

Art and Culture Class 14

5th April, 2024 at 9:00 AM

SANSKRIT LITERATURE (09:11 AM):

- Sanskrit is considered a **truly international language**.
- It transcends the boundary of region and religion.
- It was not only practiced in Hinduism but also in **Buddhism, Jainism**, and even some of the texts of the **Parsi** religion.
- Initially, Sanskrit literature existed in **Shruti** form (Oral form, and it was passed on to the next generation in the oral form).
- **Vedic literature and extended texts (09:26 am):**
- **Rigveda:**
- It derived its name from Rik which means a collection of **mantras, psalms, and hymns**.
- Originally, **1028 hymns** were composed in Rigveda and overall Rigveda is divided into **10 Mandalas**.
- Mandala numbers **2 to 7** are the oldest and they were composed in the early Vedic age.
- The rest of the Mandalas were composed in the later Vedic age.
- On the basis of themes, there are three important parts of the Rigveda:
- **i)** It is one of the most important sources of information about polity, society, and economy of the early Vedic age.
- **ii)** Rigveda provides the information about geographical details of northwestern India and it also provides a beautiful description of nature.
- It mentions the Himalayas mountains as **Himvant** and **Jamuvant** and further mentions the **Saptasindhu rivers**.
- **Indus** - Sindhu.
- **Jhelum** - Vitasta.
- **Chenab** - Ashkini.
- **Ravi** - Parushani.
- **Beas** - Vipasa.
- **Satluj** - Shutudri.
- **Saraswati** - Naditarna, Harkhawati.
- **iii)** Rigveda is also the book of prayer and mantras and through these prayers, they seek the development of a highly cultured society with emphasis on the values of virtue, honesty, nobility, etc.
- **Note: Economic importance of cattle:**
- **Gopajanya** - Master of cow.
- **Gopa** - Cow.
- **Gavishthi** - Search for cow.
- **Godhuli** - Measurement of time (according to the behavior of cattle).
- **Godhuma** - Wheat (which emerges from cow dung).
- **Duhitri** - Milcher of cow (Daughter).
- **Aghanya** - One that must not be killed (cattle).
- **Goghana** - The most important guest who is served cow meat.
- **Gavyu** - Cow.
- **Hotra** was the expert priest of Rigveda.
- **Samveda (09:51 am):**
- It is the Veda of music which derives its name from **Sama** which means music.
- All those hymns of Rigveda which were sung constitute Samveda.
- Samveda mentions naad or sound and it says '**Aum**' is the first naad and the basis of all the sounds in the universe.
- It also mentions **16k thousand** melodies.
- The expert priest of Samveda is known as **Udgatar**.

- **Yajurveda (09:56 am):**
- It derives its name from the word **Yajna** which means sacrificial rituals.
- Yajurveda provides guidelines to the performance of Vedic rituals so as the yajans.
- There are two popular parts of Yajurveda:
- **Krishna Yajurveda:** It is associated with the **Vaishampayana** tradition and is popular in the southern part of India.
- **Shukla Yajurveda:** It is associated with the **Yajnyavalkya** tradition and is popular in northern India.
- **Adhvaryu** was the expert priest of Yajurveda.
- **Atharvaveda (10:04 am):**
- The origin of Atharvaveda is attributed to two Rishis i.e. **Atharva** and **Angirah**.
- It is the most extensive of all the Vedas.
- It is not only the book of spells and charms but also it mentions cures of **99 diseases**.
- It further provides zoological and botanical details of the Indian subcontinent.
- It is also the initial text of astrology and it further builds the Vedic mathematics.
- **Atharvaveda** is sometimes also referred to as **Angirah Rasa**.
- The first three Vedas i.e. **Rig, Sama,** and **Yajur** are referred to as **Veda Trayi**, and **Atharvaveda** is referred to as **Brahmaveda**.
- **Extended text of the Veda (10:12 am):**
- **The Brahman:**
- It is the first explanatory text of the Veda and it deals with a simplistic explanation of Vedic rituals.
- It also tries to expound the importance of Vedic rituals in society.
- **Aranyaka:**
- It derives its name from **Aranya** which means forest.
- It deals with the mystery of Veda.
- The knowledge of Aranyaka was disseminated in the **Vanaprastha** stage of life.
- The complex questions about life and its purpose are discussed in Aranyaka.
- **Upanishad:**
- **Upa - Nearby; Nishad - To sit down.**
- It also means to sit closure to the guru to learn intricate and in-depth matters.
- It deals with the philosophy of Veda and some of the most difficult questions are discussed in the Upanishad.
- For example: The origin of the universe, the cycle of rebirth, the soul, the purpose of life, etc.
- **Derived religious text (10:21 am):**
- **Epics:** Ramayana and Mahabharat.
- **Puranas:**
- The one which renews the old is Purana.
- Purana literature is often legendary in nature.
- Its purpose is to expound and establish the rituals of Hinduism among the masses.
- Purana is often combined with Itihas.
- On the basis of theme, it has been classified in the following categories.
- **Sarga:** It deals with the creation of the universe.
- **Prati-Sarga:** It deals with the destruction of the universe.
- **Vamsa:** Genealogy of the gods.
- **Vamsanucharita:** Genealogy of the rulers.
- **Manvantara:** Story of the first human being the Manu and Ila.

CLASSICAL SANSKRIT LITERATURE (10:36 AM):

- **Mricch-katika** - By **Shudraka**.
- **Theme:** Courtesan Vasantsena's and it is a satire on society.
- **Mudra-Rakshasa** - By **Vishakha Dutta**.
- It deals with political mechanization developed by **Kautilya** against the Nanda ruler in which finally **Chandragupta Maurya** was finally victorious.
- **Devichandra-Guptam** - By **Vishakha Dutta**.
- It deals with the **biography** of **Chandragupta II** and it also tells the history of **Ramagupta's**.
- **Kalidas:**
- **Abhijyan Shakuntalam:** Love affairs of Dushyant and Shakuntala.
- **Malvikagnimitra:** Deals with the love affair of Agnimitra Shunga and Princess of Vidisha Malvika.
- **Vikramo-Urvashi:** The love story of Pururava and celestial nymph Urvashi.
- **Kumar Sambhavam:** Making of the young god Kartikeya and it also tells the story of the marriage of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati.
- **Raghuvamsam:** Story of the clan of Lord Rama.
- **Poems:**
- **Ritusamhara:** Medley of seasons.
- **Meghdootam:** It is the story of **Yaksha** who sends a love letter through clouds.
- **Books associated with Sanskrit Grammar (11:17 am):**
- **Astadhyayi** by **Panini** (Chapters are called Pratisakhya)
- **Mahabhashya** by **Patanjali** (It is a commentary on Panini's Astadhyayi).
- **Amarkosha** by **Amarsimha** (Lexicography of Sanskrit).
- **Scientific literature in Sanskrit:**
- **Rasarnava and Rasa Ratnakar** by Nagarjuna (Book on Metallurgy).
- **Charak Samhita** - By **Charaka** (Book on Ayurveda).
- **Bhrigu Samhita** - By **Bhrigu** (Book on Ayurveda).
- **Susruta Samhita** - By **Susruta** (Book on Surgery)
- It mentions Ophthalmic surgery, Plastic surgery, and Rhinoplasty (nose reconstruction surgery).
- It also mentions surgical instruments to be used in surgery.

BUDDHIST LITERATURE (11:30 AM):

Canonical literature

Written only in the **Pali** language

Based on the direct teachings of Buddha, a highly revered text.

Tripitaka comes under this category:

i) Sutta Pitaka: Original teachings of Buddha. Some important chapters are: Anguttar Nikaya, Digha Nikaya, Majjhima Nikaya, and Khuddaka Nikaya (It mentions Jataka Katha).

ii) Vinaya Pitaka: Rules and regulations for Buddhist monks.

iii) Abhidhamma

Pitaka: Philosophical interpretation of Buddha's teaching.

Non-Canonical literature

Written in

both **Sanskrit** and **Pali** language

Based on liberal interpretations and also includes classical and historical literature. Some of the texts are also highly revered.

Sanskrit Text:

Lalitvistara- Holy text of Mahayana Buddhism.

Buddhacharita (Written by Aswagosh) - Biography of Buddha.

Mahavibhasa- Encyclopedia of Buddhism.

Pali Text:

Mahavastu- Holy text of Theravada Buddhism.

Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa- Sri Lankan chronicle of Buddhism.

Therigatha:

It was the unique text of that time which was written by the women and attributed to the women.

It talks about women's experience of renunciation.

TOPIC FOR THE NEXT CLASS: Jain and Sangam literature.