautiful designs and drawings of animals, like, deer, bull, dog, crocodile etc. They used to prefer deer-meat to other. The deer-bones are generally strong; hence used to make tools and weapons. Hence, deer holds major position in their pottery-drawings. One of the drawings indicates a man surrounded by animals. It is informed that this drawing is of 'Pashupati' and holds religious significance. This culture comprised of major sites like Prakash, Daimabad and Inamgaon.

#### .5 Jorwe Culture (1400-1200 BC)

From the legacy of Malawa culture and contacts with Neolithic-Chalcolithic cultures in Karnataka, Jorwe culture emerged in Maharashtra. The family structure of Jorwe people was joint and they live in large rectangular houses. Some of them also lived in square and circular houses. Their settlement was planned in which all the houses laced in straight rows. Such rows have lanes in between them. These houses had more rooms, dedicated to various purposes like kitchen, storage etc. The kitchen had hearth and underground grain-storage. Besides, we also find storage-bin in the kitchen. Similar to the house-floors, the court-floor was also rammed properly. It also consisted underground grain-storage and large hearth. The settlement was presided by one headman. It lived in centre of the settlement. His house was large and planned. His house accompanied by community grain-storage. That means the leader held power on the economy of that settlement. His was privileged position and hence his burial was also somewhat different from those of others. They used to consume food with best proteins. The common people lived some distance away from these houses. Their houses were not well made. These houses consist of houses of potters, bead-makers, butchers etc. The people of Jorwe culture was farmers. They made experiments in irrigation technology.

The Jorwe people of Inamgaon diverted the surplus water of Ghod river through canal and stored in one artificial tank. Besides, they also put bund on the river. Due to annual availability of water through such system, they managed to take crops throughout the year. They took all the crops in the season, rabbi and kharif (winter crops). The crops were similar to the previous; however, the production was surplus. Sometime, if fertile land was away from the main settlement, they formed a seasonal settlement over there. For example, the Jorwe people olnamgaon formed another seasonal settlement at Walki, at the confluence of rivers. They ploughed their lands by using plough made of bulls-bones. Along with such heavy production, they used to rear cattle, sheep-goats, pigs and hens. Besides, hunting and fishing were their alternative life-style.



Due to the development of agriculture, craft and exchanges were also developed subsequently. The main tool kit of these people made up of stones. 'Earthen Pots' were major utensil of their life. Hence, potters were important parts of their society. We find potter-kilns from sites like Daimabad and Inamgaon. These pots were of various purposes and hence of various sizes. These pots were red colored with paintings in black. These paintings consist of traditional geometric designs, flora and fauna of their ecology. The society consists of coppersmiths, goldsmiths, bead-makers, lime-makers. They made beads, drills, axe, chisels, fishhooks, ornaments, and tangs from copper. Besides, by using gold, they made beads, earrings and other ornaments. They, through exchanges, were in contact with Konkan, Saurashtra and Karnataka. They brought sea-fish (from Konkan), shell (from Saurashtra) and gold (Karnataka) in exchange.

'Mother-goddess' held significant position in their religious life. We find such head-less figurines of mother-goddess from Inamgaon. 'Bull' was also worshipped, thanks to the tradition from Harappa civilization. The burial system of Jorwe people held influence of Neolithic-Chalcolithic culture of Karnataka. They believed in 'After-life'. Hence, they used to bury their dead under the house-floor or close to the house. The children were buried in pots whereas the adults in extended position. The portion below the ankles of the adult-corpse was cut off. However, the treatment to the corpse of the headman was given differently. He was put in a seated position in a big storage-pot. His legs maintained intact unlike the others. For the ease of the afterlife travel of the dead, the corpse accompanied with grave-goods.

## .6 Late Jorwe Culture (1200-900 BC)

The period opened with adverse climatic condition. The rainfall decreased, climate became dry which culminated in the fall of crops. The failure of crops resulted in the decline of entire economy; subsequently the life-ways. The population was also decreased or migrated to other parts. Now, instead of planned houses of earlier period, in this period, we witness settlement of small huts. These were of seasonal nature; hence, no planning could be discerned in the settlement. The quality of craft also diminished. Such adverse situation forced the settlers to migrate to other 46 parts. Not only that, they also changed their mode of subsistence i.e. from farming to pastoralism. Now there was scarcity of water, hence they replaced cattle with sheep and goats. They tried to incline more on hunting and fishing. Hence, we find large scale deer-bones in their settlements. The religious beliefs were as same as earlier. However, as there was no point in settled life style, they undertook the nomadic lifestyle. With sheep and goats, they started traveling in other areas in search of food. During their travel, they encountered Megalithic pastoralists.

### conclusion:

Thus, the early farming communities spread over India from North west to the south during Different periods and we come to know about them from their material culture represented in Their pottery and settlement patterns. Initially even these communities had practiced limited Farming and lived on hillocks but slowly they migrated to plains and resorted to settled agriculture. Settled life based on food the first began in the northwest. In the south, central and deccan Regions the economy was predominantly pastoral, but by the first millennium B.C slowly began to Shift towards farming.

## Questions:

1. Write about the early farming communities in India.
2. Discuss about the early food gathering communities.

## ■ Neolithic

**Aim:** To make the students aware of the New stone age and its phases,  
And understand their life styles.

### Topics

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Periods by Pottery Phase
  - 6.2.1 Neolithic stage I
  - 6.2.2 Neolithic stage II
  - 6.2.3 Neolithic stage III
- 6.3 Periods by region
  - 6.3.1 Fertile Crescent
  - 6.3.2 South and East Asia
  - 6.3.3 Social Organization
    - 6.3.3.1 Shelter
    - 6.3.3.3 Technology
    - 6.3.3.4 Clothing
- 6.4 Conclusions

### .1 Introduction:

An array of Neolithic artifacts, including bracelets, axe heads, chisels, and polishing tools. Neolithic stone implements are by definition polished and, except for specialty items, not chipped.

The Neolithic Era, or Period, from néos, "new" and líthos, "stone" or New Stone Age, was a period in the development of human technology, beginning about 10,200 BC, according to the ASPRO chronology, in some parts of the Middle East, and later in other parts of the world and ending between 4,500 and 2,000 BC.

Traditionally considered the last part of the Stone Age, the Neolithic followed the terminal Holocene Epipaleolithic period and commenced with the beginning of farming, which produced the "Neolithic Revolution". It ended when metal tools became widespread (in the Copper Age or Bronze Age; or, in some geographical regions, in the Iron Age). The Neolithic is a progression of behavioral and cultural characteristics and changes, including the use of wild and domestic crops and of domesticated animals.

Not all of these cultural elements characteristic of the Neolithic appeared everywhere in the same order: the earliest farming societies in the Near East did not use pottery. In other parts of the world, such as Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia, independent domestication events led to their own regionally distinctive Neolithic cultures that arose completely independent of those in Europe and Southwest Asia. Early Japanese societies and other East Asian cultures used pottery *before* developing agriculture.

Unlike the Paleolithic, when more than one human species existed, only one human species (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) reached the Neolithic. *Homo floresiensis* may have survived right up to the very dawn of the Neolithic, about 12,200 years ago.

The term *Neolithic* derives from the Greek, *neolithikos*, from *neos*, "new" + *lithos*, "stone", literally meaning "New Stone Age". The term was invented by Sir John Lubbock in 1865 as a refinement of the three-age system.

## **.2 Periods by pottery phase**

In the Middle East, cultures identified as Neolithic began appearing by in the 10th millennium BC. Early development occurred in the Levant (e.g. Pre-Pottery Neolithic A and Pre-Pottery Neolithic B) and from there spread eastwards and westwards. Neolithic cultures are also attested in southeastern Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia by c. 8,000 BC.

### **.2.1 Neolithic 1 – Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (PPNA)**

The Neolithic 1 (PPNA) period began roughly 10,000 years ago in the Levant. A temple area in southeastern Turkey at Göbekli Tepe dated around 9,500 BC may be regarded as the beginning of the period. This site was developed by nomadic hunter-gatherer tribes, evidenced by the lack of permanent housing in the vicinity and may be the oldest known human-made place of worship. At least seven stone circles, covering 25 acres (100,000 m<sup>2</sup>), contain limestone pillars carved with animals, insects and birds. Stone tools were used by perhaps as many as hundreds of people to create the pillars, which may have supported roofs. The major advance of Neolithic 1 was true farming. In the proto-Neolithic Natufian cultures, wild cereals were harvested, and perhaps early seed selection and re-seeding occurred. The grain was ground into flour. Emmer wheat was domesticated, and animals were herded and domesticated (animal husbandry and selective breeding).

Settlements became more permanent with circular houses, much like those of the Natufians, with single rooms. However, these houses were for the first time made of mudbrick. The settlement had a surrounding stone wall and perhaps a stone tower. The wall served as protection from nearby groups, as protection from floods, or to keep animals penned. There are also some enclosures that suggest grain and meat storage.

### **.2.2 Neolithic 2 – Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB)**

The Neolithic 2 (PPNB) began around 8,800 BC according to the ASPRO chronology. As with the PPNA dates there are two versions from the same laboratories noted above. Settlements have rectangular mud-brick houses where the family lived together in single or multiple rooms. Burial findings suggest an ancestor cult where people preserved skulls of the dead, which were plastered with mud to make facial features. The rest of the corpse may have been left outside the settlement to decay until only the bones were left, then the bones were buried inside the settlement underneath the floor or between houses.

### **.2.3 Neolithic 3 – Pottery Neolithic (PN)**

The Neolithic 3 (PN) began around 6,400 BC in the Fertile Crescent. By then distinctive cultures emerged, with pottery like the Halafian and Ubaid. This period has been further divided into PNA (Pottery Neolithic A) and PNB (Pottery Neolithic B) at some sites.

The Chalcolithic period began about 4500 BC, and then the Bronze Age began about 3500 BC, replacing the Neolithic cultures.

### **.3 Periods by region**

#### **.3.1 Fertile Crescent**

Around 10,200 BC the first fully developed Neolithic cultures belonging to the phase Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (PPNA) appeared in the fertile crescent. The settlement included 2 temples dating back to 9,650 . It was surrounded by a stone and marble wall and contained a population of 2000–3000 people and a massive stone tower

#### **.3.2 South and East Asia**

The earliest Neolithic site in South Asia is Mehrgarh, dated to 7500 BC, in the Kachi plain of Baluchistan, Pakistan; the site has evidence of farming (wheat and barley) and herding (cattle, sheep and goats).

In South India, the Neolithic began by 3000 BC and lasted until around 1400 BC when the Megalithic transition period began. South Indian Neolithic is characterized by Ashmounds since 2500 BC in Karnataka region, expanded later to Tamil Nadu.

The 'Neolithic' (defined in this paragraph as using polished stone implements) remains a living tradition in small and extremely remote and inaccessible pockets of West Papua (Indonesian New Guinea). Polished stone adze and axes are used in the present day (as of 2008) in areas where the availability of metal implements is limited. This is likely to cease altogether in the next few years as the older generation die off and steel blades and chainsaws prevail.

"No remains of an agricultural field from the Neolithic period have been found in any East Asian country before, the institute said, adding that the discovery reveals that the history of agricultural cultivation at least began during the period ". The farm was dated between 3600 and 3000 B.C. Pottery, stone projectile points, and possible houses were also found. "In 2002, researchers discovered prehistoric earthenware, jade earrings, among other items in the area". The research team will perform Accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) dating to retrieve a more precise date for the site.

#### **3.3 Social organization**

During most of the Neolithic age, people lived in small tribes composed of multiple bands or lineages. There is little scientific evidence of developed social stratification in most Neolithic societies; social stratification is more associated with the later Bronze Ages. Neolithic societies were relatively simple and egalitarian. However, Neolithic societies were noticeably more hierarchical than the Paleolithic cultures that preceded them and hunter-gatherer cultures in general.

The domestication of animals (c. 8000 BC) resulted in a dramatic increase in social inequality. Possession of livestock allowed competition between households and resulted in inherited inequalities of wealth. Neolithic pastoralists who controlled large herds gradually acquired more livestock, and this made economic inequalities more pronounced and striking lack of difference

in the size of homes and burial sites, suggesting a more egalitarian society with no evidence of the concept of capital, although some homes do appear slightly larger or more elaborately decorated than others.

Families and households were still largely independent economically, and the household was probably the center of life. However, the excavations have revealed that early Neolithic Linear Ceramic cultures ("Linearbandkeramik") were building large arrangements of circular ditches between 4800 BC and 4600 BC. These structures (and their later counterparts such as causewayed enclosures, burial mounds, and henge) required considerable time and labour to construct, which suggests that some influential individuals were able to organise and direct human labour — though non-hierarchical and voluntary work remain possibilities.

some villages were fortified for some time with a palisade and an outer ditch. Settlements with palisades and weapon-traumatized bones have been discovered, such as at the Talheim Death Pit demonstrates "...systematic violence between groups" and warfare was probably much more common during the Neolithic than in the preceding Paleolithic period. This supplanted an earlier view of the Linear Pottery Culture as living a "peaceful, unfortified lifestyle".

Control of labour and inter-group conflict is characteristic of corporate-level or 'tribal' groups, headed by a charismatic individual; whether a 'big man' or a proto-chief, functioning as a lineage-group head. Whether a non-hierarchical system of organization existed is debatable, and there is no evidence that explicitly suggests that Neolithic societies functioned under any dominating class or individual, as was the case in the chiefdoms of the European Early Bronze Age. Theories to explain the apparent implied egalitarianism of Neolithic (and Paleolithic) societies have arisen, notably the Marxist concept of primitive communism.

### 3.3.1 Shelter

The shelter of the early people changed dramatically from the paleolithic to the neolithic era. In the paleolithic, people did not normally live in permanent constructions. In the neolithic, mud brick houses started appearing that were coated with plaster. The growth of agriculture made permanent houses possible. Doorways were made on the roof, with ladders positioned both on the inside and outside of the houses. The roof was supported by beams from the inside. The rough ground was covered by platforms, mats, and skins on which residents slept.

### 3.3.2 Farming

Food and cooking items retrieved at a European Neolithic site: millstones, charred bread, grains and small apples, a clay cooking pot, and containers made of antlers and wood

A significant and far-reaching shift in human subsistence and lifestyle was to be brought about in areas where crop farming and cultivation were first developed: the previous reliance on an essentially nomadic hunter-gatherer subsistence technique or pastoral transhumance was at first supplemented, and then increasingly replaced by, a reliance upon the foods produced from cultivated lands. These developments are also believed to have greatly encouraged the growth of settlements, since it may be supposed that the increased need to spend more time and labor in tending crop fields required more localized dwellings. This trend would continue into the

Bronze Age, eventually giving rise to permanently settled farming towns, and later cities and states whose larger populations could be sustained by the increased productivity from cultivated lands.

The profound differences in human interactions and subsistence methods associated with the onset of early agricultural practices in the Neolithic have been called the Neolithic Revolution, a term coined in the 1920s by the Australian archaeologist Vere Gordon Childe.

One potential benefit of the development and increasing sophistication of farming technology was the possibility of producing surplus crop yields, in other words, food supplies in excess of the immediate needs of the community. Surpluses could be stored for later use, or possibly traded for other necessities or luxuries. Agricultural life afforded securities that pastoral life could not, and sedentary farming populations grew faster than nomadic.

However, early farmers were also adversely affected in times of famine, such as may be caused by drought or pests. In instances where agriculture had become the predominant way of life, the sensitivity to these shortages could be particularly acute, affecting agrarian populations to an extent that otherwise may not have been routinely experienced by prior hunter-gatherer communities. Nevertheless, agrarian communities generally proved successful, and their growth and the expansion of territory under cultivation continued.

Another significant change undergone by many of these newly agrarian communities was one of diet. Pre-agrarian diets varied by region, season, available local plant and animal resources and degree of pastoralism and hunting. Post-agrarian diet was restricted to a limited package of successfully cultivated cereal grains, plants and to a variable extent domesticated animals and animal products. Supplementation of diet by hunting and gathering was to variable degrees precluded by the increase in population above the carrying capacity of the land and a high sedentary local population concentration. In some cultures, there would have been a significant shift toward increased starch and plant protein. The relative nutritional benefits and drawbacks of these dietary changes and their overall impact on early societal development is still debated.

In addition, increased population density, decreased population mobility, increased continuous proximity to domesticated animals, and continuous occupation of comparatively population-dense sites would have altered sanitation needs and patterns of disease.

### .3.3.3 Technology

#### Stone tool § Neolithic industries

The identifying characteristic of Neolithic technology is the use of polished or ground stone tools, in contrast to the flaked stone tools used during the Paleolithic era.

Neolithic people were skilled farmers, manufacturing a range of tools necessary for the tending, harvesting and processing of crops (such as sickle blades and grinding stones) and food production (e.g. pottery, bone implements). They were also skilled manufacturers of a range of other types of stone tools and ornaments, including projectile points, beads, and statuettes. But what allowed forest clearance on a large scale was the polished stone axe above all other tools. Together with the adze, fashioning wood for shelter, structures and canoes for example, this enabled them to exploit their newly won farmland.

#### .3.3.4 Clothing

Most clothing appears to have been made of animal skins, as indicated by finds of large numbers of bone and antler pins which are ideal for fastening leather. Wool cloth and linen might have become available during the later Neolithic, as suggested by finds of perforated stones which (depending on size) may have served as spindle whorls or loom weights. The clothing worn in the Neolithic Age might be similar to that worn by Ötzi the Iceman, although he was not Neolithic (since he belonged the later Copper age).

#### .3.3.5 Conclusion:

Thus we are able to know about the different phases of New stone age  
And their cultures, different areas where they were traced and changes brought  
In their life styles from Paleolithic to Neolithic about their farming, clothing etc.

Questions:

1. Write about different phases of Neolithic age.
2. Discuss the socio-economic conditions during the Neolithic period

Lesson Writer  
V.V. Ramana

## **Unit-III**

### **Lesson-07**

#### **Harappan Culture (Indus Valley Civilization)**

In general sense of India's most ancient historical pride lies with Indus Valley Civilization, which is also known as Harappan Civilization, after Harappa, the first of its site has been excavated in the 1920s, located in the Punjab province of present Pakistan. Its importance stems largely as it represents the first of the successful achievements of Civilization beyond the limits of the land that constituted the 'Fertile Crescent' and its significance and uniqueness has been described since its discovery by eminent scholars and archaeologists. This civilization centered around the metropolitan centers, two of which, Mohenjodaro and Harappa, are best known. It stretches from western Baluchistan to Alamgirpur beyond Delhi and from the Punjab to the Narmada valley in India, forming the most extensive Civilizations of the Proto historic period. This civilization possesses a characteristic style of its own, marked by a striking unity. Several Harappan features are identical at all sites distributed from the foot of the Himalayas to the Arabian Sea Coast include the location of principle cities close to the river flood plains, burnt brick buildings with wells and drains, seals and the writing, an emphasis on representation of animals on seals, bronze tools and weapons, stone weights, terracotta human and animal figurines, balls, rattles and cakes, and the forms and painted designs of ceramics including the perforated vessels, bathtubs, and storage jars. However, in the principle cities, viz Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, an emphasis has been positioned on the identification of state buildings such as temples, granaries, quarters which suggest the autocratic nature of administrative control. Certain writers have gleaned the socio-economic determinant pattern parallel with Mesopotamia Civilization. But there is an perceptible difference lie in the multiplicity of city-states, efficient writing system, man-god relationship, progressive technology, art style, international contacts, organized warfare, extensive and effective irrigation system, etc., which are not noticeable in the Indus Civilization and serve its unique and different character.

The ruins of Harappa were first described in 1842 by Charles Masson in his 'Narrative of Various Journeys in Baluchistan, Afghanistan, and the Punjab', where local



people talked of an ancient city extending "thirteen cosses" (about 25 miles), but no archaeological interest was attached to this for nearly a century. In 1856, General Alexander Cunningham, later Director General of the Archaeological Survey of northern India, visited Harappa where the British engineers John and William Brunton were laying the East Indian Railway Company line connecting the cities of Karachi and Lahore. John wrote that he was much exercised in his mind how to get ballast for the line of the railway. He came to know from the local people the existence of an ancient ruined city near the lines, called Brahminabad. Visiting the city, he found it full of hard well-burnt bricks and convinced that there was a grand quarry for the ballast he wanted and the city of Brahminabad was reduced to ballast. A few months later, further north, John's brother William Brunton's, section of the line ran near another ruined city, bricks from which had already been used by villagers in the nearby village of Harappa at the same site. Those bricks were provided ballast along 93 miles (150 km.) of the railroad track running from Karachi to Lahore.

In 1872–75 Alexander Cunningham published the first Harappan seal (with an erroneous identification as Brahmi letters) and a half century later, in 1912, that more Harappan seals were discovered by J. Fleet, prompting an excavation campaign under the leadership of Sir John Hubert Marshall in 1921–22 which resulted in the discovery of the civilization at Harappa by Sir John Marshall, Rai Bahadur Daya Ram Sahni and Madho Sarup Vats, and at Mohenjo-Daro by Rakhal Das Banerjee, E. J. H. MacKay, and Sir John Marshall. By 1931, much of Mohenjodaro had been excavated and later on continued by Sir Mortimer Wheeler, the then Director of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1944. Among other Indian archaeologists who worked on Indus Valley Civilization sites before the independence in 1947 were Ahmad Hasan Dani, Brij Basi Lal, Nani Gopal Majumdar, along with and Sir Marc Aurel Stein. However, after independence, the bulk of the archaeological finds were inherited by Pakistan where most of the Indus Valley Civilization was based, and excavations were led by Sir Mortimer Wheeler in 1949, archaeological adviser to the Government of Pakistan. Outposts of the Indus Valley civilization were excavated as far west as Sutkagan Dor in Baluchistan, as far north as at Shortugai on the Amu Darya (the river's ancient name was Oxus) of present Afghanistan, as far east as at Alamgirpur, in Uttar Pradesh as far south as at Malwan in Surat District of Gujarat.

The Indus Valley Civilization was a Bronze Age civilization (3300–1300 BCE) extending from the northeastern part of present Afghanistan to Pakistan and northwest India (see map). Along with Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia it was one of three early civilizations of the Old World and, among the three, the most widespread covering an area of 1.25 million km<sup>2</sup>. It flourished in the basins of the Indus River, one of the major rivers of Asia, and the Ghaggar-Hakra river, once coursed through northwest India and eastern Pakistan. At its peak, the Indus Civilization may have had a population of over five million. Inhabitants of the ancient Indus river valley developed new techniques in handicraft (carnelian products, seal carving) and metallurgy (copper, bronze, lead, and tin). The Indus cities are noted for their urban planning, baked brick houses, elaborate drainage systems, water supply systems, and clusters of large non-residential buildings. The ongoing excavations since 1920, with an important breakthrough occurred in 1999 by the identification of early and late cultures, often called Early Harappan and Late Harappan, in the same area of the Harappan Civilization, which is sometimes called the Mature Harappan culture to distinguish it from the former cultures. By 1999, over 1,056 cities and settlements have been found, of which 96 have been excavated, mainly in the region of the Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra Rivers and their tributaries. Among the settlements the major urban centers are the Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Dholavira, Ganeriwala in Cholistan and Rakhigarhi. Recently in 2010, heavy floods hit Haryana in India, and damaged the archaeological site of Jognakhera, where ancient copper smelting were found dating back almost 5,000 years. The Indus Valley Civilization site was hit by almost 10 feet of water as the Sutlej Yamuna link canal overflowed.

Sir John Marshall suggested C. 3250-2750 BC. as the most probable date of this Civilization and the mature phase lasted from c. 2600 to 1900 BCE. With the inclusion of the predecessor and successor cultures—Early Harappan and Late Harappan, respectively—the entire Indus Valley Civilization may be taken to have lasted from the 3300 -1400 centuries BCE. The Early Harappan, Mature Harappan, and Late Harappan phases are also called the Regionalisation, Integration, and Localisation eras, respectively. However, its origin, development and decline with the Regionalization era reaching back to Neolithic period II at Mehrgarh, a type site from which one can trace the village life which had the foundation of Harappan culture could be measured and according to Prof. Ahmad Hasan Dani's statement that the "Discoveries at Mehrgarh

changed the entire concept of Indus Civilization" and the whole sequence, right from the beginning of settled village life has been chronologically suggested as below:

| <b>Dates</b>     | <b>Phase</b>                                                  | <b>Era</b>                  |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 7000–5500<br>BCE | Mehrgarh I (aceramic Neolithic)                               | Early Food-Producing<br>Era |
| 5500–3300        | Mehrgarh II-VI (ceramic Neolithic)                            |                             |
| 3300–2600        | Early Harappan                                                |                             |
| 3300–2800        | Harappan 1 (Ravi Phase)                                       | Regionalisation Era         |
| 2800–2600        | Harappan 2 (Kot Diji Phase, Nausharo I, Mehrgarh VII)         |                             |
| 2600–1900        | Mature Harappan (Indus Valley Civilization)                   |                             |
| 2600–2450        | Harappan 3A (Nausharo II)                                     | Integration Era             |
| 2450–2200        | Harappan 3B                                                   |                             |
| 2200–1900        | Harappan 3C                                                   |                             |
| 1900–1300        | Late Harappan (Cemetery H); Ochre Colored Pottery             | Localisation Era            |
| 1900–1700        | Harappan 4                                                    |                             |
| 1700–1300        | Harappan 5                                                    |                             |
| 1300–300         | Painted Grey Ware and Northern Black Polished Ware (Iron Age) | Indo-Gangetic Tradition     |

Geographically, the Indus Valley Civilization encompassed most of the present Pakistan and parts of northwestern India, Afghanistan and Iran, extending from Baluchistan in the west to Uttar Pradesh(India) in the east, northeastern Afghanistan to the north and Maharashtra(India) to the south, highly similar situation to those in Egypt and Peru, with rich agricultural lands being surrounded by highlands, desert, and ocean. Recently, many more Indus sites have been discovered in Pakistan's and in northwestern Frontier Province as well. The other IVC colonies of this culture can be found in Afghanistan while smaller isolated colonies can be found as far away as Turkmenistan and in Gujarat, whereas the coastal settlements are extended from Sutkagan Dor in Western Baluchistan to Lothal in Gujarat. In the northern most of India Harappan site is found at Manda, Jammu on the Beas River near Jammu and also at Alamgirpur on the Hindon River, only 28 km from Delhi. Indus Valley sites have been found most often on rivers, but also on the ancient seacoast, for example, Balakot, and on islands, for example, Dholavira. There is evidence of dry river beds overlapping with the Hakra channel in Pakistan and the seasonal Ghaggar River in India. Many Indus

Valley or Harappan sites have been discovered along the Ghaggar-Hakra beds. Among them mention may be made of Rupar, Rakhigarhi, Sothi, Kalibangan and Ganwariwala. According to J. G. Shaffer and D. A. Lichtenstein, the Harappan Civilization is a fusion of the Bagor, Hakra, and Koti Dij traditions or 'ethnic groups' in the Ghaggar-Hakra valley on the borders of India and Pakistan. According to some archaeologists, more than 500 Harappan sites have been discovered along the dried up river beds of the Ghaggar-Hakra River and its tributaries in contrast to only about 100 along the Indus and its tributaries.

### **Town Planning:**

The remains at Harappa and Mohenjodaro (place of the dead) signify the skill of town planning and construction of the buildings of Indus people. Dr. Mackay in his words put the skill of these people as 'these cities are the earliest, yet they appear to be so modern' and similarly, Dr. Pusalkar says that 'a visitor to the ruins of Mohenjodaro is struck by the remarkable skill in town planning and sanitation displayed by the ancients'. Excavations at Mohenjodaro revealed a well-planned city with broad streets which varied from 13.5 to 33 ft. in breadth and the roads were so arranged that the prevailing winds could work as a sort of suction pump thereby cleaning the atmosphere automatically as they cut each other at right angles. Houses were built in varied dimensions from the smallest ones of two rooms to a large one like a palace with a frontage of 85 ft. and a depth of 97 ft. with a courtyard of 32 ft. square, etc. Each house was divided into various parts serving different purposes. According to archaeologists some of these structures might have been served as temples. One of the outstanding features at Mohenjodaro about buildings being their plainness. The entrances to the houses were in narrow lanes without windows and some rooms were built to their strategic position. Common walls between houses were rare and the empty space between the walls of two houses was filled with bricks. As the walls were built thick and it is possible that the buildings might have possessed more than one storey. The roofs were formed by placing reed-matting on beams covering with mud. The stair-cases were solid with no space left underneath and the steps were high and narrow. The size of doors varied from 3 ft. 4 in. to 7 ft. 10 in. The building plans suggest the non-existence of Purdah system. They used small and plain bricks for bath room pavements by rubbing their faces carefully so as to make bath rooms water-tight. L-shaped bricks have been used occasionally at corners. Use of mud mortar was common, gypsum and mud were used for plaster and in the case of drains,

gypsum and lime mortar was used. Invariably they used burnt bricks. The streets were provided with wells and lamp posts at regular intervals and the plan of wells speak the technical perfection of those people and most astonishing thing being even though the wells were built thousands of years ago are still in perfect working condition even today. This is all perhaps necessary to remove the debris, silt and use them for the supply of drinking water. Another important feature of the houses is the presence of one or more bath-rooms and the floors were fully laid and well connected by means of drainage channels with the main street. The bath-rooms were square or rectangular in plan with pavement usually sloping towards one corner provided with an outlet of water. The houses were fitted with simple nature of furniture; big jars fixed in the floor for storage of grains, reed-mats served the purpose of sleeping and reed-stools or wooden stools for sitting. Other utensils that came across used in the kitchen was a jar with a hole at the bottom which take the waste thereby prevent it's going to the drains. The arrangement of sink-pits outside every house for the purpose of collecting all the sediments before the water flowed into the drain is an important part of the house plan.

It seems that the Indus people were very particular about cleanliness, hence dustbins were provided on the streets which indicate the existence of a well planned drainage system. Brick-laid channels flowed through every street which varied from 9 inches and 12 inches deep to double of that size. The channels were covered with loose bricks at intervals in order to remove and clean, whereas large channels were made of stone with stone coverage. Cess-pits were laid for the flow of rain water and sewage from the houses to flow into them. Long drains were provided with sumps in view of cleaning them without much difficulty. Wedge-shaped bricks were used at curves of the drainage lines and brick-lined pits were provided when one drain entered another. Large brick-culverts with corbelled roofs were constructed in the outskirts of the town to carry large amount of water at the time of storms. However, the defect of the drainage system being that in most cases a drain was placed near wells perhaps created the danger of contamination as the coping of wells was only a few inches above the pavement. They developed an excellent supply of water system to the town and witnessed in the form of wells being arranged to every house.

The high standard of town-planning and sanitation, with sufficient water supply and drainage system, makes the Indus Valley or Harappan culture outstanding among all the ancient cultures. Archeologists, even after several years of excavations, have not

yet succeeded in getting an overall picture of the city as it existed in the heyday of the Harappan Civilization. However, excavations so far revealed two important public buildings, granaries and the great bath along with the citadel. The citadel of Harappa formed a rough parallelogram of 415 x 193 m., with north-south axis. Parts of the 14 m. thick, battered walls along with a few defensive bastions at intervals. Main entrance faced north and, while to the west rose another network of bastions, ramps and terraces approached by gates overlooking guardrooms on the west, in a curved re-entrant on the encircling wall. Other building features encountered to the north of the citadel were the double line of barrack-like dwellings on a north-south axis, 16 furnaces(probably used for smelting bronze and copper) as well as a twin file of granaries and five rows of circular platforms which are named as 'coolie-lines'(presumably workmen's quarters) by Wheeler. Each line forms an oblong of 18 x 8 m. with each house consisting of two rooms and a courtyard with partly brick-paved floors. The granaries consist of 12 units, about 15 x 6 m. each, laid in two rows, six on each side, and with a central passage of seven meters wide and stand on a platform of packed earth edged backed bricks. The floors of individual units rest on sleeper walls, with air-ducts to keep the grain dry. The location of granaries near the river bank indicates that the grain was transported by boat. Granary complex with its pounding as well as the supposed workmen's quarters reinforce the view that agriculture formed the main occupation of the people of Indus Valley. The general plan of the city is almost similar at Mohenjodaro which has a circuit of about 4.82 km. and rises on the west and the lower city lies to the east, apparently, separated in ancient times by a canal or branch of the Indus River.

However, the chief buildings in the Mohenjodaro citadel is the Great Bath, a complex of verandahs and rooms arranged around the sides of a rectangular pool measuring 12 x 7 m. with a depth of 2.44 m. laid on a north-south axis. It was provided with a flight of steps which are furnished with treads fixed with bitumen and set into each of the shorter sides of the pool leads to a surrounding platform 30 cm. high. In order to make the floor and walls of this tank waterproof it has been laid with specially shaped bricks on end and set them in gypsum mortar, further strengthened by a two-centimeter-thick lining of bitumen behind the facing. Floor of the pool had been sloped towards the drain hole which could be plugged to hold water. The south-west corner of the pool has been provided with the water outlet linked with an excellent corbelled channel 60 cm. wide and high enough to walk along. A man-hole of 60 x 105 cm. is another remarkable

feature attached to the pool accessible both from the tank and the corbelled drain and the water was supplied from a double-ringed well in a room to the east. A pillared verandah had been built surrounding all four sides with rooms beyond except on the west. Two entrances led to a paved vestibule with a drain at the eastern extremity could be witnessed. A series of rooms, perhaps used for dressing, extend on the east. To the north of this great bath lie two rows of bathrooms on either side of a lane containing a drain and each bath room measured about 2.9 x 1.8 m. with brick paved floors. Each bath room had a staircase presumably leading perhaps to upper storey. The excavators' believed that those might have been reserved for the priests who came down at specific intervals for ritual bathing, while the laymen used the main bathing pool. Immediately to the west of the great bath, Sir Mortimer Wheeler's systematic excavation revealed a structure of immense significance namely granary, as discussed above at Mohenjodaro. It contained a high podium of massive proportions (46 x 23 m.) with battered walls and a crisscross of passages inside serving as air-ducts. The storage area may have had a superstructure which has left no traces now. An alcove on the northern side of the outer wall, having straight inner sides, probably served the purpose of hauling up sheaves of grain. It seems that it's foundation was reinforced by timber, as in parts of the bastions, the granary might have been contemporary with them and earlier than the great bath. It's discovery strengthened the view that in Bronze Age economy, granaries corresponded to state banks or treasuries, as it is situated inside the citadel and designed as an essentially single building with formidable battered walls adds to its importance. To the north-east of the great bath lie the remains of a building often referred to as the 'college of the priests' but it's importance and significance is not known so far.

Another building located on the southern mound of the great citadel at Mohenjodaro is a great pillared hall of about 127 m. square in plan and opened to the north. Twenty square pillars divided the floor space into five aisles and a later date it was perhaps paved with strips of brick. It's general plan resembles an Achaemenian 'apadana' or audience hall, this may have also been served as a place of assembly. The overall picture presents the great bath, granary, the so called college and the assembly hall inside a well-fortified encircling wall indicates a stable seat of power. A sophisticated and technologically advanced urban culture is evident in the Indus Valley Civilization making them the first urban centers in the region. The quality of municipal town planning suggests the knowledge of urban planning and efficient municipal governments which

placed a high priority on hygiene, or, alternatively, accessibility to the means of religious ritual. As seen in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, this urban plan included the world's first known urban sanitation systems: see hydraulic engineering of the Indus Valley Civilization. Within the city, individual homes or groups of homes obtained water from wells. From a room that appears to have been set aside for bathing, waste water was directed to covered drains, which lined the major streets. Houses opened only to inner courtyards and smaller lanes. The house-building in some villages in the region still resembles in some respects the house-building of the Harappans. The ancient Indus systems of sewerage and drainage that were developed and used in cities throughout the Indus region were far more advanced than any found in contemporary urban sites in the Middle East. The advanced architecture of the Harappans is shown by their impressive dockyards, granaries, warehouses, brick platforms, and protective walls. The massive walls of Indus cities most likely protected the Harappans from floods and may have dissuaded military conflicts. Although some houses were larger than others, Indus Civilization cities were remarkable for their apparent, if relative, egalitarianism. All the houses had access to water and drainage facilities. This gives the impression of a society with relatively low wealth concentration, though clear social leveling is seen in personal adornments.

Regarding the authority and governance, the archaeological record provides no immediate answers for a center of power or for depictions of people in power in Harappan society. But, there are indications of complex decisions being taken and implemented. For instance, the extraordinary uniformity of Harappan artifacts as evident in pottery, seals, weights and bricks. Archaeologists have hypothesized three major theories in view of explaining the existence of statehood of this ancient times, i.e., 1. There was a single state, given the similarity in artifacts, the evidence for planned settlements, the standardized ratio of brick size, and the establishment of settlements near sources of raw material; 2. There was no single ruler but several: Mohenjo-Daro had a separate ruler, Harappa another, and so forth and 3. Harappan society had no rulers, and everybody enjoyed equal status. A sophisticated and technologically advanced urban culture is evident in the Indus Valley Civilization making them the first urban centers in the region. The quality of municipal town planning suggests the knowledge of urban planning and efficient municipal governments which placed a high priority on hygiene, or, alternatively, accessibility to the means of religious ritual.



Yet another remarkable aspect of Indus Valley Civilization, but not noticed at either Harappa or Mohenjodaro, is the dockyard at Lothal discovered by S.R.Rao in 1954, which is significant to the knowledge of early seaport around 2440 BC. Lothal was a town situated at the head of the Gulf of Cambay near the estuaries of the Sabarmati and Bhigawo rivers flourished as a seaport but the site encompasses six phases of habitation. Lothal also followed the traditional scheme of a citadel raised on a higher level overlooking the township; here the citadel lies on the south-east corner of a walled enclosure. A mud-brick wall surrounds the whole site which is rectangular in plan in north-south axis and archaeologists believed that a 'ruler' existed on top of the citadel platform along with other public buildings-all provided with excellent water supply and drainage facilities. Wheeler noticed a strange sub-structure on the south-east corner of the acropolis consisted of criss-cross ducts running between 64 blocks measuring 3.6 sq.m. and called it as granary but S.R.Rao asserted its function as a warehouse handling an enormous amount of trade because of its proximity to the dock and its great size- the floor area being 1930 sq.m. A massive terraced platform which may have supported another public building faces the ware house on the west has been called dock, a rectangular depression measuring 214 x 36 m. is the most important find at Lothal. The sides revetted by kiln-burnt bricks are absolutely vertical to facilitate the berthing of ships. A channel, one meter wide, on the south wall, served as a spillway for excess water. Wooden sluice-gates probably acted as a water-locking device and insured a minimum water level inside the dock. The ships floated into the dock over a gap of 12 m. wide on the northern side. Based on certain criteria's and taking into account the direction and force of the current, the water-thrust and other problems, in addition to its unique water-locking system, if it actually functioned as dock-yard was an astonishing feat of scientific engineering in the ancient world.

### **Cultural Aspects:**

Well planned granaries and evidence of a variety of food grains suggest that agriculture (production of cereals, pulses and oilseeds consisted of domesticated crops such as peas, sesame seeds, dates, cotton etc.) was the main economy of these people which was supplemented by domestication of animals. Some post-1980 studies indicate that the food production was largely indigenous one, for example the people of Mehrgarh used domesticated wheat and barley and the major cultivated cereal crop was naked

six-row barley, a crop derived from two-row barley. Archaeologist, Jim G. Shaffer writes that the Mehrgarh site "demonstrates that food production was an indigenous South Asian phenomenon" and that the data support interpretation of "the prehistoric urbanization and complex social organization in South Asia as based on indigenous, but not isolated, cultural developments". They developed dairy activities and used milk products in addition to eggs, chicken, mutton, beef and pork.

It is difficult to describe their **dress** pattern but the evidence of pottery spindle whorls suggest that cotton and woolen threads might have been spun and used for the manufacture of cloth. Statues and carvings on seals support the usage of certain dress perhaps covering the lower and upper parts of the body. It appears that women put on a skirt and an extra cloth to cover arms and shoulders, whereas men wore short beards and whiskers along with a band of cloth round their loins. They might have used a wrapper covering the left shoulder and also pass below the right shoulder.

Usage of ornaments both men and women was popular and both sexes used necklaces, fillets, armlets, finger-rings, whereas women alone used girdles, ear-studs, anklets, etc. The ornaments of rich people were made of gold, silver, ivory, faience or semi-precious stones, but the poor used shell, bone, copper and terracotta, cornelian, steatite, soap stone, etc. It seems that hair was taken back from the forehead and then clipped or coiled in a knot with a fillet to support the same at the back of the head. They used combs, fillets and hair-pins for keeping the hair in order and tight.

The household items both articles and weapons consists of basins, bowls, jars, needles, axes, saws, knives, etc. made of stone, wood, pottery, copper, bronze, porcelain, etc. They manufactured a variety of pottery vessels mostly of utilitarian type made on wheel and painted in red and black, sometimes glazed and incised, the former technique is the earliest example of its kind in the ancient world. Some of the pottery forms such as goblets, heaters, offering stands; stone-jars, etc. are unique to this culture. Weapons comprised both offensive and defensive type, the former ones comprised axes, spears, daggers, slings, maces, etc. with less number of bows and arrows. Three kinds of missiles were used by them, mostly as offensive rather than defensive but shields, helmets and other kind of armour has not been encountered. These people enjoyed the life by preferring indoor amusements. Without much interest in hunting and chariot-racing, they enjoyed dancing and singing. The game of dice was

also known to them. A large number of toys found at Mohenjodaro suggest that the children were fond of play-things made of terracotta and the things comprised rattles, whistles, birds, carts, figures of men and women. The **Harappan language** is not directly attested and its affiliation is uncertain since the Indus script is still undeciphered. A relationship with the Dravidian or Elamo-Dravidian language family is favored by a section of scholars, while others suggest an Austroasiatic language related to Munda. Skeletal remains at Harappan sites belonged to proto-Australoid, Mongoloid, Mediterranean and Alpine.

Between 400 and as many as 600 distinct Indus symbols have been found on seals, small tablets, ceramic pots and more than a dozen other materials, including a "signboard" that apparently once hung over the gate of the inner citadel of the Indus city of Dholavira. Typical Indus inscriptions are no more than four or five characters in length, most of which (aside from the Dholavira "signboard") are tiny; the longest on a single surface, which is less than 1 inch (2.54 cm) square, is 17 signs long; the longest on any object (found on three different faces of a mass-produced object) has a length of 26 symbols.

While the Indus Valley Civilization is generally characterized as a literate society on the evidence of these inscriptions, this description has been challenged by some scholars and argued that the Indus system did not encode language, but was instead similar to a variety of non-linguistic sign systems used extensively in the Near East and other societies, to symbolise families, clans, gods, and religious concepts. Others have claimed on occasion that the symbols were exclusively used for economic transactions, but this claim leaves unexplained the appearance of Indus symbols on many ritual objects, many of which were mass-produced in moulds. No parallels to these mass-produced inscriptions are known in any other early ancient civilizations. Recent studies on language pattern and comparison of symbols to various linguistic scripts and non-linguistic systems, including DNA and a computer programming language, it is known that the Indus script's pattern is closer to that of spoken words, supporting the hypothesis that it codes for an as-yet-unknown language. The messages on the seals have proved to be too short to be decoded by a computer. Each seal has a distinctive combination of symbols and there are too few examples of each sequence to provide a sufficient context. The symbols that accompany the images vary from seal to seal, making it impossible to derive a meaning for the symbols from the images. There have,

nonetheless, been a number of interpretations offered for the meaning of the seals.  
These interpretations have been marked by ambiguity and subjectivity.

## **Unit-III**

### **Lesson-08**

#### **Art and Crafts**

Many crafts, viz. shell working, ceramics, agate and glazed steatite bead making used in the making of necklaces, bangles, and other ornaments formed the main crafts known to these people evident from all phases of Harappan sites and some of these crafts are still practiced in the subcontinent today. Some make-up and toiletry items (a special kind of combs (kakai), the use of collyrium and a special three-in-one toiletry gadget) that were found in Harappan contexts still have similar counterparts in modern India. Terracotta female figurines were found (ca. 2800-2600 BCE) which had red color applied to the 'manga' (line of partition of the hair). Harappans evolved some new techniques in metallurgy and produced copper, bronze, lead, tin and such technology might have been fruitfully utilized by them in their material culture of producing both offensive and defensive tools and weapons as mentioned above.

They displayed a high degree of artistic skill which is reflected in the collection of figures, images and jewellery. The images of humped bull, a bronze statue of a dancing girl, a number of gold, terracotta and stone figurines of girls in dancing poses reveal the presence of some dance form. The terracotta figurines included cows, bears, monkeys, and dogs. The animals depicted on majority of seals, found at sites of the mature period, however are not clearly identified. Part bull, part zebra, with a majestic horn has been a source of speculation. As yet, there is insufficient evidence to substantiate claims that the image had religious or cultic significance, but the prevalence of the image raises the question of whether or not the animals in images of the Indus Valley Civilization are religious symbols.

More than 2000 seals and amulets have been discovered made on terracotta and stone is another example of these people's technique of art and craft even though they are associated with religious aspect. A harp-like instrument depicted on an Indus seal and two shell objects found at Lothal indicate the use of stringed musical instruments. The Harappans also made various toys and games, among them cubical dice (with one to six holes on the faces), which were found in sites like Mohenjo-Daro. They disposed their dead by the method of cremation. A number of urns containing human bones and ashes along with burnt vessels being the offerings for the dead in after-life have been found support this presumption. Harappans evolved some new techniques in metallurgy and produced copper, bronze, lead, and tin. The engineering skill

of these Harappans was a remarkable, especially in building docks; granaries, citadel, etc. are the best example of their heterogenic skill and division of artisans'.

## Trade

Indus Valley culture had trade networks linked with related regional cultures and distant sources of raw materials, including lapis lazuli and other materials for bead-making. Early Harappan communities turned to large urban centers by 2600 BCE, from where the mature Harappan phase started. They maintained trade contacts with foreign countries like Egypt, Crete and Sumer. Boats were used in foreign trade. The Indus civilization's economy appears to have depended significantly on trade, which was facilitated by major advances in transport technology. The Indus Valley Civilization may have been the first civilization to use wheeled transport. These advances may have included bullock carts that are identical to those seen throughout South Asia today, as well as boats. Most of these boats were probably small, flat-bottomed craft, perhaps driven by sail, similar to those one can see on the Indus River today; however, there is secondary evidence of sea-going craft. Archaeologists have discovered a massive, dredged canal and what they regard as a docking facility at the coastal city of Lothal in western India (Gujarat state). An extensive canal network, used for irrigation, has however also been discovered. Most city dwellers appear to have been traders or artisans, who lived with others pursuing the same occupation in well-defined neighbourhoods. Materials from distant regions were used in the cities for constructing seals, beads and other objects. Among the artifacts discovered were beautiful glazed faience beads. Some of the seals were used to stamp clay on trade goods and most probably had other uses as well.

Evidence of the use of chert weights indicate both foreign and local trade and the weights were in a ratio of 5:2:1 with weights of 0.05, 0.1, 0.2, 0.5, 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500 units, with each unit weighing approximately 28 grams, similar to the English Imperial ounce or Greek uncia and smaller objects were weighed in similar ratios with the units of 0.871. However, as in other cultures, actual weights were not uniform throughout the area. The weights and measures later used in Kautilya's Arthashastra (4th century BCE) are the same as those used in Lothal. The people of the Indus Civilization achieved great accuracy in measuring length, mass, and time. They were among the first to develop a system of uniform weights and measures. A comparison of available objects indicates large scale variation across the Indus territories. Their smallest division, which is marked on an ivory scale found in Lothal, was approximately 1.704 mm, the smallest division ever recorded on a scale of the Bronze Age.

Harappan engineers followed the decimal division of measurement for all practical purposes, including the measurement of mass as revealed by their hexahedron weights. The engineering skill of the Harappans was remarkable, especially in building docks. There was an extensive maritime trade network operating between the Harappan and Mesopotamian civilizations as early as the middle Harappan Phase, with much commerce being handled by "middlemen merchants from Dilmun" (modern Bahrain and Failaka located in the Persian Gulf). Such long-distance sea trade became feasible with the innovative development of plank-built watercraft, equipped with a single central mast supporting a sail of woven rushes or cloth. Several coastal settlements like Sotkagen-dor (astride Dasht River, north of Jiwhani), Sokhta Koh (astride Shadi River, north of Pasni), and Balakot (near Sonmiani) in Pakistan along with Lothal in India testify to their role as Harappan trading outposts. Shallow harbors located at the estuaries of rivers opening into the sea allowed brisk maritime trade with Mesopotamian cities.

## Religion

There is no direct evidence of religion and belief system of the Indus valley people. However, the study of the seals, sealings, inscribed copper tablets, stone statues and terracotta figurines receive considerable attention, especially from the view of identifying precursors to deities and religious practices developed in the area. Due to the sparsity of evidence, which is open to varying interpretations, and the fact that the Indus script remains undeciphered, the conclusions are partly speculative and largely based on a retrospective view from a much later Hindu perspective. An early and influential work in the area that set the trend for Hindu interpretations of archaeological evidence from the Harappan sites was done by John Marshall who in 1931 identified the following as prominent features of the Indus religion: a Great Male God and a Mother Goddess; deification or veneration of animals and plants; symbolic representation of the phallus (linga) and vulva (yoni); and, use of baths and water in religious practice. Marshall's interpretations have been much debated, and sometimes disputed.

One of the Indus valley seal shows a seated, possibly ithyphallic and tricephalic, figure with a horned headdress, surrounded by animals. Marshall identified the figure as an early form of the Hindu god Shiva (or Rudra), who is associated with asceticism, yoga, and linga; regarded as a lord of animals; and often depicted as having three heads. The seal has hence come to be known as the Pashupati Seal, after Pashupati (lord of the beasts), an epithet of Shiva. While Marshall's work has earned some support, many critics and even supporters have raised several objections. However, Srinivasan argued that the figure does not have three

faces, or yogic posture, and that in Vedic literature Rudra was not a protector of wild animals. Herbert Sullivan and Alf Hiltebeitel also rejected Marshall's conclusions, with the former claiming that the figure was female, while the latter associated the figure with *Mahisha*, the Buffalo God and the surrounding animals with *vahanas* (vehicles) of deities for the four cardinal directions. Gregory L. Possehl concluded that while it would be appropriate to recognize the figure as a deity, its association with the water buffalo, and its posture as one of ritual discipline, regarding it as a proto-Shiva would be going too far. Despite the criticisms of Marshall's association of the seal with a proto-Shiva icon, it has been interpreted by Jains and Buddhists as representing an early Tirthankara or an early Buddha.

Marshall hypothesized the existence of a cult of Mother Goddess worship based upon excavation of several female figurines, and thought that this was a precursor of the Hindu sect of Shaktism. However the function of the female figurines in the life of Indus Valley people remains unclear and Possehl does not regard the evidence for Marshall's hypothesis to be "terribly robust". Some of the baetyls interpreted by Marshall to be sacred phallic representations are now thought to have been used as pestles or game counters instead, while the ring stones that were thought to symbolize *yonis* were determined to be architectural features used to stand pillars, although the possibility of their religious symbolism cannot be eliminated. Many Indus Valley seals show animals, with some depicting them being carried in processions, while others show chimeric creations. One seal from Mohenjo-Daro shows a half-human, half-buffalo monster attacking a tiger, which may be a reference to the Sumerian myth of such a monster created by goddess Aruru to fight Gilgamesh.

Moreover, Indus valley lacks any monumental temples or palaces, even though excavated cities indicate that the society possessed the requisite engineering knowledge. This may suggest that religious ceremonies, if any, may have been largely confined to individual homes, small temples, or the open air. Several sites have been proposed by Marshall and later scholars as possibly devoted to religious purpose, but at present only the Great Bath at Mohenjo-Daro is widely thought to have been so used, as a place for ritual purification. The funerary practices of the Harappan civilization is marked by its diversity with evidence of supine burial; fractional burial in which the body is reduced to skeletal remains by exposure to the elements before final interment; and even cremation.

**Decline:** Around 1800 BCE, signs of a gradual decline began to emerge, and by around 1700 BCE, most of the cities were abandoned. In 1953, Sir Mortimer Wheeler proposed that the



decline of the Indus Civilization was caused by the invasion of an Indo-European tribe from Central Asia called the 'Aryans'. As evidence, he cited a group of 37 skeletons found in various parts of Mohenjo-Daro, and passages in the Vedas referring to battles and forts. However, scholars soon started to reject Wheeler's theory, since the skeletons belonged to a period after the city's abandonment and none were found near the citadel. Today, many scholars believe that the collapse of the Indus Civilization was caused by drought and a decline in trade with Egypt and Mesopotamia. It has also been suggested that immigration by new peoples, deforestation, floods, or changes in the course of the river may have contributed to the collapse of this culture. However, the Indus Valley Civilization did not disappear suddenly, and many elements of the Indus Civilization can be found in later cultures. David Gordon White cites three other mainstream scholars who "have emphatically demonstrated" that Vedic religion is partially derived from the Indus Valley Civilizations. Current archaeological data suggest that material culture classified as Late Harappan may have persisted until at least c. 1000–900 BCE and was partially contemporaneous with the Painted Grey Ware culture. Some other archaeologists suggested that the late Harappan settlement of Pirak is the best example for the continuity from 1800 BCE to the time of the invasion of Alexander the Great in 325 BCE.

## CHALCOLITHIC FARMING CULTURES

**Aim:** To know about various phases of Chalcolithic cultures, and their limitations.

### Topics:

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Chronology
- .3 Importance of Chalcolithic phase
- .4 Limitations of Chalcolithic cultures
- .5 The Copper Hoards and the Ochre Colored Pottery Phase
- .6 Conclusion

## .1 Introduction.

The end of the Neolithic period saw the use of metals. The metal to be used first was copper, and several cultures were based on the use of stone and copper implements. Such a culture is called Chalcolithic which means the stone-copper phase. Technologically, chalcolithic stage applied to the pre-Harappa. The chalcolithic people mostly used stone and copper objects, but they also occasionally used to low grade bronze. They primarily rural communities spread over a wide the area in those parts of the country where hilly land and rivers were available. On the other hand, the Harappa's used bronze and had attained urbanization on the basis of the produce from the flood plains in the Indus valley. In India, settlements belonging to the chalcolithic phase are found in south-eastern Rajasthan, the western part of Madhya Pradesh, western Maharashtra and also in southern and eastern India. In south-eastern Rajasthan two sites, one at Ahar and the other at Gilund have been excavated. They live in the dry zones of the Banas valley. In western the Madhya Pradesh, Malwa, Kayatha and Eran have been exposed. The Malwa ware typical of the Malwa chalcolithic culture of central and western India is considered the richest among the ceramics. Some of it pottery and other cultural elements are also found in Maharashtra.

But the most extensive excavations have taken place in western Maharashtra. Several chalcolithic sites, such as Jorwe, Nevasa, Diamabad in Ahmadnagar district, Chandoli and Songoan and Inamgaon in Pune district, Praskash and Nasik have been excavated. They all belong to the Jorwe culture named after Jorwe, the type site situated on the left bank of the Pravara river, a tributary of the Godavari, in Ahmadnagar district. The Jorwe culture owed much to the Malwa but it also contained elements of the south Neolithic culture.

The Jorwe culture, 1400 to 700 B.C., covered modern Maharashtra of except parts of vidarba and the coastal region of Konkan. Although the Jorwe culture was rural some of its settlements such as Daimabad and Inamgaon had almost reached the urban stage. All these Maharashtra sites were located in semi-arid areas mostly on brown-black soil which had ber and babul vegetation but felt in the riverine tracts. In addition to these, we have Navdatoli situated on the Narmada. Most chalcolithic ingredients intruded into the Neolithic sites in south India.

Several chalcolithic sites have been found in the Vindhyan region of Allahabad district. In eastern India, besides Chirand on the Ganga, mention may be made of Pandu Rajar Dhibi in Burdwan district and Mahishdal in Birbhum district in WestBengal. Some more sites have been excavated. Notable among these are Senwar, Sonpur and Taradih in Bihar, and Khairadih and Narhan in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

The people belonging to this culture used tiny tools and weapons made of stone in which the stone-blades and bladelets occupied an important position. In many places, particularly in south India, the stone blade industry flourished and stone axes continued to be used. It is obvious that such areas were not situated far from the hills. In certain settlements copper objects are found in good numbers. This seems to be the case with Ahar and Gilund, which lay more or less in the Rajasthan. Unlike the other contemporary chalcolithic farming cultures, Ahar particularly did not use microlithic tools; stone axes or blades are almost absent here. Its objects include several flat axes, bangles, several sheets, all made of copper, although a bronze sheet also occurs. Copper was locally available.

The people of Ahar practiced smelting and metallurgy from the very beginning. The old name of Ahar is Tambavati or a place possessing copper. The Ahar culture is placed between 2100 and 1500 B.C and Gilund is considered a regional centre of the Ahar culture. In Gilund only fragments of copper appear. Here, we find a stone blade industry. Flat, rectangular copper axes are found in Jorwe and Chandoli in Maharashtra and copper chisels appear at Chandoli. The people of the chalcolithic phase used different types of pottery, one of which is called black and red and seems to have been widely prevalent from nearly 2000 B.C; onwards. It was thrown on wheel and occasionally painted with white linear designs Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra but also of habitations found in Bihar and West Bengal. People living in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar produced channel-spouted pots, dishes on stand and bowls on stand. It would be wrong to think that all the people who used black and red pottery possessed the same culture. We can notice differences in their forms of pottery and implements.

The people in the chalcolithic age in south eastern Rajasthan, western Madhya Pradesh, western Maharashtra and elsewhere domesticated animals and practiced agriculture. They kept cows, sheep, goats, pigs and buffaloes, and hunted deer. Remains of the camel have also been found. It is not clear whether they were acquainted with the horse. Some animal remains are identified as belonging either to the horse or donkey or wild ass. People certainly ate beef, but they did not take pork on any considerable scale. What is remarkable is that these people produced wheat and rice. In addition to these staple crops, they also cultivated bajra. They produced several pulses such as lentil, black gram, green gram, and grass peas. Almost all these food grains have been found at Navdatoli situated on the bank of the Narmada in Maharashtra. Perhaps at no other place in India so many cereals have been discovered as a result of digging. The people Navdatoli also produced bera and linseed. Cotton was produced in the black cotton soil of the Deccan and ragi, bajra and several millets were cultivated in the lower Deccan. In eastern India, fish hooks have been found in Bihar and West Bengal where we also find rice. This suggests that the chalcolithic people in the eastern regions lived on fish and rice, which is still a popular diet in that part of the country. Most settlements in the Banas valley in Rajasthan are small but Ahar and Gilund spread over an area of nearly four hectares.

The chalcolithic people were generally not acquainted with burnt bricks, which were seldom used, as in Gilund around 1500 B.C. Occasionally their houses were made of mud bricks, but mostly these were constructed with wattle and daub, and seem to have been thatched houses. However, the people in Ahar lived in stone-built houses. Of the 200 Jorwe sites discovered so far, the largest is Daimabad in the Godavari valley. It is about 20 hectares in extent which could contain around 4000 people. It also seems to have been fortified with a mud wall having stone, rubble bastions. Daimabad is famous for the recovery of a large number of bronze goods, some of which were influenced by the Harappan culture.

At Inamgaon, in the earlier chalcolithic phase in western Maharashtra, large mud houses with ovens and circular pit houses have been discovered. In the later phase we have a house with five rooms, four rectangular and one circular. This was located in the centre of the settlements, and may have been the house of a chief. The granary lying close to may have been used for storing tributes in kind. Inamgaon was a large chalcolithic settlement. It shows more than one hundred houses and numerous burials. This settlement was also fortified and surrounded by a moat.

We know a good deal about the chalcolithic arts and crafts. They were clearly expert copper smiths and also good workers in stone. We get tools, weapons and bangles of copper. They manufactured beads of semi stones such as camelian, steatite and quartz crystal. People knew the art of spinning and weaving because spindle whorls have been discovered in Malwa. Cotton, flax and silk threads made of cotton silk of semal/silk have been found in Maharashtra. This shows that these people were well acquainted with the manufacture of cloth. In addition to artisans who practiced and these crafts at various sites we find potters, smiths, ivory carvers, lime makers and terracotta artisans at Inamgaon.

Regional differences in regard to cereals, structure, pottery etc appear in the stone copper phase. India cultivated barley and wheat. Chronologically certain settlements in Malwa and central India such as those in Kayatha and Eran, appeared early, those of western Maharashtra and eastern India were of a much later date.

We can form some idea about the burial practices and religious cults of these people. In Maharashtra people buried their dead in urns under the floor of their house in the north to south position. They did not use separate cemeteries for this purpose, as was the case with the Harappans. Pots and some copper objects deposited in the graves obviously for the use of the dead in the next world.

Terracotta figures of women suggest that the chalcolithic people venerated the mother goddess. Some unbaked nude clay figurines were also worshipped. A figure of the mother goddess similar to that found in western Asia has been found in Inamgaon. In Malwa and Rajasthan stylized bull terracottas show that the bull was the symbol of religious cult.

Both the settlement pattern and burial practices suggest beginnings of social inequalities. A kind of settlement hierarchy appears in several Jorwe settlements found in Maharashtra. Some of them are as large as twenty hectares, but other are five hectares and even less in size. This would imply two-tier habitations. The difference in the size of settlements suggests that larger settlements dominated the smaller ones. However, in both and smaller settlements the chief and his kinsmen who lived in rectangular houses dominated others who lived in round huts. In Inamgaon the craftsmen lived on the western fringes and the chief probably in the centre; this suggests social distance between the inhabitants. In the graves at Chandoli and Nevasa in western Maharashtra some children were buried along with copper based necklaces around their necks; other children had grave goods consisting only pots. At Inamgaon an adult was buried with pottery and some copper. In one house in Kayath 29 copper bangles and two unique axes were found. At the same place necklaces of semi-precious stones such as steatite and carnelian beads were found in pots. It is evident that those who possessed these objects were affluent.

## .2 Chronology

Chronologically a special note may be taken of a site at Ganeshwar which is located close to the rich copper mines of the Sikar Jhunjhunu area of the Khetri copper belt in Rajasthan. The copper objects excavated from this area include arrowheads, spearheads, fish hooks, colts, bangles, chisels etc. some of their shapes are similar to those discovered at Indus sites; a terracotta cake resembling the Indus type has been also found. It also shows many microliths which are typical of the chalcolithic culture. We also find the OCP ware which is a red-slipped ware often painted in black and mainly represented in vase forms. Since the Ganeshwar deposits are ascribed to 2800-2200 B.C. they largely predate the

mature Harappa culture. Ganeshwar mainly supplied copper objects to Harappa and did not receive much from it. The Ganeshwar people partly lived on agriculture and largely on hunting. Although their principal craft was the manufacture of copper objects they could not develop urban elements of the Harappan economy, which was based on the produce from the wide flood plains. The Ganeshwar assemblage, therefore, can be regarded as a proper OCP/Copper Hoard culture. With its microliths and other stone tools much of the Ganeshwar culture can be regarded as a pre-Harappan chalcolithic culture, which contributed to the making of the mature Harappan culture.

Chronologically there are several series of chalcolithic settlements in India. Some are pre-Harappan, others are contemporaries of the Harappan culture and still others are post-Harappan. Pre-Harappan strata on some sites in the Harappan zone are also called early Harappan in order to distinguish them from the mature urban Indus civilization. Thus the pre-Harappan phase at Kalibangan in Rajasthan and Banawali in Haryana is distinctly chalcolithic. So is the case with Kot Diji in Sindh in Pakistan. Pre-Harappan, post-Harappan chalcolithic cultures and those co-existing with the Harappan are found in northern, western and central India. An example is the Kayatha culture 2000-1800 B.C, which is a junior contemporary of the Harappa culture. It has some pre-Harappan elements in pottery, but it also shows Harappan influence. Several post-Harappan chalcolithic cultures in these areas are influenced by the post-urban phase of the Harappan culture.

Several other chalcolithic cultures, though younger in age than the mature Harappan culture, are not connected with the Indus civilization. The Malwa culture (1700-1200 B.C) found in Navdatoli, Eran and Nagda is considered to be non-Harappan. So is the case with the Jorwe culture (1400-700 B.C) which covers the whole of Maharashtra except parts of Vidarbha and Konkan. In the southern and eastern parts of the country, chalcolithic settlements existed independently of the Harappan culture. In south India they are found invariably in continuation of the neolithic settlements. The chalcolithic settlement of the Vindhya region, Bihar and West Bengal are also not related to the Harappan culture.

Evidently various types of pre-Harappan chalcolithic cultures promoted the spread of farming communities in Sindh, Baluchistan, Rajasthan etc and created conditions for the rise of the urban civilization of Harappa. Mention may be made of Amri and Kot Diji in Sindh, Kalibangan and even Ganeshwar in Rajasthan. It appears that some Chalcolithic farming communities moved to the flood plains of the Indus, learnt bronze technology and succeeded in setting up cities.

Chalcolithic cultures in central and western India disappeared by 1200 B.C or so; only the Jorwe culture continued until 700 B.C. However, in several parts of the country the chalcolithic black and red ware continued into historical times till the second century B.C. But by and large a gap of about four to six centuries appears between the chalcolithic culture and the early historic culture at Kayatha, Prabhas, Prakash, Nasik and Nevasa in central and western India. The eclipse of the chalcolithic habitations is attributed to a decline in rainfall from about 1200 B.C onwards. Really the chalcolithic people could not continue for long with the digging stick in the black clayey soil area which is difficult to break in the dry season. In the red soil areas, especially in eastern India, however, the chalcolithic phase was immediately followed, without any gap, by the iron phase which gradually transformed the people into full-fledged agriculturists. Similarly, at several sites in southern India chalcolithic culture was transformed into megalithic culture using iron.

### **.3 Importance of the chalcolithic phase:**

Except for the alluvial plains and the thickly forested areas, traces of chalcolithic cultures have been discovered almost all over the country. In this phase of people mostly founded rural settlements on river banks nor far removed from the hills. As stated earlier, they used microliths and other stone tools supplemented by some use of copper tools. It seems that most of them knew the art of copper smelting. Almost all chalcolithic communities used wheel turned black and red pots. Considering their pre-Bronze phase of development, we find that they were the first to use painted pottery. Their pots were meant for cooking, eating, drinking and storing. They used both *lota* and *thali*. In south India, the neolithic phase imperceptibly faded into the chalcolithic phase, and so these cultures are called neolithic-chalcolithic. In other parts, especially in western Maharashtra and Rajasthan, the chalcolithic people seem to have been colonizers. Their earliest settlements appear in Malwa and central India, such as those in Kayatha and Eran; those in western Maharashtra appeared later and those in West Bengal emerged much later.

The chalcolithic communities founded the first large villages in peninsular India and cultivated far more cereals than is known in the case of the neolithic communities. In particular they cultivated barley, wheat and lentil in western India, and rice in southern and eastern India. Their cereal food was supplemented by a non vegetarian food. In western India we have more of animal food, but fish and rice formed important elements in the diet of eastern India. More remains of structures have been found in western Maharashtra, western Madhya Pradesh and south-eastern Rajasthan. The settlements at Kayatha and Eran in Madhya Pradesh and at Inamgaon in western Maharashtra were fortified. On the other hand, the remains of structures in Chirand and Pandu Rajar Dhibi in eastern India were poor, indicating post holes and round houses. The burial practices were different. In Maharashtra the dead body was placed in the north-south position but in south India in the east-west position. Almost complete extended burial obtained in western India, but fractional burial prevailed in eastern India.

### **. 4 Limitations of Chalcolithic cultures:**

The chalcolithic people domesticated cattle, sheep, goats which were tethered in the court yard. Probably the domesticated animals were slaughtered for food and not milked for drink and dairy products. The tribal's such as the Gonds of Bastar think that milk is meant only to feed the young animals, and therefore, they do not milk their cattle. Because of this the chalcolithic people could not make full use of the animals. Further, the chalcolithic people living on the black cotton soil area of central and western India did not practice cultivation on any intensive or extensive scale. Neither plough nor hoe has been found at chalcolithic sites. Only perforated stone discs were tied as weights to the digging sticks which could be used in the slash-burn or *Jhum* cultivation. It was possible to sow in the ashes with the help of such a digging stick. Intensive and extensive cultivation on the black soil required the use of iron implements which had no place in the chalcolithic culture. The chalcolithic people living in the red soil areas of eastern India also faced the same difficulty.

The general weakness of chalcolithic cultures is evident from the burial of a large number of children in western Maharashtra. In spite of a food –producing economy the rate of infant mortality was very high. It might be attributed to lack of nutrition, absence of medical knowledge or outbreak of epidemics. At any rate the chalcolithic social and economic pattern did not promote longevity.

The stone copper culture had an essentially rural background. During its phase the supply of copper was limited and as a metal, copper had its limitations. By itself a tool made of copper was pliant. People did not know the art of mixing tin with copper and thus forging the much stronger and useful metal called bronze. Bronze tools facilitated the rise of earliest civilizations in Crete, Egypt and Mesopotamia and also in the Indus valley.

The people of the Stone-Copper Age did not know the art of writing; nor did they live in cities as the people of the Bronze Age did. We notice all these elements of civilization for the first time in the region of the Indian subcontinent. Although most chalcolithic cultures existing in the major part of the country were younger than the Indus valley civilization, they did not derive any substantial benefit from the advanced technological knowledge of the Indus people.

### **. 5 The Copper Hoards and the Ochre Coloured Pottery Phase:**

More than forty copper hoards consisting of rings, Celts, hatches, swords, harpoons, spearheads and human like figures have been found in a wide area ranging from West Bengal and Orissa in the east to Gujarat and Haryana in the west, and from Andhra Pradesh in the south to Uttar Pradesh in the north. The largest hoard comes from Gungeria in Madhya Pradesh; it contains 424 copper tools and weapons and 102 thin sheets of silver objects. But nearly half of the copper hoards are concentrated in the Ganga-Yamuna doab; in other areas we encounter stray finds of copper harpoons, antennae swords and anthropomorphic figures. These artifacts served several purposes. They were meant not only fishing, hunting, and fighting but also for artisanal and agricultural use. They presuppose good technological skill and knowledge on the part of the copper smith, and cannot be the handiwork of nomadic people or primitive artisans. In excavations at two places in the western Uttar Pradesh some of these objects have been discovered in association with ochre-coloured pots and some mud structures. At one place stray baked brick fragments are also found. Stone tools have also been found in excavations. All this suggests that the people who used the implements of the copper hoards supplemented by stone tools led a settled life, and were one of the earliest chalcolithic agriculturists and artisans to settle in a good portion of the doab. Most ochre colored pottery sites are found in the upper portion of the doab, but stray copper hoards are found in the plateau areas of Bihar and the other regions. Many copper Celts have been found in the Khetri zone of Rajasthan.

The period covered by the ochre-colored pottery culture may roughly be placed between 2000 B.C and 1500 B.C, on the basis of a series of eight scientific dating. When ochre-coloured settlements disappeared, the doab does not show much habitation until about 1000 B.C. we learn some habitations by people using black and red ware, but their habitationl deposits' are so thin and antiquities so poor that we cannot form a clear and any case, in t upper portion of the doab, the settlement begins with the advent of the ochre-coloured pottery people. Jodhpura on the border of Harvana and Rajasthan shows the thickest OCP deposits accounting for 1.1 metre. It seems, however, that at no place did these settlements last for more than a century or so; nor were they considerable in size and spread over a very wide territory. Why and how these settlements came to an end is not clear. A suggestion has been made inundation followed by water-logging in one extensive area may have rendered the area unfit for human settlements. The present soft texture of the ochre coloured pottery is according to some scholars, the result of its association with water for a considerable period of time.

The OCP people were junior contemporaries of the Harappa's, and the ochre– coloured pottery area in which they lived was not far removed from that of the Harappans. We may, therefore, expect some give and take between the OCP people and the bronze using Harappans.

. 6 Conclusion:

Thus the Chalcolithic cultures flourished almost all over the country except for the Alluvial plains and thickly forested areas. These people settled on the river banks and Used megalithis and other stone tools along with the copper tools. The chalcolithic Communities used wheel turned black and red pots and domesticated cattle. They were basically rural people.

Questions:

1. Write about the chronology and importance of chalcolithic culture.
2. What is chalcolithic culture? What are its limitations?



# RIGVEDIC CULTURE

Aim: To know about the origin of Aryans, their social, cultural, literary, economic and religious conditions.

Topics:

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Early Vedic Period
  - .2.1 Origin of the Aryans
  - .2.2 Political Organisation
    - .2.2.1 Kingship
    - .2.2.2 Assemblies – Sabha and Samithi
- .3 Rig-Veda Society
  - .3.1 Patriarchal Family
  - .3.2 Caste system
  - .3.3 Dress
  - .3.4 Food
  - .3.5 Amusements'
  - .3.6 Dwellings
- .4 Economic Conditions
  - .4.1 Animal Farming
  - .4.2 Hunting
  - .4.3 Work Smith
  - .4.4 Trade
- .5 Religion
  - .5.1 Classification of Vedic gods
- .6 Literature
  - .6.1 Vedas
  - .6.2 Upavedas and Vedangas
  - .6.3 Vedanta'
  - .6.4 Upanishads

## .1 Introduction

By 1750 BC the urban phase of the Harappan Civilisation had declined. And it was on the relics of the Harappan monuments that the foundation of an entirely new civilization, better known as the Vedic Civilisation, was laid by Aryans, a vast community of people from outside who passed into India just when the glory of Harappa was on the wane.

Aryans arrived not in one but in many phases, which started in BC 1500 BC 1600 and continued till BC 1000. During this period Aryans settled in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent. After Aryans settled in the region, they composed a series of religious hymns, which were later on compiled into the earliest of the four sacred Vedas, called the Rigveda. Apart from its great spiritual significance as the holiest scripture of Hinduism, the text forms main source of knowledge of Aryans.

The word 'Aryan' does not denote name of any race or tribe. As German scholar Max Muller (1823-1900) has opined, the term 'Aryan', in scientific language, is utterly inapplicable to race. It means language and nothing but language. In 1786, Sir William Jones on phonetics and linguistic basis showed a definite relation between the Vedic Sanskrit and some of the principal Asian and European languages. On this basis it has been surmised that the people who spoke the common language and shared the common home, dispersed or emigrated to various parts of the world, including India.

### Early Vedic Period (BC 1500 - BC 1000)

#### Origin of the Aryans

Opinions differ regarding the original homeland of the Aryans. The most accepted view is that the region between Poland to the Central Asia might have been the homes of Aryans. They were said to be semi-nomadic people, who started moving from their original homeland towards the west, south and east. The branch, which went to Europe, was the ancestor of the Greeks, Romans, Celts and Teutons. Another branch went to Anatolia. The great empire of the Hittites evolved from the mixture of these immigrants with the original people. The branch, which remained, was the ancestors of the Slavonic people. The group, which moved south, came to conflict with the west Asian civilisation. In course of their journey towards the east or south a group of Aryans had settled in Iran. They crossed the Hindukush and entered India through Afghanistan and captured the greater part of the northern India. They came to be known as Indo-Aryans to distinguish them from the others who spoke a language different from those who settled in western Asia and Europe.

The Indo-Aryans entered Punjab and Northwestern parts of India. They moved towards south-east and eastwards into Ganges Valley. The Aryans were pastoral Nomads. The region which the Aryans occupied was known as *Sapta Sindhu*. Moving further eastwards they settled along the Ganga-Yamuna *doab*. In due course of time the whole of northern India was under the control of the Aryans were divided into many tribes. A few among them are Anus, Druhyus, Yadus, Turvasas and Purus. They settled on either side of the river Saraswati. They were involved in fighting among themselves. Besides these tribal warfare, the Aryans were engaged in struggles with the dark-skinned people *Dasyus*. The *Dasyus* were the Dravidians who occupied the regions of the Harappan Civilisation. The superiority of the Aryans resulted in the Dravidian submission and retirement to the south.

A number of scholars, both archaeologists and historians, have suggested that the Aryans, or the people who composed the Rigveda, were responsible for the destruction of Harappan Civilisation. This view was based on both literary and archaeological evidence. However, the archaeological evidence of an invasion has been found to be particularly weak, and at present this theory rests solely on literary evidence, which includes description of the Vedic god Indra as a destroyer of forts (*Pyraḍdara*) and less clear indications of the possible destruction of embankments which might have disrupted the irrigation network necessary for the Harappan economy.

While the Vedic people need not have necessarily destroyed the Harappan urban centers, there is no denying that, at least in material terms, the contrast between the Harappans and the Vedic people was striking. To start with, as noted earlier, *Rigvedic* society appears to have been primarily pastoral. While animal-rearing was certainly known to the Harappans, their economy as a whole was much more complex with an agricultural base capable of supporting large non-agricultural urban populations and substantial evidence for long distance trade and craft specialization. The Vedic people, on the other hand, had a limited familiarity with agriculture and do not seem to have participated in long distance exchanges. The evidence for craft specialization within Vedic society is also, likewise limited.

#### Political Organization

Family served as the basis of both social and political organizations. Families together formed the *grama* or villages. Villages together formed the *janas*. The community was patriarchal and each tribe was under the chief whose position was hereditary. The *rastra* was ruled by king which was normally hereditary. The king led the tribe in battle and protected the people. The *purohita* was one of the important functionaries. He was the sole associate of the king - his friend, philosopher and guide. The *gramani* the head of the village. The main duty of the king was the protection of his subjects, property, defense and maintenance of peace. The king was not an autocrat and, was controlled by two popular assemblies, *Sabha* and *Samiti*. These assemblies brought forth the people's view on various issues. The *Sabha* also discharged legal duties like providing justice. Individual ownership of property was recognized. The land was a property owned by family. The property passed on in a hereditary manner from father to son.

*Kingship:* According to Prof. Apte, as a general rule, monarchy was the system of government prevailing in the Rigvedic age. The term *Rajan* or king is frequently used in the Rig-Veda.

Vedic kingship was the natural outcome of the conditions surrounding the Aryans. A king was the leader of the people in a war of aggression and also of defence. He is called the "Protector of the people".

Hereditary kingship was the normal system but there is evidence to show that when the situation demanded, the people could select a worthy monarch of their own choice from among the members of the royal family or the nobility.

Protection of the people was the sacred duty of the king. The word *Bali* occurs several times in the Rig-Veda in the sense of a tribute or offering to a god. In the sense of a tribute to king, it is met within the compound *Bali-hrit* or paying tribute. They were both compulsory and voluntary. The king was not the owner of the land. He was pre-eminently the war-lord.

The king performed the duties of judge, probably as a court of final appeal in civil cases. In criminal cases, he exercised a wider jurisdiction. The marks of the royalty were the pomp of dress, the possession of a place and of a retinue.

*Assemblies:* The King's autocracy was somewhat limited by the popular bodies called the Sabha and the Samiti, through which the will of the people expressed itself on important matters affecting their welfare, including the election of the king himself.

*Sabha:* The Sabha is mentioned in many passages of the Rig-Veda, which however, do not define its exact character and functions. It is used in the sense of an assembly as well as of the hall or meeting place for discussion of public matters. A person "eminent in the Assembly" is called Sabha-Saha; these terms probably indicate that the Rigvedic Sabha was a Council of Elders or Nobles. The Sabha was as important as the Samiti.

*Samiti:* It was a standing and stationary body of selected men working under the authority of the Sabha. The rise of the Sabha is to be the latest period of the Rig-Veda. Its career was co-existence with that of the Samiti. According to Zimmermann, the Samiti was a National Assembly of all the people and the Sabha was a general meeting of all the adults of the village.

*Rig-Vedic society:* The Rig-Veda points to a highly organized society. Monogamy was the general rule, but among the princess, polygamy was also practiced. Polyandry was absolutely unknown. Marriage was a sacred bond for them. Widows are allowed to re-marry particularly when they were without a child. Dowry was usual at the time of marriage, but sometimes money has to be paid by a son-in-law to purchase his bride. The marriage of girls was not considered to be essential. The wife was the partner of husband at the time of religious ceremonies and no ceremony was considered to be effective without her participation. Child marriage was unknown. The choice of the father was counted in the selection of the bridegroom but the girl was

*Patriarchal Family:* The father had complete control over his children. He was the head of the family and so long as he lived, he was the owner of his property. Individual ownership of movable things such as cattle, horses and gold was recognized. The right of adoption was recognized.

The unit of social formation was the family which consisted of several members under a common head who was called as Kulapa. Many families combined together and they constituted a Grama or Village under a headman known as Gramani.

*Caste System:* There is difference of opinion among scholars with regard to the existence or non-existence of the caste system in Rig-Veda India. There is also a distinction between Aryans and non-Aryans. The Non-Aryans were called Dasas, Dasyus or Asuras. They were also referred to as Pishachas and Rakshasas. They are described as dark skinned and noseless. They did not perform the sacrifices like the Aryans. They did not worship Vedic god.

*Dress:* As regards the dress of the people, the Rigvedic people had two or three kinds of garments, consisting of the undergarment, a garment and an over garment. Ornaments such as necklaces, earrings, bracelets and anklets were used by both the sexes. Hair was combed and

oil was also used. Women wore their hair plaited. There was also the practice of growing beards and shaving was also known as there is a mention of razors.

*Food:* Milk and its products were the most important part of the food of the Aryans. They also used mess of grains cooked with mild. Cakes of rice or barley was mixed with ghee and eaten. Porridge was made from Yava grain. Meat of goat and sheep which were sacrificed was used. The cow was considered to be sacred and could not be killed. Soma and Sura were used but the use of Sura or liquor was condemned. The whole of the ninth Mandala of the Rig-Veda is devoted to the Soma drink.

*Amusements:* The amusements of the people were chariot racing- horse racing, music, dancing and dicing. Dicing was done with stakes and consequently many families were ruined. Both men and women took part in dancing which was accompanied by music from cymbals. The drum, Dundubhi, karkari, lute, harp and the flute were used for music.

*Dwellings:* The Aryans of Rigvedic India were not nomads. They lived a settled life and built cottages of wood and thatch for their dwellings..

#### Economic Condition

The Aryans who were semi-nomadic people also domesticated animals which helped them in the activities of agriculture and other pastoral and hunting acts. Animal rearing was the major economic activity. However, towards the end of Rigvedic period agriculture formed the major share of the economy. Canals to provide irrigation was a significant feature of this occupation. Coins were unknown and trade was through the barter system. Craft was not a popular profession. The lack of good roads might have hampered trade, but river navigation was existing. Specialization in areas such as carpentry, smithy, weaving, poetry, etc., had been taking place.

*Animal Farming:* There were pastures for the grazing of cattle. There are references to herdsmen. The wealth of the people was known in terms of cattle, heroes or good sons. The grain grown was called Yava and Dhanya. Water was got from wells, lakes and canals.

*Hunting:* The Rigvedic Indians resorted to hunting for livelihood, sport and the protection of their flock from wild animals. Different methods were adopted to capture various kinds of animals.

*Work smith:* The carpenter played an important part in Rigvedic society. It was his duty to make chariots for sport and fighting purposes and also to keep them in good repair. He was also to make carts. The tanner tanned the hides of the slaughtered animals and used leather for the purpose of making reins, bags, slings, bow strings etc. there is also a mention of metal workers, potters and smiths. Weaving was generally done by men.

*Trade:* there was the system of barter in Rigvedic society. It is stated that the price of an image of Indra was ten cows. There was the practice of haggling in the market. People contracted debts and paid interest on the same. Trade was carried on with other countries and naturally there must have been some system of exchange.

## Religion

The religion of the Vedic Aryans was a form of nature worship. Natural phenomena were conceived as the expression of some spiritual beings manifestations of various gods. For the different appearances of the sky different deities were imagined. However, Indra, the king of Vedic gods also known as the 'god of war' and 'god of thunder', was the most prominent among the Vedic gods and as many as 250 *Rigveda* hymns are devoted to him, Agni, Soma, Varuna, Surya, Vayu, Mitra, Dyus, etc., were other popular deities of the Rigvedic period.

### Classification of Vedic Gods

#### Type

#### Name of Gods

#### Prithvisthan (Terrestrial)

Prithvi, Agni, Soma, Brihaspati and River Gods

#### Antarikshathan (Aerial)

Indra, Vishnu, Aditya, Rudra, Vayuvata, Parjanya, Apah, etc.

#### Dyusthan (Celestial)

Varuna, Mitra, Pushan, Ushas, Asvins, etc.

### Literature in the Vedic Period

**Vedas :** The four *Vedas* were the sources of reconstructing the Vedic period. Among these, the oldest is the *Rigveda* while the others in the order of their composition are *Samveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda*. The *Samveda* contains the verses from the *Rigveda*. The hymns in it were relevant to the *soma* sacrifice. The *Yajurveda* also consists of hymns from the *Rigveda*, of which more than half are in prose to facilitate the performance of sacrifices. It depicts the social and religious condition of this period. The *Atharvaveda* contains philosophic speculations, popular cults and superstitions.

**The Brahmanas :** They are prose of the sacrificial ceremonies. These are explanatory treatises of Vedas which lay emphasis on ritualism. They mark the transition from Vedic to classical Sanskrit. It also marks the period which marks the advance of the Aryans from the Panchala country to Videha (North Bihar)

**The Vedangas and the Upavedas :** These are said to be the supplementary sections of the Vedic literature. These give us idea about *Jyotish* (astronomy), *Ayurveda* (medicine), *Dhanurveda* (war), *Gandharvaveda* (music), etc.

**The Vedanta :** It is the philosophy taught in most of the Upanishads.

**The Upanishads :** These texts contain the main idea that constitutes the intellectual aspect of the Hindu philosophy. They do not lay emphasis on rites, ceremonies and austerities. The Upanishads are dated between BC 800 and BC 500. The Upanishads are more than 100 in number. The *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad*, *Chandogya Upanishad*, *Aitreya Upanishad* are a few important ones. The Upanishads reflect the richness and universality of the Indian culture. They are said to be the thinking power of the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas.

### Conclusion:

Rig-Veda culture flourished in Saptasindhu region with its simple polity, economy, society and religion. The king functioned with the help of Sabha and Samithi. Their society was kin based society.

### Questions:

1. Discuss the polity and economy under the Rig-Vedic/early Aryans.
2. Write about the socio- religious conditions of the Rig-Vedic society.
3. Discuss briefly about the Vedic literature.

Lesson Writer

V.V. Ramana

# Later Vedic Period

## Later Vedic period (1000–500 BCE)

Aim: To know about the social, religious, political and economic conditions during the later Vedic period.

### Topics:

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Second urbanization
- .3 Society
- .4 Family
- .5 Political Organisation
- .6 Economy
- .7 Religious
- .8 Literature
  - .8.1 Vedas
  - .8.2 Rig-Vedic texts
  - .8.3 Mantra Language texts
  - .8.4 Samhita Prose texts
  - .8.5 Brahmana Prose texts
  - .8.6 Sutra Language texts

### **.1 Introduction:**

After the 12th century BCE, as the *Rig Veda* had taken its final form, the Vedic society transitioned from semi-nomadic life to settled agriculture. Vedic culture extended into the western Ganges Plain. The Gangetic plains had remained out of bounds to the Vedic tribes because of thick forest cover. After 1000 BCE, the use of iron axes and ploughs became widespread and the jungles could be cleared with ease. This enabled the Vedic Aryans to settle at the western Gangetic plains. Many of the old tribes coalesced to form larger political units.

The Vedic religion was further developed when the Indo-Aryans migrated into the Ganges Plain after c. 1100 BCE and became settled farmers, further syncretising with the native cultures of northern India. However, the development of the *varna* system, which created a hierarchy of priests, warriors, and free peasants, ultimately led to the excluding of indigenous peoples by labelling their occupations impure.

The Kuru Kingdom, the earliest Vedic "state", was formed by a "super-tribe" which joined several tribes in a new unit. To govern this state, Vedic hymns were collected and transcribed, and new rituals were developed, which formed the now orthodox *Srauta* rituals. Two key figures in this process of the development of the Kuru state were the king Parikshit and



his successor Janamejaya, transforming this realm into the dominant political and cultural power of northern Iron Age India.

The most famous of new religious sacrifices that arose in this period was the *Ashvamedha* (horse sacrifice). This sacrifice involved setting a consecrated horse free to roam the kingdoms for a year. The horse was followed by a chosen band of warriors. The kingdoms and chiefdoms in which the horse wandered had to pay homage or prepare to battle the king to whom the horse belonged. This sacrifice put considerable pressure on inter-state relations in this era. This period saw also the beginning of the social stratification by the use of Varna, the division of Vedic society in Kshatriya, Brahmins, Vaishya and Shudra.

The Kuru kingdom declined after its defeat by the non-Vedic Salva tribe, and the political centre of Vedic culture shifted east, into the Panchala kingdom on the Ganges. Later, the kingdom of Videha emerged as a political centre farther to the East, in what is today southern Nepal and northern Bihar state in India, reaching its prominence under the king Janaka, whose court provided patronage for Brahmin sages and philosophers such as Yajnavalkya and Uddalaka Aruni.

### **Second urbanization:**

By the sixth century BCE, the political units consolidated into large kingdoms called Mahajanapadas. The process of urbanization had begun in these kingdoms and commerce and travel, even over regions separated by large distances became easy. Anga, door step of modern day West Bengal, a small kingdom to the east of Magadha, formed the eastern boundary of the Vedic culture. Yadavas expanded towards the south and settled in Mathura. To the south of their kingdom was Vatsa which was governed from its capital Kausambi. The Narmada River and parts of North Western Deccan formed the southern limits. The newly formed states struggled for supremacy and started displaying imperial ambitions. The end of Vedic India is marked by linguistic, cultural and political changes.

The grammar of Pāṇini marks a final apex in the codification of Sutra texts, and at the same time the beginning of Classical Sanskrit. The invasion of Darius I of the Indus valley in the early 6th century BCE marks the beginning of outside influence, continued in the kingdoms of the Indo-Greeks. Meanwhile, within India, the shramana movements (including Jainism and Buddhism) challenged the authority and orthodoxy of Vedic scriptures and ritual.

## **Society**

Rig Vedic society was relatively egalitarian in the sense that a distinct hierarchy of socio-economic classes or castes was absent. However, political hierarchy was determined by rank, where *rajan* stood at the top and *dasi* at the bottom. The words *Brahmana* and *Kshatriya* occur in various family books of the *Rig Veda*, but they are not associated with the term *varna*. The words *Vaishya* and *Shudra* are absent. Verses of the *Rig Veda*, such as 3.44-45, indicate the absence of strict social hierarchy and the existence of social mobility:

O, Indra, fond of *soma*, would you make me the protector of people, or would you make me a king, would you make me a sage who has drunk *soma*, would you impart to me endless wealth.

The Vedic household was patriarchal and patrilineal. The institution of marriage was important and different types of marriages— monogamy, polygyny and polyandry are mentioned in the *Rig Veda*. Both women sages and female gods were known to Vedic Aryans. However, hymns attributable to female sages are few and female gods were not as important as male ones. Women could choose their husbands and could remarry if their husbands died or disappeared. While the wife enjoyed a respectable position, she was subordinate to her husband. People consumed milk, milk products, grains, fruits and vegetables. Meat eating is mentioned, however, cows are labelled *aghnya* (not to be killed). Clothes of cotton, wool and animal skin were worn. *Soma* and *sura* were popular drinks in the Rig Vedic society, of which *soma* was sanctified by religion. Flute (*vana*), lute (*vina*), harp, cymbals, and drums were the musical instruments played and a heptatonic scale was used. Dancing, dramas, chariot racing, and gambling were other popular pastimes.

## Literature

### *Vedas*

An early 19th-century manuscript of *Rigveda* (padapatha) in Devanagari. The Vedic accent is marked by underscores and vertical overscores in red.

The reconstruction of the history of Vedic India is based on text-internal details, but can be correlated to relevant archaeological details. Linguistically, the Vedic texts could be classified in five chronological strata:

1. Rigvedic text: The Rigveda is by far the most archaic of the Vedic texts preserved, and it retains many common Indo-Iranian elements, both in language and in content, that are not present in any other Vedic texts. Its time span likely corresponds to the Late Harappan culture, Gandhara Grave culture and Ochre Coloured Pottery culture.
2. Mantra language texts: This period includes both the mantra and prose language of the Atharvaveda (Paippalada and Shaunakiya), the Rigveda Khilani, the Samaveda Samhita (containing some 75 mantras not in the Rigveda), and the mantras of the Yajurveda. Many of these texts are largely derived from the Rigveda, but have undergone certain changes, both by linguistic change and by reinterpretation. Conspicuous changes include change of *vishva* "all" by *sarva*, and the spread of the *kuru-* verbal stem (for Rigvedic *kmo-*). This is the time of the early Iron Age in north-western India, corresponding to the *Black and Red Ware* (BRW) and *Painted Grey Ware* (PGW) cultures, and the early Kuru Kingdom, dating from ca. the 12th to 11th century BCE.
3. Samhita prose texts: This period marks the beginning of the collection and codification of a Vedic canon. An important linguistic change is the complete loss of the injunctive. The Brahmana part ('commentary' on mantras and ritual) of the Black Yajurveda (MS, KS, TS) belongs to this period. Archaeologically, the *Painted Grey Ware* (PGW) culture from ca. 1000 or 900 BCE corresponds to the Kuru Kingdom and the subsequent eastward shift of the political centre from the Kurus to the Pancalas on the Ganges.
4. Brahmana prose texts: The Brahmanas proper of the four Vedas belong to this period, as well as the Aranyakas, the oldest of the Upanishads (BAU, ChU, JUB) and the oldest Shrautasutras

(BSS, VadhSS). In the east, Videha (N. Bihar and Nepal) is established as the third main political centre of the Vedic period.

5. Sutra language texts: This is the last stratum of Vedic Sanskrit leading up to c. 500 BCE, comprising the bulk of the Śrauta and Grhya Sutras, and some Upanishads (e.g. KathU, MaitrU).

### Conclusion:

In the later vedic period, the Aryans migrated to Gangetic plain and their rural set up has underwent lot of change. Their simple polity was dominated by the ideas of imperialism. Their social system slowly became rigid. The occupation structure also got elaborated.

### Questions:

1. Discuss the political, economic social and religious conditions during the later vedic period.
2. Discuss about the later vedic literature.

Lesson Writer  
V.V. Ramana

# Lesson-11

## IRON AGE

**Aim:** To gain knowledge about of the use of iron by the pre-historic man and their culture specially in India.

Topics:

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Chronology
- .3 Indian Sub-Continent

### INTRODUCTION:

The Iron Age is the period generally occurring after the Bronze Age, marked by the prevalent use of iron.

The early period of the age is characterized by the widespread use of iron or steel. The adoption of these materials coincided with other changes in society, including differing agricultural practices, religious beliefs and artistic styles. The *Iron Age* as an archaeological term indicates the condition as to civilization and culture of a people using iron as the material for their cutting tools and weapons. The *Iron Age* is the third principal period of the three-age system created by Christian Thomsen (1788–1865) for classifying ancient societies and prehistoric stages of progress.

In historical archaeology, the ancient literature of the Iron Age includes the earliest texts preserved in manuscript tradition. Sanskrit and Chinese literature flourished in the Iron Age. Other texts include the Avestan Gathas, the Indian Vedas and the oldest parts of the Hebrew Bible. The principal feature that distinguishes the Iron Age from the preceding ages is the introduction of alphabetic characters, and the consequent development of written language which enabled literature and historic record.

The beginning of the Iron Age in Europe and adjacent areas is characterized by certain forms of implements, weapons, personal ornaments, and pottery, and also by systems of decorative design, which are altogether different from those of the preceding age of bronze. Metalsmithing expanded from the primary form in the Bronze Age, casting, to include forging. The system of decoration, which in the Bronze Age consisted chiefly of a repetition of rectilinear patterns, gave way to a system of curvilinear and flowing designs. The term "*Iron Age*" has low chronological value, because it did not begin simultaneously across the entire world. The dates and context vary depending on the region, and the sequence of ages is not necessarily true for every part of the earth's surface. There are areas, such as the islands of the South Pacific, the interior of

Africa, and parts of North and South America, where peoples have passed directly from the use of stone to the use of iron without an intervening age of bronze.

### Chronology

In 2005, metallurgical analysis by Hideo Akanuma of iron fragments found at Kaman-Kalehöyük in 1994 and dating to c. 1800 BC revealed that some of these fragments were in fact composed of carbon steel; these currently form the world's earliest known evidence for steel manufacture.

Lack of archaeological evidence of iron production made it seem unlikely that it had begun earlier elsewhere, and the Iron Age was seen as a case of simple diffusion of a new and superior technology from an invention point in the Near East to other regions. It is now known that meteoric iron, or iron-nickel alloy, was used by various ancient peoples thousands of years before the Iron Age. Such iron, being in its native metallic state, required no smelting of ores. By the Middle Bronze Age, increasing numbers of smelted iron objects (distinguishable from meteoric iron by the lack of nickel in the product) appeared in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and South Asia.

Pure iron is softer than bronze, and therefore produces tools which wear out faster. The advantage of using iron over bronze lay in cheaper production and the wide availability of iron ore. The systematic production and use of iron implements in Anatolia began around 2000 BC. Recent archaeological research in the Ganges Valley, India showed early iron working by 1800 BC. However, this metal was expensive, perhaps because of the complications of steel-making.

Anthony Snodgrass suggests that a shortage of tin, as a part of the Bronze Age Collapse and trade disruptions in the Mediterranean around 1300 BC, forced metalworkers to seek an alternative to bronze. As evidence, many bronze implements were recycled into weapons during this time. More widespread use of iron led to improved steel-making technology at lower cost. Thus, even when tin became available again, iron was cheaper, stronger, and lighter, and forged iron implements superseded cast bronze tools permanently.

Recent archaeological work has modified not only the above chronology, but also the causes of the transition from bronze to iron. New dates from India suggest that iron was being worked there as early as 1800 BC, and African sites are turning up dates as early as 1200 BC, confounding the idea that there was a simple discovery and diffusion model. Increasingly, the Iron Age in Europe is being seen as a part of the Bronze Age collapse in the ancient Near East, in ancient India (with the post-Rigvedic Vedic civilization). The Near Eastern Iron Age is divided into two subsections, Iron I and Iron II. Iron I (1200–1000 BC) illustrates both continuity and discontinuity with the previous Late Bronze Age. There is no definitive cultural break between the 13th and 12th century BC throughout the entire region, although certain new features in the hill country, Transjordan, and coastal region may suggest the appearance of the Aramaean and Sea People groups. There is evidence, however, that shows strong continuity with Bronze Age culture, although as one moves later into Iron I the culture begins to diverge more significantly from that of the late 2nd millennium.

### History

Indian subcontinent

### *Iron Age India*

The history of metallurgy in the Indian subcontinent began during the 2nd millennium BC. Archaeological sites in India, such as Malhar, Dadupur, Raja Nala Ka Tila and Lahuradewa in present day Uttar Pradesh show iron implements in the period 1800 BC – 1200 BC. Archaeological excavations in Hyderabad show an Iron Age burial site. Rakesh Tewari believes that around the beginning of the Indian Iron Age (13th century BC), iron smelting was widely practiced in India. Such use suggests that the date of the technology's inception may be around the 16th century BC.

Epic India is traditionally placed around early 10th century BC and later on from the Sanskrit epics of Sanskrit literature. Composed between approximately 1500 BC and 600 BC of pre-classical Sanskrit, the Vedic literature forms four Vedas (the Rig, Yajur, Sāma and Atharva). The main period of Vedic literary activity is the 9th to 7th centuries when the various schools of thought compiled and memorized their respective corpora. Following this, the scholarship around 500 to 100 BC organized knowledge into Sutra treatises.

The beginning of the 1st millennium BC saw extensive developments in iron metallurgy in India. Technological advancement and mastery of iron metallurgy was achieved during this period of peaceful settlements. One iron working centre in east India has been dated to the first millennium BC. In Southern India (present day Mysore) iron appeared as early as 12th to 11th centuries BC; these developments were too early for any significant close contact with the northwest of the country. The Indian Upanishads mention metallurgy and the Indian Mauryan period saw advances in metallurgy. As early as 300 BC, certainly by 200 AD, high quality steel was produced in southern India, by what would later be called the crucible technique. In this system, high-purity wrought iron, charcoal, and glass were mixed in crucible and heated until the iron melted and absorbed the carbon.

### **Conclusion:**

Thus we are able to know about the Iron age- use of iron by the prehistoric age humans and the spread of Iron Age during various empires, under different kings, and especially in India.

### **Questions:**

1. What is Iron Age? Discuss the spread of early Iron Age in India.

## The Megalithic Cultures of the South India

**Aim:** To know about the origin and spread of Megalithic culture and the classification of Megaliths in South India, their social, economic, and religious conditions.

### Topics:

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Chronology
- .3 Origins and spread of Megalithic cultures
- .4 Megalithic cultures – the Iron age Culture of South India
- .5 Classifications of the Megaliths
  - .5.1 Rock Cut Caves
  - .5.2 Hood stones and Hat stones/Cap stones
  - .5.3 Menhirs, Alignments and Avenues
  - .5.4 Dolmenoid Cists
  - .5.5 Cairn Circles
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## The Term 'Megalith'

The term 'megalith' is derived from Greek '*megas*', which means great and '*lithos*' meaning stone. As the nomenclature suggests, the 'megaliths' refer to the monuments built of large stones. But all monuments constructed of big stones are not megaliths. The term has a restricted usage and is applied only to a particular class of monuments or structures, which are built of large stones and have some sepulchral, commemorative or ritualistic association except the hero stones or memorial stones. In other words, the megaliths usually refer to the burials made of large stones in graveyards away from the habitation area.

## Chronology

Megalithic cultures in India (including North India) have been roughly assigned to a prehistoric period or to a great antiquity by different scholars like M.H. Krishna, R.S. Panchamukhi, G.S. Ghurye, Panchanan Mitra and others. But their dating lacks the merit of being based on well observed archaeological context. So, this dating is generally countered by the archaeologists.

The problem of chronology of these cultures has evaded a clear solution. R.E.M. Wheeler, for the first time, on the basis of excavations at Brahmagiri provided a firm archaeological setting for megalithic cultures in South India. Based on archaeological evidence, he places these cultures between the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C and the 1<sup>st</sup> c. A.D. But the limits prescribed by Wheeler on the basis of Brahmagiri evidence are unconvincing. Megalithic culture of South India had a much larger chronological span than what Wheeler could visualise over five decades ago. Similarly, B.K. Thapar, on the basis of his excavations at Maski, assigned the megalithic culture in South India from *circa* 200 B.C to the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. A.D with a reasonable margin of a century on either side.

The problem in ascertaining the chronological span of the megalithic cultures in South India lies in the fact that only a few radiocarbon dates are so far available from megalithic habitations. The habitations site at Hallur gave a <sup>14</sup>C date of 1000 B.C for the earliest phase of these cultures. Nagaraja Rao correlated this phase with the graves at Tadakanahalli, 4 kms. away from this site. S.B. Deo gives two radiocarbon dates for the sites at Naikund and Takalghat and places Vidarbha megaliths in *circa* 600 B.C. In Tamilnadu, Paiyampalli recorded a <sup>14</sup>C date of *circa* 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. A. Sundara, on the basis of his explorations and excavations, pushed the date of the megaliths in North Karnataka region as early as 1200 B.C.

As the megalithic culture overlapped with the end phases of neolithic-chalcolithic culture, it is found in association with neolithic-chalcolithic wares at the lower end and with the rouletted ware at the upper end. In other words, the late phase of these cultures merges with the early historical period. On this basis the time bracket of the megalithic cultures in South India may be placed between 1000 B.C and A.D 100. This view is supported by many scholars like K. Rajan. However, the available archaeological data suggests that the period of their maximum popularity lies somewhere between 600 B.C and A.D 100.



It is interesting to note that in other parts of the world, for example England, France, Iran and Seistan, such sepulchral monuments of the dead were constructed through this period and are not identical in all the countries.

## Origin and Spread of Megalithic Cultures

Different theories have been put forward regarding the origin and diffusion of the megalithic cultures. Scholars, by and large, unanimously look forward to a West Asian origin. According to C. von F. Heimendorf, the megalithic folk of South India were the Dravidian speakers who came to South India from the West by sea. But we find that the typical West Asian megaliths yielded the bronze objects and this culture came to an end in the last phase of their Bronze Age around 1500 B.C. The Indian megaliths, on the other hand, belong to the Iron Age generally dated to 1000 B.C onwards. It is yet not certain when and how iron technology developed and became an integral part of the megalithic culture. It appears that even the advent of this metal into Indian subcontinent was through two routes and also with two groups. The material and chronological differences between the megalithic culture of northern India and southern India suggest that the coming of this culture into the Indian subcontinent would have taken place by two routes by the two different groups – one following the sea route from the Gulf of Oman to the West coast of India and the other following the land route from Iran. Asko Parpola in his book *The South Indian Megaliths* connects the megaliths with the Vrtiyas of the Aryan origin who are referred to in the Vedic literature. But it can be observed that the complex pattern of widely different burial practices that are all lumped together and comprised in the term 'megaliths' is the result of mingling of various traditions and developments during a long period. Moreover, the limited explorations and excavations conducted so far generally concentrated in some geographical zones do not provide tangible conclusions about the origin of the megalithic traditions.

The early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the studies on the megaliths of Kerala with the discovery and excavation of a few burials in the Kannur district by J. Babington in 1823. Subsequently, several British administrators and many other individuals explored and excavated a large number of megaliths, and brought their findings to the notice of people. But they were mainly interested in the grave goods found in the megaliths and some of them even related the monuments with the local legends and folk tales. Later on, in 1887 scholars like W. Logan carried the study of the megaliths further. Since the publication of J.W. Brecks in 1837 on the megalithic monuments of the Nilgiris, the megalithic monuments of Tamilnadu have attracted the attention of many antiquarians, archaeologists and the institutions alike on account of their curious and imposing structures. But the systematic investigations of the South Indian megaliths began only in 1940s. Scholars like R.E.M Wheeler (1947), B.K. Thapar (mid-1940s) and V.D. Krishnaswami (1949) studied the megaliths at Brahmagiri (Karnataka), Porkalam (Kerala) and Cochin (Kerala) regions respectively and enriched our knowledge about megalithic phase. As mentioned earlier R.E.M. Wheeler, for the first time, on the basis of excavations at Brahmagiri, provided a firm archaeological setting for megalithic cultures in South India. He dated the megaliths on the basis of a characteristic ceramic (pottery) type – the Black and Red Ware (BRW), which is available in all types of megaliths in South India. V.D. Krishnaswami studied the unknown megaliths of the Cochin region systematically for the first time in India and classified them into distinct types and also defined them in unambiguous term. He also standardized the terminology for megaliths. Thus, the confusion in the nomenclature of the megaliths was brought to an end. In recent years, scholars like B.K. Gururaja Rao, A. Sundara, K. Rajan, Rajan Gurukkal, P. Rajendran, C.S.P Iyer and others have illuminated us through their researches on the megaliths of different regions in South India.

The main concentration of the megalithic cultures in India was the Deccan, especially south of the river Godavari. However, large-stone structures resembling some of the usual megalith types have also been reported from some places in North India, Central India and Western India. These include – Seraikala in Bihar; Deodhoora in Almora district and Khera near Fatehpur Sikri in Agra district of Uttar Pradesh; Nagpur; Chanda and Bhandra districts of Madhya Pradesh; Deosa, 32 miles east of Jaipur in Rajasthan. But since neither the excavation nor a reliable surface-examination of these monuments has so far been carried out, it is difficult to say if and how far they are connected with the megaliths of the Deccan. Similar monuments or structures are also found near Karachi in Pakistan, near Leh in the Himalayas and at Burzahom in Jammu and Kashmir. However, their wide distribution in the southern region of India suggests that it was essentially a South Indian feature which flourished at least for a thousand years, resulting in a variety within the underlying megalithic unity of common origin.

### Megalithic Culture – The Iron Age Culture of South India

In the present state of research these megalithic monuments, whatever their external shape and contents be, seem to herald the Iron Age in South India. The megalithic culture in South India was a full fledged iron age culture when the great benefits of the use of this metal were fully realised by the people. Hence, normally the stone dropped out of use as a material for the weapons and tools to a large extent. The megalithic people of South India, or, for that matter, the iron age people of the subcontinent in general, found out new uses of stones in their daily life. Most of the information about the iron age in South India comes from the excavations of the megalithic burials. Iron objects have been found universally in all the megalithic sites right from Junapani near Nagpur in Vidharba region (Central India) down to Adichanallur in Tamilnadu in the far south.

With the introduction of iron there was a gradual change in almost everything except perhaps the house plans. But, of all these changes the most remarkable was the elaborate method of disposing the dead. This became a characteristic feature of the South Indian regions. Instead of laying the dead accompanied by four or five pots in a pit in the house, now the dead were buried in a separate place – a cemetery or a graveyard away from the house. The remains of the dead were collected perhaps after exposing the body for sometime and then the bones were placed underground in specially prepared stone box called a cist. The cists were elaborate structures and must have necessitated an amount of planning and cooperation among the community and the existence of masons and other craftsmen capable of manufacturing the required size of stones, large and small. It is probable that like Egyptian cellars, these megaliths must have been planned and kept ready before the death of an individual.

### Classification of the Megaliths

It is not easy to prepare a typology of the megaliths of South India in general because the megalithic burials show a variety of methods for the disposal of the dead. Moreover, there are megaliths which are internally different but exhibit the same external features. Nevertheless, on the basis of the explorations and excavations carried out on different sites of South India, the megaliths can be classified under different categories depending upon their outstanding features. These are:

- I. Rock Cut Caves,
- II. Hood Stones and Hat Stones / Cap Stones,
- III. Menhirs, Alignments and Avenues,

- IV. Dolmenoid Cists,
- V. Cairn Circles,
- VI. Stone Circles,
- VII. Pit Burials, and
- VIII. Barrows

#### I. Rock Cut Caves

These are *scooped out on soft laterite*, as found in the southern part of the West Coast. These rock cut cave tombs are peculiar to this region and occur in the Cochin and Malabar regions of Kerala. They also occur in other regions. On the East Coast of South India, they are present in *Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram) near Madras*. In the Deccan and western India they are observed at *Elephanta, Ajanta, Ellora, Karle, Bhaja etc.* But these belong to a later date and were used for entirely different purposes while those in Kerala are purely megalithic and funerary ones, the others being of different tradition.

The Kerala funerary rock cut caves consist of an open well, roughly rectangular or square, cut vertically down the rock and provided with a flight of steps for descending to the floor. Such caves are found at many sites like Chovvannur, Kakkad, Porkalam, etc. More elaborate specimens of such caves occur at sites like Eyyal, Kattakampal, etc.

On the basis of his detailed study of these rock cut burial caves in Cochin region, Y.D. Sharma (1956) recognises four types of caves – (i) Caves with Central pillar, (ii) Caves without central pillar, (iii) Caves with a deep opening and (iv) Multi-chambered caves.

#### II. Hood Stones (*Kudaikallu*) and Hat Stones / Cap Stones (*Toppikkals*)

Allied with the rock cut caves but of a simpler form are the Hood stones or *Kudaikallu*. These consist of a *dome-shaped dressed laterite block which cover the underground circular pit cut into a natural rock and provided with a stairway*. In some cases the hood stone gives place to a hat stone or *toppikkal*, which is a plano-convex slab resting on three or four quadrilateral clinostatic boulders, forming a square base and a truncated top on which rests the *toppikkal* or the hat stone. This also covers an underground burial pit containing the funerary urn and other grave furnishings. Unlike as in the rock cut caves, there is no chamber apart from this open pit in which itself the burial is made. Usually, it contains a burial urn covered with a convex or dome-shaped pottery lid or a stone slab and contains skeletal remains, small pots and, sometimes ashes. Similar monuments are commonly encountered in Cochin and Malabar regions extending along the Western Ghats into the Coimbatore region upto the Noyyal river valley in Tamilnadu.

#### III. Menhirs, Alignments and Avenues

Menhirs are *monolithic pillars planted vertically into the ground*. These may be small or gigantic in height, ranging from 14 to 16 ft. down to a mere 3ft. Their common heights range between 3 to 6 ft. They are often rudely dressed or not dressed at all. These are essentially commemorative stone pillars set up at or near a burial spot. These menhirs are mentioned in ancient Tamil literature as *nadukal* and are often called *Pandukkal* or *Pandil*. In some cases, the menhirs are not planted in ground but rest on the original ground propped up with a mass of rubble as at Maski. These occur in a number of sites in close vicinity of other type of megalithic

burials, mostly in different regions of Kerala and Bellary, Raichur and Gulbarga regions of Karnataka in large numbers, but less frequently at other places of South India.

Alignments are closely associated to the menhirs. These consists of a series of standing stones, oriented to the cardinal directions. Some of these stones are 14 to 16 ft. high and one monolith at a certain place measured 25 ft. long. But the normal heights range between 3 and 6 ft. These stones are sometimes dressed. The alignments are found at Komalaparathala in Kerala and at a number of sites in Gulbarga, Raichur, Nalgonda and Mahboobnagar districts of Karnataka.

Avenues consists of two or more parallel rows of the alignments and hence many of the sites in the Deccan, mentioned above under alignments, may be considered as examples of this category of monuments when they are in parallel lines.

#### IV. Dolmenoid Cists

Dolmenoid cists consists of square or rectangular box-like graves built of several orthostats, one or more for each side, supporting the superincumbent capstone consisting of one or more stones, often with the floor also paved with the stone slabs. The orthostats and the capstones might be formed either of undressed rough blocks of stone or partly dressed flattish stones. The dolmenoid cists occur at large number at Sanur near Chingleput and many other sites in this region. The cists built of dressed slabs or the slab cists are the normal type of cists, occurring all over South India, as also in some parts of the north. There are many sub-types of this in Tamilnadu – (i) Dolmenoid cist with multiple orthostats, (ii) Dolmenoid cist with four orthostats planned contra-clockwise with U-shaped port-hole in the east or west, (iii) Dolmenoid cist with four orthostats kept contra-clock-wise with U-shaped port-hole on the top corner of the eastern orthostat, and (iv) Dolemnoid cist with four orthostats arranged contra-clockwise and with slab-circles.

#### V. Cairn Circles

The Cairn circles are one the most popular type of megalithic monuments occurring all over south India in association with other types. They consist of a heap of stone rubble enclosed within a circle of boulders. On the basis of the form of the underground burial, they may be divided into three sub-types – (i) Pit burials, (ii) Sarcophagi burials, and (iii) Pyriform or other types of urn burials.

The pit burials under the cairn circles consist of deep pits dug into the natural soil, roughly circular, square or oblong on plan. The skeletal remains and the grave furniture were placed on the floors of these pits. The pits were then filled up with earth, either the earth dug up in the pit or that which was brought from elsewhere, upto the original ground level. Above this earth filling was placed the cairn heap which might be just a thin layer or may rise upto 3 to 4 ft. above the ground level and bounded by a circle of stones. Such pit burials have been found at many sites in the Chingleput (Tamilnadu), Chitradurg and Gulbarga (Karnataka) districts.

A sarcophagus is literally a legged coffin made of terracotta. The cairn circles containing sarcophagi entombments are comparatively more widespread than the pit burials. They are similar to the pit burials described above but the skeletal remains and the primary deposits of the grave furniture are placed in an oblong terracotta sarcophagus. This sarcophagus is generally provided with a convex terracotta lid, rows of legs at the bottom and often with a capstone at a higher level. Rarely, these sarcophagi are not provided with legs, but are supported on pottery stands and vessels or placed on the floor directly. Such megalithic structures are found from South Arcot, Chingleput and North Arcot districts of Tamilandu and

Kolar district of Karnataka. They are also found in the southern districts of Andhra Pradesh, though they are comparatively rare in these regions.

The urn burials under the cairn circles are a variant form of the sarcophagi burials described above and occur in large number in most parts of South India. The urns, in which the burials are made, are deposited in pits dug into the soil. The pits are filled up with the soil upto the ground level and are frequently provided with a capstone. Then, the heap of cairns on the surface, which marks the burial, is surrounded by a circle of stones. They are predominant in Kerala and have been known to occur in Madurai, Tiruchirapalli, Coimbatore, Nilgiris, Salem, Chingleput and South Arcot district of Tamilnadu; Kolar, Bangalore, Hassan, Chitradurg, Bellary, Raichur and Gulbarga districts of Karnataka; various districts of Andhra Pradesh and the region around Nagpur in Maharashtra.

#### VI. Stone Circles

They are the most commonly encountered megalithic monuments in India. They reflect the features of various forms of megalithic monuments such as the *Kudaikallu*, *Topikkal*, different types of pit burials, menhirs, dolmenoid cists of different types, cairns, etc. These occur from the southern tip of the peninsula upto Nagpur region and in different parts of North India, where the megalithic monuments are known to occur. But in this category under consideration, only stone circles without any considerable cairn filling within the circle, containing burial pits with or without pyriform urns or sarcophagi, are included. The monuments under this category are distinguished from the cairn circles only in that the cairn heaps occur or do not occur in these circles. Otherwise, all the three sub-types discussed above under the cairn circles are found to occur in this category also. It may appear that there is not much justification in making this distinction between cairn circles and stone circles. But at some sites like Sanur near Chingleput, both the kinds exist side by side, but in separate groups. Therefore, on the basis of some distinctions they are placed under different categories under our considerations.

#### VII. Pit Burials

Burials in pyriform or fuciform urns a large conical jars or *handi-shaped* jars containing the funerary deposits, are buried in the underground pits specially dug for the purpose into the hard natural soil and sometimes into the basal rock and the pits are filled up. In these kinds of burials we do not find any surface indication of the burial in the form of a stone circle, cairn heap, hood stone or hat (cap) stone, or even a menhir. These urn burials are without any megalithic appendage. But in some sites like Amritamangalam in Chingleput district some small heaps of earth mixed with quartz chips would make out the place of the burial.

Strictly speaking, this class of megalithic burials cannot be included under the megalithic burial monuments, because no megalithic or, for that matter, any lithic appendage in the form of stone circle or capstone is observed in relation to them. But they exhibit the general traits of the megalithic culture of South India, characterized by the use of the typically megalithic Black-and-red ware (BRW) and associated wares with iron objects. These grave goods are identical typologically with their counterparts found in the regular megalithic burials. Moreover, these occur in the general areas where the typical megalithic burials exist. In fact, these urn burials do not differ in any detail from the urn burials under a stone or cairn circle of the megalithic order, except for the surface features. These urn burials without megalithic appendage are found in many sites of Tamilnadu like Adichanallur, Gopolasamiparambu and scores of other sites, practically in almost every village in Madurai, Tiruchirapalli, Coimbatore, Salem, and South Arcot districts. However, these occur less abundantly in Karnataka and Andhra regions. Even in North India, these urn burials are frequently observed at a number of Harappan and the Later Chalcolithic sites in Western, Central and North-western India, but their

context is completely different from the South Indian urn burials. But the latter might have had some phylogenetic (racial affinity) connection with the former.

### VIII. Barrows

The barrows or earthen mounds mark off the underground burials. They may be either a circular or a round barrow, oblong or oval on plan, a long barrow. They have or may not have the surrounding stone circles or ditches. Monuments of this kind have not been found in large numbers in India. However, such monuments have been observed in the Hassan district of Karnataka.

### Grave Goods in Megalithic Burials

The megalithic burials have yielded a variety of objects, which prove to be very important for us in the study of megalithic culture. It is observed that right from the Later Palaeolithic period, an intentional burial was accorded to the dead for manifold motives. The megalithic people were no exception to the age-old custom and, therefore took pains to construct elaborate and much labour-consuming tombs. They furnished them with as many essential objects as they could afford. They thought this practice to be necessary as they believed in after-life of the dead. And so, the dead were suitably provided for a place to live in with goods of their essential needs.

In the Indian megalithic especially those in South India, the grave furniture consisted of a large variety of pottery; weapons and implements mostly of iron but often of stone or copper; ornaments like beads of terracotta, semi-precious stones, gold or copper, shell, etc., strung into necklaces or rarely the ear or nose ornaments, armlets or bracelets and diadems; often food as indicated by the presence of paddy husk and chaff, and some other cereals; skeletal remains of animals, sometimes complete in these graves.

### Subsistence Pattern

A detailed analysis of the available archaeological, archaeobotanical and archaeozoological data recently by U.S. Moorti (1993), and their correlation with certain environmental factors indicates an agro-pastoral base for the megalithic period of South India, with other crafts coming to the fore and all plausibly intertwined in a symbiotic relationship with each other. Now let us discuss the sector-wise developments illuminating the subsistence pattern during the period.

#### (i) Agriculture

The basis of their economy was agriculture. In fact, the megalith builders were responsible for the introduction of the advance methods of agriculture on a large scale, based on irrigation. Scholars like E.H. Hunt and N.R. Banerjee have observed that the megalithic builders introduced the 'tank-irrigation' in South India and thus brought a revolutionary change in the agricultural system. Their statement is based on the circumstantial evidence that the megaliths are concentrated invariably on the slopes of the hills or on elevated ground, which are not suitable for irrigation as they do not encroach upon arable lands. Some of the megaliths which seem to be on the edge of the tanks in the summer season, are virtually submerged in water during the rainy season. However, one can argue that the embankment, if at all it was man-made? Was the water stored in it sufficient for cultivation? Some of the sites are on the river banks. Does this mean that megalithic people were harnessing the river water for

cultivation? Further, some of the sites are in thick forest. Neither is there any land for irrigation nor any tanks in these regions. There are many sites where there are no tanks.

On the basis of the above evidence B. Narasimhaiah opines that the megalithic builders were not the people who introduced 'tank-irrigation' in South India. Of course, it is a well-known fact that even from the prehistoric times man settled where there was perennial water source for his sustenance. The tanks therefore might have been natural ponds, which supplied water for their daily needs, but not for irrigation. However, most of the scholars believe that these tanks supplied water for their household life and to their crops. The tank-irrigation system, according to them, was definitely introduced into South India by the megalithic builders and it has lasted for more than 2500 years, till the present day.

These highly intelligent and pragmatic communities were to see that the fertile arable lands were not wasted from encroachments by their graves. Unproductive foot-hills, rocky and gravelly lands were used for the location of their graves, while lower down, the plains were reserved for agricultural purposes. But they seem to have considered that the spirit of their dead ancestors would not only guard but also bestow prosperity on their fields and hence, located massive though empty dolmens in the midst of their fields at Uttaramerur in Chingleput district of Tamilnadu.

Rice, an essentially irrigational crop, served, no doubt as their staple food. Paddy husks and rarely paddy grains are reported from a number of excavated graves from all over the region. Rice as attested by the Sangam literature, is the staple food of the people of South India since very early times and remains till today. The archaeobotanical evidence indicates the cultivation of other crops too such as Ragi, Navane, Wheat, Kodo millet, Barley, Hyacinth bean, Horse gram, Black gram, Green gram, Common pea, Pigcon pea, Grass pea, Jobs tears, Indian jujube, Goosefoot (Fathen), Lentil, Cotton, etc. in the megalithic period of South India.

#### (ii) Pastoralism

Scores of megalithic sites have yielded evidence of the remains of the domesticated animals like cattle, sheep/goat, dog, pig, horse, buffalo, fowl, ass, etc. On the basis of the analysis of these faunal remains at different sites, it is inferred that cattle (including buffalo) predominates over other domesticated species at these sites. Invariably, in all these sites it accounts for nearly more than 60% of the total faunal assemblage. This brings out two important facts. First, the earlier neolithic tradition of cattle keeping was continued and second, cattle pastoralism and not sheep/goat pastoralism, formed a major preoccupation of megalithic society.

The occurrence of the remains of domesticated pig and fowl suggests pig rearing and poultry farming on a small scale at many of the sites.

#### (iii) Hunting and Fishing

Hunting naturally augmented the food supply, as the equipment for hunting, like arrowheads, spears and javelins would indicate. Sling was probably another equipment used for hunting by megalithic people, as attested by the large scale findings of stone balls. The occurrence of skeletal remains of wild fauna like Wild boar, Hyena, Barking deer, Chousingha, Sambar, Chital, Nilgai, Peacock, Leopard, Tiger, Cheetah, Sloth bear, Wild hog, Pea fowl, Jungle fowl, Water fowl, etc. from different sites indicate that these species were hunted and

obviously formed part of their dietary system. Even now, many of these wild species are found in and around the areas.

The evidence in the form of terracotta net sinkers from Takalghat and fish-hooks from Khapa and Tangal besides the actual skeletal remains of fish from Yelleshwaram reflect that fishing was also practised by the megalithic folk.

(iv) Technology : Industries and Crafts

For the fulfilment of other societal needs in domestic, technical and cultural fronts an efficient infrastructure of subsidiary economic activities is essential. The industrial activities such as smithery, carpentry, pottery making, lapidary, basketry and stone cutting which formed other economic activities of megalithic society, are dealt here mainly because of the interdependent link between these and the primary methods of production.

(a) *Metals* There are many megalithic sites which in all probability were the production sites of metals like iron, copper, gold, silver etc. The available archaeological evidence in the form of crucibles, smelting-furnaces, clay tuyers and presence of material like iron ore pieces, iron slag, copper slag and traces of ancient copper, gold mines or the mineral resources at or near to these sites is suggestive of smithery. The available archaeological evidence indicates the utilisation of metal implements such as axes, ploughshares, hoes, sickles, spades, etc. The use of axe was either for cutting logs or for clearing forests. The use of hoe (or bladed harrow) for cultivation has been recorded at many sites. This particular implement resembles the modern bladed harrow, known as "*kunte*" in Kannada and "*gunlaka*" in Telugu. The use of ploughshare from many sites amply attest to the technological base of megalithic people for carrying out the agricultural operations. A recent study (1986) also highlights a wider knowledge of agricultural technology attained during the protohistoric and early historical India.

Iron was the metal used predominantly to produce weapons of different shapes and for different purposes, tools and implements for agricultural purposes and everyday household needs. The rich variety of iron objects enables us in understanding the aspects of their economy and their way of life to a large extent. These objects reflect that agriculture was their primary occupation as a large number of iron tools necessary for agricultural activities are found at different sites. Copper was used for the production of vessels and ornaments. The ornaments were also made of gold. The use of silver was rather scarce. Though Adichannallur burials and Nilgiris yielded bronze objects the use of bronze at these two sites are exceptions and it is rather doubtful if these were locally manufactured.

An efficient utilization of metallic resources is dependent upon other crucial factors and they are the availability of fuel and type of fuel capable of producing the required degree of temperature. Perhaps the most common type of fuel used by these pre-industrial smelters were charcoal, wood dung and paddy husk.

(b) *Woodcraft / Carpentry*: A wide variety of technomic items viz., those related to woodcraft indicates another skilled profession practiced by megalithic people. The evidence shows that the axes, chisels, wedges, adzes, anvil, borers, hammer stones, etc., formed the main tool-kit for working on the wood. The archaeobotanical evidence from megalithic sites show that the information regarding some of the plant species like Acacia, Pinus, Brassica, Stellaria, Teak, Satinwood etc. were already known to these communities. The use of wooden plough for cultivation cannot be set aside as suggested by M.K. Dhavalikar and G. Possehl. Even now, the



tillage implement common in black cotton soil tracts, is the country wooden plough, which is large and very heavy.

The woods were also used for posts in the construction of huts with thatched or reed roofs supported on wooden posts. Postholes are observed at Bramagiri and Maski indicating the presence of timber constructions for domestic buildings. Some scholars like S.B. Deo suggest an advance stage of wooden architecture involving dressing of wood and creating different types of mortice holes either for interlocking or for tenons. The common occurrence of these technomic items suggests ample use of wood for construction and many other purposes.

(c) *Ceramics (Pottery)*: The ceramic fabrics associated with the megalithic culture are black-and-red ware (BRW), burnished black ware, red ware, micaceous red ware, grey ware, russet coated painted ware (RCPW), etc.

BRW, which is a wheel-turned pottery, essentially consists of utilitarian shapes and a majority of the forms probably served as tableware of megalithic society. The prominent shapes encountered in this ware are varieties of bowls, dishes, lids or covers, vases, basins, legged jars, channel-spouted vessels and conoids.

The burnished black ware, which is also wheel-turned, comprises some prominent shapes such as elongated vases, tulip-shaped lids, funnel-shaped lids, goblets, spouted vessels, circular ring-stands, knobbed and rimmed lids with bird or animal finials.

In red ware the shapes are strictly utilitarian which include legged vessels, double knobbed lids, ring-stands, dough plates and vases.

Of all the types, the most attractive are the RCPW with wavy lines and other decorations. They are occasionally bearing post-firing graffiti. Russet-coated jars are recovered from several sites.

The micaceous red ware exhibits typical shapes like pots with globular body and funnel-shaped mouth, dough plates and basins. Decoration in the form of cording, applique and painted designs have also been noticed.

All these varieties of pottery are characterised by a fine fabric and are produced from well levigated clay rarely with sand or such gritty material. They were generally well fired in open kilns at low temperature. R.E.M. Wheeler opines that possibly the pottery were turned on a slow wheel.

The evidence of pottery kilns from at least two sites, viz., Polakonda and Beltada Banahalli can be taken as supportive evidence for the practice of this craft. Although, the above evidence at both these sites comes from late neolithic levels, a continuation in the habitation deposit bearing megalithic levels may help us to assume so. A wide variety of shapes in different fabrics to serve as tableware for eating and drinking purposes and cooking utensils and the technical efficiency evident in the preparation of these ceramics or potteries might hint at a professional class of potters and pottery making as one of the important economic activities.

(d) *Miscellaneous (Bead making, Mat weaving, Stone cutting, Terracotta making, Rock art, etc.)*: A number of objects ranging from single terracotta beads to very finely manufactured gold ornaments were used by the megalithic folk for their personal decoration. The locational occurrence of some of the megalithic sites in resources zones, and the evidence of bead making industry attested at two megalithic sites –Mahurjhari and Kodumanal, are suggestive of the practice of this craft. The availability of a large variety of beads show that agate, carnelian, chalcedony, feldspar, coral, crystal, garnet, jasper, tremolite, magnesite, faience, paste martz, serpentine, shell, steatite, amethyst and terracotta were utilised in the preparation of beads of

different exquisite shapes. Apart from the use of semi-precious stones, some of the shapes have also been worked on precious metals like gold, shell, horn, bone and glass.

The mat impressions left on the base of jars at sites like Managondanahalli and Nagarjunakonda indicate that the art of mat-weaving was known and practised.

The activity of stone-cutting is attested by the chisel impressions noticed at Bargaon Khurd (Maharashtra) on a stone trough, excellent laterite cutting evidenced in rock-cut chamber tombs of Kerala region, the field observation by A. Sundara in the construction pattern of chamber tombs in North Karnataka and also the occurrence of domestic stone artefacts such as pestles, mortars, saddle querns, etc., at many megalithic sites.

Terracotta discs, figurines, gamesman, miniature pottery vessels found from graves attest their use as toys for entertainment of children. The most remarkable is the terracotta disc resembling spindle-whorls, which was probably used in hop-scotch game. This is suggested by the discovery of a disc in the grave of a child.

Scholars like S.P. Tampi, Y. Mathpal and K.J. John, on the basis of the engravings and paintings on the rock-shelters in peninsular India, argue that these megalith builders were the authors of these paintings. There is evidence in Sangam literature also of the erection of burial stones with paintings as well as writings. But, unless direct dating of the pigments from the painting is done, the antiquity and authorship of these paintings cannot be ascertained.

Thus, we can say that the megalithic people practised a highly specialised agro-pastoral economy. The divergent economic patterns, which seem to have prevailed then, as is the case even now, were not isolated but had a symbiotic relationship with each other.

#### Trade and Exchange Network

The excavations have yielded various non-local items among the grave goods which reflect that there were exchange activities during the megalithic period. According to R.N. Mehta and K.M. George, carnelian beads reported from coastal sites, which were points of exchange in ancient times, direct us to the presence of trade activities. Similarly, the availability of bronze suggests the arrivals of copper and an alloy, either tin or arsenic, from somewhere. From the Graeco-Roman writings and the Tamil texts it is clear that at a little later period maritime exchange was the major source for procuring them. The archaeological remains like the rouletted ware, amphora and other ceramic materials found at many sites like those at Arikamedu are evidence for this. Scholars like H.P. Ray, Rajan Gurukkal, R. Champakalakshmi and others have already shown that inter-regional and intra-regional exchange of goods were fairly well established in South India by the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C. Regional variation in the production of commodities and the non-availability of local raw materials/finished goods had set in long-distance transactions under the initiative of the long-distance traders from the Gangetic region as well as the overseas world. The exchange network which was in an incipient state during the early iron age expanded over the centuries as a result of internal dynamics and external impetus involving the demand for goods in other parts of the subcontinent as well as the Mediterranean region. Many scholars including B. Morris, S. Gupte and D. Stiles opine that it was a network across land and seas with long-distance traders in the middle and unevenly developed people at either side. Thus, the megalithic people as the hunter-gatherers and shifting cultivators of iron age also had active participation in the exchange network.

#### Social Organization and Settlement Pattern

It is not archaeology but anthropology, which provides us evidence to assume the possibility of production relations transcending clan ties and kinship in such remote periods of

tribal descent groups. By and large they point to the material culture of diverse forms of subsistence such as hunting/gathering and shifting cultivation besides the production of a few craft-goods, which have been discussed in the previous section ("Subsistence Pattern") of this chapter.

Though there was commonality in the idea of megalithism and the associated assemblages, the variations observed in the external and internal features of the burials reflect that the Iron Age society of the megalithic people was not a homogenous entity. Some of the relatively huge burial types are suggestive of status differentiation and ranking of the buried individuals as discussed earlier. Differences in the types and contents of the burials suggest that there was some sort of disparity in the attributes of the buried individuals. The number of more elaborate burials like the multi-chambered rock-cut tombs at many sites, are limited. Moreover, these have yielded rare artifacts made of bronze or gold. On the other hand, many of the burials are simple urn burials with a very few artifacts. The variety, high quality and fineness of ceramic goods in huge burials including the elaborate urn burials, are also suggestive of the difference in social status. The studies on the megalithic society of South India by scholars like J.M. O'shea and U.S. Moorti generally assume that "an individual treatment at death bears some predictable relationship to the individual's state in life and to the organisation of the society to which the individual belonged".

The megalithic people lived in villages consisting of a sizeable population. Though they had a bias for the urban life, they were slow in building huge cities like their contemporaries in the Gangetic Valley. The size of the population is indicated by the organised mass of manual labour that was available for transporting and housing massive blocks of stone in the construction of cists, dolmens and other types of megaliths, or in erecting large rubble and earthen mounds across the water courses for storing up rain waters for irrigational purposes. The large size of population is further attested by the fact that extensive burial grounds with numerous graves, many of them containing the remains of more than one individual, and occasionally of as many as 20 or more individuals, have been found.

The houses in which the megalithic people lived probably consisted of huts with thatched or reed roofs, supported on wooden posts as indicated by the presence of postholes in the excavated sites. At Brahmagiri and Maski were found postholes indicating the presence of timber construction for ordinary buildings. Some scholars like S.B. Deo suggest an advance stage of wooden architecture during the megalithic period.

#### Religious Beliefs and Practices

The elaborate architecture of their graves, the grave goods and other metal and stone objects throw light on the religious beliefs of megalithic people. The megalithic people had great veneration for the dead as they constructed these monuments with great effort and devotion. They believed that the dead had a life after death and the living had to provide them with their necessities. The grave goods indicate that they belonged to the dead man in life and since they were required for his/her use in the other world, they were buried along with the mortal remains. All these certainly reflect that the 'cult of the dead' had a strong hold on the people. The grave goods represented the affection and respect of the living for their dead.

Their belief in animism is reflected in animistic cults. This is evident by the occurrence of animal bones of domestic animals like cattle, sheep/goats and the wild animals like wolf in the megaliths. It seems that these animals were killed for the funeral-feast and the skeletal remains were buried in the graves, or they were sacrificed and buried in the graves to supply food for the dead. Animism is also reflected by terracotta figurines of animals decorated with garlands and ornaments.

## Polity

The differences in the size of the monuments and the nature of the grave valuables reflecting differentiation in status and ranking, also suggest the nature of contemporary political power. The construction of a huge monument involving the mobilisation of substantial collective labour implies the power of buried individual to command it.

The Sangam works also help us in understanding the period. The chief of the tribal group is referred to as *perumakan* (great son) in the literary texts. He commanded the entire personal, material and culture resources of his clan. This attests that these elaborate burials probably were of the chiefs or descent heads. The tribal pattern of the distribution of power was simple and involved no hierarchy, though the chiefs, their heirs and warriors had a privileged status. However, this differentiation in status was too flexible to be made out as a stratification.

There is no theoretically plausible evidence showing the existence of a class-structured society anywhere in South India even by the mid-first millennium A.D, which is the upper date now ascribed to the megaliths. Therefore, the remarks of some scholars about the existence of tribal descent groups as a stratified society with aristocrats seems inconceivable. The period of these huge monuments hardly crosses the last two or three centuries before Christ. This period witnessed numerous small chiefdoms co-existing and contesting against one another and anticipating the emergence of big chiefdoms by the turn of the Christian era. As Rajan Gurukkal has shown, the people under big chiefdoms also were in a social organisation based on clan kinship ties and a complex system of redistribution. From the references in Tamil heroic texts like *Purananuru*, it is evident that even the big chieftains, who had enjoyed prestigious status among many other chieftains, were also given urn burials. So, in a way all burials including the most commonly seen urn burials represent individuals or groups with some status and ranking as headmen or kinsfolk. Thus, it can be assumed that even urn burials were of chiefly type. Sometimes memorial stones (*natukal*) were erected over the urn burials of great chieftains and warriors. However, the huge multi-chambered rock-cut tombs are not mentioned anywhere in the literary texts, probably because the practice of erecting such elaborate burials must have become uncommon by that time.

Some of the chiefdoms must have been bigger depending upon their human strength, resource control and exchange relations. This is testified by the prestige goods and varieties of ceramics and other artefacts found in the graves.

The megalithic people had been interacting and exchanging material and cultural goods with one another. There was need-oriented and use-value based interaction at the level of clans. But at the level of chiefs it was competitive and hence combative process of plundering raids, both inter-clan and intra-clan, led by chiefs for predatory control. This led to subjugation of one chief by the other which in turn helped the emergence of bigger chiefs and the formations of bigger chiefdoms. These armed fights among the clans must have resulted in the death of many chiefs and warriors. Probably, this was the reason for erecting numerous sepulchral monuments during the megalithic period. This also accounts for the emergence of the cult of heroism and ancestral worship. Through armed confrontation and predatory subjugation the cultural and political power of a few chiefdoms became more evolved over the years and they emerged as bigger chiefdoms. The Tamil heroic texts represent the phase of bigger chiefdoms. From this we can infer that the last phase of the megalithic period which is contemporaneous to the Sangam period, marked the march towards bigger chiefdoms.

### Legacy of the Megalithic Culture

It is interesting to note that megalithism is still alive amongst different tribes in India, for example the Maria Gonds of Bastar in Madhya Pradesh, the Bondos and Gadabas of Orissa, the Oraons and Mundas of Chotanagpur region now in the state of Jharkhand, and the Khasis and Nagas of Assam. Their monuments, which are of a memorial nature, include dolmens, stone-circles and menhirs. The North-east Indian megalithic culture seems to have a South-east Asian affiliation rather than the western influence.

In South Indian context, the remnants of megalithism among the Todas of Nilgiris are very significant. The account of M.J. Walhouse regarding the funeral customs of this primitive tribe reflects the surviving burial practices that were followed by the megalithic people. It helps us in understanding the probable customs that existed among the now extinct megalithic builders of South India. The existing burial practices of the Todas include many common features of the megalithic burials with grave goods including food items and the use of stone circles to mark the place of the burial.

### Conclusion:

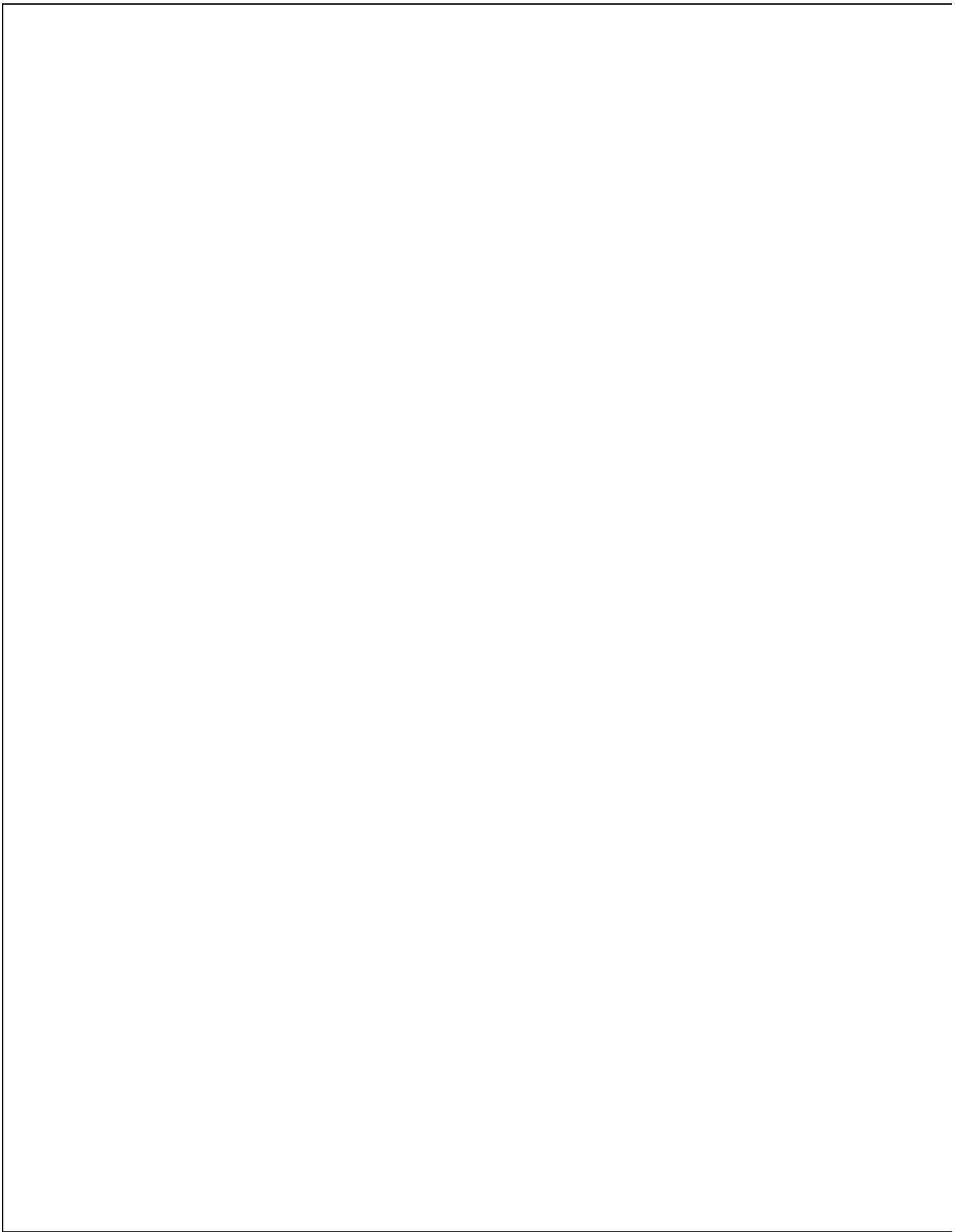
By the above discussion we can say that the megalithic culture in south India was gifted with dynamic people, who almost revolutionized the society of the earlier Neolithic chalcolithic times. It becomes amply clear that the megalithic people practiced a mixed economy on agro-pastoral production.

### Questions:

1. Write about the origin and spread of Megalithic cultures.
2. Discuss different types of Megalithic cultures in South India briefly.
3. Explain the socio, economic pattern of Megalithic cultures in South India.
4. Write about cultural contribution of Megaliths to South India.

Lesson Writer

V.V. Ramana



# Lesson-12

## TERRITORIAL STATES

**Aim:** To know about the great 16 territorial states- their origin, political and cultural conditions and their rise to power.

**Topics:**

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Anga
- .3 Kasi
- .4 Kosala
- .5 Vriji
- .6 Malla
- .7 Chedi
- .8 Vasta
- .9 Kuru
- .10 Panchala
- .11 Mastya
- .12 Surasena
- .13 Asvaka
- .14 Avanti
- .15 Gandhara
- .16 Khamboja
- .17 Conclusion

From the beginning of the sixth century B.C, there was no paramount power in North India, which was divided into a large number of independent states. These were the three important kingdoms of Magadha, Kosala, and Vasta and a host of minor ones such as Kuru, Panchala, Surasena, Kasi, Mithila, Anga, Kalinga, Asmaka, Gandhara and Kamboja. Two other kingdoms those of the Haihayas and the Vitihotras. One of them probably represents Avanti and the other the Chedi kingdom.

The same political condition is reflected in the stereotyped list of sixteen great countries (Solasa Mahajanapada) which, according to the Buddhist texts, flourished shortly before the time of Gautama Buddha. They are as follows according to Ariguttara Nikaya :- Anga, Magadha, Kasi, Vriji (Vajji), Malla, Chedi, Vasta (vamsa), Kuru, Panchala, Mastya (Machchha), Surasena, Asvaka or Asmaka (Assaka), Avanti, Gandhara and Kamboja, each being named after the people who settled down there or colonized it. The Janavasabha Suttanta refers to some of in pairs like Kasi-Kosala, Vajji-Malla, Chedi-Vamsa, Kuru Panchala and Matsya-Surasena. The Chullaniddesa adds Kalinga to the list and substitutes Yona for Gandhara. The Mahavastu list agrees with that in the Ariguttara Nikaya save that it omits Gandhara and Kamboja and mentions Sivi and Darsana period.

The Jain Bhagavati Sutra (other wise called Vyakhya-Pranjnapti) also mentions sixteen countries , though it gives a somewhat different list :- Anga, Vanga, Magaha, Malava, Achchha, Vachchha, Kochchha, Padha, Ladha(Radha), Bajji(vajji), Moli, Kasi, Kosala, Avaha and Sambhuttara. The Mahagovinda Suttanta tells us that Mahagovinda, the Brahmin chaplain to king Renu divided his empire into seven separate kingdoms with their respective capitals as named below:-

1.Kalinga capital Dantapura.

2.Assaka capital Potana

3.Avanti capital Mahishmati

4.Sovira capital Roruka

5.Videha capital Mithila

6.Anga capital Champa

7.Kasi capital Varanasispite

In spite of striking resemblances, especially between the puranic and Buddhist lists, there are also important differences. This leads to the assumption that the lists were originally drawn up at different times, and they reflect the difference in their author's knowledge of, interest in, or intimacy with parts of the country. This is best illustrated by their mention in the Buddhist and Jain texts of the Vriji or Vajji and Malla which are omitted in the puranas for it is well known that these two states were the strongholds of both the heterodox religious sects.

The mention of these states is of special importance for, as will be presently shown, they were autonomous clans with a non-monarchical form of government. The Puranas do not indicate in any way the existence of such states in this period. But these formed a distinctive feature in Indian Politics in the sixth century B.C., for the Buddhist texts reveal the existence of many such clans at the time of Gautama Buddha. These are the Sakiyas or Sakyas of Kapilavastu, the Mallas of Pava and Kusinara, Lichchhavis of Vesali (Vaisali), the Videhas of Mithila, the Koliyas of Ramagama, the Bulis of Allakappa, the Kalamas of Kesaputta, the Moriyas of Pippalivana and the Bhaggas with their capital on Sumsumara Hill. The Buddhist account is fully supported by the Ashtadhyayi of Panini who according to Sir.R.G.Bhandarkar, lived about 700B.C and according to Professor A.Macdonell, about 500B.C. Panini, in his grammar, mentions both classes of States i.e, the Republics, to which he applies the term Samgha or Gana, and the kingdoms called Janapadas. Some of the leading Republics mentioned by him were the Kshudrakas (Greek Oxydrakai), Malavas (Malloi), Ambashthas (Abastanoi), Hastinayana (Astakenoi), Prakanva (Parikanioi or modern Ferghana), Madras Madhumantas (modern Mohmands), Apritas (Greek Aparytai modern Afridis), Vasati (Ossadi), Bhaggas, Sibis(Sibai), Asvayana (Greek Aspasioi) and Asvakayana (Greek Assakenoi with their capital at Massaga=Masakavati). Most of these continued up to time of Alexander's invasion which they stoutly resisted. As regards the Janapadas or kingdoms, Panini mentions, among others, Gandhara, Avanti, Kosala, Usinara, Videha and also Magadha, Anga and Vanhga, which he designates as Prachya Janapadas. Baudhayana in his Dharma Sutra mentions



states like Surashtra, Avanti, Magadha, Anga, Pundra, and Vanga. The existence of non-monarchical clans can be traced throughout the period under review. They are expressly referred to by Megasthenes and Kautilya, and names of many of them occur in epigraphic records of the fourth century A.D.

We may thus reasonably conclude that there were in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., a large number of states, both great and small, and many of these were not ruled by kings but formed petty republics or oligarchies. This political condition of North India for all the states so far mentioned, except perhaps Asmaka, belonged to this region – thus resembled that of Greece in the same period, though naturally the size of the kingdoms as well as of some of the non-monarchical states in India was much bigger. The location, origin, and early history of most of these states have been discussed above on the basis of traditions contained in Brahmanical texts. The Buddhist and other texts, which testify to their existence in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., only incidentally refer to them and do not give any connected history except in the case of Magadha.

### Anga:

The Jain Prajnapana ranks Anga and Vanga in the first group of Aryan peoples. Anga, as described in the Mahabharata, seems to have comprised the districts of Bhagalpur and Monghyr. The river Champi formed the boundary between Anga in the east and Magadha in the west. The kingdom Anga was bounded by the Ganga on the north. Its capital Champa formerly known as Malini stood on the right bank of the Ganga, near its junction with the Champi and was at a distance of 60 Yojanas from Mithila. It was one of the most flourishing cities. The Digha Nikaya refers to it as one of the six principal cities of India. It was a great centre of trade and commerce and its merchants sailed to distant Suvarabhumi. There was a famous tank called Gaggara in the neighbourhood of Champa. Bhaddiya and Assapura were the other towns of the Anga Kingdom. Its long rivalry with, and final conquest by, Magadha has been mentioned.

### Kasi:

The kingdom of Kasi, whose extent is given in the Jatakas as three hundred leagues, was wealthy and prosperous. The rivers Varuna and Asi by which the city was bounded respectively on the north and south gave rise to the name of its capital city Varanasi, modern Benares, eighty miles below Allahabad on the north bank of the Ganga. The Jatakas speak of a long rivalry between the two kingdoms of Kasi and Kosala for supremacy. There also existed occasional rivalries between Kasi and Anga and between Kasi and Magadha. Kasi which was once an important state was conquered by Kosala sometime before Buddha.

### Kosala:

The kingdom of Kosala roughly corresponded to modern Oudh. It was probably bounded by the Gandak (Gandak) river on the east, Panchala on the west, the Sarayu or Syandika river on the south, and the Nepal hills on the north. The country of Kosala proper was divided into north and south, evidently by the river Sarayu. Sravasti was the capital of

northern Kosala, and Kusavati, the capital of southern Kosala. Kosala had some minor towns like Setavya, Ukkattha and Kitagiri.

The conquest of Kasi made Kosala a powerful state. It soon extended its supremacy over the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, probably also over the Kalamas of Kesaputta, and other neighbouring states. Its king Prasenajith or Parenadi a contemporary of Buddha figures as one of the most important rulers of the time. He carried on a protracted struggle with Ajatasatru, king of Magadha, as will be described later.

Although not definitely converted to Buddhism, Prasenajit was a great admirer of the Buddha, and the Buddhist texts record many conversations between the two. His administration extended also to the Sakya clan, in which the Master was born, and he asked for a daughter of a Sakya chief as his wife. The Sakyas, too proud of their lineage to enter into such an alliance, but too weak to refuse openly the request of such a powerful potentate in their immediate neighbourhood, had resort to a trick. The offspring of a Sakya chief by a slave girl was passed off as the legitimate daughter of the Sakya race and married to Prasenajit. A son, Vidudabha was born of this marriage, and when he paid a visit to his maternal grandfather the true origin of his mother came to light. It naturally created a great sensation, and Prasenajit discarded both his queen and son. But the great Buddha told him that whatever might have been the origin of the queen, the son belonged to the caste of his father, and on his advice Prasenajit restored both the queen and the prince to favour.

Whether it was a repercussion of this incident or not, Prasenajit was involved in domestic troubles. In his last interview with the Buddha, which took place in the Sakya country, he contrasted the dissensions in his own household and government with the perfect peace maintained in the Buddhist Order. But even while he was talking with the Buddha, the minister, who was left in charge of the kingdom, proclaimed prince Vidudabha as king. Prasenajit, being deserted by his people, proceeded towards Rajagriha to secure the help of Ajatasatru. But weary and worn out, he reached that city only to die outside its gates. Such was the miserable end of a great man whose attachment to Buddhism alienated his people and brought about his tragic end, though some texts represent him as a great patron of the Brahmanas to whom he granted territory in the royal domains with extensive powers.

Of all the kings of this period, Prasenajit is the only outstanding personality. Vidudabha, who succeeded him, invaded the Sakya country and massacred the Sakya clan, sparing neither men or women and children. Though many escaped, it was the virtual end of the famous autonomous clan which produced one of the greatest teachers the world has seen. The fraud practiced by the Sakyas in respect of his mother is represented to be the cause of his wrath, though there might have been political reasons or other factors. Nothing else is known of Vidudabha or the kingdom of Kosala after him.

### Vriji:

The Vrijian confederacy consisted of eight or nine clans of which Videhans, the Lichchhavis, the Jnatrikas and the Vajjis were the most prominent. Vrijigama was a locality near Vaisali. Vaisali was the capital of the Lichchhavis and the headquarters of the powerful

Vrijian confederacy. It seems to have been formerly under a monarchical form of government. Visala mentioned in the Ramayana was an excellent town (uttama puri). The city was rich, prosperous, and populous, being surrounded by the three walls at a distance of a gavuta from one another, each provided with gates and watch-towers. It had high buildings, pinnacled houses, lotus ponds etc. Videha, which was once a very powerful monarchy with Mithila as its capital was bounded by the Kausiki in the east, the Ganga in the south, thSadanira in the west and the Himalayas in the north. Cunningham identifies Mithila with Janakapura, a small town within the Nepal border. According to the early Jain texts the Jnatikas, to whom belonged Siddhartha and his son Mahavira, had their seats at Kindapura or Kundagrama and Kollaga, which were suburbs of Vaisali. In Kautilya's Arhatsastra the Vrijikas or Vajjis are distinguished from the Lichchhivikas or Lichchhavis. As regards the remaining confederate clans, we have no definite information as yet.

Some scholars are of the opinion that the Lichchhavis were of foreign origin, but this view is not supported by evidence. Indian tradition represents them as Kshatriyas. The ruling clan of the Lichchhavis was firmly established during the days of Mahavira and Gautama Buddha, and the latter gave eloquent expression to his great admiration for their unity, strength, noble bearing and republican constitution. The Lichchhavis were on friendly terms with king Prasenajith of Kosala. Their relation with the neighbouring Mallas was on the whole friendly, and the Jain books speak of the nine Lichchhavis as having formed confederacy with nine Mallas and eighteen gana-rajās of Kasi –Kosala.

### Malla:

The Mallas are often mentioned in Buddhist and Jain works. They seem to have been a powerful tribe dwelling in Eastern India. Bhimasena is said to have conquered the Chief of the Mallas in the course of his expedition to Eastern India. The Bhishmaparva of the Mahabharata similarly mentions the Mallas along with such peoples of Eastern India as the Angas, Vangas, and Kalingas. The kingdom of the Mallas consisted of nine territories one of each of the nine confederate clans. The territories of two of these confederate clans were prominent at the time of the rise of Buddhism, one with its headquarters at Kusinara and the other with Pava as its chief town. The first abutted on the Sakya territory and the second on the Vriji. The river Kakustha formed the boundary between the two territories. The sala grove of Kusinara was on the river Hirannavati.

The Mallas, like the Lichchhavis, are mentioned by Manu as Vratya Kshatriyas. They are called Vasishthas in the Mahaparinibbana Suttanta. Like the Videhas, the Mallas had originally a monarchical form of government, Okkaka (Ishvaku) being mentioned in the Kusa Jataka as a Malla King. The Mallas were a sangha or corporation, of which the members called themselves rajās. Buddhaghosha also calls them rajās. The Mallas and Lichchhavis became allies for self defence, though the Bhaddasala Jataka offers us an account of a conflict between them. The Mallas retained their independence till the death of Buddha, for we find both the main sections of the Mallas claiming a share of his bodily remains.

The Mallas appear to have lost their independence not long after Buddha's death and their dominions were annexed to the Magadhan Empire.

### Chedi (Cheti):

The Chedis or Chetis had two distinct settlements, of which one was in the mountains of Nepal and the other in Bundelkhand near Kausambi. D.R.Bhandarkar thinks that Cheta or Chetiya corresponds roughly to the modern Bundelkhand. According to old authorities the country of the Chedis lay near the Yamuna, mid way between the kingdoms of the Kurus and the Vatsas. Sothivatinagara, probably identical with Sukti or of the sMahabharata, was its capital. Sahajati was a town of the Chedis which stood on the right bank of the Yamuna.

The Chedis were one of the most ancient tribes of India. A branch of the Chedis founded a royal dynasty in the kingdom of Kalinga, according to the Hatigumpha Inscription of Kharavela, to which reference was made.

### Vasta:

The country of Vasta was very rich and prosperous and noted for high quality of its cotton fabrics. Kausambi, which was its capital, is now represented by the village of Kosam on the right bank of the Yamuna. The village of Pabhosa is about two and a half miles north-east of Kosam. In a modern Jain dedicatory inscription the hill of Pabhosa is placed just outside the town of Kausambi.

Udayana who was contemporary to Buddha was a very powerful king and a number of interesting legends centre round his rivalry with king Pradyota of Avanti. The latter, although very jealous because Udayana surpassed him in glory, was unwilling to risk an open campaign against him, and hit upon a device to capture his hated rival. Knowing Udayana's passion for catching elephants, he had one made of wood, with sixty soldiers concealed inside and set it up in a forest near the boundary of the two kingdoms. Udayana fell into trap and was taken as prisoner. He knew a wonderful secret for taming elephant and Pradyota offered him his liberty in exchange for revealing it. But Udayana would teach him the secret only if he received due salutation as a teacher from his pupil. Pradyota made his daughter Vasuladatta to learn this secret.

Udayana was the hero of three dramas, Svapna-Vasavadatta of Bhasa and Priyadarsika and Ratnavali of Harsha, and we know from Meghaduta of Kalidasa, that even in the time of this poet many stories about Udayana were widely current in Avanti. An account of his conquest or digvijaya is given in the Kathasaritasagara.

### KURU:

According to the Jatakas, the capital of the Kurus was Indraprastha (Indrapatta) near modern Delhi, which extended over seven leagues. In Buddha's time the Kuru country was ruled by a titular chieftain named Koravya and had very little political importance of its own. The Kurus continued to enjoy their ancient reputation for deep wisdom and sound health. The Jain

Uttaradhyayana Sutra refers to a king named Isukara who was the ruler of the ancient th wealthy, famous and beautiful town of Isukara.

The Kurus had matrimonial relations with the Yadavas, the Bhojas and the Panchalas. The Jatakas contain an account of king Dhananjaya introduced as a prince of the race of Yudhishthira.

The earlier monarchical constitution of the Kurus subsequently gave place to a republic. They, however, continued the monarchical form of government in the Vasta country.

### Panchala:

Originally Panchala was the country, north and east of Delhi, from the foot of the Himalayas to the river Chambal, and the Ganga divided into North and South Panchala. It roughly corresponds to the modern Budaun, Farrukhabad and the adjoining districts of the Uttar Pradesh. The division of the country into northern or Uttara Panchala and southern or Dakshina Panchala is supported by the Mahabharata, the Jatakas and the Divyavadana. The Northern Panchala had its capital at Ahichchhatra or Adhichchhatra or Adisadra of Ptolemy or Chhatravati while Southern Panchala had its capital at Kampilya, which is Kampil in the Farrukhabad District. King Chulani Brahmadata of Panchala finds mention in the Ramayana, Maha Ummagga Jataka, the Uttaradhyayana Sutra, and the Svapna Vasavadatta. The famous ciaty of Kanyakubja or Kanauj was situatedh in the kingdom of Panchala. Originally a monarchical clan, the panchalas formed a sangha or republican corporation in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.

### Matsya:

The Mastya or Machchha country corresponds to the modern territory of Jaipur. It included the whole of the present territory of Alwar with a portion of Bharatpur. The capital of the Mastya country was Viratanagara named after its founder king Virata.

In Pali literature the Matsyas as a people are usually associated with the Surasenas. The Aparas Mastya was probably the hill tract on the north bank of Chambal. In the Ramayana we find a similar reference to Vira Matsya. A branch of the Matsyas is similarly found in the later days in the Vizagapatam region. The Matsyas had no political importance of their own during the time of Buddha. King Sahaja ruled over the Chedis and the Matsyas. Matsya thus once formed a part of the Chedi kingdom.

### Surasena:

The surasena country had its capital at Madhura or Mathura on the Yamuna. The ancient Greek writers refer to it as Sourasenoι and its capital as Methora. From Sankissa to Mathura it was a distance of four yojanas. Avantiputra, king of the Surasenas, was the first among the chief disciples of Buddha through whose help Buddhism gained ground in the Mathura region.

It may be inferred from the epithet Avantiputra that there existed a matrimonial alliance between Avanti and Surasena. The Andhakas and n of Mathura are referred to in Paninis Ashtadhyayi. In Kautilya's Arthashastra the Vrishnis are described as a Sangha i.e, a republican corporation. The Vrishnis, Andhakas and other allied tribes formed a Sangha and Vasudeva is described as a 'Sanghamukhya'. The name of the Vrishni corporation is also found on a coin. Mathura, the capital of the Surasenas, was also known at the time of Megasthenes as the centre of Krishna worship and the Surasena kingdom then became an integral part of the Magadhan empire.

### Asvaka:

Assaka, Asmaka or Asvaka was originally a country in the basin of the Sindhu. It may be identified with the kingdom of Assakenoi of the Greek writers in the Swat valley. The Asmakas, as noted above are also mentioned by Panini. They are placed in the north-west in the Markandeya Purana and Brihat-samhita. The early Buddhist texts refer to Assaka as Mahajanapadha, the capital of which was Potana or Potali corresponding to Paudanya of the Mahabharata. This Assaka of Buddhist literature was a south Indian country. The river Godavari flowed between the two neighbouring kingdoms of Assaka and Mulaka or Alaka. The latter had Pratishthana or Paithan as its capital and Assaka lay immediately to its south. A Brahmin named Bavari settled near a village on the Godavari in the Assaka territory in the Dakshinapadha after having left t Kosala country. According to the commentary on the Sutta-Nipata, the two kingdoms of Assaka and Mulaka represented as two Andhaka or Andhra territories. Bahattasvami, the commentator of Kautilya Arthashastra, identifies Asmaka with Maharashtra. The Assaka country of the Buddhists, therefore, whether it be identical with Maharashtra or located on the Godavari, lay outside the pale of the Madhyadesa.

Asmaka and Mulaka appear as scions of the Ikshvaku family. Brahmadatta, a king of the Assakas, was a contemporary of the King of Anga and Kasi named Dhritarashtra. Another king of Assaka named Aruna won a victory over the king of Kalinga. At the time of Buddha the ruler of Assaka was a king whose son was Prince Sujata.

### Avanti:

Avanti was an important kingdom of western India. It was one of the four great monarchies in India when Buddhism arose, the other three kingdoms being Kosala, Vatsa and Magadha. It appears to have been divided by the river Vetravati into north and south. It fell to the share of Vessabhu, one of the seven contemporary king of the line of the Bharata. Mahissati was then the capital of Avanti. But Pali canonical texts mention Ujjani as the capital of king Chanda Pradotya of Avanti in the time of Mahavira and Buddha. D.R.Bhandarkar seeks to account for this discrepancy by the assumption that the country of the Avantis was divided into two kingdoms, one placed in the Dakshinapatha having Mahishmati for its capital, and the other i.e. the northern kingdom, having its capital, and the other i.e, the northern kingdom, having the capital atUjjayani.

The country or kingdom of Avanti may be taken to have corresponded roughly to modern Malwa, Nimar and the adjoining parts of the MadhyaPradesh. Both Ujjayani and Mahismati stood on the southern high road extending from Rajagriha to Prastishthana. Vidisha

lay on the road to Ujjayni. Dasarna has been mentioned in the Mahabharata as well as in the Meghaduta of Kalidasa and is generally identified with Vidisa or Bhilsa region in the Madhya Bharat. Two other cities of Avanti are known from Buddhist and Jain Literature. These were Kumaraghara and Sudarsana pura. The Mahabharata also speaks of Avanti and Mahishmati as two different countries. Ujjajini, capital of Avanti, was built by Achchutagami. Avanti was an important centre of Buddhism. Some of the leading theras and theris were either born or resided there.

According to the Puranas Pulika killed his master and placed his own son Pradyota on the throne of Avanti. Pradyota was a powerful king and a contemporary of Buddha. In his time kingdom of Avanti was in rivalry with the neighbouring kingdoms of Magadha, Vasta and Kosala. Pradyota's relation with Udayana, king of Kausambi has been related above. According to a Buddhist text, Ajatasatru fortified his capital Rajagriha as he apprehended an invasion by Pradyota. The puranas refer to him as having subjugated the neighbouring kings, but describe him as 'destitute of good policy'. The Buddhist text Mahavagga also says that he was cruel. All this is borne out by his epithets chanda and Mahasena.

According to the Puranas, Chanda Pradyota Mahasena, to give the king his full name, ruled for 23 years, and was followed by four kings, Palaka, Visakhayupa, Ajaka and Nandhivardhana who ruled for 24, 50, 21 and 20 years. The last ruler was defeated by Sisunaga and Avanti was incorporated with the growing kingdom of Magadha, as will be related in the next chapter.

### Gandhara:

Gandhara denotes the region comprising the modern districts of Peshawar and Rawalpindi. Its capital Takshashila or Takkassila was both a centre of trade and an ancient seat of learning. Gandhara sometimes also included Kashmir and Hecataeus of Miletus refers to Kaspapyros as a Gandaric city. The city of Takshashila was 2000 leagues from Benaras.

King Pukkusati or Pushkaravarin, the ruler of Gandhara in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., was a contemporary of king Bimbisara of Magadha. He sent an embassy and a letter to his great Magadhan contemporary as a mark of friendship. He waged war on king Pradyota of Avanti who was defeated.

### Kamboja:

Kamboja is included in the Uttarapatha. It is generally associated with Gandhara in ancient literature and in the Edicts of Asoka. The Kambojas occupied roughly the province round about Rajaori or ancient Rajapura, including the Hazara District of the North West Frontier Province and probably extending as far as Kafiristan. Rajapura was the home of the Kambojas, and may be identified with Rajapura mentioned by Hiuen Tsang which lay to the south or south-east of Poonch. In the Petavatthu Commentary Dvaraka occurs along with kamboja. From this Rhy Davids concludes that Dvaraka was the name of the capital of the Kambojas during the early Buddhist period. This view does not appear to be correct, because Dvaraka is nowhere mentioned as the capital of the Kamboja country. During the earlier period the kambojas were

ruled by kings, but in Kautilya's time they had a non-monarchical form or the Sangha type of government.

That the sixteen states mentioned in the Anguttara Nikaya and discussed above, flourished before 550 B.C., is proved by the inclusion of Kasi, as it was absorbed in the kingdom of Kosala about or some time before that date. The mention of Vriji shows that the states must have flourished after the fall of the Videha monarchy. Though the date of this event is not known with certainty it was not likely to have taken place long before 600 B.C. We may therefore regard the Buddhist list of sixteen great states as true of the first half of the sixth century B.C., if not somewhat earlier.

The list in the Jain Bhagavati Sutra contains some common names such as Anga, Magadha, Vatsa, Vriji, Kasi and Kosala. Malava evidently corresponds to Avanti and Moli probably stands for Malla. Of the rest, Vanga and Ladha are well known, while Sambhuttra and Kochchha probably stand for Suhmottara and Kachchha. This list therefore shows acquaintance with a more extensive region both in the east as well as in the west. If, as has been suggested, Padha is taken as Pandya, and Malaya as the name of the well known country in the south, the author of the list was acquainted with the whole of India, an assumption which is hardly compatible with the inclusion of Vriji, which ceased to exist in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., and the absence of all reference to any other kingdom in the Deccan or South India. On the whole, the Jain list is less reliable and was probably compiled at a later time.

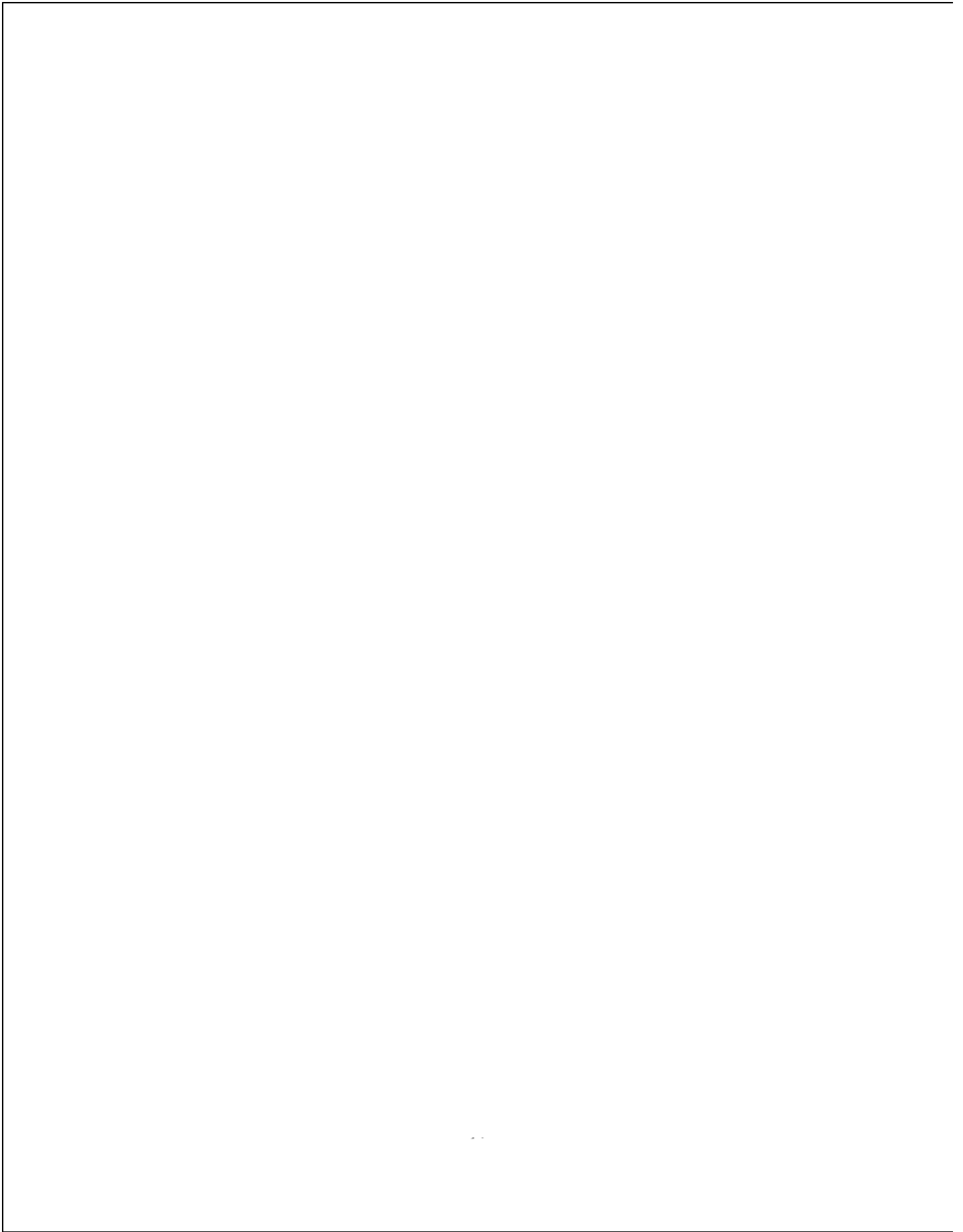
Conclusion: thus, we are able to know about the great sixteen mahajanapadas and their greatness. Their political, social and religious conditions were available. Their administrative methods, the greatness of all the sixteen mahajanapadas their struggle for existence is well known.

Questions:

1. Briefly describe the 16 Mahajanapadas.
2. Write about the rise of Magadha.

Lesson Writer  
V.V. Ramana





## Territorial States of the South India

**Aim:** To gain knowledge about the three early kingdoms and development of sangam literature and the Megliths in the south.

**Topics:**

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Three Early Kingdoms
  - 2.1 Pandya
  - 2.2 Chola
  - . 2.3 Chera
  - 2.4 Economy and Polity
  - 2.5 Army
- .3 Rise of Social Classes
- .4 Beginnings of Brahmanism
- .5 Tamil language and Sangam Literature
- .6 Social evolution from Sangam Texts
- .7 Conclusion

**The Megalithic Background:**

Several elements mark the beginning of the historical period. These are settlements of large scale rural communities which carry on plough agriculture with the help of the iron share, formation of the state system, rise of social classes, use of writing, of beginnings written literature. All these phenomena are not found at the tip of the peninsula with the Kaveri delta as the nuclear zone until about the second century B.C. Up to this period the upland portions of the peninsula were inhabited by people who are called megalith builders. They are known not from their actual settlements which are rare, but from their graves. These graves are called megaliths because they were encircled by big pieces of stone. They contain not only skeletons of people who buried but also pottery and iron objects. The people used various types of pottery including red ware, but black and red ware seems to have been popular with them. Obviously the practice of burying goods in the graves with the dead bodies was based on the belief that the dead would need all these in the next world. These goods give us an idea of their sources of livelihood. We find arrowheads, spearheads and also hoes and sickles, all made of iron. Tridents, which later been found in the megaliths. However, compared number of agricultural tools that were buried, those meant for fighting and hunting are larger in number.

The megaliths are found in all upland areas of the peninsula, but their concentration seems to be in eastern Andhra and in Tamil Nadu. Their beginnings can be traced to 1000 B.C., but in a few places this phase persisted even as late as the early centuries of the Christian era.

The Cholas, Pandyas and Keralaputras mentioned in Ashokan inscriptions were probably in the late megalithic phase of material culture. The megalithic people in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu had certain peculiar characteristics. They buried pottery in pits. In many cases there urns were not surrounded by stone circles, and grave goods were not too many. The practice of urn burial was different from that of cist-burial or pit-burial surrounded by stone circles which practice prevailed in the Krishna Godavari valley. But at any rate, in spite of the use of iron, the megalithic people depended partly for settlement and burials on the slopes of the hills. Although the megalithic people produced paddy and ragi, apparently the area of cultivable land used by them was very limited, and generally they did not settle on the plains or the low lands due to the thick forest cover.

By the third century B.C., the megalithic people had moved from the uplands into fertile river basins and reclaimed marshy deltaic areas. Under the stimulus of contact with the elements of material culture brought from the north to the extreme end of the peninsula by traders, Buddhist conquerors and Jaina, and some Brahman missionaries, they came to have social classes. Cultural and economic contacts between the north and the deep south known as Tamilakam or Tamizhakam became extremely important from the fourth century B.C. The route to the south called the Dakshinapadha was valued by the northerners because the south supplied gold, pearls and various precious stones. The Pandya country known to Megasthenes who lived in Pataliputra. The earlier Sangam texts are familiar with the rivers Ganga and Son and also with Pataliputra which was the capital of the Magadhan empire. The Ashokan inscriptions, mention the Cholas, Pandyas, Keralaputras and Satyaputras living on the borders of the empire; of these only the Satpuras are not clearly identified. Tamraparnis or the people of Sri Lanka are also mentioned. Ashoka's title 'dear to gods' was adopted by a Tamil Chief. All this was the result of the missionary and acculturating activities of the Jainas, Buddhists, Ajivikas and brahmanas as well as the traders who went along in their train. It is significant that Asoka inscriptions were set up on important highways. In the earliest much of the influence of Gangetic culture over the south was felt through the activities of the heterodox sects which are mentioned in the earliest Tamil Brahmin inscriptions. The Brahmanical influence also percolated in a large measure to the Tamilakam, but this really happened after the fourth century A.D. Eventually many elements of Tamil culture spread to the north and in the brahmanical texts the Kaveri came to be regarded as one of the holy rivers in the country.

These southern kingdoms would not have developed without the spread of iron technology which promoted forest clearing and plough cultivation. The distribution of the punch-marked coins of the Janapada and of the Imperial Magadhan type show the development of north-south trade.

Flourishing trade with the Roman empire contributed to the formation of the three states respectively under the Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas. From the first century A.D onwards the rulers of these peoples derived benefit from the exports and imports that went between the coastal parts of south India on the one hand and the eastern dominions of the Roman empire, especially Egypt, on the other.

#### THREE EARLY KINGDOMS:

The southern end of the Indian peninsula situated south of the Krishna river was divided into three kingdoms- Chola, Pandya and Chera. The Pandyas are first mentioned by Megasthenes, who says that their kingdom, was celebrated for pearls. He also speaks of its being ruled by a woman, which may suggest some matriarchal influence in the Pandya society.

The Pandya territory occupied the southern-most and the south-eastern portion of the Indian peninsula, and it roughly included the modern districts of Tinnevely, Ramnad and Madurai in Tamil Nadu. It had its capital at literature compiled in the Tamil academies in the early centuries the Christian era and called the Sangam literature refers to the Pandya rulers, but it does not give any connected account. One or two Pandya conquerors are mentioned. However, it is evident from this literature that the country was wealthy and prosperous. The Pandya kings profited from trade with the Roman empire and sent embassies Roman Pandya king performed Vedic sacrifices in the early centuries of the Christian era.

#### THE CHOLA KINGDOM:

The Chola kingdom, which came to be called Chola-mandalam in early medieval times, was situated to the north-east of the territory of the Pandyas, between the Pennar and the Velar rivers. We have some idea of the political history of the power lay at Uraiyur, a place famous for cotton trade. It seems that in the middle named Elara conquered Sri Lanka and ruled over it for nearly 50 years. A firmer history of the Cholas begins in the second century A.D with their famous king Karikala. He founded Puhar and constructed 160kms of embankment along the Kaveri river. This was built with the labour of 12,000 slaves who were brought as captives from Sri Lanka. Puhar is identical with Kaveripattinam, which was the Chola capital. It was a great centre of trade and commerce, and excavations show that it had a large dock. One of the Cholas was trade in cotton cloth. They maintained an efficient navy.

Under Karikala's successors the Chola power rapidly declined. Their capital, Kaveripattinam, was overwhelmed and destroyed. Their two neighbouring powers, the Cheras, and the Pandyas, extended at the cost of the Cholas. What remained of the Chola power was almost wiped out by the attacks of the Pallavas from the north. From the fourth to the ninth century A.D. the Cholas played only a marginal part in the South Indian History.

#### THE CHERA KINGS:

The Chera or the Kerala country was situated to the west and north of the land of the Pandyas. It included the narrow strip of land between the sea and the mountains and covered portions of both Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In the early centuries of the Christian era, the Chera country was as important as the country of the Cholas and the Pandyas. It owed its

importance to trade with the Romans. The Romans set up two regiments at Muziris identical with Cranganore in the Chera country to protect their interests. It is said that they also built there a temple of Augustus.

The history of the Cheras was marked by continuous wars with the Cholas and the Pandyas. Although the Cheras killed the father of the Cholas king Karikala, the Chera King also lost his life. Later the two kingdoms temporarily became friends and concluded a matrimonial alliance. The Chera king next allied himself with the Pandya rulers against the Cholas. But the Cholas defeated the allies, and it is said that since the Chera king was wounded in the back he committed suicide out of shame.

According to the Chera poets their greatest king was Senguttuvan, the Red or Good Chera. He routed his rivals and established his cousin securely on the throne. It is said that he invaded the north and crossed the Ganga. But all this seems to be exaggerated. After the second century A.D the Chera power declined, and we have nothing of its history until the eighth century A.D.

The main interest of the political history of these three kingdoms lies in the continuous wars they fought with one another and also with Sri Lanka.

Although the wars weakened these states, they very much profited from their natural resources and foreign trade. These kingdoms were fairly rich. They grew spices, especially pepper, which was in great demand in the western world. Their elephants supplied ivory, which was highly valued in the West. The sea yielded pearls and their mines produced precious stones, and both these were sent to the West in good quality. In addition to this they produced muslin and silk. We hear of cotton cloth as thin as the slough of a snake. The early Tamil poems also mention the weaving of complex patterns on silk. Uraiyur was noted for its cotton trade. In ancient times the Tamils traded with the Greek or Hellenistic kingdom of Egypt and Arabia on the one side, and with the Malaya archipelago and from there with China on the other. As a result of trade the words for rice, ginger, cinnamon and several other articles in Greek language were derived from Tamil language. When Egypt became a Roman province and when the monsoon was discovered about the beginning of the first century A.D. this trade received great impetus. Thus for the first two and a half centuries A.D southern kingdoms carried on lucrative trade with the Romans. With the decline of this trade these kingdoms also began to decay.

## Economy and Polity:

Trade, local and long-distance, constituted a very important source of royal revenue. We know how the custom officials functioned in Puhar. Transit duties were also collected from merchants who moved with their goods from place to place. For the safety of merchants and prevention of smuggling, soldiers maintained constant vigil on the road.

Spoils of war further added to royal income. But the real foundation of war and polity lay in regular income from agriculture. The share of the agricultural produce, claimed and collected by the king, is not specified. The tip of the peninsula and the adjacent regions were extremely fertile. The land produced paddy, ragi and sugarcane. It was said that of the Kaveri delta that the space in which an elephant could lie down produced enough to feed seven persons. In addition to this, the Tamil region produced grains, fruit, pepper and turmeric. It seems that the king had a share in all this produce.

**Army :** Apparently out of the taxes collected from the peasantry, the state maintained a rudimentary army. It consisted of chariots drawn by oxen, of elephants, cavalry and infantry. Elephants played an important part in war. Horses were imported by sea into the Pandyan kingdom. The nobles and princes or captains of army rode on elephants, and the commanders drove on the chariots. The foot men and horsemen wore leather sandals for the protection of their feet.

## Rise of social classes:

Income from trade and, war booty and agricultural produce enabled the king not only to maintain groups of professional warriors but also to pay the bards and priests, who were mainly Brahmins. The Brahmins first appear in the Tamil land in the Sangam age. An ideal king was one who never hurt the Brahmins. Many Brahmins functioned as poets, and in this role they were generously rewarded by the king. Karikala is said to have given one poet 1,60,000 gold pieces. Besides gold, the poets or bards also received cash, land, chariots, horses and even elephants.

The Tamil Brahmins took meat and wine. The Kshatriyas and vaishyas appear as regular varnas in the Sangam texts. But the class of warriors was an important element in polity and society. Captains of the army were invested with the title of enadi at a formal ceremony. Civil and military offices were held under both the Cholas and the Pandyas by vellalas or rich peasants. The ruling class was called arasar, and its members had marriage relations with the vellalas, who formed the fourth caste. They held the bulk of the land and thus constituted the peasantry, divided into the rich themselves but employed labourers for this purpose. Agricultural operations were generally carried on by members of the lowest class, whose status appears to have differed little from that of the slave.

Some artisans were not different from agricultural labourers. The pariyars were agricultural labourers who also worked in animal skins and used them as mats. Several out-castes and forest tribes suffered from extreme poverty and lived from hand to mouth. We notice sharp social inequalities in the age of Sangam. The rich lived in houses of brick and mortar, and the

poor in huts and humbler structures. In the cities the rich lived in the upper storey of their houses. But it is not clear whether rites and religion were used to maintain social inequalities. We notice the emergence of the brahmanas and the ruling caste, but acute caste distinctions which appeared in later times are lacking in the early Sangam age.

### Beginnings of Brahmanism:

The state and the society that were formed in the Tamil land in the early centuries of the Christian era developed under the impact of Brahmanism. But the brahmanical influence was confined to a small part of the Tamil society in that area. The kings performed vedic sacrifices. The brahmanas, who were the followers of the Vedas, carried on disputations. But the chief local god worshipped by the people of the hilly region was Murugan, who came to be called Subramanyam in early medieval times. The megalithic practice of providing for the dead continued. People offered paddy to the dead. Cremation was introduced, but inhumation followed in the megalithic phase was not abandoned.

### TAMIL LANGUAGE AND SANGAM LITERATURE:

All that has been stated above about the life of the Tamils in the beginning of the historical period is based on the Sangam literature. As shown earlier, the Sangam was a college or assembly of Tamil poets held probably under chiefly or royal patronage. But we do not know the number of Sangams or the period for which they were held. It is stated in a Tamil commentary of the middle of the eighth century A.D. that three Sangams lasted for 9,900 years. They were attended by 8,598 poets, and had 197 Pandya kings as patrons. All this is wild exaggeration. All that can be said is that a Sangam was held under royal patronage in Madurai.

The available Sangam literature which was produced by these assemblies was compiled in circa A.D 300-600. But parts of this literature look back to at least the second century A.D. The Sangam literature can roughly be divided into two groups, narrative and didactic. The narrative texts are called Melkannakku or Eighteen Major Works. They comprise eighteen major works consisting of eight anthologies and ten idylls. The didactic works are called Kilkanakku or Eighteen Minor Works.

### Social evolution from Sangam Texts:

Both types suggest several stages of social evolution. The narrative texts are considered works of heroic poetry in which heroes are glorified and perpetual wars and cattle raids frequently mentioned. They show that the early megalithic life appears in the Sangam texts. The earliest megalithic people seem to be primarily pastoralists, hunters and fishermen although they also produced rice. Hoes and sickles occur at many sites in peninsular India but not the plough shares. Other iron objects include wedges, flasks, arrowheads, long swords and lances, spikes and spearheads, horse-bits etc. these were meant mainly for war and hunting. This has some parallels in the Sangam texts which speak of perpetual war and cattle raids. The texts suggest that war booty was an important source of livelihood. They also state that when a hero dies he is reduced to a piece of stone. This reminds us of the circles of stone which were raised on the graves of the megalithic people. It may have led to the practice of raising hero stones

called virakal in honour of the heroes who died fighting for kine and other objects. It is likely that the earliest phase of social evolution reflected in the early megalithic stage.

The narrative Sangam texts also give some idea of the state formation in which the army consisted of the groups of warriors, and the taxation system and judiciary appeared in a rudimentary state. The texts also tell us about trade, merchants, craftsmen and farmers. They speak of several towns such as Kanchi, i, Madurai, Puhar and Uraiyur. Of them Puhar or Kaveripattanam was the most important. The Sangam references to towns and economic activities are attested by Greek and Roman accounts, and by the excavation of the Sangam sites.

A good deal of Sangam texts, including the didactic, was the work of the brahmana Prakrit-Sanskrit scholars. The didactic texts the early centuries of the Christian era and prescribe a code of conduct not only for the king and his court but also for various social groups and occupations. All this could have been possible only after the fourth A.D. when brahmanas appear in good numbers under the Pallavas. The texts also refer to grants of villages, and also to the descent of kings from solar and lunar dynasties; this practice started in north India around the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

Besides the Sangam texts we have a text called Tolkkappiyam, which deals with grammar and poetics. Another important Tamil text deals with philosophy and wise maxims; this text is called Tirukkural. In addition to this we have the twin Tamil epics of Silappadikaram and Manimekalai. The first is considered to be the brightest gem of early Tamil literature. It deals with a love in which dignitary called Kovalan prefers a courtesan called Madhavi of Kaveripattanam to his noble wedded with Kannagi. The author apparently seems to be a Jaina and tries to locate the scenes of the story in all the kingdoms of the Tamil country. The other epic Manimekalai was written by a grain merchant of Madurai. It deals with the adventures of the daughter born of the union of Kovalan and Madhavi though this epic is of more religious than literary interest. It is claimed in prologues to the two epics that the authors were the friends and contemporaries of the Chera king Senguttuvan who ruled in the second century A.D. Though the epics cannot be dated so early, they throw light on the social and economic life of the Tamils up to about the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

The art of writings was doubtless known to the Tamils before the beginning of the Christian era. More than 75 short inscriptions in the Brahmi script have been found in natural caves, mainly in the Madurai region. They provide the specimens of the earliest form of Tamil mixed with Prakrit words. They belong to the second-first centuries B.C. when the Jaina and Buddhist missionaries appeared in this area. Inscribed potsherds during recent excavations have been found at several places and they provide examples of Tamil languages in the beginning of the Christian era. It is therefore no wonder that considerable Sangam literature was produced in the early centuries of the Christian era, although it was finally compiled by 600 A.D.



## Conclusion:

In the late Megalithic phase of material culture in South India, the Chola, Pandya and Chera kingdoms flourished. These states have evolved into rich cultural hubs in the south though they were mutually warring states. These fairly rich kingdoms had brisk foreign trade with the west and internally exploited their rich natural resources with the help of their iron technology. They began to decay with the decline of their lucrative trade with the Romans.

## Questions:

1. Discuss the rise and fall of three early kingdoms in South India.
2. Write about the socio-economic religious evolution during Sangam Age.
3. Write about Sangam Age and its significance to South Indian history.

Lesson Writer

V.V. Ramana

## Lesson-14

### RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

**Aim:** To know about the rise of religious movements, their causes and the results of the movements.

#### Topics:

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Causes for the rise of Religious Movements
  - .2.1 Change in Vedic Religion
  - .2.2 Sacrifices
  - .2.3 Faith in Magic and Charms
  - .2.4 Supremacy of Brahmanas
  - .2.5 Caste System
  - .2.6 Difficult language
- .3 Conclusion

#### Introduction:

Hinduism held its powerful sway over entire India for a long time, but with the passage of time the society came to be bedeviled by some unhealthy dogmas. People failed to adjust to such an atmosphere. Moreover, the supremacy of the Brahmins and the deplorable condition of the Shudras gave an impetus to the rise of new religions which were, in fact, the offshoots of Hinduism, but later on, took the shape of independent religions.

The sixth century B.C witnessed a great religious ferment in the world. It was during this age that there prevailed unrest in the religious, social and economic fields of India as well as in the entire world. Consequently, the reformers in different countries protested against the evils that were prevalent in society and disturbing the entire socio-economic fabric of the country. They also endeavoured to reconstruct it on a new pattern in countries like Greece, China, Iran, India etc.

In Greece, Pythagoras, Empedocles and Heraclitus played important roles in religious and social awakening. Zoroaster launched a protest against religious superstitions in Iran. In China people felt a sigh of relief and welcomed the teachings of the learned philosopher, Confucius. During this period the people of India were in the grip of religious dogmas, superstitions and reeled under the supremacy of the priests and the Brahmins. People were trying to adopt a simple religion easily understandable to them. People were being crushed under the burden of

a religion which consisted of rituals and superstitions. There was no purity or sanctity in it nor was it doing any service to the people.

The sixth century before Christ was an age of great intellectual ferment and may be said to mark the wonderful adolescence of Indian culture. Such problems as the nature of the soul, the causes of pain and pleasure and the possibility of life after death engaged the attention of the thoughtful, and a number of religious thinkers varying in character, temperament and spirit, satisfied their religious curiosity in endless philosophical enquiries and speculations. Each religious thinker claimed a monopoly of truth for his system and ruthlessly tore to pieces the subtle metaphysical theories woven by others. The materialistic Carvakas, for examples, repudiated the authority of the Vedas and other holy scriptures and did not believe in self soul virtue. They declared life and consciousness as combination of matter, and since the body was destroyed on death there could not be any life after death or rebirth. Life is only for enjoyment. The ajivakas were fatalists who believed that nothing was the result of human effort. They therefore denied moral responsibility of human action, good or evil. Another school founded by Ajitha Kesakambali resolved man into the four elements of earth, water and air and fire which dispersed at death, the inevitable end of life. It was said that neither parents nor any former lives had any influences in moulding ones life in this unreal world.

Consequently, new religious movements were launched in the entire world, and India could not remain uninfluenced by this wave. As in other countries of the world, so in India, too, new movements for religious reforms were launched by reforms. The rise of Jainism and Buddhism gave a fatal blow to Brahmanism.

#### CAUSES FOR THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS:

##### Change in Vedic Religion:

The Vedic religion was not complex and all people followed it due to its simplicity. But with the passage of time the Vedic religion degenerated and many complexities cropped up in it. The rites and ceremonies had become so expensive that it was not possible for a common man to cope with them. Moreover, the priestly class had established its unnecessary authority and introduced several intricate rituals just to satisfy their whims and selfish interests. People, therefore, were groaning under the heavy burden of rituals. Thus the selfish attitudes of the Brahmins, known as Bhudeva, the gods on earth, formed the background for the rise of Jainism and Buddhism.

##### Sacrifices:

The Aryans' belief in sacrifices was also exploited by the priestly class. They made its form so expensive, complex and intricate that it was not possible for the people to bear the burden of the expenses of sacrifices. Several animals and sometimes even human beings were sacrificed at the time of Yajnas that people began to hate such bloody form of sacrifices. As the presence of the Brahmins was necessary at the time of sacrifice, people not only hated the practice of sacrifice, but also the Brahmins. That is why a religion with a non-violence theory as its backbone suited the contemporary society and people joined Jainism and Buddhism happily.

#### Faith in Magic and Charms:

Gradually with the passage of time, the simplicity and purity of the Vedic religion disappeared and the spiritual outlook of the masses burdened with faith in various kinds of charms and spells. People began to believe that the Vedic hymns had a magic effect. All diseases could be cured by reciting these hymns. Mantras could bring about victory or defeat and children could be had by the chanting of Mantras.

But there were many persons of progressive outlook who had no faith in the magic of the Vedic hymns. The hymns were unintelligible and it was a sort of blind faith to have in their supernatural powers. Therefore, they began to give up their faith in Hinduism.

#### Supremacy of the Brahmins:

According to the theory of Varnas, the society was divided into various castes and sub-castes. The learned people were classed as Brahmins. They had full control over society. From birth to death there was no function which could be performed without the help of a Brahmin. It was beyond the power of the people to shake off their dominance. They also advised and supervised the administrative work of the state. The Brahmins used to enjoy several special privileges and powers and considered themselves superior to the other Varnas. They were called Bhudeva which also points to their supremacy. Their high position in the society made them very proud and they began to behave improperly with the masses. People, therefore, revolted against their monopoly and embraced new religions such as Jainism and Buddhism.

#### Caste system:

It was the greatest evil of the Hindu society and religion. Discrimination and distinction were the root causes of caste system. The caste system had divided the society into various watertight compartments and with the passage of time it continued to be more rigid and iron-clad. The members of the lower castes had to face several miseries at the hands of the higher castes. They not only misbehaved with them, but also tyrannized over them. The Sudras were not allowed even the fundamental human rights. Several restrictions were imposed on the shudras which created a revolt against that classes should long for such a religion as knew no caste barriers. Jainism and Buddhism were according to the dreams of the lower classes, and they all took to them vehemently.

#### Difficult Language:

Most of the Vedic literature, such as, Veda, Upanishads, Brahmanas. Ramayana and Mahabharata were written in Sanskrit. People did not understand it well as it was not the language of the common masses. All the rituals were performed by the Brahmins in this language. The priestly class interpreted the religious texts according to their own advantage and exploited the simple people. That is why people inspired for a religion which was simple and could be explained to them in their spoken language.

#### Intellectual confusion due to the Theory of Karma, Gyana and Tapa Marga:

Every individual in the society was eager to achieve salvation due the increasing miseries and sufferings. Different ways were directed towards attaining this end. The Brahmins emphasized several ceremonies and "Samsakaras" to achieve salvation which was known as Karma Marga. Besides Karma Marga, Tapa Marga, self-mortification was also an important means to achieve salvation. It was believed that if a man practices austerities in the forest and subdues his passions, he can achieve Mukti from the cycle of births and deaths. Gyana Marga the true knowledge, is also a way to reach the ultimate goal. It is stated that "he knows God, attains God, nay, he is god". Thus the followers of Gyana Marga rejected all other theories or means of salvation except Gyana Marga. These different ways of the attainment of salvation created an intellectual confusion among the common masses and they failed to understand as to which way they should adopt and which they should shun.

All the factors referred to above led to a sense of discontentment against the existing state of things. The prevailing social evils and religious monopoly of the priestly class compelled the intellectuals to introduce reforms in the society and the religion. People also anxiously waited for such leaders as were eager to purge the society of evils. Mahavira Swami and Gautama Buddha fulfilled their hopes and expectations. The two new religions, propagated by the above referred leaders or reformists, played a significant role in the history of India. The profounder of their religions raised their voice against the malpractices prevalent in the Hindu Dharma, and endeavored to give a simple and pure religion to the people. They opened the doors of salvation to the people without any distinction of caste or creed.

Jainism and Buddhism were not independent religions. These religions were merely the outcome of the revolt against Hinduism. They flourished on certain aspects of pre-existing system. In fact, it was an appeal for better living in the existing Hindu religion and society. The fundamental theory of these religions like ascetism, self-torture, non violence, etc. had its origin from the Vedas and the Upanishads. The roots of Buddhism can be in the philosophy of Sankhya.

Both Jainism and Buddhism criticized the bloody sacrifices and rituals but this trend is also available in the Upanishads. The doctrine of non-violence was also known to the people of the Vedic period. It was, therefore, an offshoot of Brahmanism and not an independent religion.

It is also wrong to say that both Jainism and Buddhism instituted a new order of monks and nuns. But it existed long before the rise of these new religions. The Upanishads and Smritis also lay emphasis on the life of renunciation and asceticism. Moreover, both these reformative movements gave encouragement to the spirit of scientific inquiry and intellectual discussion. The leaders of these religions did not ask their followers to accept any faith blindly. We come across several references of court discussions during the later Vedic Period or Epic Age.

Thus we see that Jainism and Buddhism were not independent religions, strictly speaking. They were merely offshoots of Hinduism, mainly aimed at reforming the existing religion. This religious revolution gave impetus to independent thinking which contributed to the development of Indian philosophy.

### Conclusion:

So, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C their prevailed socio-economic and religious unrest in India which gave rise to Jainism and Buddhism. These two new religions opposed the prevailing social evils and the monopoly of vedic Brahmanism. They were the warring daughters of Vedic Brahmanism which tried to correct the existing socio-economic and religion order.

### Questions:

1. What are the causes for the rise of religious movements in 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C?

Lesson Writer

V.V. Ramana

# Lesson-15

## BUDDHISM

**AIM:** To know about the life, career and preaching's of Buddha, his principles, spread of Buddhism, its policies, different sects of Buddhism and about its decline.

### Topics:

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Buddha's Early Life
- .3 Buddhist Concepts
  - .3.1 Life and the world'
  - .3.2 Samsara'
  - .3.3 karma
  - .3.4 Rebirth
- .4 The Four Noble Truths
  - .4.1 Noble Eight Fold Path
  - .4.2 Four Immeasurables
  - .4.3 Brahnavihara
  - .4.4 Middle Way.
  - .4.5 Three marks of Existence
- .5 Twelve Nidanas
- .6 Nirvana
- .7 Buddha eras
- .8 Bodhisattva
- .9 Practice
- .10 Three Jewels
  - .10.1 History of Buddhism
  - .10.2 Earliest teachings
  - .10.3 Indian Buddhism
  - .10.4 Buddhist Schools
    - .10.4.1 Early Buddhist Schools
    - .10.4.2 Mahayana
    - .10.4.3 Late Mahayana
    - .10.4.4 Vajrayana
    - .10.4.5 Development of Buddhism
    - .10.4.6 Teravada Schools
    - .10.4.7 Mahayana traditions
    - .10.4.8 Vajrayana Buddhist traditions
    - .10.4.9 Buddhist Texts
    - .10.4.10 Causes for the decline of Buddhisms

## .1 Introduction:

According to author Michael Carrithers, while there are good reasons to doubt the traditional account, "the outline of the life must be true: birth, maturity, renunciation, search, awakening and liberation, teaching, death." In writing her biography of the Buddha, Karen Armstrong noted, "It is obviously difficult, therefore, to write a biography of the Buddha that meets modern criteria, because we have very little information that can be considered historically sound... [but] we can be reasonably confident Siddhata Gotama did indeed exist and that his disciples preserved the memory of his life and teachings as well as they could."

The evidence of the early texts suggests that Siddhārtha Gautama was born in a community that was on the periphery, both geographically and culturally, of the northeastern Indian subcontinent in the 5th century BCE. It was either a small republic, in which case his father was an elected chieftain, or an oligarchy, in which case his father was an oligarch.

## .2 Buddha's Early Life:

According to this narrative, shortly after the birth of young prince Gautama, an astrologer named Asita visited the young prince's father—King Śuddhodana—and prophesied that Siddhartha would either become a great king or renounce the material world to become a holy man, depending on whether he saw what life was like outside the palace walls.

Śuddhodana was determined to see his son become a king, so he prevented him from leaving the palace grounds. But at age 29, despite his father's efforts, Gautama ventured beyond the palace several times. In a series of encounters—known in Buddhist literature as the four sights—he learned of the suffering of ordinary people, encountering an old man, a sick man, a corpse and, finally, an ascetic holy man, apparently content and at peace with the world. These experiences prompted Gautama to abandon royal life and take up a spiritual quest.

Gautama first went to study with famous religious teachers of the day, and mastered the meditative attainments they taught. But he found that they did not provide a permanent end to suffering, so he continued his quest. He next attempted an extreme asceticism, which was a religious pursuit common among the Shramanas, a religious culture distinct from the Vedic one. Gautama underwent prolonged fasting, breath-holding, and exposure to pain. He almost starved himself to death in the process. He realized that he had taken this kind of practice to its limit, and had not put an end to suffering. So in a pivotal moment he accepted milk and rice from a village girl and changed his approach. He devoted himself to anapanasati meditation, through which he discovered what Buddhists call the Middle Way (Skt. *madhyamā-pratipad*): a path of moderation between the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification.

Gautama was now determined to complete his spiritual quest. At the age of 35, he famously sat in meditation under a sacred fig tree — known as the Bodhi tree — in the town of Bodh Gaya, India, and vowed not to rise before achieving enlightenment. After many days, he finally destroyed the fetters of his mind, thereby liberating himself from the cycle of suffering and rebirth, and arose as a fully enlightened being (Skt. *samyaksambuddha*). Soon thereafter, he attracted a band of followers and instituted a monastic order. Now, as the Buddha, he spent the



rest of his life teaching the path of awakening he had discovered, traveling throughout the northeastern part of the Indian subcontinent, and died at the age of 80 (483 BCE) in Kushinagar, India. The south branch of the original fig tree available only in Anuradhapura Sri Lanka is known as Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi.

## Buddhist concepts

### *Buddhist terms and concepts*

## Saṃsāra

### *Saṃsāra (Buddhism)*

Within Buddhism, samsara is defined as the continual repetitive cycle of birth and death that arises from ordinary beings' grasping and fixating on a self and experiences. Specifically, samsara refers to the process of cycling through one rebirth after another within the six realms of existence, where each realm can be understood as physical realm or a psychological state characterized by a particular type of suffering. Samsara arises out of *avidya* (ignorance) and is characterized by *dukkha* (suffering, anxiety, dissatisfaction). In the Buddhist view, liberation from samsara is possible by following the Buddhist path.

## Karma

### *Karma in Buddhism*

In Buddhism, Karma (from Sanskrit: "action, work") is the force that drives saṃsāra—the cycle of suffering and rebirth for each being. Good, skillful deeds (Pāli: "kusala") and bad, unskillful (Pāli: "akusala") actions produce "seeds" in the mind that come to fruition either in this life or in a subsequent rebirth. The avoidance of unwholesome actions and the cultivation of positive actions is called śīla (from Sanskrit: "ethical conduct").

In Buddhism, karma specifically refers to those actions of body, speech or mind that spring from mental intent ("cetana"), and bring about a consequence or fruit, (*phala*) or result (*vipāka*).

In Theravada Buddhism there can be no divine salvation or forgiveness for one's karma, since it is a purely impersonal process that is a part of the makeup of the universe. In Mahayana Buddhism, the texts of certain Mahayana sutras (such as the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Angulimaliya Sutra* and the *Nirvana Sutra*) claim that the recitation or merely the hearing of their texts can expunge great swathes of negative karma. Some forms of Buddhism (for example, Vajrayana) regard the recitation of mantras as a means for cutting off of previous negative karma. The Japanese Pure Land teacher Genshin taught that Amida Buddha has the power to destroy the karma that would otherwise bind one in saṃsāra.

### *Rebirth (Buddhism)*

Rebirth refers to a process whereby beings go through a succession of lifetimes as one of many possible forms of sentient life, each running from conception<sup>1</sup> to death. Buddhism rejects the concepts of a permanent self or an unchanging, eternal soul, as it is called in Hinduism and Christianity. According to Buddhism there ultimately is no such thing as a self independent from the rest of the universe (the doctrine of anatta). Buddhists also refer to themselves as the believers of the anatta doctrine—Nairatmyavadin or Anattavadin. Rebirth in subsequent existences must be understood as the continuation of a dynamic, ever-changing process of "dependent arising" ("pratītyasamutpāda") determined by the laws of cause and effect (karma) rather than that of one being, transmigrating or incarnating from one existence to the next.

Each rebirth takes place within one of five realms according to Theravadins, or six according to other schools.

1. Naraka beings: those who live in one of many Narakas (Hells);
2. Preta: sometimes sharing some space with humans, but invisible to most people; an important variety is the hungry ghost
3. Animals: sharing space with humans, but considered another type of life;
4. Human beings: one of the realms of rebirth in which attaining Nirvana is possible;
5. Asuras: variously translated as lowly deities, demons, titans, antigods; not recognized by Theravāda (Mahavihara) tradition as a separate realm;
6. Devas including Brahmas: variously translated as gods, deities, spirits, angels, or left untranslated.

The above are further subdivided into 31 planes of existence. Rebirths in some of the higher heavens, known as the Śuddhāvāsa Worlds or Pure Abodes, can be attained only by skilled Buddhist practitioners known as anāgāmis (non-returners). Rebirths in the arupa-dhatu (formless realms) can be attained by only those who can meditate on the arūpajhānas, the highest object of meditation.

### Suffering's causes and solution

#### The Four Noble Truths

The teachings on the Four Noble Truths are regarded as central to the teachings of Buddhism, and are said to provide a conceptual framework for Buddhist thought. These four truths explain the nature of *dukkha* (suffering, anxiety, and unsatisfactoriness), its causes, and how it can be overcome. The four truths are:

#### The truth of *dukkha* (suffering, anxiety, unsatisfactoriness)

1. The truth of the origin of *dukkha*
2. The truth of the cessation of *dukkha*
3. The truth of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*

The first truth explains the nature of *dukkha*. *Dukkha* is commonly translated as "suffering", "anxiety", "unsatisfactoriness", "unease", etc., and it is said to have the following three aspects:

- The obvious suffering of physical and mental illness, growing old, and dying.
- The anxiety or stress of trying to hold onto things that are constantly changing.
- A subtle dissatisfaction pervading all forms of life, due to the fact that all forms of life are changing, impermanent and without any inner core or substance. On this level, the term indicates a lack of satisfaction, a sense that things never measure up to our expectations or standards.

The second truth is that the *origin* of *dukkha* can be known. Within the context of the four noble truths, the origin of *dukkha* is commonly explained as craving (Pali: *tanha*) conditioned by ignorance (Pali: *avijja*). On a deeper level, the root cause of *dukkha* is identified as ignorance (Pali: *avijja*) of the true nature of things. The third noble truth is that the complete *cessation* of *dukkha* is possible, and the fourth noble truth identifies a *path* to this cessation.

## Noble Eightfold Path

### *Noble Eightfold Path and Buddhist Paths to liberation*

The Noble Eightfold Path—the fourth of the Buddha's Noble Truths—consists of a set of eight interconnected factors or conditions, that when developed together, lead to the cessation of *dukkha*. These eight factors are: Right View (or Right Understanding), Right Intention (or Right Thought), Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

The eight factors of the path are commonly presented within three divisions (or higher trainings) as shown below:

| Division                                                           | Eightfold factor   | Sanskrit, Pali                                    | Description                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Wisdom<br>(Sanskrit: <i>prajñā</i> ,<br>Pāli: <i>paññā</i> )       | 1. Right view      | <i>samyag drṣṭi</i> ,<br><i>sammā ditthi</i>      | Viewing reality as it is, not just as it appears to be |
|                                                                    | 2. Right intention | <i>samyag saṃkalpa</i> ,<br><i>sammā sankappa</i> | Intention of renunciation, freedom and harmlessness    |
| Ethical conduct<br>(Sanskrit: <i>śīla</i> ,<br>Pāli: <i>sīla</i> ) | 3. Right speech    | <i>samyag vāc</i> ,<br><i>sammā vāca</i>          | Speaking in a truthful and non-hurtful way             |
|                                                                    | 4. Right action    | <i>samyag karman</i> ,                            | Acting in a non-harmful way                            |

|                                                       |                        |                                      |                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                       |                        | <i>sammā kamanta</i>                 |                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                       | 5. Right livelihood    | <i>samyag ājivana, sammā ājīva</i>   | A non-harmful livelihood                                                                                                                               |
|                                                       | 6. Right effort        | <i>samyag vyāyāma, sammā vāyāma</i>  | Making an effort to improve                                                                                                                            |
| Concentration<br>(Sanskrit and Pāli: <i>samādhi</i> ) | 7. Right mindfulness   | <i>samyag smṛti, sammā sati</i>      | Awareness to see things for what they are with clear consciousness; being aware of the present reality within oneself, without any craving or aversion |
|                                                       | 8. Right concentration | <i>samyag samādhi, sammā samādhi</i> | Correct meditation or concentration, explained as the first four jhānas                                                                                |

#### *Brahmavihara*

While he searched for enlightenment, Gautama combined the yoga practice of his teacher Kalama with what later became known as "the immeasurables". Gautama thus invented a new kind of human, one without egotism. What Thich Nhat Hanh calls the "Four Immeasurable Minds" of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity are also known as brahmaviharas, divine abodes, or simply as four immeasurables. Pema Chödrön calls them the "four limitless ones". Of the four, mettā or loving-kindness meditation is perhaps the best known. The Four Immeasurables are taught as a form of meditation that cultivates "wholesome attitudes towards all sentient beings." The practitioner prays:

1. May all sentient beings have happiness and its causes,
2. May all sentient beings be free of suffering and its causes,
3. May all sentient beings never be separated from bliss without suffering,
4. May all sentient beings be in equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger.

#### Middle Way

An important guiding principle of Buddhist practice is the Middle Way (or Middle Path), which is said to have been discovered by Gautama Buddha prior to his enlightenment. The Middle Way has several definitions:

1. The practice of non-extremism: a path of moderation away from the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification;
2. The middle ground between certain metaphysical views (for example, that things ultimately either do or do not exist);
3. An explanation of Nirvana (perfect enlightenment), a state wherein it becomes clear that all dualities apparent in the world are delusory;
4. Another term for emptiness, the ultimate nature of all phenomena (in the Mahayana branch), a lack of inherent existence, which avoids the extremes of permanence and nihilism or inherent existence and nothingness.

Buddhist scholars have produced a number of intellectual theories, philosophies and world view concepts (see, for example, Abhidharma, Buddhist philosophy and Reality in Buddhism). Some schools of Buddhism discourage doctrinal study, and some regard it as essential practice.

The concept of liberation (nirvāṇa)—the goal of the Buddhist path—is closely related to overcoming ignorance (avidyā), a fundamental misunderstanding or mis-perception of the nature of reality. In awakening to the true nature of the self and all phenomena one develops dispassion for the objects of clinging, and is liberated from suffering (dukkha) and the cycle of incessant rebirths (saṃsāra). To this end, the Buddha recommended viewing things as characterized by the three marks of existence.

### Three Marks of Existence

The Three Marks of Existence are impermanence, suffering, and not-self.

Impermanence (Pāli: *anicca*) expresses the Buddhist notion that all compounded or conditioned phenomena (all things and experiences) are inconstant, unsteady, and impermanent. Everything we can experience through our senses is made up of parts, and its existence is dependent on external conditions. Everything is in constant flux, and so conditions and the thing itself are constantly changing. Things are constantly coming into being, and ceasing to be. Since nothing lasts, there is no inherent or fixed nature to any object or experience. According to the doctrine of impermanence, life embodies this flux in the aging process, the cycle of rebirth (saṃsāra), and in any experience of loss. The doctrine asserts that because things are impermanent, attachment to them is futile and leads to suffering (dukkha).

Suffering is also a central concept in Buddhism. The word roughly corresponds to a number of terms in English including suffering, pain, unsatisfactoriness, sorrow, affliction, anxiety, dissatisfaction, discomfort, anguish, stress, misery, and frustration. Although the term is often translated as "suffering", its philosophical meaning is more analogous to "disquietude" as in the condition of being disturbed. As such, "suffering" is too narrow a translation with "negative emotional connotations" that can give the impression that the Buddhist view is pessimistic, but Buddhism seeks to be neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but realistic. In English-language Buddhist literature translated from Pāli, "dukkha" is often left untranslated, so as to encompass its full range of meaning.

Not-self (Pāli: *anatta*; Sanskrit: *anātman*) is the third mark of existence. Upon careful examination, one finds that no phenomenon is really "I" or "mine"; these concepts are in fact constructed by the mind. In the *Nikayas* *anatta* is not meant as a metaphysical assertion, but as

an approach for gaining release from suffering. In fact, the Buddha rejected both of the metaphysical assertions "I have a Self" and "I have no Self" as ontological views that bind one to suffering. When asked if the self was identical with the body, the Buddha refused to answer. By analyzing the constantly changing physical and mental constituents (skandhas) of a person or object, the practitioner comes to the conclusion that neither the respective parts nor the person as a whole comprise a self.

### *Twelve Nidānas*

The Twelve Nidānas describe a causal connection between the subsequent characteristics or conditions of cyclic existence, each one giving rise to the next:

1. Avidyā: ignorance, specifically spiritual ignorance of the nature of reality;
2. Saṃskāras: literally formations, explained as referring to karma;
3. Vijñāna: consciousness, specifically discriminative;
4. Nāmarūpa: literally name and form, referring to mind and body;
5. Ṣaḍāyatana: the six sense bases: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind-organ;
6. Sparśa: variously translated contact, impression, stimulation (by a sense object);
7. Vedanā: usually translated feeling: this is the "hedonic tone", i.e. whether something is pleasant, unpleasant or neutral;
8. Trṣṇā: literally thirst, but in Buddhism nearly always used to mean craving;
9. Upādāna: clinging or grasping; the word also means fuel, which feeds the continuing cycle of rebirth;
10. Bhava: literally being (existence) or becoming. (The Theravada explains this as having two meanings: karma, which produces a new existence, and the existence itself.);
11. Jāti: literally birth, but life is understood as starting at conception;
12. Jarāmaraṇa: (old age and death) and also soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa and upāyāsā (sorrow, lamentation, pain, affliction and despair)

Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya, India, where Gautama Buddha attained Nirvana under the Bodhi Tree (left)

### *Nirvana (Buddhism)*

Nirvana (Sanskrit; Pali: "Nibbana") means "cessation", "extinction" (of craving and ignorance and therefore suffering and the cycle of involuntary rebirths (saṃsāra)), "extinguished", "quieted", "calmed"; it is also known as "Awakening" or "Enlightenment" in the West. The term for anybody who has achieved *nirvana*, including the Buddha, is *arahant*.

*Bodhi* (Pāli and Sanskrit, in devanagari: is a term applied to the experience of Awakening of arahants. *Bodhi* literally means "awakening", but it is more commonly translated into English as "enlightenment". In Early Buddhism, *bodhi* carried a meaning synonymous to *nirvana*, using only some different metaphors to describe the experience, which implies the extinction of *raga* (greed, craving), *dosa* (hate, aversion) and *moha* (delusion). In the later school of Mahayana Buddhism, the status of *nirvana* was downgraded in some scriptures, coming to refer only to the extinction of greed and hate, implying that delusion was still present in one who attained *nirvana*, and that one needed to attain *bodhi* to eradicate delusion:

An important development in the Mahayana was that it came to separate nirvana from bodhi ('awakening' to the truth, Enlightenment), and to put a lower value on the former (Gombrich,

1992d). Originally nirvana and bodhi refer to the same thing; they merely use different metaphors for the experience. But the Mahayana tradition separated them and considered that nirvana referred only to the extinction of craving (passion and hatred), with the resultant escape from the cycle of rebirth. This interpretation ignores the third fire, delusion: the extinction of delusion is of course in the early texts identical with what can be positively expressed as gnosis, Enlightenment.

Therefore, according to Mahayana Buddhism, the *arahant* has attained only *nirvana*, thus still being subject to delusion, while the *bodhisattva* not only achieves *nirvana* but full liberation from delusion as well. He thus attains *bodhi* and becomes a *buddha*. In Theravada Buddhism, *bodhi* and *nirvana* carry the same meaning as in the early texts, that of being freed from greed, hate and delusion.

The term *parinirvana* is also encountered in Buddhism, and this generally refers to the complete *nirvana* attained by the *arahant* at the moment of death, when the physical body expires.

#### Buddha eras

Buddhists believe Gautama Buddha was the first to achieve enlightenment in this Buddha era and is therefore credited with the establishment of Buddhism. A Buddha era is the stretch of history during which people remember and practice the teachings of the earliest *known* Buddha. This Buddha era will end when all the knowledge, evidence and teachings of Gautama Buddha have vanished. This belief therefore maintains that many Buddha eras have started and ended throughout the course of human existence. The Gautama Buddha, then, is *the Buddha of this era*, who taught directly or indirectly to all other Buddhas in it (see types of Buddhas).

In addition, Mahayana Buddhists believe there are innumerable other Buddhas in other universes. A Theravada commentary says that Buddhas arise one at a time in this world element, and not at all in others. The understandings of this matter reflect widely differing interpretations of basic terms, such as "world realm", between the various schools of Buddhism.

The idea of the decline and gradual disappearance of the teaching has been influential in East Asian Buddhism. Pure Land Buddhism holds that it has declined to the point where few are capable of following the path, so it may be best to rely on the power of the Amitabha Buddha.

#### Bodhisattva

*Bodhisattva* means "enlightenment being", and generally refers to one who is on the path to buddhahood. Traditionally, a bodhisattva is anyone who, motivated by great compassion, has generated *bodhicitta*, which is a spontaneous wish to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. Theravada Buddhism primarily uses the term in relation to Gautama Buddha's previous existences, but has traditionally acknowledged and respected the bodhisattva path as well.

According to Jan Nattier, the term *Mahāyāna* ("Great Vehicle") was originally even an honorary synonym for *Bodhisattvayāna*, or the "Bodhisattva Vehicle." The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, an early and important Mahāyāna text, contains a simple and brief definition for the term *bodhisattva*, and this definition is the following:

Because he has enlightenment as his aim, a bodhisattva-mahāsattva is so called.

Mahāyāna Buddhism encourages everyone to become bodhisattvas and to take the bodhisattva vows. With these vows, one makes the promise to work for the complete enlightenment of all beings by practicing six perfections (Skt. *pāramitā*). According to the Mahāyāna teachings, these perfections are: giving, discipline, forbearance, effort, meditation, and transcendent wisdom.

A famous saying by the 8th-century Indian Buddhist scholar-saint Shantideva, which the Dalai Lama often cites as his favourite verse, summarizes the Bodhisattva's intention (Bodhicitta) as follows:

For as long as space endures, and for as long as living beings remain, until then may I too abide to dispel the misery of the world.

Practice

Devotion

#### *Buddhist devotion*

Devotion is an important part of the practice of most Buddhists. Devotional practices include bowing, offerings, pilgrimage, and chanting. In Pure Land Buddhism, devotion to the Buddha Amitabha is the main practice. In Nichiren Buddhism, devotion to the Lotus Sutra is the main practice

#### *Refuge (Buddhism) and Three Jewels*

Traditionally, the first step in most Buddhist schools requires taking refuge in the Three Jewels as the foundation of one's religious practice. The practice of taking refuge on behalf of young or even unborn children is mentioned in the *Majjhima Nikaya*, recognized by most scholars as an early text (cf. Infant baptism). Tibetan Buddhism sometimes adds a fourth refuge, in the *lama*. In Mahayana, the person who chooses the *bodhisattva* path makes a vow or pledge, considered the ultimate expression of compassion. In Mahayana, too, the Three Jewels are perceived as possessed of an eternal and unchanging essence and as having an irreversible effect: "The Three Jewels have the quality of excellence. Just as real jewels never change their faculty and goodness, whether praised or reviled, so are the Three Jewels (Refuges), because they have an eternal and immutable essence. These Three Jewels bring a fruition that is changeless, for once one has reached Buddhahood, there is no possibility of falling back to suffering."

The Three Jewels are:

- The Buddha. This is a title for those who have attained Nirvana. See also the Tathāgata and Gautama Buddha. The Buddha could also be represented as a concept instead of a specific person: the perfect wisdom that understands *Dharma* and sees reality in its true form. In Mahayana Buddhism, the Buddha can be viewed as the supreme Refuge: "Buddha is the Unique Absolute Refuge. Buddha is the Imperishable, Eternal, Indestructible and Absolute Refuge."
- The *Dharma*. The teachings or law of nature as expounded by the Gautama Buddha. It can also, especially in Mahayana, connote the ultimate and sustaining Reality that is inseparable from the Buddha. Further, from some Mahayana perspectives, the Dharma



embodied in the form of a great sutra (Buddhic scripture) can replace the need for a personal teacher and can be a direct and spontaneous gateway into Truth (Dharma). This is especially said to be the case with the Lotus Sutra. Dr. Hiroshi Kanno writes of this view of the *Lotus Sutra*: "it is a Dharma-gate of sudden enlightenment proper to the Great Vehicle; it is a Dharma-gate whereby one awakens spontaneously, without resorting to a teacher".

- The *Sangha*. Those who have attained any of the Four stages of enlightenment, or simply the congregation of monastic practitioners. The monks' order, which began during the lifetime of the Buddha, is among the oldest organizations on Earth.

According to the scriptures, Gautama Buddha presented himself as a model. The Dharma offers a refuge by providing guidelines for the alleviation of suffering and the attainment of Nirvana. The Sangha is considered to provide a refuge by preserving the authentic teachings of the Buddha and providing further examples that the truth of the Buddha's teachings is attainable.

## History

### *History of Buddhism*

Historically, the roots of Buddhism lie in the religious thought of ancient India during the second half of the first millennium BCE. That was a period of social and religious turmoil, as there was significant discontent with the sacrifices and rituals of Vedic Brahmanism. It was challenged by numerous new ascetic religious and philosophical groups and teachings that broke with the Brahmanic tradition and rejected the authority of the Vedas and the Brahmins. These groups, whose members were known as shramanas, were a continuation of a non-Vedic strand of Indian thought distinct from Indo-Aryan Brahmanism. Scholars have reasons to believe that ideas such as samsara, karma (in the sense of the influence of morality on rebirth), and moksha originated in the shramanas, and were later adopted by Brahmin orthodoxy.

This view is supported by a study of the region where these notions originated. Buddhism arose in Greater Magadha, which stretched from Sravasti, the capital of Kosala in the north-west, to Rajagṛha in the south east. This land, to the east of aryavarta, the land of the Aryas, was recognised as non-Vedic. Other Vedic texts reveal a dislike of the people of Magadha, in all probability because the Magadhas at this time were not Brahmanised. It was not until the 2nd or 3rd centuries BCE that the eastward spread of Brahmanism into Greater Magadha became significant. Ideas that developed in Greater Magadha prior to this were not subject to Vedic influence. These include rebirth and karmic retribution that appear in a number of movements in Greater Magadha, including Buddhism. These movements inherited notions of rebirth and karmic retribution from an earlier culture.

At the same time, these movements were influenced by, and in some respects continued, philosophical thought within the Vedic tradition as reflected e.g. in the Upanishads. These movements included, besides Buddhism, various skeptics (such as Sanjaya Belatthiputta), atomists (such as Pakudha Kaccayana), materialists (such as Ajita Kesakambali), antinomians (such as Purana Kassapa); the most important ones in the 5th century BCE were the Ajivikas, who emphasized the rule of fate, the Lokayata (materialists), the Ajnanas (agnostics) and the Jains, who stressed that the soul must be freed from matter.

Many of these new movements shared the same conceptual vocabulary—atman ("Self"), buddha ("awakened one"), dhamma ("rule" or "law"), karma ("action"), nirvana ("extinguishing"), samsara ("eternal recurrence") and yoga ("spiritual practice"). The shramanas rejected the Veda, and the authority of the brahmins, who claimed they possessed revealed truths not knowable by any ordinary human means. Moreover, they declared that the entire Brahmanical system was fraudulent: a conspiracy of the brahmins to enrich themselves by charging exorbitant fees to perform bogus rites and give useless advice.

#### Earliest teachings

##### Tracing the oldest teachings

Information of the oldest teachings may be obtained by analysis of the oldest texts. One method to obtain information on the oldest core of Buddhism is to compare the oldest extant versions of the Theravadin Pali Canon and other texts. The reliability of these sources, and the possibility to draw out a core of oldest teachings, is a matter of dispute.

#### *Dhyana* and insight

A core problem in the study of early Buddhism is the relation between *dhyana* and insight. Schmithausen, in his often-cited article *On some Aspects of Descriptions or Theories of 'Liberating Insight' and 'Enlightenment' in Early Buddhism* notes that the mention of the four noble truths as constituting "liberating insight", which is attained after mastering the Rupa Jhanas, is a later addition to texts such as Majjhima Nikaya 36.

#### Indian Buddhism

##### *: History of Buddhism in India*

The period of the Early Buddhist schools, Early Mahayana Buddhism, Later Mahayana Buddhism, and Esoteric Buddhism (also called Vajrayana Buddhism).

#### Early Buddhist schools

##### *Early Buddhist schools, Buddhist councils and Theravada*

According to the scriptures, soon after the parinirvāṇa (from Sanskrit: "highest extinguishment") of Gautama Buddha, the first Buddhist council was held. As with any ancient Indian tradition, transmission of teaching was done orally. The primary purpose of the assembly was to collectively recite the teachings to ensure that no errors occurred in oral transmission. In the first council, Ānanda, a cousin of the Buddha and his personal attendant, was called upon to recite the discourses (*sūtras*, Pāli *suttas*) of the Buddha, and, according to some sources, the abhidhamma. Upāli, another disciple, recited the monastic rules (*vinaya*). Scholars regard the traditional accounts of the council as greatly exaggerated if not entirely fictitious.

According to most scholars, at some period after the Second Council the *Sangha* began to break into separate factions. The various accounts differ as to when the actual schisms

occurred. According to the *Dipavamsa* of the Pāli tradition, they started immediately after the Second Council, the Puggalavada tradition places it in 137 AN, the Sarvastivada tradition of Vasumitra says it was in the time of Ashoka and the Mahasanghika tradition places it much later, nearly 100 BCE.

Following (or leading up to) the schisms, each Saṅgha started to accumulate an Abhidharma, a detailed scholastic reworking of doctrinal material appearing in the Suttas, according to schematic classifications. These Abhidharma texts do not contain systematic philosophical treatises, but summaries or numerical lists. Scholars generally date these texts to around the 3rd century BCE, 100 to 200 years after the death of the Buddha. Therefore the seven Abhidharma works are generally claimed not to represent the words of the Buddha himself, but those of disciples and great scholars. Every school had its own version of the Abhidharma, with different theories and different texts. The different Abhidharmas of the various schools did not agree with each other. Scholars disagree on whether the Mahasanghika school had an Abhidhamma Pitaka or not.

### Early Mahayana Buddhism

#### *Mahāyāna*

A Buddhist triad depicting, left to right, a Kushan, the future buddha Maitreya, Gautama Buddha, the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, and a Buddhist monk. 2nd—3rd century.

The origins of Mahāyāna, which formed between 100 BCE and 100 AD, are still not completely understood. The earliest views of Mahāyāna Buddhism in the West assumed that it existed as a separate school in competition with the so-called "Hīnayāna" schools. The split was on the order of the European Protestant Reformation, which divided Christians into Catholic and Protestant. Due to the veneration of buddhas and bodhisattvas, Mahāyāna was often interpreted as a more devotional, lay-inspired form of Buddhism, with supposed origins in stūpa veneration. The old views of Mahāyāna as a lay-inspired sect are now largely considered misguided and wrong.

The Chinese monk Yijing who visited India in the 7th century CE, distinguishes Mahāyāna from Hīnayāna as follows

Both adopt one and the same Vinaya, and they have in common the prohibitions of the five offences, and also the practice of the Four Noble Truths. Those who venerate the bodhisattvas and read the Mahāyāna sūtras are called the Mahāyānists, while those who do not perform these are called the Hīnayānists.

### Late Mahayana Buddhism

During the period of Late Mahayana Buddhism, four major types of thought developed: Madhyamaka, Yogacara, Tathagatagarbha, and Buddhist Logic as the last and most recent. In India, the two main philosophical schools of the Mahayana were the Madhyamaka and the later Yogacara. According to Dan Lusthaus, Madhyamaka and Yogacara have a great deal in common, and the commonality stems from early Buddhism. There were no great Indian teachers associated with tathagatagarbha thought.

### Vajrayana (Esoteric Buddhism)

## *Vajrayana*

Scholarly research concerning Esoteric Buddhism is still in its early stages and has a number of problems that make research difficult.

Vajrayana Buddhism was influenced by Hinduism, and therefore research must include exploring Hinduism as well.

1. The scriptures of Vajrayana have not yet been put in any kind of order.
2. Ritual must be examined as well, not just doctrine.

Coin depicting Indo-Greek king Menander, who, according to Buddhist tradition records in the *Milinda Panha*, converted to the Buddhist faith and became an arhat in the 2nd century BCE .  
(British Museum)

Buddhism may have spread only slowly in India until the time of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka, who was a public supporter of the religion. The support of Aśoka and his descendants led to the construction of more stūpas (Buddhist religious memorials) and to efforts to spread Buddhism throughout the enlarged Maurya empire and even into neighboring lands—particularly to the Iranian-speaking regions of Afghanistan and Central Asia, beyond the Mauryas' northwest border, and to the island of Sri Lanka south of India. These two missions, in opposite directions, would ultimately lead, in the first case to the spread of Buddhism into China, and in the second case, to the emergence of Theravāda Buddhism and its spread from Sri Lanka to the coastal lands of Southeast Asia.

The Theravada school spread south from India in the 3rd century BCE, to Sri Lanka and Thailand and Burma and later also Indonesia. The Dharmagupta school spread (also in 3rd century BCE) north to Kashmir, Gandhara and Bactria (Afghanistan).

The Silk Road transmission of Buddhism to China is most commonly thought to have started in the late 2nd or the 1st century CE, though the literary sources are all open to question. The first documented translation efforts by foreign Buddhist monks in China were in the 2nd century CE, probably as a consequence of the expansion of the Kushan Empire into the Chinese territory of the Tarim Basin.

In the 2nd century CE, Mahayana Sutras spread to China, and then to Korea and Japan, and were translated into Chinese. During the Indian period of Esoteric Buddhism (from the 8th century onwards), Buddhism spread from India to Tibet and Mongolia.

Theravada school

## *Theravada*

Theravada ("Doctrine of the Elders", or "Ancient Doctrine") is the oldest surviving Buddhist school. It is relatively conservative, and *generally* closest to early Buddhism. This school is derived from the Vibhajjavāda grouping that emerged amongst the older Sthavira group at the time of the Third Buddhist Council (c. 250 BCE). This school gradually declined on the Indian subcontinent, but its branch in Sri Lanka and South East Asia continues to survive.

The Theravada school bases its practice and doctrine exclusively on the Pāli Canon and its commentaries. After being orally transmitted for a few centuries, its scriptures, the Pali Canon, were finally committed to writing in the 1st century BCE, in Sri Lanka, at what the Theravada usually reckon as the fourth council. It is also one of the first Buddhist schools to commit the complete set of its canon into writing. The Sutta collections and Vinaya texts of the Pāli Canon (and the corresponding texts in other versions of the Tripitaka), are generally considered by modern scholars to be the earliest Buddhist literature, and they are accepted as authentic in every branch of Buddhism.

#### Mahayana traditions

Chinese and Central Asian monks. Bezeklik, Eastern Tarim Basin, China, 9th–10th century. (National Institute of Informatics and the Tōyō Bunko)

Mahayana Buddhism flourished in India from the 5th century CE onwards, during the dynasty of the Guptas. Mahāyāna centres of learning were established, the most important one being the Nālandā University in north-eastern India.

Mahayana schools recognize all or part of the Mahayana Sutras. Some of these sutras became for Mahayanists a manifestation of the Buddha himself, and faith in and veneration of those texts are stated in some sutras (e.g. the Lotus Sutra and the Mahaparinirvana Sutra) to lay the foundations for the later attainment of Buddhahood itself.

#### Vajrayana traditions

The Vajrayana tradition of Buddhism spread to China, Mongolia, and Tibet. In Tibet, Vajrayana has always been a main component of Tibetan Buddhism, while in China it formed a separate sect. However, Vajrayana Buddhism became extinct in China but survived in elements of Japan's Shingon and Tendai sects.

There are differing views as to just when Vajrayāna and its tantric practice started. In the Tibetan tradition, it is claimed that the historical Śākyamuni Buddha taught tantra, but as these are esoteric teachings, they were passed on orally first and only written down long after the Buddha's other teachings. Nālandā University became a center for the development of Vajrayāna theory and continued as the source of leading-edge Vajrayāna practices up through the 11th century. These practices, scriptures and theories were transmitted to China, Tibet, Indochina and Southeast Asia. China generally received Indian transmission up to the 11th century including tantric practice, while a vast amount of what is considered Tibetan Buddhism (Vajrayāna) stems from the late (9th–12th century) Nālandā tradition.

Vajrayana combined and developed a variety of elements, a number of which had already existed for centuries. In addition to the Mahāyāna scriptures, Vajrayāna Buddhists recognise a

large body of Buddhist Tantras, some of which are also included in Chinese and Japanese collections of Buddhist literature, and versions of a few even in the Pali Canon.

### *Buddhist texts*

Buddhist scriptures and other texts exist in great variety. Different schools of Buddhism place varying levels of value on learning the various texts. Some schools venerate certain texts as religious objects in themselves, while others take a more scholastic approach. Buddhist scriptures are mainly written in Pāli, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese. Some texts still exist in Sanskrit and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.

Unlike many religions, Buddhism has no single central text that is universally referred to by all traditions. However, some scholars have referred to the Vinaya Pitaka and the first four Nikayas of the Sutta Pitaka as the common core of all Buddhist traditions. This could be considered misleading, as Mahāyāna considers these merely a preliminary, and not a core, teaching. The Tibetan Buddhists have not even translated most of the āgamas (though theoretically they recognize them) and they play no part in the religious life of either clergy or laity in China and Japan. Other scholars say there is no universally accepted common core. The size and complexity of the Buddhist canons have been seen by some (including Buddhist social reformer Babasaheb Ambedkar) as presenting barriers to the wider understanding of Buddhist philosophy.

The followers of Theravāda Buddhism take the scriptures known as the Pāli Canon as definitive and authoritative, while the followers of Mahāyāna Buddhism base their faith and philosophy primarily on the Mahāyāna sūtras and their own *vinaya*. The Pāli sutras, along with other, closely related scriptures, are known to the other schools as the *āgamas*.

### Pāli Tipitaka

#### *Pāli Canon*

| Pāli Canon                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vinaya Pitaka                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suttavibhanga</li><li>• Khandhaka</li><li>• Parivara</li></ul>                                        |
| Sutta Pitaka                                                                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Digha Nikaya</li><li>• Majjhima Nikaya</li><li>• Samyutta Nikaya</li><li>• Anguttara Nikaya</li></ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Khuddaka Nikaya</li> </ul>                                                                                                                          |
| Abhidhamma Pitaka                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dhammasangani</li> <li>• Vibhanga</li> <li>• Dhatukatha and Puggalapannatti</li> <li>• Kathavatthu</li> <li>• Yamaka</li> <li>• Patthana</li> </ul> |

Causes for the Decline of Buddhism: Many causes were responsible for the gradual decline and fall of Buddhism in the land of her birth although it continued to flourish in countries beyond India for centuries. Even today, it has a large number of followers all over the world. However, it has practically disappeared from India.

1. One important cause of the decline of Buddhism was the decline of Buddhist Sangha. With the passage of time, the Sangha became the hot bed of intrigues and corruption. There was more of mutual fighting than of actual work. While doing so, they could not claim any superiority over Brahmanical priests and consequently people lost all respect for them. They could not inspire any confidence and came to be looked down upon. The Mahayanist and Hinayanist priests began to condemn each other openly. Internal dissensions proved to be the ruin of Buddhism.
2. The revival of Brahmanical Hinduism also gave a setback to the cause of decline of Buddhism. The Gupta rulers were great patrons of Brahmanical religions and consequently did a lot for that religion. The loss of the royal patronage must have weakened Buddhism in India. Moreover, it was felt that the Buddhist principle of Ahimsa was responsible for the misfortunes of the country.
3. From the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the 12<sup>th</sup> century most of the Northern Indian was governed by the Rajput princies who took pleasure in fighting and bloodshed. The Buddhist principle of Ahimsa did not appeal to them. They were prepared to help Hinduism which was a martial religion. No wonder, Buddhism practically disappeared from the whole of Northern India.
4. The Buddhist Viharas were full of gold and wealth and no wonder their riches excited the greed of the Muslim invaders. The Viharas became the targets of the Muslims whose main object was to get money.
5. Another cause of the weakness of Buddhism was the decline of intellectual activity and the development of the Tantric or the magic form of Buddhism which was Saivism in disguise.
6. disguise.

### Conclusion:

Thus the Buddhism had great impact on the contemporary polity, society, economy and religion. From time to time many changes were introduced in their new religions.

### Questions:

1. Discuss the life, career and preachings of Buddhism.
2. What are the different principles of Buddhism.
3. Write about different sects of Buddhism.
4. Trace the rise, spread and decline of Buddhism in India.
5. Write about different Buddhist councils.

Lesson Writer

V.V. Ramana



## Lesson-16

### JAINISM

**Aim:** To know about the origin of Jainism, life and career of Mahavira and principles, the doctrines, spread and decline of Jainism.

#### Topics:

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Prasvanath
- .3 Mahavira
- .4 Five major Vows
- .5 Jainism after Mahavira
- .6 Spread of Jainism
- .7 Jain Doctrines
  - .7.1 Non-Violence
  - .7.2 Non-Absolutism
  - .7.3 Non-Possiveness
- .8 Orgin
- .9 Literatures
- .10 Decline of Jainism
- .11 Conclusions

#### Introduction:

##### Parsva and Mahavira:

Jain tradition speaks of twenty four Tirthankaras or “ford-makers across the streak of existence”, each of whom preached the doctrine to his own age. Of these, however, the first twenty-two seem to be completely mythical and have no historical foundation.

The case, however, is different with the last two prophets, Parsava and Mahavira. All that Jain tradition reports of them is quite probable. The contemporaries of Mahavira were well-known and the Buddhist canon supplies us with incontrovertible proof of their historicity.

We know very few facts of Parsava' s life. He is said to have been a son of Asvasena, king of Benaras, and his wife was Vama. He lived for 30 years as a householder, then became an ascetic and after performing penance for 84 days, he received enlightenment. He lived for a full hundred years and died on Mount Samment in Bengal, some 250 years before mahavira. He

must have been of a genial nature as he is always given the epithet "purisadaniya beloved of men".

The followers of Parsva preached that self control(samyama)results in the cessation of Karma(anhaga), and penance leads to its annihilation. With this Mahavira agreed as well as with the four vows enunciated by Parsva, i.e, that life should not be taken, no falsehood spoken, nothing should be received which is not freely given, and non-attachment should be practiced (bahiddhadanao veramanamte). Finally there was this outward difference between the two sects, that Parsva allowed the use of a white garment by the monks, while Mahavira forbade even this. Hence the two Jain sects are entitled Svetambaras (white-clad) and Digambara(sky-clad or naked).

It is thus highly probable that some kind of Jain faith existed before Mahavira, and his teachings were based on it. The conversation between Kesi and Goyama in the Uttaradhyayana testifies to their friendly relations and points out that, in spite of some minor difference, the two were essentially the same. By the very nature of the case, tradition has preserved only those points of Parsva's teachings which differed from the religion of Mahavira, while other common points are ignored. The few differences that are known make Mahavira definitely a reformer of an existing faith, and the addition of a vow, the importance of nudity and a more systematic arrangement of its philosophical tenets may be credited to his reforming zeal.

Some authentic facts of Mahavira's life can be collected from the Ardha-Magadhi canon. He was born in suburb of Vaisali, called Kundagrama, now known as Basukunda. He belonged to the Naya clan known as Nata in Pali and Jnatri in Sanskrit. His parents were Siddhartha, a wealthy nobleman, and Trisala sister of Chetaka, an eminent Lichchhaavi prince of Vaisali. Tradition emphasis the importance of Mahavira's noble birth and tells of the transference of his embryo from the womb of the Brahmana lady Devananda, wife of Rishabha, to that of Trisala. It is difficult to ascertain how old this belief is, but the canon makes Mahavira speak of Devananda as his mother and the role of Harinegamesi in the transference of the embryo. A sculpture from Mathura also represents this scene. The original name of the prophet was Vardhanamana, while his more popular name Mahavira is said to have been bestowed on him by the Gods. The canon also gives him a number of suggestive epithets like Nayaputta (a scion of the Naya clan), Kasava on account of his gotra, Vesaliya after his place of birth, and Vedehadinna after his native country. He is most frequently referred to as 'the venerable ascetic Mahavira.'

As the normal age Mahavira married Yasoda and had a daughter called Anojja or Priyadarsana. She was married to a son of his sister, Jamali, whose name is not found in older sources but only in the Avasyaka tradition. The suppression of his name in early books of the canon may be due to the ignominious role he plays in church history as the originator of the first schism.

Not to grieve his parents, Mahavira became a monk only after their death and with the permission of his elder brother Nandivardhana. He was at that time 30 years old. He left his home at the beginning of winter, which shows his inclination towards severe asceticism. Thirteen months after, also in winter, he abandoned his clothing and began to wander abroad as a naked monk. This was probably the first important step in the reformation of the church of

Parsva, which allowed clothing. Mahavira attributed life not only to animals and plants, but to material objects like earth and water, assumed the real cause of worldly misery to be karma, engendered by indulgence in sensual pleasure, and the essential misery of life to be due to the endless cycle of birth and death. His own behavior furnished an example to be followed by the monks in their religious life. Jain tradition tells us that Mahavira was born with the three types of knowledge, acquired the fourth at the beginning of his monkhood, and achieved omniscience under a Sala tree at the end of 12 years of austerity, on the bank of the river Rijupalika not far from the village Jrimbhikagrama. Henceforth he entered on his career as a religious teacher.

The acquisition of perfect knowledge entailed the continuation of a wandering mode of life and constant preaching of his doctrines to all kinds of men. He wandered for eight months of the year and spent the four months of the rainy season in some famous towns of eastern India. The Jain tradition gives the name of such places as Champa, Vaisali, Rajagriha, Mithila and Sravasti where he spent one or more seasons. They give us a fair idea of the country over which he wandered propagating his faith. With the spread of his fame, he was now better received by the people, and famous kings came to hear his preach. At the age of 72 Mahavira died in a place called Majjhima Pava in the house of ruler of the name of Hastipala. This place is said to be the modern Pavapuri in the Patna District. We are told that on the night of his death the kings of two clans, the Mallas, and the Lichchhavis, celebrated the lamp festival in his honour.

Like Buddhism, Jainism also received royal patronage from the very beginning. Srenika, the king of Magadha, was devoted to Mahavira, and was related to the prophet on his mother's side. The Jain attempt to explain away the parricidal act of his son Ajatasatru or Kunika would indicate that he was more inclined to Jainism than to other religions. Later Jain tradition, without much historical support, however, brings nearly all the kings of north India in those days in relation to Mahavira by describing their queens as daughters of Chetaka, the maternal uncle of Mahavira.

### Five Major Vows:

Jainism encourages spiritual development through cultivation of personal wisdom and through reliance on self-control through vows. Jains accept different levels of compliance for strict followers and laymen. Followers of this religion undertake five major vows:

1. Ahimsa: Ahimsa means nonviolence. The first major vow taken by followers is to cause no harm to living beings. It involves minimizing intentional and unintentional harm to other living creatures.
2. Satya: Satya figuratively means truth. This vow is to always speak the truth. Given that non-violence has priority, other principles yield to it whenever they conflict: in a situation where speaking truth could lead to violence, silence is to be observed.
3. Asteya: The third vow, asteya, is to not take anything that is not willingly offered. Attempting to extort material wealth from others or to exploit the weak is considered theft.
4. Brahmacharya: The vow of brahmacharya requires the exercise of control over the senses by refraining from indulgence in sexual activity.

5. Aparigraha: Aparigraha means non-possessiveness. This vow is to observe detachment from people, places and material things. Strict Jains completely renounce property and social relations.

Monks and nuns are obligated to practice the five cardinal principles of nonviolence, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, and non-possessiveness very strictly, while laymen are encouraged to observe them within their current practical limitations. This may mean avoiding sexual promiscuity for laymen.

Additionally, Jainism identifies four passions of the mind: Anger, Pride (Ego), Deceitfulness and Greed. Jainism recommends conquering anger by forgiveness, pride (ego) by humility, deceitfulness by straight-forwardness and greed by contentment.

## JAINISM AFTER MAHAVIRA:

For a few centuries after the death of Mahavira, the history of Jainism means little more than the history of the Jain Church. We have a regular account, mostly a farrago of myth and historical reminiscence, of the Jain patriarchs, with a reference, now and then, to some ruling king favourably disposed towards the faith. While the agreement between the two major sects covers only a few immediate successors of Mahavira and comes hardly up to Bhadrabahu, some 170 years after his death. There is also a gradual shift of the center of gravity of the community, which slowly spreads to the west and the south of its original home.

The two sects of Jainism like Svetambaras and Digambaras were more successful and resulted in a sharp division of the church, each section claiming greater authenticity than the other. The traditional accounts of the origin of this split are purely and the outcome of sectarian hatred. The evidence of the literary writings of the Svetambaras and early sculptures goes to show that most of the differences between the two sects were of slow growth and did not arise at all one time.

Attempts to explain the origin of this split are mainly based upon only one divergent practice, that of wearing a white robe or going naked, which has given the two sects their names. The split is sometimes traced to differences between the practices of Mahavira and his predecessor Parsva, or the more austere life of his pupil, or to the events caused by the great famine in Magadha which occurred at the time of Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta, causing the migration of a section of the community to the south.

When the first council was held at Pataliputra to compile the canon, a group given to a more severe mode of life, appears to have repudiated it, perhaps due to the migration to the coast caused by the famine. Along with such a group there must have also existed other holdings views which combined the opinions of both the sects in various ways. With their disappearance in course of time, the two sects found themselves in sharp contrast and finally fell apart. By the very nature of the case, no precise date can be assigned to this process.

## SPREAD OF JAINISM:

The spread of Jainism was more a case of successive migrations than of continuous expansion. In spite of the mechanical scheme visible in the traditional account of the different migrations, said to be caused by a famine of 12 years duration, we find them confirmed by other evidence, and the traditional agrees with all the historical facts of the spread of this religion. The wanderings of Mahavira gives us a fair idea of the original extent of Jainism. This included the kingdoms of Kosala, Videha, Magadha and Anga.

One early migration led the community to the south-east, the country of Kalinga, as can be seen from the famous inscription of Kharavela. The numerous caves on the Udayagiri and Khandagiri hills testify to the continued existence of the Jain faith in this part of the country.

A similar extension or migration of the Jain community to the west must have early brought it to Mathura. We have the ruins of Jain shrine dating back to the pre-Christian period and a large number of small inscriptions, engraved on the images of the Jinas, votive tablets, arches dating from the first two centuries of the Christian era.

The extension of Jainism to South India is associated with the migration of the Digambaras to this locality. The problem is complicated by the nature of the evidence, which is insufficient to lead to any definite conclusion. Scholars of south India history have mostly accepted that Digambara tradition have taken place with the Bhadrabahu to seek shelter in the south, with Sravana Belagola as its centre. The svetambara tradition however, makes the migration proceed from Ujjain in Malwa.

## Jain Doctrines:

### Non-violence

#### *Ahimsa in Jainism*

The principle of nonviolence or ahimsa is the most fundamental and well known aspect of Jain religious practice. Nonviolence is seen as the most essential religious duty for everyone. The everyday implementation of ahimsa is more scrupulous and comprehensive than in other religions and the most significant hallmark for Jain identity. Mahatma Gandhi notably practiced and preached ahimsa.

Jainism defines violence as intentional or unintentional harm. It is intentional harm and the absence of compassion that make an action more violent. Jains believe in avoiding harm to others through actions, speech and thoughts. This is practiced first and foremost as it applies to interactions with other individuals.

Jains extend the practice of nonviolence towards all living beings. Although every life-form is said to deserve protection from injury, Jains admit that this ideal cannot be completely implemented in practice. Hence, they recognize a hierarchy of life that gives less protection to immobile beings than to mobile ones, which are further distinguished by the number of senses they possess, from one to five. The more senses a being has, the more care Jains take for its

protection. Among those with five senses, rational beings (humans) are the most strongly protected by ahimsa.

Jains also go out of their way not to hurt even small insects and other minuscule animals. Insects in the home are often escorted out instead of killed. Honey production is not supported if it amounts to violence against the bees. Jain monks and nuns may minimize going out at night when it is more likely that they might trample insects. Per Jainism, injury caused by carelessness is like injury caused by deliberate action. Jain farming is careful to avoid unintentional killing or injuring of small animals, such as worms and insects. They usually keep a cloth for ritual mouth-covering to avoid any insects or micro-organisms that may enter the mouth while talking or otherwise. Additionally, Jains consider harsh words to be a form of violence and is thus preached not to allow violence in their speech and hurt anyone's feelings.

Jains agree that violence in self-defense can be justified, and that a soldier who kills enemies in combat is performing a legitimate duty. Jain communities have accepted the use of military power for their defense, and there have been Jain monarchs, military commanders, and soldiers.

#### *Anekantavada*

The second main principle of Jainism is anēkāntavāda. It refers to the principles of pluralism and multiplicity of viewpoints, and to the notion that truth and reality are perceived differently from diverse points of view, no single one of which is complete.

Anekāntavāda encourages its adherents to consider the views and beliefs of their rivals and opposing parties. Proponents of anekāntavāda apply this principle to religions and philosophies, reminding themselves that any of these—even Jainism—that clings too dogmatically to its own tenets is committing an error based on its limited point of view. The principle of anekāntavāda also influenced Mahatma Gandhi to adopt principles of religious tolerance, *ahimsā* and *satyagraha*.

Jains contrast attempts to proclaim absolute truth with this theory, which can be illustrated through the parable of the blind men and an elephant. In this story, each blind man feels a different part of an elephant: its trunk, leg, ear, and so on. All of them claim to understand and explain the true appearance of the elephant but, due to their limited perspectives, can only partly succeed. This principle is more formally stated by observing that objects are infinite in their qualities and modes of existence, so they cannot be completely grasped in all aspects and manifestations by finite human perception. Only Kevalins—omniscient beings—can comprehend objects in all aspects and manifestations; others are only capable of partial knowledge. Accordingly, no single, specific, human view can claim to represent absolute truth.

Syādvāda is the theory of conditioned predication, which recommends the expression of anekānta by prefixing the epithet Syād to every phrase or expression. Syādvāda is not only an extension of anekānta into ontology, but a separate system of logic capable of standing on its own. The Sanskrit etymological root of the term syād is "perhaps" or "maybe", but in the context of syādvāda it means "in some ways" or "from some perspective". As reality is complex, no single proposition can express its nature fully. The term *syāt-* should therefore be prefixed to each proposition, giving it a conditional point of view and thus removing dogmatism from the statement. Since it comprises seven different conditional and relative viewpoints or propositions,

syādvāda is known as saptibhaṅgīnāya or the theory of seven conditioned predications. These seven propositions, also known as saptibhaṅgi, are:

1. *syād-asti*—in some ways, it is;
2. *syād-nāsti*—in some ways, it is not;
3. *syād-asti-nāsti*—in some ways, it is, and it is not;
4. *syād-asti-avaktavyaḥ*—in some ways, it is, and it is indescribable;
5. *syād-nāsti-avaktavyaḥ*—in some ways, it is not, and it is indescribable;
6. *syād-asti-nāsti-avaktavyaḥ*—in some ways, it is, it is not, and it is indescribable;
7. *syād-avaktavyaḥ*—in some ways, it is indescribable.

Each of these seven propositions examines the complex and multifaceted nature of reality from a relative point of view of time, space, substance and mode. To ignore the complexity of reality is to commit the fallacy of dogmatism.

#### Non-Possessiveness

##### *Aparigraha*

The third main principle in Jainism is Aparigraha (non-possessiveness). Aparigraha is the Sanskrit word for greedlessness or non-grasping. Jainism emphasizes taking no more than is truly necessary. Ownership of objects and roles to discharge duties is not possessiveness. However attachment to them is possessiveness. Followers should minimize tendency to hoard unnecessary material possessions and limit attachment to current possessions. Wealth and possessions should be shared and donated whenever possible. Jainism believes that unchecked attachment to possessions can lead to direct harm to oneself and others

The origins of Jainism are obscure. During the 5th or 6th century BC, Vardhamana Mahāvīra became one of the most influential teachers of Jainism. Mahāvīra, however, was most probably not the founder of Jainism, which reveres him as the last of the great tīrthaṅkaras of this age and *not* the founder of the religion. He appears in the tradition as one who, from the beginning, had followed a religion established long ago.

Pārśva, the traditional predecessor of Mahāvīra, is the first Jain figure for whom there is reasonable historical evidence. He might have lived somewhere in the 9th–7th century BC. Followers of Pārśva are mentioned in the canonical books; and a legend in the *Uttarādhyayana* sūtra relates a meeting between a disciple of Pārśva and a disciple of Mahāvīra which brought about the union of the old branch of the Jain ideology and the new one.

The word Jainism is derived from the Sanskrit verb roots *Jin* ("to conquer"). It refers to a battle with the passions and bodily pleasures that the Jain ascetics undertake. Those who win this battle are termed as *Jīna* (conqueror). The term *Jaina* is therefore used to refer to laymen and ascetics of this tradition alike.

A Jain manuscript giving instructions on how best to live a proper Jain life

The tradition talks about a body of scriptures preached by all the tirthankaras of Jainism. These scriptures were contained in fourteen parts and were known as the purvas. These were memorised and passed on through the ages, but were vulnerable and were lost because of famine that caused the death of several saints within a thousand years of Mahāvīra's death. The Jain Agamas are canonical texts of Jainism based on Mahāvīra's teachings. These comprise forty-six works: twelve *angās*, twelve *upanga āgamas*, six *chedasūtras*, four *mūlasūtras*, ten *prakīrnaka sūtras* and two *cūlikasūtras*.

There are two major denominations of Jain monks and nuns, the Śvētāmbara ("white-clad", who wear white garments) and Digambara, or "Sky Clad", who, as a further austerity, eschew clothing altogether. The Digambara sect of Jainism maintains that these agamas were also lost during the same famine. In the absence of authentic scriptures, Digambaras use about twenty-five scriptures written for their religious practice by great Acharyas. These include two main texts, four *Pratham-Anuyog*, three *charn-anuyoga*, four *karan-anuyoga* and twelve *dravya-anuyoga*.

Jains flourished in Tamil Nadu at least as early as the Sangam period. Tamil Jain tradition places their origins much earlier. The Ramayana mentions that Rama paid homage to Jain monks living in South India on his way to Sri Lanka. Some scholars believe that the author of the oldest extant work of literature in Tamil (3rd century BCE), Tolkāppiyam, was a Jain.

Tirukkural by Thiruvalluvar is considered by many to be the work of a Jain by scholars like V. Kalyanasundamar, Vaiyapuri Pillai, Swaminatha Iyer, P.S. Sundaram. It emphatically supports vegetarianism (Chapter 26) and states that giving up animal sacrifice is worth more than thousand offerings in fire (verse (259).

*Nālaṭṭiyār* was composed by Jain monks from South India during 100-500 CE. It is divided into three sections, the first section focusing on the importance of virtuous life, second section on the governance and management of wealth, and the third smaller section on the pleasures.

Silappatikaram, the earliest surviving epic in Tamil literature, was written by a Jain (Samaṇa), Ilango Adigal. This epic is a major work in Tamil literature, describing the historical events of its time and also of then-prevailing religions, Jainism, Buddhism and Shaivism. The main characters of this work, Kannagi and Kovalan, who have a divine status among Tamils, were Jains.

Jains developed a system of philosophy and ethics that had a great impact on Indian culture. They have contributed to the culture and language of the Indian states Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Jain scholars and poets authored Tamil classics of the Sangam period, such as the *Cīvaka Cintāmaṇi* and *Nālaṭṭiyār*. In the beginning of the mediaeval period, between the 9th and 13th centuries, Kannada language authors were predominantly of the Jain and Lingayati faiths. Jains were the earliest known cultivators of Kannada literature, which they dominated until the 12th century. Jains wrote about the tirthankara and other aspects of the faith. Adikavi Pampa is one of the greatest Kannada poets. Court poet to the Chalukya king Arikesari, a Rashtrakuta feudatory, he is best known for his *Vikramarjuna Vijaya*.

Jains encourage their monastics to do research and obtain higher education. Monks and nuns, particularly in Rajasthan, have published numerous research monographs. The 2001 census



states that Jains are India's most literate community. Jain libraries, including those at Patan and Jaisalmer, have a large number of well preserved manuscripts.

### DECLINE OF Jainism:

Once a major religion, Jainism declined due to a number of factors, including proselytising by other religious groups, persecution, withdrawal of royal patronage, sectarian fragmentation and the absence of central leadership. Since the time of Mahavira, Jainism faced rivalry with Buddhism and the various Hindu sects. The Jains suffered isolated violent persecutions by these groups, but the main factor responsible for the decline of their religion was the success of Hindu reformist movements. Around the 7th century, Shaivism saw considerable growth at the expense of Jainism due to the efforts of the Shaivite poets like Sambandar and Appar. Around the 8th century CE, the Hindu philosophers Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and Adi Shankara tried to restore the orthodox Vedic religion.

Royal patronage has been a key factor in the growth as well as decline of Jainism. The Pallava king Mahendravarman I (600–630 CE) converted from Jainism to Shaivism under the influence of Appar. His work *Mattavilasa Prahasana* ridicules certain Shaiva sects and the Buddhists and also expresses contempt towards Jain ascetics. Sambandar converted the contemporary Pandya king back to Shaivism. During the 11th century Brahmana Basava, a minister to the Jain king Bijjala, succeeded in converting numerous Jains to the Lingayat Shaivite sect. The Lingayats destroyed various temples belonging to Jains and adapted them to their use. The Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana (c. 1108–1152 CE) became a follower of the Vaishnava sect under the influence of Ramanuja, after which Vaishnavism grew rapidly in the present-day Karnataka. As the Hindu sects grew, the Jains compromised by following Hindu rituals and customs and invoking Hindu deities in Jain literature.

There are several legends about the mass massacre of Jains in the ancient times. The Buddhist king Ashoka (304-232 BCE) is said to have ordered killings of 18,000 Jains or Ajivikas after someone drew a picture of Buddha bowing at the feet of Mahavira. The Saivite king Koon Pandiyan, who briefly converted to Jainism, is said to have ordered a massacre of 8,000 Jains after his re-conversion to Saivism. However, these legends are not found in the Jain texts, and appear to be fabricated propaganda by Buddhists and Saivites. Such stories of destruction of one sect by another sect were common at the time, and were used as a way to prove the superiority of one sect over the other. There are stories about a Jain king of Kanchi persecuting the Buddhists in a similar way. Another such legend about Vishnuvardhana ordering the Jains to be crushed in an oil mill doesn't appear to be historically true.

The decline of Jainism continued after the Islamic conquest of India. The Muslims conquerors of India, such as Mahmud Ghazni (1001), Mohammad Gori (1175) and Ala-ud-din Muhammed Shah Khilji (1298) further oppressed the Jain community. They vandalised idols and destroyed temples or converted them into mosques. They also burned the Jain books and killed Jains. Some conversions were peaceful, however; Pir Mahabir Khamdayat (c. 13th century CE) is well known for his peaceful propagation of Islam. The Jains also enjoyed amicable relations with the rulers of the tributary Hindu kingdoms during this period; however, their number and influence had diminished significantly due to their rivalry with the Saivite and the Vaisnavite sects.

### Conclusion:

Thus, Jainism spread all over India and was patronised by the kings and business groups. It enriched the literature of the different languages in India from time to time.

### Questions:

1. Discuss the life and preachings of Mahavira.
2. Write about the doctrines of Jainism and its different sects.
3. Give a brief account of Jain Literature.
4. Explain the growth and decline of Jainism.

Lesson Writer

V.V. Ramana

## Lesson-17

### Bhagavatism and Krishna Cult

#### (Bhakti Cult)

**Aim:** To know about the origin of Bhagavatism and the importance of this religion and the doctrines of Bhagavad Gita.

**Topics:**

- .1 introduction
- .2 origin of Bhagavatism
- .3 BHAGAVADGITA OR GITA
- .4 The Doctrines of Bhagavata Gita
- .5 NEED OF BHAGVATISM
- .6 Relation of Bhagavathism with other creeds
- .7 Conclusions

#### Introduction:

In the sixth century B.C. Bhagavatism or Krishnaism flourished side by side with Buddhism and Jainism. Bhagavatism or Krishnaism as a religious creed developed round devotion for Vishnu. In the Rigveda there is some reference to Vishnu as an aspect of the Sun. In the Later Vedic literature Vishnu is associated with Vedic Yajnas or sacrifices. Probably a separate religious sect in the name of Vishnu did not grow in the Vedic Age. Vishnu was yet considered as one of the Vedic and Brahmanical gods. Then how did the cult of Bhakti or devotion for Vishnu develop? Bhandarkar has suggested that the origin of the Bhakti cult can be traced in the Upanishadas where it is said that salvation will come by pure devotion and not by worship or Yajna. In the post-Vedic Age there was a tendency of compromise between Brahmanism and pre-Aryan religious belief. Perhaps Bhakti cult was a legacy of pre-Aryan religious belief.

#### Origin of Bhagavatism:

The origin of Bhagavatism or Vaishnavism has been sought in the Upanishadic period because in the 'Chhandogya Upanishada' Krishna is described as a disciple of the sage Ghora. The teachings which Ghora imparted to Krishna had much relevance to the teachings of the Bhagabat Gita which Lord Krishna expounded to Arjuna. The Krishna of Chhandogya Upanishada is also described as son of mother Devaki, as Krishna is described in tradition as Devaki Putra. The Chhandogya Upanishad's hymn therefore testifies that Krishna was a human being who was a disciple of Ghora. Later on Krishna was deified.

In the 'Mahabharata' and the 'Puranas' Vasudeva Krishna is described as the chief of the Vrishni clan and Krishna was deified. He was worshipped by the Vrishni clan and

also by the Pandavas. Scholars have pointed out that Vasudeva Krishna was a hero. His hero cult and his other virtues led to his deification. The 'Astadhyi' of Panini which belonged to the fifth century B.C. referred to the Bhagavata sect and the devotees of Vasudeva i.e. Vasudevaka. Panini mentions clear deification of Vasudeva. Later in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. Megasthenes remarked that, "People of Souraseni worshipped Heracles." This Heracles was no other than Vasudeva Krishna. Both grew out of hero cult and the theme of Heracles destroying the great multi-fanged serpent has some resemblance in the Kaliya Damana story of Krishna. Thus Krishna worship was noticed by Megasthenes in the 4th century B.C.

The Krishna cult was suitable for agrarian society of post-Vedic Age. In the Vedic and Brahmanical religion large number of oxen and horses were sacrificed in a Yajna. It caused hardship to peasants. The worship of different gods involved the house holders with great expenses. In Krishna worship Bhakti or devotion replaced Yajna and Puja. Krishna was a protector of cattle and legends grew about his pastoral life. Krishna's elder brother Balarama or Sankarashana represented the culture of tilling land and his symbol was plough. This had great appeal to agrarian culture of common house-holders. D.D. Kosambi has pointed out that Quintus Curtius has hinted on the worship of Heracles in Punjab. Now if we identify Heracles with Krishna then in agriculturally fertile Punjab Krishna cult became popular.

Bhagavatism under-went some transformation with rise of the doctrine of four vyuhas. Four heroes of Vrishni clan were deified—they were regarded as parts of Vasudeva. They were Sankarashana, Vasudeva Krishna, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Vaishnavism could adopt local religious beliefs and rites due to the doctrine of four Byuhas. It was said that Krishna revealed he in 4 apparitions. It is believed by many scholars that the doctrine of Byuhas originated from the Brahma Sutra. But many others have expressed doubt about the theory. The reference to the doctrine of Byuhas can be found in Bhagavatism in the Second century B.C. Perhaps three other heroes of Vrishni clan were deified apart from Vasudeva and this led to the rise of the doctrine of Byuhas. The Guosundi inscription of Chitore in Rajputana and the Nan Ghat inscription only refer to Samkarsana and Vasudeva. This indicates that the evolution of 4 Byuhas was gradual.

The Bhagavata religion, which originated with the Yadava-Satvata-Vrishni people of Mathura era, appears to have pread to western India and the northern Deccan with the migration of the numerous Yadava tribes. As already observed, Vasudeva was probably deified, atleast partially, and worshipped by his own people as early as the age of Panini, although he may or may not have been regarded as the supreme god. It cannot be ignored that the identification of Vasudeva with the highest god is not recognized in the earlier parts of the Mahabharata. The reviling scene in the sabhaparvan shows that Vasudeva-Krishna's Claim to devine honours was sometimes openly challenged. Even in the Gita, Vasudeva-Krishna laments that the magnanimous person who says "vasudeava is All" is rare, and that people scorn him. Vasudeva sometimes described as a pious hypocrite, and it is only in late passages that he is represented as a friend of Brahmanas, the originator of the Vedas, and perfectly identical with Vishnu. The Mahabhashya refers to the Kamsabhaktas who were Kalamukha (dark faced) and to Vasudeva bhaktas who were raktamukha (red faced) although the reference is possibly to the masked stage-players of the Kamsa-vadha story.

A Besnagar (old Gwalior State) inscription of the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., refers to garuda dhvaja (column surmounted by the figure of Garuda conceived as the emblem of Vahana of Vishnu) raised to Vidisa in honour of Vasudeva, the deva-deva (the

greatest god), by his Yavana or Greek devotee Heliodorus, an inhabitant of Takshashila in Gandhara, who calls himself a Bhagavata i.e. a worshipper of Bhagavat (Vasudeva-Vishnu). Another inscription from Besnagar speaks of the erection of the Garuda column of an excellent temple (prasadtama) of the Bhagavat (Vasudeva).

The Ghosundi (Chittorgarh District, Rajputana) inscription of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., refers to the construction of puja-sila-prakara (a stone enclosure for the place to worship, of better an enclosure for the sacred stone called Salagrama believed to be typical of Vishnu as the Linga is of Shiva), probably styled Narayanavataka, by a Bhagavata performer of the Asvamedha sacrifice, in honour Sankarshana and Vasudeva who are called Bhagavat, anihata (unconquered or respected), and sarvasena (supreme lord). The Nanaghat inscription of the same age to the queen of a Satavahana performer of numerous Vedic sacrifices begins with an adoration to the gods Dharma, Indra, Sankarsha, and Vasudeva, the Moon and the Sun, and the four Lokapalas.

These epigraphs support what is already known from literary evidence as regards Vasudeva's association with Garuda and therefore with Vishnu, with the Vrishni Sankarshana as well as with Narayana long before the birth of Christ. He is not called Krishna in the earlier epigraphic literature of India; but the use of Krishna as another name of Vasudeva in such works as the Mahabharata, the Ghata Jataka and the Mahabhasya should probably be ascribed to a pre-Christian date.

The spread of the Bhagavata religion far outside the Mathura region and the Yadava-Satvaha-Vrishni people, especially amongst performers of Vedic sacrifices in western India and the northern Deccan, is thus clearly indicated by epigraphic evidence; but the Satavahana record at Nanaghat also shows that some people regarded Vasudeva, even in the first century B.C., not as the greatest of all gods, but only as an equal of Indra and other gods. That another Satavahana king of the second century A.D. claim to be equal to Rama (Baladeva and Sankarshana) and Kesava (Vasudeva-Krishna) is also noteworthy. The growing importance of Vasudevism in South India is, however, indicated by the Chinnai (Krishna district) inscription of the second century A.D. which begins with an adoration to Vasudeva, and a Prakrit charter of the Pallavas referring to a devakula of Bhagavat Narayana somewhere in the Guntur district.

The introduction of Bhagavatism in the far south at a much earlier date is indicated by the relation of the Pandyas with the Pandavas and Surasenas, alluded to in the confused stories narrated by Megasthenes about Herakles and Pandaia and in the grammatical work of Kathayana, and by the name of the Pandya capital Madhura, adapted from that of Madhura, the original home of the Vasudeva cult.

Iconic representations of the god Vishnu-Vasudeva cannot be traced much earlier than the beginning of the Christian era. A four-armed figure of the deity, with Chakra in the upper left hand, is found on the coins of the Panchala king Vishnumitra in evident allusion to the issuer's name. A similar representation of the four-armed Vishnu, with Sankha, Chakra, Gada and a ring-like object, instead of the lotus, in the hands, appears in a Kushana seal-matrix attributed by Cunningham to Huvishka. It is interesting that the Kushana king is represented as reverentially looking up at the god with his hands in the anguli pose. He may have become for some time a worshipper of Vasudeva. Some of the Huvishka's coins bear the figure of the four-armed god Oshna (Vishnu). The adoption of the name Vasudeva by Huvishka's successor also

points to the fact that the later Kushanas, who had an important centre of government at Mathura, the original centre of the Vasudeva cult, had Bhagavata learnings.

Patanjali seems to make a distinction between Vasudeva the tatrabhavat i.e, the specially honoured Vasudeva and the Kshatriya Vasudeva. The Padma-tantra, a canonical work of the Bhagavatas, also makes a distinction between the two Vasudevas. The Mahabharata refers to a story which says that there was, besides Krishna of the Yadava –Satava-Vrishni family, another claimant to the status of Vasudeva in Paundraka Vasudeva i.e, Vasudeva king of the non-Aryan Paundraka Vasudeva may have actually been the leader of a rival religious sect, these legends were perhaps the result of an attempt on the part of a section of the

Bhagavatas to absolve their hero from the bad deeds, attributed to him by rival sects, probably including the followers of an earlier teacher named Narayana, by suggesting a different entity for the performer of those deeds. The name Satvata, applied to the Bhagavata religion, shows that its founder was not different from the Kshatriya Vasudeva of the Yadava-Satvata-Vrishni family. The legends about Krishna's questionable acts appear to have their origin in the Rigveda, which represents Vishnu as a Kuchara (performer of bad deeds) and as stealing food and butter. In later Vedic literature also Vishnu is often found to resort to cunning devices in order to help Indra and other friends to defeat the Asuras.

#### BHAGAVADGITA OR GITA :

The philosophy of Bhagavata religion is best propounded in the Bhagavata Gita. The earliest and best exposition of the doctrine of Bhagavata sect founded by Vasudeva-Krishna is to be found in the Bhagavadgita or simply called Gita, which has been incorporated in the Mahabharata. Although it cannot be definitely dated, it is generally referred to the first or second century before Christ.

The Bhagavadgita holds a unique position in Indian literature. It is a poem which, by virtue of its dialogue-form, takes on a dramatic interest, and imparts lessons in philosophy, religion and ethics without seeming to do so, because the occasion or situations which give rise to the dialogue is of the nature of a psychological crisis which may occur in the life of any individual. Arjuna, who represents such an individual, comes to the battlefield to fight his kinsmen, the Kauravas. At this crucial moment, a curiously pessimistic mood suddenly overcomes him. The fratricidal combat in which he was about to engage appears to him to be a sinful act and he decides to withdraw from the battlefield. Krishna, who serves as his charioteer, dissuades him from this cowardly course of action, and his teachings to Arjuna in this connection form the subject-matter of the Bhagavadgita. It is this specific situation involving a moral dilemma which gives a perennial charm and universal appeal to the poem.

As Gita deals thus with a specific situation, a particular occasion and the course of conduct suited to it, we cannot expect it to discuss the whole of normal philosophy or to present a complete theory of morals. Nevertheless, as practical teaching is the motive of the work, its teachings are predominantly ethical. It also discusses metaphysical problems, more or less as a background to its ethics, and contains an exposition of many other doctrines interspersed here and there along with its main one. We shall, therefore, concentrate here on the essential and fundamental part or core of its teachings.

### The Doctrines of Bhagavata Gita:

The Gita teaches the doctrine of rebirth. The character we develop in this life will determine the type of our next birth. This doctrine gives a reality to free will in spite of necessity or determinism, because the latter operates in a single life only. The discipline of rebirth leads to perfection and ultimately to Moksha.

The theory of avatara or incarnation is mentioned in the Gita which declares Krishna to be the Purushottama or Perfect Man. Though unborn and eternal, I take charge of Prakriti and was born through recourse to maya," says Krishna and this happens "when piety wanes and unrighteousness rears its ugly head." An avatara is generally speaking, a limited manifestation of the Supreme, but the Gita seems to take it as the descent of the whole god into man. In a sense every individual human being is an avatara; only it is enveloped in ignorance and is a veiled manifestation, whereas the divine avatara with a conscious being is none else but God, who limits himself for a definite purpose and fulfills himself in the world. This possibility of an avatara at the time of a world crisis is indeed a most heartening spiritual message of the Gita.

To sum up, the catholicity of the Gita, is clearly seen when, in a spirit of true toleration, it presents the most harmonious blend of the apparently conflicting doctrines then prevalent, and declares: 'All roads to Moksha (salvation) lead but unto Me.' It put down three distinct paths or ways (marga) of salvation, i.e., through Jnana (knowledge), Karma (action) and Bhakti (Devotion). Very characteristic is its treatment of the first, i.e., Jnana-marga or path of knowledge. There are two kinds of knowledge:

1. The understanding of the phenomena of existence externally through the intellect is called Vijnana; and

2. The integral knowledge, through the force of intuition, of the ultimate principle behind the phenomena, the common foundation of all existence, is Jnana. It is this Jnana which the Gita describes as incomparable in its purifying power and thus a means to attain final emancipation.

It can only be attained if Vijnana or science is supplemented by pariprasana (investigation) and seva (service). As agnana (ignorance) is more a spiritual blindness than an intellectual fog, mental training and a cleansing of the soul are necessary to remove it. The Gita says that Karma-Yoga, supplemented by the Yogic discipline (which was later systematized in Patanjali's Sutras), provides such a training.

The second path, the Karma-yoga of the Gita, gives a new version of the Vedic theory of sacrifice and harmonises it with true spiritual knowledge. Sacrifice is nothing but self-restraint and self-surrender. The sacrifice of sense-pleasures is the true sacrifice. The Karma-yogin surrenders to God whatever work he does. He not only lives but acts in God. The third, the Bhakti-yoga, the path of love and worship or emotional attachment of God, as distinguished from knowledge or action, is according to the Gita, the royal road to Moksha, being the easiest and open to all. Meditation on the unmanifested absolute i.e., the Jnana -marga, is a difficult process and entails much hardship. The great attraction of the Gita for the ordinary man is that it reveals as it were this unmanifested absolute as a personal God- a savior answering the cry of faith in distress with his grace. The doctrine of Bhakti is at the same time reconciled with Karma-yoga. The inexorability of the law of Karman is sought to be mitigated by the doctrine that the thought of the last moment of a man's life is far more potent than previous thoughts in shaping

<sup>1</sup> man's life is far more potent than previous thoughts in shaping man's destiny, and the true Bhakta may also be at the same time a true Karma-origin if, in the midst of all his activities, he keeps his mind steadfastly on God so that his last thoughts may not stray from his SAVIOUR.

Thus the paths of knowledge, devotion, ritualism and activism are perfectly reconciled. On the philosophical side it may be said that diverse currents of philosophic thought, not yet determined and labeled as irreconcilable, meet in it. One is not surprised therefore to find the following observation made with regard to its teaching.

<sup>3</sup> Talking of Bhagvatism it had a very peculiar birth. The inroads of a large number of foreigners in the wake of the disappearance of the Mauryan Empire were a cultural shock to Aryanism. Quite a number of foreigners took to Buddhism as it was a simple doctrine unlike Hinduism. Exceptionally as a few foreigners started believing in exactly this came into existence is not known. This cult gradually caught on and in course of time came to be transformed into the Vasudeva Krishna cult of the Gupta period. This stage in the development of Bhagvatism is controversial. Some opine that the Bhagavata cult of the north-west got merged with the Krishna cult of the Abhiras in the Mathura area.

The one chief attribute of this religious perception is devotion or love towards god known as the Dionysian perspective in the west. This feature was not at all prominent in the then Aryanism of Hinduism. The predominant feature of Aryanism was the Apollonian perspective but not the Dionysian.

To begin with it is not clear on how this off shoot of Hinduism came about but in course of time it came to be blended with the traditional Aryanism or brahminism. As a matter of fact the Vasudeva-Krishna cult belongs to the epic the Mahabharata and thereby forms one of the bases of Hindu religious consciousness even till today.

#### NEED OF BHAGVATISM

1. Brahmanism had become an essentially intellectual doctrine. It ignored the right of heart. The fundamental principles which Brahmanism taught were impersonal and speculative. It became too dogmatic orthodox violent ritualistic formal and too rigid to be pursued. The people who were always in need of an ethical and emotional cult in which it was possible to find both satisfaction of the heart and moral guidance understood no thing of it. It was in these circumstances that the movement Bhakti devotion blended with love of God found a favorable atmosphere.

2. There was the need of popular hero who could be made the rallying center to counter-act the mighty influence of the heterodox or heretical sects which challenged Brahmanism in the 6th century B.C.

3. Then there was the need of the absorption or assimilation of new ethnic groups, tribal groups and foreigners, and bringing back of these, if possible, who were then known as sramans, sanyasia, parivrajaka or yogi into the Aryan fold.

4. Secure revived respect of and confirmation to varnashramandharma in order to establish social law or ensure systematic functioning of society which would ensure its well-being.



### Relation of Bhagavathism with other creeds:

The Ajivakas are known to have been followers of a great champion of fatalism named Gosala; a contemporary of Mahavira Utpala, commenting on the Brihajataka, seems to include the Ajivakas amongst the Narayanasritas i.e. devotees of Narayana. It is probable that in later days the Ajivakas merged themselves with the followers of Vasudeva.

It may be observed that the Jain faith, which shares the doctrine of Ahimsa with Bhagavatism and Buddhism, is with influences of Hinduism, especially of Krishna worship. The Jaina includes Vasudeva and Baladeva among the influenced 63salaka –purushas who have directed or influenced the course of the world. The legend of Mahavira's birth in Jain mythology is again entirely derived from that of Krishna's birth. On the other hand, the later conception of the 24 forms of Vishnu was probably derived from that of the 24 Jain Thirthankaras. The Jain Thirthankara Rishabha was regarded as an avatara of Vishnu by some Bhagavatas.

Senart and Possuin believe that there was an intimate relation between the Buddhist way of deliverance and that of the old theistic cults of India, and suggest that devout worshippers of Narayana exerted great influence on the making of the Buddhist doctrine even from its inception. Although the theory can hardly be accepted, as the early spheres of influence of the two creeds were different, we know that the importance of Ahimsa is recognized in both the systems. It is possible that the adoration of Buddha's footprints was borrowed from the conception of Vishnu's pada. The influence of the Gita on Buddhist works like the Saddharma-pundarika, Mahayana sraddhotpada, etc. is unmistakable. On the other hand, the full the Buddhist conception of the former Buddhas, some of whom were worshipped in their own stupas as early as the third century B.C. that a large number of Buddhists were admitted into the fold of the Vaishnavas towards the close of the Hindu period is suggested by the inclusion of Buddha in the list of Vishnu's avatars.

It will be seen from the above discussion that the Vaishnava sect absorbed a number of different elements, among which prominent mention should be made of the worshippers of such different divinities as the Vedic Vishnu, the deified sage Narayana and the deified Vrishni heroes Vasudeva and Baladeva. We have to include in the list also the followers of Vasudeva's relatives Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Samba, of his friend the Pandava Arjuna, as well as of the avatars before their identification with Vishnu, and of such tribal gods as those of the Abhiras. Under the circumstances, the existence of sectarian or doctrinal differences was inevitable, although its nature can hardly be determined.

Some writers believe that much of Bhagavatism, including the idea of Bhakti, was borrowed from Christianity, while others go so far as to suggest that Krishna himself was an adaptation of Christ. It should, however, be remembered that the origin of Bhakti in India, the apotheosis and worship of Vasudeva, and the identification of Vasudeva-Krishna with Vishnu and Narayana are pre-Christian. There are, no doubt, resemblances between the story of the child Krishna and that of the child Jesus, and also Rama in Tulsi Das's work. Hopkins attributes it to direct importation from Christian lands into India, especially because of the late date of the development of the Krishna legends. But the Mahabhashya, quoting passages from the Kavya on the Kamsa –Vadha episode, points to the pre-Christian origin of the Krishna saga. Indian

literature and archaeological evidence show that the cowherd association of Krishna was widely known about the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that the adoration of the Virgin Mary is not much earlier than the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

1

#### THE WORSHIP OF IMAGES:

The Bhagavatas or the Pancharatrins seem to be mainly responsible for the dissemination of the practice of image-worship among the higher section of the orthodox Indian people. To them the Archa or Sri-vigraha (auspicious body of the lord) was the god himself in one of his aspects, and was thus the object of the greatest veneration as the 'God manifest' (pratyaksha devata). Epigraphic data of the pre-Christian and early post-Christian periods prove that there were Bhagavata or Vaishanava shrines in various parts of India, such as Besnagar (ancient Vidisa), Mathura etc. very early images are not, however, extant and this can be explained by referring to undoubted evidence that the images were usually made at first of perishable materials. One or two stone images of Vaishnavite deities are, however, known, which can be dated probably in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century before the Christian era, if not earlier.

Vaishnava images of the early post-Christian period also are not many in number, a few that are extant being mostly attributable to the Mathura region. It was traditionally associated with the Vasudeva cult, and inscriptions of the first century A.D. and later periods refer to the construction of Bhagavata shrines, some by foreigners. One such inscription discovered at Mora refers, as noted above, to the installation of the images of the holy Panchaviras of the Vrishnis in a beautiful stone temple erected under the orders of Tosha., evidently a foreign lady. A few fragmentary images in the round, obtained from the Mora site and now exhibited in the Mathura Museum, may be the remains of the figures of the five Vrishni viras; but the mutilation is so complete that nothing can be said with certainty about their iconography.

#### Conclusion:

Thus, Bhagavatism flourished in 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C and along with Buddhism and Jainism. It became very popular in the Vedic age and its doctrines were propounded through Bhagavad Gita.

#### Questions:

1. Write about the origin of Bhakti cult and discuss the doctrine of Bhagavatism.
2. Mention the relation of Bhagavatism with other religions.

Lesson Writer  
V.V. Ramana

**COURSES TOWARDS EMPIRE**

## **NANDA DYNASTY**

**Aim :** To know about the origin of Nanda dynasty, its rulers and the importance of them, their Economy, religion and life style.

**Topics :**

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Origin of Nanda Dynasty
- .3 Regime of Nanda Dynasty
- .4 Administration of Nanda Dynasty
- .5 Nanda Rulers
- .6 Religion of Nandas
- .7 Economy of Nandas
- .8 Significance of Nandas
- .9 Conclusion.

### **.1 Introduction:**

The Nanda Dynasty or Nanda Empire was established in the territory of Magadha and is one of the famous Ancient Indian Dynasties. It ruled in India at the time of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. During the peak of its glory, the Nanda had its stretch from Punjab to the west to Bengal to the east, and in the distant south till the Vindhya Mountain Range. Subsequently, Chandragupta, the famous monarch and founder of the Maurya Dynasty overwhelmed the Nanda Dynasty.

### **.2 ORIGIN OF NANDA DYNASTY:**

The founder of famous Nanda Dynasty is Mahapadma Nanda. He had conquered a number of kingdoms, namely the Panchalas, Haihayas, Kasis, Asmakas, Kalingas, Maithilas, Kurus, Vitihotras and Surasenas to name a few. During the regime of Mahapadma Nanda, the kingdom was stretched to the Deccan Plateaus in the southern part of India. He breathed his last when he was 88 and reigned over his kingdom for an extensive period which excluded the last 12 years of the empire. The Nanda rulers have been mentioned in the Puranas, the book of legends for the Hindus. All the nine Nanda monarchs were cited in the Puranas and the Maha Bodhi Vamsa, the famous literary work in Pali Language.

It was assumed that the Nanda monarchs who took over the position of Shisunaga Empire were of abject ancestry. The reason behind this is that Mahapadma Nanda, the establisher of this empire, was the child of a mother who belonged to the illegitimate child of a concubine and a barber. The Puranas state that Mahapadma Nanda overwhelmed all his contemporary

Kshatriya monarchs. He conquered dynasties of Panchalas, Aishvakus, Haihayas, Kasis, Asmaka, Kalinga Maithilas, Kuru and Sursenas and added these provinces to Magadha.

Mahapadma Nanda is often depicted as the sole sovereign or Eka rata. It is also said that he is the illicit child of Maharaja Mahanandin. Other names in which he was known are Ugrasena or Mahapadmapati.

### .3 Regime of Nanda Dynasty:

On certain occasions, it is said the Nanda rulers were the earliest conquerors in the chronicles of Indian history. They were the successors of the colossal Magadha Dynasty and had the desire of stretching it too far away borders. For achieving this goal, they formed a big military regiment, comprising 20,000 horseback troops, 200,000 foot soldiers, 3,000 battle elephants and 200 war horses –drawn vehicles.

Nonetheless, as laid down by the Plutarch, the Greek biographer, the magnitude of the armed forces was even bigger and it comprised 80,000 horseback troops, 200,000 foot soldiers, and 6,000 battles elephants and 8,000 was horse-drawn vehicles.

When Mahapadma Nanda breathed his last, other monarchs who reigned over the territory of Magadha for short stints were Panghupati, Pandhuka, Rashtrapala, Bhutapala, Dashasidkhaka, Govishanaka, Kaivarta a Mahendra.

The Nanda monarchs did not have the chance to test their military strength versus Alexander, the king of Macedonia, who attacked the country during the regime of Dhana Nanda. The reason behind this is that Alexander had restricted his operation to the flatland in Punjab. Moreover, his army, panic-stricken with the possibility of confronting a dreadful rival, engaged in an open rebellion in an open rebellion near the Hyphasis River declining to proceed any more. In this way, the Beas River symbolizes the eastern most limit of the invasion by the great Macedonian king.

Till 321 B.C., the Nanda Dynasty thrived, following which Dhana Nanda, the final Nanda monarch, was defeated and removed from power by Chandragupta Maurya, which brought into existence the Maurya Dynasty.

The language used for communication during this dynasty is the Sanskrit Language. The monarch was called as Samrat.

The Nandas became successful in setting up an enormous kingdom which spanned a significant portion of North India and certain areas of South India. You will find very small information regarding the chronicles of Nandas following the regime of Mahapadma Nanda other than Dhana Nanda, the final monarch of the dynasty.

### .4 Administration of Nanda Dynasty:

The Nandas are famous for the introduction of a systematic process for the receipt of taxes. They ensured it through employing functionaries on a frequent basis, which formed a

constituent of their ruling arrangement. The exchequer was persistently stocked up, the resources of the dynasty being recognized. In addition, the Nanda rulers constructed inland waterways and channels and worked on water supply schemes. The prospects of colonial system on the basis of a typically cultivation-oriented economy started to develop in the Indian psyche from this period. The dynasty of Magadha which was taken over by the Nandas had significant prospect for expansion and progress.

However, it has been acknowledged by all the prominent historians that all the nine monarchs of the Nanda Empire reigned over Magadha.

The last monarch of the Nanda Dynasty, Dhana Nanda became infamous among the mass he ruled as a result of inordinate taxes that he imposed and eviction of people. Chandragupta Maurya made the most of the disapproval and misrule and was triumphant in assassinating Dhana Nanda and conquering the kingdom of Magadha. In doing so, Chandragupta Maurya took the assistance of Chanakya or Vishnugupta. This event marked the ascent of the golden epoch of the Mauryan Empire in the chronicles of India.

#### .5 Nanda Rulers:

Here are some of the famous rulers of the Nanda Empire:

Mahapadma Nanda, Panghupati, Pandhuka, Bhutapala, Govishanaka, Rashtrapala, Kaivartala, Dashasidkhaka, Mahendra and Dhana Nanda.

#### . 6 Religion during Nanda Dynasty:

The various religions that were followed during the Nanda Dynasty Jainism, Hinduism and Buddhism. However, rulers of the Nanda Empire embraced Jainism. Once the Nanda rulers took over the kingdom of Kalinga, they fetched the 'Kalinga Jina' and set it up in Pataliputra, their capital. Jivasiddhi, the Digambar saint, was venerated by the final Nanda monarch. Pataliputra is known all over the world for being the place of enlightenment of Lord Mahavira.

Incidentally, the stupas which are major holy sites for the Hindus, were constructed in big numbers by Dhana Nanda, the final ruler of the empire. You can see plenty of these stupas in Rajgir.

#### .7 Economy of Nanda Dynasty:

The Economy during the empire was mostly dependent on farming and cultivation. The territory had significant prospect for progress and expansion. However, it did not fructify because of the sudden downfall of the empire. The coffer of the Nanda Empire replenished every so often. Therefore, the resources of the dynasty exhausted by no means. This huge stock of resources made a significant contribution to the economic stability of the empire. The principal line of work during this regime was crop growing. Farming was facilitated by the building of inland waterways. As a result, farming grew

and thrived significantly. The rulers ensured that there was proper infrastructure for farming activities.

#### .8 Significance of Nanda Dyansty:

The Nanda period in the chronicles regarded significant from different standpoints. The monarchs of this dynasty had established an effective governing method which was essential to look after the enormous kingdom. This structure was prevailing even at the Stime of the Maurya rule. The rulers of the Nanda dynasty had a military which had four divisions, namely horseback troops, foot soldiers, war horse-drawn vehicles and battle elephants. They are also famous for bringing into existence the base of the standard measures and weights. The monarchs were also known for their appreciation of writing and art. They offered support to a number of academics and researchers. Panini, the eminent linguist, was born during this era.

#### Conclusion:

Thus we are able to know about the origin of the Nanda dynasty. Their administration, religion, economy and their significance of nanda dynasty with the Romans and how they had raised the Nanda dynasty into a popular dynasty.

#### Questions:

1. Discuss the political history of Nandas.
2. Write about the socio-economic and religious conditions under the Nanda rule.

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Lesson Writer

V.V. Ramana

## Lesson-19

### PERSIAN INVASIONS ON INDIA

Aim: To know about the early Persian and Greek invasions and their effects on the polity of India.

Topics:

- .1 Introduction
- .2 Cyrus
- .3 Darius'
- .4 Xeres
- .5 Effects of Persian Invasion
- .6 Conclusion

#### The Persian Invasion (550 - 515 B.C)

There had been relations between India and old Persia (Iran) since a long time. The Aryan who settled in India belonged to the same racial stock which had first entered Persia. However, there is no definite information regarding the contact between the two during the later Vedic age. The Jataka stories refer to trade relations between India and Persia. According to some scholars the Avestan passages indicate a political control that was established by old Persia on northern India in pre-Achaemenian period. However, we find no supporting evidence of this political connection.

Darius (588-530 B.C.):

The narrative of the Persian invasion of India is found in a number of inscriptions left by Achaemenian emperors. These accounts are supplemented by casual references by the classical writers such as Herodotus, Ctesias, Xenophon, Strabo and Arrian. According to a generally accepted opinion by many scholars, the first political contact between Persia and India was established during the reign of Emperor Cyrus, the founder of the Achaemenid dynasty. Within a short period of eleven years Cyrus established a vast empire by conquering Anatolia and Babylonia as far as the frontiers of Egypt and advanced up to the Kabul Valley. According to Pliny, Cyrus destroyed the famous city of Kapisa in the Ghorband and Panjshir valley. According to Arrain Indians between the river Indus and Cophen (Kabul) paid tribute to Cyrus. According to Xenophon, Cyrus brought under his rule Bactrians and Indian, and extended his sway up to the Erythrean sea, i.e. the Indian Ocean. Xenophon also makes a reference to an Indian ruler sending an embassy of money to Cyrus, probably in payment of tribute. On the basis of these references it has been believed that Cyrus conquered the frontier regions

between India and Persia. According to Ctesias, Cyrus died of a wound inflicted in battle by 'an Indian'; a battle which "the Indians were fighting on the side of Derbikes whom they supplied with elephants." These Derbikes might have been a frontier tribe.

Darius I (522-486 B.C.): The son and successor of Cyrus, Cambyses (530-522 B.C.) could not pay any attention towards India as he was too much pre-occupied by rebellions in his own empire. However, his son Darius I made decisive conquests in India. His own inscriptions provide us with the information regarding the extent of the Persian dominion in India. The inscriptions at Persopolis and at Naksh-I-Rustam mention Hi(n)du or the northern Punjab as part of his empire. Thus, Darius must have conquered this part of India by about 518 B.C. Herodotus makes a reference to a naval expedition sent by Darius under Scylax to explore the Indus river. Herodotus states that India constituted the twentieth satrapa (province) of the Persian Empire. It is difficult to determine the exact extent of the Persian control over India. But with reasonable precision it may be assumed that the Persian possessions in India comprised the valley of the Indus from Kalabagh to the sea, including the whole of Sind, and a considerable portion of the Punjab east of the Indus. Xerxes (468-465 B.C.): Darius I was succeeded by Xerxes. He continued his hold over the Indian provinces. This is proved by the fact that he secured the services of Gandharians and 'Indians' to fight his battles (Marathon and Thermopylae) against the Greeks. This was the first instance when an Indian expeditionary force fought on the soil of Europe. Herodotus gives an interesting account of the India soldiers and their equipment. According to him the Indians, clad in garments made of cotton, carried bows of cane and arrows of cane, the latter tipped with iron, which were used for long range combat. Besides, infantry, India also supplied Xerxes with cavalry and chariots, riding horses, and also horses and wild asses to draw the chariots, together with very large number of dogs. The cavalry had the same equipment as the infantry.

The Persian hold over these Indian regions lasted till 330 B.C. Darius III, the last of the Achaemenian rulers sought reinforcements from India to check the advance of Alexander of Macedonia. According to Arrian, one Indian contingent fought at Gaugamela under the satrap of Bactria, along with the Bactrians, while another, the Indian mountaineers from the Punjab fought under the satrap of Arachosia. India also sent a small force of elephants. The Persian Empire under the Achaemenian dynasty came to an end in 330 B.C. when Alexander defeated Darius III in the battle of Arbela.

Impact of the Persian Invasion: Political Impact: The Persian invasion and the hold of the Persians in the north-western frontier regions of India did not affect Indian politics in any significant way. It only exposed the weakness of the Indian defense in that region and paved the way for the conquest of Alexander. However, the satrapal system of administration introduced by the Persians in their Indian provinces served as a model to later dynasties especially the Sakas and the Kushanas.

Development of Trade: Though the Persian invasion did not affect India politically to a great extent, the contact between the Indians and the Persians that continued even after the end of the Achaemenian Empire had certain tangible impact. These contacts between Persia and India through both the sea and the land led to the establishment of trade relations between the two



countries. The Persian rulers did much to promote geographical exploration and promote trade and commerce. The exploration of the Indus and the Arabian Sea by Scylax opened a new water-route. When the western and north-western India formed parts of the Persian Empire which extended up to Asia Minor in the west, Indian trade naturally got a fresh impetus. Indian ivory and teak were popular in the Persian markets. Darius used them in the construction of his palace. This information is found in the Susa inscription of Darius.

**Cultural Contact:** The trade relation indirectly brought about cultural contact between India and Persia. Even before the invasion of Alexander, the Persians became catalysts between the Indian and Greek cultures. The Greek philosophers came in contact with Indian philosophy long before the invasion of Alexander.

**Kharoshti Script:** The Aramaic form of writing which the Persians introduced in the north-western India after their conquest, gradually developed into the Kharoshti script. All the Ashokan rock inscriptions in the north-west India were engraved in the Kharoshti script. The idea of inscribing ethical exhortations on rocks in the form of royal proclamations might have been borrowed from Persia. Certain resemblances have been discovered between the Achaemenid inscriptions and those of Ashoka. They both have the same style, especially in the construction of the opening sentence.

**Influence on Coinage:** the Persian silver coins were in circulation in India. This affected Indian coinage. The Persian coins were known for their refined minting and elegant looks. The Indian rulers adopted similar techniques to mint their coins on the Persian model.

**Impact on Art:** According to Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador at the court of Chandragupta, the Mauryan ruler adopted certain Persian ceremonies and rituals. The Mauryan art was influenced by the Persian art to some extent. Traces of the Persian influence can be seen in the Mauryan sculptures and in the Ashokan pillars. The polish of the Mauryan pillars manifests the Persian influence. The Persian masonry had this characteristic of high polish. The architecture of the period of Ashoka was completely influenced by Persian architecture.

## GREEK INVASION

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- .2 Political Condition of India at the time of Alexander's invasion
- .3 Kingdom of Taxila
- .4 Kingdom of Elder Porus
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#### Political Condition of India at the time of Alexander's Invasion:

After the invasion and rule of Persia, India once again had to face the Greek invader Alexander. India's weakness were exposed by the Persians to foreign invaders and taking the advantage of degenerating political condition of India, Alexander decided to conquer her. There were several small states in India at the time of Alexander's invasion, and they too were not having good relations with one another. The chief reason of their rivalry and conflict was the different forms of government. Some states had monarchy while others had republican form of government. The lack of any sovereign power was also important cause of their mutual struggles. It weakened the power of these states and they easily became prey of the foreign invaders, such as, Iranians and Greeks.

We do not have enough source material from which we can know much about Alexander's invasion on India. The ancient literature does not say anything about this invasion as the ancient scholars regarded this invasion ineffective. Only Greek historians Herodotus has referred to it. There were about 28 independent principalities in different parts of the country which deserve mention.

Several kings ruled to the west of the Indus. They created hindrance to the advance of Alexander later on. The Assakenoi tribe was the most important among them. Their capital was Massaga. Four such tribes were ruling across the Indus river. Alexander had to fight with each of them during his campaign in India.

**THE KINGDOM OF TAXILA:** Taxila was situated between the rivers Indus and Jhelum. It was ruled by a king known as Ambhi. Taxila was a very prosperous and wealthy kingdom. Ambhi was not having friendly relations with the neighbouring king Porus. Both of them always remained at daggers drawn with each other. It affected the power of both the kings adversely.

**THE KINGDOM OF ELDER PORUS:** This territory was between the Jhelum and Chenab. The Greeks used to call king Puru as Porus. Porus' army was quite large consisting of 50,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 1000 chariots and 130 elephants. Porus's bad relation with the king of Taxila proved to be an obstacle in achieving victory over Alexander, otherwise, he gave a tough resistance to the foreign invader.

**YOUNGER PORUS AND GLAUSALS:** This territory was also situated between the Chenab and Ravi. It was ruled by the younger Porus. He was a relative of the elder Porus. A tribe Glausals also used to live along the river Ravi. At the time of Alexander's invasion this tribe also fought against him.

**Republic of Kathaioi:** His kingdom was situated in the tract between the rivers Jhelum and Chenab. The Kathaioi republic was very famous and its capital was Sangla. This tribe enjoyed the highest reputation for courage and skill in the art of warfare. Alexander had called for a reinforcement of soldiers from Porus to fight against this republic.

**The Empire of Magadha:** It was a very powerful empire which extended to the east of the river Beas. Mahapadmananda was the ruler of this kingdom. He had a very vast army, consisting of infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants. The capital of Magadha was Pataliputra.

**Sivi, Kshudrakas and Malloi Republics:** Five independent tribes ruled in the southern Punjab on the route of Alexander back to the Indus river. Among them Sivi, Kshudraka and Malloi were famous. Multan was under the control of Malloi tribe and Kshudrakas established their authority near modern Montgomery. All the tribes had republican form of government. Sivi was ruled by Usinara.

**The kingdom of Mousikanos:**

Several small tribes had established their control in the Indus valley. The most important of them was Mousikanos. Their capital has been identified with Alor in the Sukkur district.

**The Principality of Oxykanos:** This territory was situated to the west of Indus in the level country around Larkana. Western India was divided into many small kingdoms. It had held upon their power and prestige and they easily became a prey to the foreign invader.

**ALEXANDER'S INVASION ON INDIA:**

Greeks were the second invaders after the Iranians who had invaded the Indian Territory. Alexander ascended the throne of Macedonia after the death of his father King Philip in 334 B.C. he was very ambitious and wanted to conquer the entire world. After establishing his authority over western Asia and Egypt, he attacked Persia. Thereafter he achieved victory in Afghanistan and Bactria. All these victories aroused in him a desire to win over the entire world. With this aim in view, he decided to undertake an invasion of India after making due arrangements for countries that he had subdued.

**Aim of Alexander's Invasion:**

1. Some portion of India was considered to be a part of the Iranian empire. Alexander had established his authority over the whole of the Persian empire, and he wished to conquer the Iranian part of the Indian empire.
2. He had spent a good deal of wealth in course of his wars and the wealth and prosperity of India lured him to achieve victory over her so that he might replenish his resources.

3. He was the most ambitious ruler of Greece. He wanted to gain glory through wars. He was also desirous of establishing the biggest empire in the world.
4. The ruler of Taxila fired his ambition and provided Alexander an opportunity to invade India by sending an invitation to him.

#### CONQUESTS OF ALEXANDER:

IN 326 B.C Alexander marched with his invincible forces to conquer India. First, the ruling tribes across the Indus became his prey and were forced to bow down one after the other before his powerful army. The mighty tribe of Assakenois endeavoured their best to maintain their independence and to save their capital known as Massaga, but they were subjected to ruthless massacre. After establishing his authority over these powerful tribes, Alexander marched towards Taxila where Ambi was ruling. The king of Taxila, instead of fighting against the fighting against the foreign foe, sent many costly presents and elephants to Alexander as gifts and accepted his sovereignty.

Ambhi has been described as a traitor in the history of ancient India, who for his own selfish ends sent an invitation to Alexander with the evil design of manoeuvring the fall of Porus. But Porus did not submit to Alexander like other frontier kings, and got ready to fight Alexander.

#### Fight with Hill Tribes:

Before fighting the most powerful king Porus, Alexander had to face many brave and freedom loving hill tribes. Alexander defeated Aspasioi and Gauranis. He forced Nysaeans to submit to him. He also established his sway over the free cities of Aornos, Bazira, Pushkavati, Embolima and Dyrtia.

#### Battle with Porus:

When Alexander was at Taxila, he sent a message to Porus requiring him to pay homage and accept his overlordship. Alexander was sent reply that he would indeed come to his frontier to meet the invader. Both the powerful rulers faced each other on either bank of the river Jhelum. King Porus had a big powerful army consisting of 50,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 1000 chariots and 130 elephants. The army of Alexander was a mixture of different elements. Some scholars mention that the army of Alexander consisted of 35,000 soldiers.

As Porus' army was standing across the river Jhelum fully prepared to fight, Alexander was at a loss as to how to cross the river. Alexander was a great diplomat; he knew that it would not be possible to cross the river in front of the army of Porus, so he decided to steal his way across the river. One dark night he marched his soldiers about 25 kms and crossed the river. Porus never thought that Alexander would be able to cross the river during night time and hence he made no precautions.

#### BATTLE OF JHELM:

Porus came to know quite late that Alexander had crossed the river Jhelum, so he sent his son with a large number of soldiers to check the advancement of Alexander. Porus son along with his soldiers was killed in the battle field. Hearing the news of the death of his son, Porus himself advanced to face the invasion of Alexander. The Indian soldiers with great courage. After a fierce battle at Kurukshetra, at last Alexander won the day. Porus himself fought very bravely and was taken prisoner when he became unconscious.

#### ALEXANDER HONOURS PORUS:

Porus is a king having magnificent personality. Alexander was very much impressed by Porus, he returned his entire kingdom to him. The younger Porus ran away and Alexander got victory over the republic of his Aspasia and Kethu.

The soldiers of Alexander were not ready to advance further. The following were reasons for soldiers refusal:

1. The soldiers had advanced very far from the base.
2. The soldiers were anxious to go back to their homes.
3. Their arms and ammunition had been depleted and many of them had fallen sick.
4. They were terrified by the bravery of the soldiers of Magadha.

Alexander tried to inject new spirit in his soldiers and made a powerful speech before them but all went in vain. Soldiers expressed their unwillingness and he had to retreat. They followed the same route on their return which they had come to India. The return journey was full of Sivas, Kshudrakas, Malloi, Mousikanos etc, while fighting against these republic Greeks realized that it was not an easy affair to conquer India. Alexander was not destined to reach home country. He fell ill in Babylonia and breathed his last in 323 B.C.

#### Causes of Defeat of the Indians:

1. Lack of Unity: The most important reason of defeat of the Indians against the Greeks was the lack of unity among Indian rulers. The entire western India which had to bear the brunt of Alexander's invasion was divided into several small principalities. They were always at daggers drawn with one another due to their mutual conflicts and jealousies. It undermined their strength and unity. The mutual enmity between the king of Ambhi and Porus made the work of Alexander all the more easy. Several small kingdoms of India could never unite together against their common foe, rather they helped Alexander when he attacked their neighbouring kingdom.
2. Lack of proper Organization: The Greek soldiers were well disciplined and well organized in comparison to Indian soldiers. Undoubtedly as regards bravery and art of warfare the Indian soldiers were not less skilled but lack of proper organization told upon their efficiency.
3. Personality of Alexander: Alexander was one of the ablest and the greatest generals of the world. Before his invasion of India he had conquered several

countries and had a vast experience of wars and battle fields. His soldiers were well disciplined and loved their generals.

4. Use of Chariots and Elephants: there was a difference in the way of fighting between the Indians and the Greeks. The Greek soldiers always fought on horse back, used long spears and bows and arrows which were far superior to Indian bows and arrows. Moreover, Indians relied on chariots and elephants which proved to be very harmful at the time of defeat. The elephants often crushed their own soldiers.
5. Absence of central power: There was no central power to control the small and conflicting states. Lack of leadership also proved to be detrimental to the interest of the country.

#### EFFECTS OF ALEXANDER'S INVASION INDIA:

Historians hold divergent opinions regarding the effect of Alexander's invasion. Some scholars express their opinion that Alexander's invasion was like that of storm which came and passed away without leaving any permanent effect on India.

The Indian culture and civilization remained unchanged and invasion of Alexander proved to be futile.

Alexander stayed in India for a short while, and was busy fighting with Indian rulers. He could not be instrumental in Greek culture and civilization making any impact on India. No cultural exchange can take place during war. The natural feeling of jealousy and hatred among the vanquished for the victor proved to be the greatest obstacle in the way of Alexander's invasion making a permanent impact on Indian History.

Alexander launched invasions on the borders of India, and turned back to his home country from the banks of the river Beas. Therefore entire India was not at all by his raids which he made on the frontiers only. In fact, Alexander's invasion of India had several indirect consequences and effects. Some of them are mentioned below.

#### Political effects:

1. As Punjab had to bear the brunt of Alexander's invasion, it grew weaker than any other part of the country. It paved the way for the rise of Chandragupta Maurya, who reaped full advantage of the situation and established his sway over Punjab.
2. Greek rule was set up on bordering provinces of western Punjab and Sindh.
3. Besides providing political unity to India, Chandragupta Maurya saved it from foreign invaders. This is why he is stated to be the first national monarch of India. Thus, the invasion of Alexander's invasion proved helpful in bringing unity to the country.
4. Alexander's invasion had provided a solid source material to establish the history of the country chronologically. As the Greek historians have described every detail datewise, their writings have helped us in establishing the history of India.
5. Indians learnt various new methods of warfare due to Alexander's invasion. The Indian realized the significance of discipline and an organized army during their

encounter with the Greeks. In fact, the number of soldiers has no importance at all. It is the quality of the national character that makes nation victorious.

#### Economic Effects:

1. Alexander's invasion not only demolished the wall of separation between the East and the West, but also opened four new routes between Europe and India – three land routes and one sea route. Many traders and religious missionaries travelled abroad through these route and trade and commerce flourished.
2. The Indians learnt the art of making beautiful coins. So far the Indian coins were not shaped property. The Greek coins inspired the Indians to reshape their coins in an artistic way.

#### Cultural Effects:

1. With the establishment of Greek kingdom in western Asia, both Greeks and Indians came into contact with each other. Learned men and scholars visited each other's country, and it affected the cultural outlook.
2. It is stated that Kanishka the Kushan ruler invited s Greco-Bactrian sculptors to Gandhara for making figures of Lord Buddha and Bodhisattvas. It mingled the Greek and the Indian art. It also gave birth to t new style of sculpture, the Gandhara School of art.
3. Indian astrology and astronomy were also largely influenced by Hellenic system.

Thus, we can say though there seems to be no direct influence of the invasion of Alexander on India, she was indirectly influenced by this invasion. The effects which were noticed are the result of the later intercourse between the two nations.

#### Conclusion:

Thus, the Persian and the Greek invasions on India had exposed the weakness and the disunity of the independent states in India, which in turn paved the way for the rise of Magadha under the Mauryans.

These invasion opened new routes to India from the west and also gave rise to the growth of new war technology. It also had great impact on the Indian culture especially in the field of art and architecture, sculpture and drama.

#### Questions:

1. Write about the Persian invasions and their effects.
2. Explain the political condition of India at the time of Alexander's invasion.
3. Discuss the causes, course and effects of Alexander's invasion.

Lesson Writer

V.V. Ramana

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