

## Ancient and Medieval History Class 06

4th January, 2024 at 9:00 AM

### THE CLASS STARTED (IN CONTINUATION) AT: (09:06 AM):

#### SATVAHANAS DYNASTY: (09:09 AM):

- The Satvahana's history is traced from Matsyapuram and many of their inscriptions in Naneghat about their Brahmin lineage.
- They established their Capital near Paithan at the banks of Godavari.
- Hala was the initially important ruler of the dynasty, who patronized art and literature.
- He wrote famous love poetry in the Prakrit language Gaatha Saptasati.
- Gautamiputra Satkarni was the most powerful and famous ruler of this dynasty.
- His victories against the Sakas are mentioned in the Nashik inscription. This inscription further proclaims that Satkarni was the only protector of the Brahmins.
- It was inscribed on the orders of his mother Gautami Balashree.
- From his name, it is noted that the Satvahanas have become matrilineal.
- During his tenure once again the power of the Sakas started to rise.
- In one such fight, he was defeated by Saka ruler Rudradaman I. As a result, he married his daughter to Rudradaman.
- **Initiatives of the Satvahanas:**
- a) Satvahanas were the first rulers of India, who started the practice of granting land to the Priestly Class which included both Brahmins and Buddhist monks.
- b) They patronized the Amravati Style of sculpture.
- c) Perhaps they were the first ruler of India, who started issuing Lead Coins for commercial transactions apart from Copper, Silver, and Bronze.

### **INDO-GREEK RULERS: (09:25 AM):**

- Their arrival in India happened in many batches from 1090 BC onwards.
- **1) Menander:**
- Menander was the most important ruler of this dynasty who established his capital at Sialkot also known as Shakala.
- He was persuaded by a Buddhist monk Nagasena to accept Buddhism.
- Menander asked many questions to Nagasena to which a satisfactory reply was given by Nagasena.
- As a result, Menander accepted Buddhism and took the title of Milind.
- This historical conversation is mentioned in the Milindpanho.
- Indo-Greeks were the first people in India who issued Gold Coins.
- They also introduced curtains in India which the part of theatrical traditions and later became household things.
- **2) Sakas (Scythians)**
- Sakas were also known as Scythians or Kshatrapas.
- They arrived from the Indo-Bactrian area in many branches, such as:
  - a) Kabul Branch.
  - b) Kandhar Branch.
  - c) Kashmir Branch.
  - d) Gujrat Branch.
- The **Gujrat Branch** also known as Western Kshatrapas was the most important.
- Rudradaman was the most important ruler of this branch his known for the very famous Junagarh inscription it was the first inscription which was written in pure Sanskrit.
- In this inscription, he writes that he defeated Satvahana ruler Vasisthiputra twice but every time he spared his life to respect the matrimonial alliance between the two kingdoms.
- He further added that Sudarshan Lake which was created by the Governor of Chandragupta Maurya, was also repaired by Rudradaman.
- **Malwa Branch:** This branch was defeated by a local ruler of Ujjain who took the title of Vikramaditya in 57 BC and created Vikram Samvat.
- With the name of Vikramaditya, there were fourteen rulers in India, out of which the most famous was Chandragupta II.
- **3) Parthians (25 AD):**
- This was a short-lived dynasty in India that started to arrive from the area between Israel and Iran.
- Gondophernes was the most important ruler of this dynasty.
- During his tenure the famous Saint Thome came to India for the propagation of Christianity he died at a place in Tamilnadu (Mylapuram) later in his memory one of the earliest churches was established at Velancani near Puducherry.

### **KUSHANAS: (10:08 AM):**

- Kushanas arrived in many branches the first branch came in 65 AD, known as the Kadphises Branch.
- The other branch of the Kushanas was the Kanishka Branch which arrived in 78 AD.
- Originally Kushanas were in Mongolia, but driven out by the Chinese rulers they settled in Central Asia. They belonged to the Yuechi Tribe.
- During the tenure of Kujul Kadphises and Vima Kapdphises, silver coins were released.
- On the Obverse side, an image of the Kushan King was created but on the Reverse side of the coin, a free-standing image holding tri-dent along with a bull was depicted.
- It is indicative of worship of the Lord Shiva.
- **Kanishka:**
- The Kanishka branch was most important which arrived in 78 AD. Kanishka defeated the Kashmir branch of the Sakas and to celebrate this victory he initiated Saka Samvat in 78 AD (It has been adopted as a calendar of the Government of India).
- Kanishka was persuaded by the practitioner of the Buddhist faith as such he convened the fourth Buddhist Council in Kundalvan Kashmir in 78 AD.
- The outcome of this council was division of the Buddhism into 2 formal sects i.e. Hinayana and Mahayana.
- Under the guidance of Ashvaghosh, Kanishka accepted the Mahayana faith.
- He also started to patronize art and architecture.
- During his tenure, the Gandhara and Mathura Schools of Arts developed.
- His phase was also noted for urbanization in North-Western India, the major centers were Purushpur (Peshawar), Kansihkapur (Jammu), Huvishkapur (Udhampiur), and Mathura.
- Kansihka released the purest of the purest quality gold coins. He also used the Silk Route to trade with the Chinese and Romans.

### **GUPTA EMPIRE: (10:26 AM):**

- It is believed that the Guptas were the feudatory of the Kushanas.
- Srigupta in the middle of the 3rd Century AD, founded this dynasty.
- He was followed by his son Ghatotkatcha.
- **Chandragupta I:**
- He was regarded as the real founder of the Gupta Dynasty based in Prayag.
- He filled the vacuum in North and Central India after the demise of Kanishka.
- He took the title of Maharajadhiraj (Kings of kings) and married Kumardevi of Licchavi.
- To celebrate his marriage special types of Kumardevi Coins were minted.
- For the first time in Indian history, coins were issued with the image of a king along with queens.
- On the reverse side of the coins, the Three Forms of Shakti i.e. Parvati, Saraswati, and Laxmi were created.

- **Samudragupta (335 AD-375 AD):**

- He was regarded as the Second Chakravarthy Samrat of India.
- His court poet Harisena wrote the Prayag Prashasthi. In which he highly eulogized Samudragupta.
- He wrote that Samudragupta won more than 100 battles and he was never defeated.
- He further adds that Samudragupta was a prolific poet and musician.
- He was a deep believer in Hinduism and performed 2 Aswamedh Yagnas. He was very generous and accommodating.
- According to the Chinese records he funded and supported the Srilankan ruler Meghvarman to create a Buddhist Monastery in Bodh Gaya.
- During his tenure, excellent-quality Gold Coins were released. In some of these coins, he was depicted playing the musical instrument Veena.
- He further started the tradition of creating Simhavahini (Goddess Durga on lion).

**CHANDRAGUPTA II: (11:12 AM):**

- He defeated the Western branch of the Sakas and took the title of Vikramaditya.
- He created the Second Capital of the Guptas at Ujjain.
- He is regarded as the most enlightened ruler of the Gupta history.
- During his tenure, there was a holistic development in the fields of art, architecture, religious literature, Sanskrit literature, astrology, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, etc.
- His age is also regarded as the Golden Age of Art and Architecture. He maintained 9 luminaries (Navratnas) in his court e.g. Kalidas, Amarsimha, Vararuchi, Varahmihira, Dhanvantri.
- He also followed the policy of matrimonial alliances whereby he married Kubernaga from the northeast and gave the hand of his daughter Prabhvati to Vakataka ruler Rudrasena.
- The Vakatak area was ruled under the guidance of Chandragupta II.
- During his tenure, Fa-Hien visited India and mentioned his experiences in the book Fu-Koki.
- Chandragupta II was succeeded by Kumaragupta who laid the foundation of Nalanda University regarded as the first Modern University of India.
- Nalanda has a well-established infrastructure, libraries, and hostels.
- It also followed a well-defined course infrastructure. Nalanda Library was one of the largest in the world and at its peak in the 11th Century, it had more than 5 lakh books.

**SKANDGUPTA: (11:43 AM):**

- He was the last important Gupta Ruler.
- During his tenure a barbaric tribe Hunas started the invasion of the Gupta territories but this challenge was effectively met by the Skandgupta and removed the threat.
- He also added in the Junagrah inscription that he repaired the Sudarshan lake.
- After his death, the Hunas started reinvading the Gupta territory under the leadership of Tormana and Mihirkula.
- They thoroughly looted the Gupta cities and took important possessions like Gold coins and Gold minting machines.
- It led to an irreversible decline of the Guptas and by 550 AD, the Gupta rule completely disappeared.

**TOPICS OF THE NEXT CLASS:** Polity, Administration of the Gupta period, etc.