

Ancient and Medieval Class 07

20th January, 2024 at 1:00 PM

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS CLASS (1:09 PM)

ECONOMY DURING GUPTA PERIOD (1:11 PM)

- Though there were many types of taxes during the Gupta Age, the most important was land tax.
- In normal times it was $\frac{1}{6}^{\text{th}}$ of the produce in emergencies it can either increase or decrease depending on the context.
- The cotton and silk textile industries were highly developed at this point.
- Banaras to Maheswar were the important textile clusters at this time.
- Gupta also released huge quantities of gold coins but they **were not the purest of the pure.**
- There was a huge demand for silk textiles from the Roman world which led to a huge accumulation of gold with the Guptas.
- In the 2nd decade of the 5th century Romans started to prefer the raw material of silk from China. It led to the decline of trade with the Guptas.
- Earlier Gupta rulers granted lands to the priestly class for their religious services. **These lands were known as Bramhadeya.**
- In later times Gupta rulers started the practice of granting land to their officers also as a salary which led to the **consolidation of feudalism in North and Central India.**
- **IMPORTANT GUPTA PORTS.**

Western Coast.	Eastern coast.
Kalyan, Sopara, Chakala.	Ghanatsila, Tamralipti
- **Note-> Kulyavapa and Dronavapa were units of measurement of land.**

ADMINISTRATION OF GUPTAS (1:24 PM)

- Though the Gupta administration was not highly centralized like the Maurya's but centrality of the administration was intact till the rule of Skanda Gupta.
- In the 2nd half of the 5th century decentralization of the Gupta administration started.
- **The weak Gupta rulers of this period granted autonomy to many of their important feudatories such as,**
- Yashodharman of Malwa.
- Maukhari of Kanauj
- Maitraka of Saurashtra
- **Following administrative divisions were created during Gupta rule:**
- Bhukti- Equivalent to a province headed by Bhktipati or Uparika
- Vishaya- districts, headed by Vishayapati
- Vithi- Block or subdistrict headed by Vithipati.
- Gram->Village, headed by Gramika.
- The chief justice was known as **Mahadandanayak**, He was appointed at the provincial level.
- **Note- Visthi or bonded labor was also practiced during this time.**

SOCIETY DURING GUPTA PERIOD (1:34 PM)

- Gupta society was patriarchal.
- By the time of their rule, already deterioration in the position of women and backward classes.
- In the post-Maurya age Stereotyping and objectification of women increased.
- Moreover, there was a rise in the institution of prostitution.
- In the post-Maurya age, political rights were denied to women and they were not allowed to read, write, or listen to the Vedic scriptures.
- **The Guptas initiated the reformation of religion and society:**
- They allowed widow remarriage and women were further allowed to listen to the Vedic scriptures.
- However, the difference existed between the status of upper and lower-caste women.
- Upper-caste women were allowed to seek an independent source of living. They were dependent on their parents or husbands.
- On the other hand, lower caste women were allowed to seek independent sources of living.
- To uplift the position and image of women they were often compared with the form of goddess.
- **Katyayana** who was the famous lawgiver of this time further explained **Stree dhana**. It's a valuable gift given to the girls at the time of their marriage.
- He further added it's not a dowry price and only the girl has the right to sell it
- In the rear end of the Gupta rule practice of Sati also started.
- Recorded or archaeological evidence of Sati has been found in the **Eran Inscription of Madhya Pradesh dated around 510 AD.**
- **In the post-Maurya age, two types of Shudras emerge:**
- **Anirvasit Shudra:** - They were allowed to live inside the villages or towns and they performed household chores.
- **Nirvasit Shudra:** - They were not allowed inside the village or town but they were supposed to live on the periphery of the habitation
- In the Gupta age, a particular category of Nirvasit shudra known as Chandalas started to emerge in large numbers.
- Their concentration was mainly in graveyards and they had animalistic beliefs and food behaviour.
- Several disabilities were imposed on them by the rulers of those times.
- For example, whenever they were entering villages or towns, they needed to blow a horn or beat a drum.
- Moreover, they were not allowed to enter the villages during early morning or late evening.

RELIGION DURING THE GUPTA PERIOD (2:13 PM)

- The Gupta Age is regarded as one of the most important phases in the institutionalization of the Hindu religion.
- Not only did temple construction start at this time but also a majority of Hindu religious literature was compiled for example Ramayana, Mahabharat, Bhagwat Gita, and all the Major Puranas.
- Moreover, in this age, the concept of Tridevi was further formalized.
- The three forms of goddess Durga or Shakti emerged that is Parvati, Saraswati, and Laxmi.
- Though Guptas favoured the development and consolidation of Hinduism they were also accommodative towards other religious beliefs like Buddhism and Jainism.

SANGAM AGE IN SOUTH INDIA (2: 23 PM)

- According to the famous historian **Nilakantha Shastri**, the expanse of the Sangam Age was from 300 BC to 600 AD.
- In this period three major dynasties ruled in the southern part of India.
- This age is referred to as Sangam because of a compilation of Sangam literature written in Tamil language.
- **These three dynasties are as follows:**
- All three Sangam dynasties were quite rich and endowed with huge natural resources.
- They had very good knowledge of shipbuilding and developed strong Navies.
- They further developed trade contact with the Arabs, the Roman world, and Chinese traders.
- The major commodities of export included pearls, ivory, cotton textiles, silk, and spices.
- **Early rulers of Cholas:**
- The initial ruler **Elara** conquered Sri Lanka and ruled Sri Lanka for 50 years.
- The most important ruler Karikala (The man with charred legs). Perhaps he was the first ruler who did the embankment of the Cauvery River.
- 140 Km stretch of the Cauvery River was embanked by slaves brought from Sri Lanka.
- Inland Capital Uraiyur- It was a major textile production center.
- Coastal capital and most important port.
- Other important ports -Arikamedu.

CHERAS (2:52 PM)

- Also known as Keralaputras.
- Initial rulers-> Udayinjeral.
- The most important ruler – Senguttuvan also known as Red Chera or Good Chera.
- He constructed a famous temple of Kannagi (goddess of chastity)
- He also founded Pattini Cult.
- Capital-> Vanji also known as Karur.
- The most important port is Muziri.

PANDYA (3:00 PM)

- Initial ruler- Mudukumudi.
- The most important ruler-> Nedumjeliuan.
- Capital-> Madurai.
- Important ports were Korkai and Tutikodi.
- Nedumjeliyan was known for expanding the Pandya kingdom and for his Justice but in the last leg of his life he made a grave mistake of injustice which is the central theme of the Tamil Epic Silapathikaram written by Elango Adigal.

PUSHYABHUTI DYNASTY (3:31 PM)

- After the demise of the Guptas, many small principalities emerged in North and Central India out of which the most important was the Pushyabhuti Dynasty of Thaneswar in Haryana.
- Prabhakar Vardhan was the founder of this dynasty around 600 AD.
- Following the policy of the Matrimonial alliance, he married his daughter to Maukhari Ruler of Kannauj Grahavarman.
- After the death of Prabhakar Vardhan his eldest son Rajya Vardhan became the next ruler.
- Shashank Gauda of Bihar-Bengal was the formidable enemy of the Vardhan.
- Shashank with intelligent planning Killed Grahavarman captured Rajyashri and later also killed Rajyavardhan.
- **It led to the appointment of Harshavardhan as the Ruler.**
- Harshavardhan was successful in his sister Rajyashri from Shashank's Captivity.
- After long-drawn preparation, Harshavardhan finally defeated Shashank Gauda.
- Harshavardhan was an ambitious ruler and he wanted to expand his kingdom south of River Narmada.
- It led to a fight with Chalukya's ruler Pulkeshin-II.
- Harshavardhan was thoroughly defeated in this fight.
- But it led to a friendship treaty between the two rulers which is mentioned in the famous **Aihole inscription of Karnataka.**
- The inscription was written by the Court poet of Chalukya's **Ravi Kirti in the Sanskrit language**
- As per the treaty, both sides promised to each other that they would treat River Narmada as a boundary and would not venture in each other's territory.
- During the tenure of Harshavardhan famous Chinese Buddhist traveller **Hiuen Tsang visited Kanauj.**
- He wrote his experience of the Harshavardhan court in his book **Si-Yuki.**
- As per Hiuen Tsang, there was a very strict provision of punishment even for the pettiest of the crime.
- He further adds **despite the punishment provision streets of Kanauj were not free from the robbers.**
- He was completely robbed in Kanauj.
- Under the influence of Hieun Tsang Harshavardhan accepted **Mahayana Buddhism**, but he continued worship of lord Shiva.
- Influenced by Hiuan Tsang, Harshvardhan convened two religious conferences one at Kanauj and 2nd at Prayag.
- In both the conference Hieun Tsang gave elaborate lectures on Mahayana Buddhism.
- It was regarded as a big shot in the arm of Mahayana Buddhism.
- Around 647 AD another Chinese Buddhist traveller **I-Tsing** visited Kanauj to meet Harshavardhan but Harshavardhan was dead by this time.

THE TOPIC OF NEXT CLASS->Chalukya etc