

## Ancient and Medieval History Class 04

30th December, 2023 at 9:30 AM

### **SOCIETY DURING LATER VEDIC PERIOD (09:35 AM):**

- In the tenth Mandala of Rig Veda under Purusha Shukta it was maintained to divide the society on the basis of birth profession.
- As per Purusha Shukta Brahman emerged from the mouth of Primeval man (intellectual work).
- Kshatriya - Emerged from the shoulders and chest of primeval man (protection, ruling class).
- Vaishya - Thighs (service, trade, commerce).
- Shudra - Feet (manual labour, physical work).
- Women didn't enjoy any political rights at this time.
- Somehow, they lost their former relevance and Vidhata was no more.
- Educational discourses were still open to women.
- The best example is Vidushi Gargi who had an intellectual debate with Rishi Yajnavalkya.
- Widow remarriage was still allowed under "**Niyoga Vivah**".
- There were no preferences for child marriage.
- But many deteriorating types of marriages emerged at this time like Asur Vivah, Paisach Vivah, etc.
- Two more types of marriages are:
  - i) **Anuloma**:
    - Lower caste women getting married to upper caste men.
    - It was allowed in the society.
  - ii) **Pratiloma Vivah**:
    - Upper-caste women getting married to lower-caste men.
    - It was frowned upon by society often leading to social exclusion.
- Ashrama Vyavastha:
  - In the Later Vedic Time, the first three stages of Ashram Vyavastha were formalized and the last one was consolidated in the age of Buddha and Mahavir.
  - a) Brahmacharya:
    - It is a period of education and observation of celibacy.
  - b) Grihashta:
    - Married life and its responsibilities.
  - c) Vanaprastha:
    - Forest stage of life and partial retirement from householder life.
  - d) Sanyas:
    - Complete retirement from householder life and striving for entitlement (it was formalized in the age of Buddha).
- The concept of "**Gotra**" was further consolidated at this time.
- The meaning of the Gotra is a spiritual genealogy from a common ancestor.
- The priestly class came up with many rules associated with gotra.
- They prescribed exogamy of gotra in matrimonial affairs.
- At this age, the 16 Samskara, or 16 important rituals of Hinduism were formalized.
- For example, Garbhadhana samskara, Rashi samskara, Namokarana samskara, Annaprashana, Chudakarana, Upanayan samskara, Vivah and Antyesti.

- **Upanayana Samskara:**

- Sacred thread ceremony.
- This samskara is regarded as the second birth of a person.
- After the performance of the samskara, a person has to assume the responsibility for religious and household life.
- Only Brahman, Kshatriya, and Vaishya were entitled to the sacred thread ceremony.
- Shudra community needed to pray for the world in the upper three varnas then in the next world they could perform this samskara.
- Brahman, Kshatriya, and Vaishya were regarded as Dvij which means two consecutive human births out of 7 human births.

- **Religious Practices during the Later Vedic Period (10:33 AM):**

- The Early Vedic gods like Indra, Agni, Varun, and Maharut lost their former importance and **Prajapati Brahma** emerged as the most important God.
- He was regarded as the creator of the universe.
- Further, the concept of Rudra and Vishnu was further consolidated.
- At a later time, they will emerge as the Trinity of god.
- The mode of worship at this time was through Vedic sacrifices, rituals, recitation of mantras, prayer, etc.
- In the beginning, the objective of worship was material gain but in the rear part of the Later Vedic Period objective became spiritual growth due to the emergence of progressive tendencies in the society and composition of Upanishads.

### **6TH CENTURY BC (10:46 AM):**

- a) The rise of the Religious Reform Movement led to the foundation of Jainism, Buddhism, and Ajivika.
- b) Rise of 16 Mahajanapada:
- In the 6th century BC, 16 big territorial States emerged in the Indian Subcontinent with a well-organized system of administration like monarchy, oligarchy, and republic.
- The major source of information about Mahajanapada is the Buddhist text of Anguttara Nikaya and Mahavastu and Jain text of Bhagawatisutra.
- **List of Mahajanapadas and their capital:**
- **Note** - Kindly refer to the map drawn in the class by the faculty for the exact location of these places.
- Indraprastha - Hastinapur (capital).
- Panchala - Ahichatra and Kampilya.
- Shaurasena - Mathura.
- Kosala - Sharavasti and Saket.
- Vatsa - Kaushambi.
- Kashi - Banaras.
- Malla - Kushinara (Pava).
- Vajji - Vaishali.
- Magadh - Rajgir.
- Anga - Champa.
- Chedi - Suktimati.
- Matsya - Viratnagar.
- Kamboja - Rajpura.
- Gandhara - Taxila.
- Assamaka - Potana.
- Avanti - North Capital was Ujjain and South Capital was Mahishmati.
- **Emergence of Magadh as Most Powerful Mahajanpada:**
- Magadh's capital Rajgir was strategically located.
- a) It was surrounded by five mountains which provided natural protection to the capital.
- b) Magadh had a large number of river channels and all of them were navigable.
- c) Magadh rulers preferred transport and communication through these river channels.
- d) Magadh was heavily forested which was a good source of high-quality timber.
- They traded timber with far-flung areas.
- e) Magadh had a huge abode of iron with which they created very good quality sharp tools.
- f) Last but not least reason for their strength was their unorthodox nature and highly enterprising rulers.
- Magadh rulers didn't pay any heed to the rules mentioned in Dharmashashtra, which was a hindrance to their commerce and business.

## **MAGADH HISTORY (11:24 AM):**

- **Haryanka Dynasty: (554-412 BC):**
- Bimbisara (554-492 BC):
- Brihadratha and Jarasandha were the original founders of Magadh in the Mahabharata age.
- Bimbisara was the founder of Haryanka Dynasty in Magadh.
- He also consolidated the position of Magadh through military annexation and matrimonial policy.
- He militarily annexed Anga Mahajanapada.
- Later Anga was placed under the Governorship of his son, Ajatashatru.
- He also performed a **matrimonial alliance** whereby he married:
  - a) Chellana of Licchavi (daughter of Licchavi king Chetaka).
  - b) Mahakausika Devi of Kashi (Sister of Prasenjit).
  - c) Khema from Madra (Punjab).
- Magadh didn't share any good relations with Avanti.
- At this time, Avanti ruler Chandra Pradyota was suffering from jaundice.
- Bimbisara sent the famous physician Jivaka to cure Chandra Pradyota.
- It led to the development of a friendly relationship between Magadh with Avanti.
- Bimbisara was a contemporary of Buddha and played huge reverence to Buddha.
- In 492, he was assassinated by his Ajatashatru.
- **Ajatashatru (492-460 BC):**
- Ajatashatru faced challenges from Kashi and Licchavi.
- He thoroughly defeated Kashi ruler Prasenjit and agreed to a treaty whereby he married the daughter of Prasenjit.
- He completely destroyed Licchavi capital Vaishali and in this war, he used **two innovative war engines** that is:
  - a) Ratha Musala:
    - In a chariot, a revolving mace and sword were attached.
  - b) Mahashilakantaka:
    - It was a flexible platform to catapult stones on the enemy.
- Ajatashatru was also a contemporary of Buddha and an ardent follower of Buddha.
- After the death of Buddha in 483 BC, he convened the first Buddhist council at Rajgriha.
- He decided to shift the capital to Patliputra but his death happened.
- He was succeeded by **Udayin** who constructed the beautiful city of Patliputra.
- The last ruler of the Haryanka Dynasty Nagadasaka was killed by his minister Shishunaga who founded Shishunaga Dynasty in Magadh.

- **Shishunag Dynasty (412-344 BC):**
- Shishunag completely annexed the province of Avanti and also shifted the capital of Magadh to Vaishali.
- He was followed by Kalashok or Kakvarnin.
- Kalashok convened the second Buddhist council in 383 BC at Vaishali which led to division in Buddhism.
- Later, he was assassinated by Mahapadma Nanda who was believed to be the illegitimate son of Kalashok.

**THE TOPIC FOR THE NEXT CLASS - THE NANDA DYNASTY AND THE MAURYAN EMPIRE.**