

Social and Cultural History of Ancient India

By-

Dr. (Mrs.) Anjali





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***This book is dedicated to my respected Father Shri
J.R. Yadav***

Preface

The present work '*Social and Cultural History of Ancient India*' emerged from the intersection of my experiences as a researcher. Primarily a textbook for undergraduate students, this book will, I hope, also appeal to the general reader. Its aim is to provide a description of the social and cultural history of Ancient India. It deals with the historical development in Ancient India up to the Sangam age.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my heartiest gratitude to my Post-doctorate supervisor Prof. Yogeshwar Tewari, who enlightened me with his insightful comments and wise observations. I feel fortunate to have received his guidance and mentorship.

This work would not have been possible without the motivation and encouragement I have received from Prof. Heramb Chaturvedi (Head of the Department, University of Allahabad), Prof. Lalit Joshi and Ex V.C. Om Prakash Sir.

I owe my sincere thanks to our library staffs of University of Allahabad for providing me all essential materials when I needed. All their help has been indispensable. I would also like to extend my thanks to the staffs of Bharat Kala Bhawan Varanasi, Archeology Department University of Kerala, Allahabad Museum and the various libraries where most of the research for this work was done: the

library of BHU Varanasi, ICHR library New Delhi and the library of the State Archives Allahabad.

I am grateful to Shri Santosh Srivastava for his active cooperation and invaluable assistance in process of writing this book.

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Dr. (Mrs.) Anjali

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Cultural differences among Indians even in the same province, district or city are as wide as the physical differences among the various parts of the country. The people of India are well united in spite of the much diversity of religions, castes, communities, region, education, gender, races, languages dialects etc. Cultural pattern plays an important role to the dynamism and vitality of social, political and economic development.

Ancient Indian culture is known for an infinite variety of symbols and rituals. India is home to many of the finest cultural symbols of the world which includes paintings, architecture, forts, temples, churches, mosques, performing arts, music, classical dances, sculptures, literature etc.

Indian culture is so prosperous that many cultural sites have been selected by the UNESCO as World Heritage Sites. Some prestigious and spectacular World Heritage Sites in India are the Nalanda Mahavihara, Bihar; Caves of Ajanta, Elephanta and Ellora, Maharashtra; Maha Bodhi Temple Complex Bihar; Bhimbetka and Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh; Group of Monuments at

Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu; Pattadakal, Karnataka and many more.

The rich and diverse culture of India is one of the oldest in the world. Culture is everything in a particular society and Indian culture is no easy composite of varying styles and influences.

The English word '*culture*' is derived from the Latin term 'cult' or 'cultus' meaning tilling, or cultivating, or refining, or caring and worship. Thus, culture is cultivating and refining a thing to such an extent that its end product evokes our admiration and respect. Practically, it is the same as 'Sanskriti' of the Sanskrit language. Culture is a way of life. The language we speak, the food we eat, the custom we follow, the clothes we wear, the music we listen, the dance we do, the God we worship, the way we behave, all are aspects of culture. In very simple terms, we can say that culture is the embodiment of the ways in which we think and do things. It is also the things that we have inherited as members of society. Actually, the ways in which people act and think in the social world makes the culture. All the achievements of human beings as members of social groups can be called culture. In other words, we can say that all the achievements of people life in a society are culture. Art, music, literature, architecture, sculpture, philosophy, religion and science can be seen as aspects of culture. However, culture also includes the customs,

traditions, festivals, ways of living and one's outlook on various issues of life.

Thus, *Culture* refers to the patterns of thought and behavior of people. It includes customs, beliefs, values, rules of conduct, and patterns of social, political and economic organisation. By various formal or informal processes these attributes of culture are passed on from one generation to the next generation.

Culture has been classified into two categories:

- (i) Material Culture, and**
- (ii) Non-material Culture.**

The first category covers the material goods, consumer goods, architecture etc. i.e. this category is mainly related with the tangible items. The non-material culture includes the non-tangible items like beliefs, values, spirituality, rituals, norms, myths, art forms, literature and other intellectual types of activities. In general terms, the non-material type of culture is mainly considered as culture.

The material and non-material aspects of any culture are usually correlated and dependent on each other, but both has its own nature. Material culture may change quickly but the non-material culture takes longer time to adopt the changes. Indian culture stands not only for a traditional social code but also for a spiritual foundation of life. Culture is the soul of a state. On the basis of culture,

we can experience the prosperity of its past and present. Culture is a collection of values of human life and it is the culture which makes human distinctly and ideally separate from other creatures on the earth.

Culture, thus refers to a human-made environment which includes all the material and non-material products of a group life that are transmitted from one generation to the next. As per Henry P. Fairchild, “culture denotes all the behavioral patterns socially acquired and transmitted from one to one, generation to generation by means of symbols, and communicate and develop their knowledge about and express their attitudes towards life”.

Attributes of culture vary from region to region based on the historical process operating in a local, regional, or national, or other context. For example, we differ in greeting styles, religious and social practices like marriage, cremation styles, clothing styles and food habits, from nation to nation and continent to continent. In other words, the people of each region or country have their own distinctive cultural traditions and it is not necessary that they get matched with that of the other region or country.

General Characteristics of Culture:

Here are some general characteristics of culture, which are common to different cultures throughout the whole world.

Culture is learned and acquired:

It is a well-known fact that we learn several things from our ancestors. Culture is acquired in the sense that there are certain behaviors which are acquired through heredity. Individuals inherit many qualities from their parents but not all, e.g. the socio-cultural patterns are not inherited from parents and these social patterns are learnt from family members, from the group and the society in which they live. Thus, many characteristics are acquired, many are lost and many are modified. It is thus apparent that the culture of human beings is influenced by the physical and social environment through which they operate.

Culture is cumulative:

Present knowledge can be passed from one generation to another generation. More and more knowledge is added in a particular culture as the time passes by. A lot of new knowledge, thoughts, and teaching techniques are added as new cultural traits and it is transferred from one generation to the next. This cycle remains as the particular culture goes with time.

Culture changes (Culture is dynamic):

No culture remains on the permanent state because when new traits come the old traits and tradition are lost or modified. In other words, the Culture is changing constantly as new ideas and new techniques are added as time passes.

Culture is shared by a group of people:

Culture refers to the patterns of thought and behavior of people i.e. a thought or behavior may be called culture if it is shared and believed or practiced by a group of people.

Culture is diverse:

Material components i.e. tangible parts and non-material components i.e. non tangible parts makes the culture. These tangible and non-tangible components are interdependent. Although these parts are separate, they are interdependent on one another forming culture as whole.

Indian culture is one of the most ancient cultures of the world. The fundamental principles of the Indian culture remain almost the same, as were in the ancient time. This is the reason that the Indian culture is alive till today while the other ancient cultures of Greece, Egypt, Rome, etc. were destroyed with time. The teachings of Lord Krishna, Gautam Buddha and Mahavira are still alive and are a great source of inspiration. Today also we are inspired by the values of spirituality, faith in karma

and reincarnation, non-violence, truth, chastity etc. Civilisation generally refers to the material development while Art of Living, spirituality, beliefs, customs, faith, traditions, rituals etc. come under culture. It is notable that the material development is possible to a limit only. This is the reason that the other civilizations which were mainly related with material culture got destroyed while the Indian culture is present till today because the basis of development was non-material attributes e.g. Spirituality. Thus, Indian culture can be called an ancient culture, whose past is alive even in the present and we will see in this volume also that the Indus, Ganges, Narmada etc. basins were the cradles of culture and civilisation.

The Characteristics of the Indian culture includes its cosmic vision, harmony, receptivity, adoptability, tolerance, spirituality, unity in diversity, joint family system, focus on duty instead of right etc. Its cosmic vision is '*satyam-shivam-sundaram*' and '*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*' and love for all creatures living, non-living and God.

Aspects of Indian Culture

Few main aspects of the Indian culture are art, architecture, music, dance etc.

Religion has important role in the Indian art and the art is generally centered on sacred themes. However, we can easily see the non-religious art

also. The Indian art consists of the eternal diversity of human life and nature. It is now a well-known fact that during the Harappan civilisation time the art of architecture and sculpture was well developed.

Sangit is the popular word which is used throughout India for music which includes dance as well as vocal instrumental music. The Samaveda is mostly a rearrangement of the Rigveda for musical rendering. It was written in order to facilitate the singing or chanting of the verses. Only 75 additional stanzas were added in Rig-Veda to compose Sama-Veda. In *Natyashastra* the oldest detailed exposition of Indian musical theory is found. It was written by sage Bharata in the beginning of the Christian era. North Indian Hindustani classical music and South Indian Karnataka music are the two major forms of classical music in India. *Gharaanaa* is one aspect of the Indian culture that has achieved worldwide recognition. *Gharaanaa* system, generally found in India, not only nourished but also protected the Indian art.

Classical Indian dance, a very important aspect of Indian culture, is a bright, beautiful and significant symbol of the spiritual and artistic approach of the Indian mind. We found the terms *nritya* (music) and *nata* (drama) in many traditional Indian scripts. Dance and music are in the soul of every Indian since the inception of culture. *Natya*,

Nritya and *Nritya* are generally considered as the three aspects of Indian dancing. *Natya* corresponds to drama. *Nritya* is interpretative dance performed to the words sung in a musical melody, and *nritya* on the other hand represents the pure dance where body movements do not express any mood nor convey any meaning.

Cultural Heritage: All the values and aspects of culture which are transmitted from ancestors to the next generation of the human being are called Cultural Heritage. Monuments, arts, philosophy, literature, inventions, discoveries, intellectual achievements, architectural creation, yoga, meditations, etc. are the parts of cultural heritage. A nation also inherits a culture and it may be termed as 'National Cultural Heritage' and India is very prosperous in its cultural heritage.

Civilization

The word 'civilization' has roots in the Latin adjective '*civilis*', a reference to citizen. In the interest of larger community the citizen willingly merge together to form the political, social, economic and religious organizations. Over the time the word civilization has come to imply something beyond organization. It refers to a particular shared way of thinking about the world as well as a reflection of that world in art, literature, drama and a host of other cultural happenings. The original meaning of civilisation is the manner or condition in

which men live together as citizens. A civilization is a complex society or culture group characterized by dependence on business, state form of government, occupational specialization, urbanism and class stratification. Aside from these core elements, civilization is often marked by any combination of a number of secondary elements, including a developed transportation system, writing, standards of measurement, formal legal system, great art style, monumental architecture, medical system, banking, mathematics, science, sophisticated metallurgy, electronic instruments and techniques, library system, including writing and digitalization.

Albert Schweitzer in his book “Philosophy of Civilisation” outlines two characteristics of human species to design a conceptual framework to define civilization, one is purely material and other spiritual. He writes “It is the sum total of all progress made by man in every sphere of action from every point of view in so far as the progress helps towards the spiritual perfecting of individuals, constitutes the progress of all progress”.

According to Oxford English dictionary civilization is “the action or process of civilizing or of being civilized; a developed or advanced state of human society.”

Characteristics of Civilization

Civilizations has been distinguished by their means of art, architecture, types of livelihood; settlement

patterns i.e. cities etc.; forms of government, social structure, economic systems, literacy, religion, writing, technology and other cultural traits.

Initially, when human was primitive he was totally unaware of agriculture. In the course of time when farming started and later on food production increased and resulted in a surplus of food, particularly when people used intensive agriculture techniques such as irrigation and crop rotation, as in present time, resulted in a division of labour and a more diverse range of human activity.

Civilizations have distinctively different settlement patterns from other societies. From ancient to modern period we see that there is a greater difference among the social classes. The ruling class, normally concentrated in the areas having more facilities and amenities, has control over much of the surplus and exercises through the actions of a government or bureaucracy or other form of governance.

Living in one place allows people to accumulate more personal possessions than nomadic people. Some people also acquire landed property, or private ownership of the land.

Writing skill, developed first by people, is considered a hallmark of civilization. Invention of writing helped the civilisation to keep accurate records, to express their creativity, to preserve and

transfer the knowledge to their next generation. This resulted into the world's first work of literature.

Culture and Civilization

The words 'culture' and 'civilization' are often used synonymously. However, they have different meanings in Social Science. Historians and Anthropologists have different descriptions for both the terms, especially for the word 'civilisation'. According to Anthropologists culture is earlier and civilization is later. Thus, culture is a pre-condition for civilization to develop. Generally, Civilisation is considered to have begun only after the invention of writing. Anthropologists say that everything created by human is culture while the civilization is an advanced state of the cultural developments.

Writers have given different concepts of civilisation. Ogburn and Nimkoff conceived of civilisation as the latter phase of the superorganic culture. According to Gillins, "civilisation is a more complex and evolved form of culture".

Anthropologist A.W. Green writes- "A culture becomes civilisation only when it possesses written language, science, philosophy, a specialized division of labour and a complex technology and political system".

Civilization means having better ways of living and sometimes making nature bend to fulfill their needs. Civilisation refers to an advanced stage

of development like, high level of science, art, architecture, political, legal, religious organizations, roads, communication system, etc. It also includes organizing societies into politically well-defined groups working collectively for improved conditions of life in matters of food, dress, communication, industry, science, government and culture too. In general terms, civilization denotes what we have in actual, hence we found some precise standards of measurement for civilization.

On the other hand 'culture' refers to the inner being, a refinement of head and heart. This includes arts, rituals, spirituality, music, dance, literature and various higher pursuits of human life which we generally classify as cultural activities. Thus, culture is dominated by intangible aspects of human societies such as human qualities and values. One who may be poor and wearing cheap clothes, living in old and broken house may be considered 'uncivilized', but still he or she may be the most cultured person. One possessing ostentatious wealth may be considered as 'civilized' but he or she may not be cultured. Only when the deeper levels of a person's intellect and consciousness are brought into expression can we call him/her 'cultured'.

Civilisation is generally seen as external and mechanical things while culture is considered as internal; and organic. Civilization is transferred from one generation to next generation generally in quick and easy way, without change or loss but

culture takes long time for transfer and may change during this process. Therefore, when we think of culture, we have to understand that it is different from civilization. As we have seen, culture is the higher levels of inner refinement of a human being. Humans are not merely physical beings. They live and act at three levels: Physical, mental and spiritual. While better ways of living socially and politically and better utilization of natural resources around us may be termed as civilization. Civilisation has many elements and when it includes culture it (civilization) becomes a more advanced civilization. A culture deserves to be called a 'civilisation' when material culture has reached a stage of advancement. In broad sense culture is mainly indicates human qualitative development while civilization mainly refers human quantitative development. In other words culture is what we are and civilization is what we have.

CHAPTER - 2

THE PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD

Prehistory: The Past before writing i.e. history of non-literate people who did not leave behind any written sources.

Protohistory: In the European Context, it is sometimes used to refer to people who did not themselves have writing, but who are mentioned in the written records of a contemporary literate group. Authors have different opinions about the correct usage of the 'Protohistory'. In the Indian subcontinent, the Harappan civilization- a literate culture with an undeciphered script- is included in protohistory. This term can also include the period 1500-500 B.C., for which there is an orally transmitted literature (the Vedas) but no evidence of writing. The oldest script in the Indian subcontinent is the Harappan script, but the oldest deciphered script is Brahmi, known from about the 4th Century BCE.

Archaeologists often use the word Protohistory for the long period between the beginning of food production and the advent of iron technology. This would include Neolithic cultures in different parts of the subcontinent. 4th Century

B.C. is considered as the surviving sample of deciphered writing i.e. the beginning of the historical period in north India.

Stone Age

The earth is about 4.5 billion years old and human appeared on it only some 200,000 years ago. Geologists divided the history of the earth into many epochs and eras in relation to the evolution of life forms. Neozoic, Cenozoic, Mesozoic, Palaeozoic and Pre-Palaeozoic are the main eras in the geological History/clock of the earth. Each Era is numbered in sequence as first (primary), second, third and fourth and then these are divided into periods. Further each period is divided into several epochs. The Neozoic is divided into two periods, namely, Pleistocene and Holocene. These two periods are especially important in the story of hominid evolution.

Table 2.1: Geological Time Table (from youngest to oldest)

Era	Epoch	Period	Beginning time before present (ya= years ago, mya=Million Years ago)	Remarks
Neozoic	Quaternary	a. Holocene or Post-Glacial b. Pleistocene	(a)10,000 ya (b)1mya	Glaciation in Pleistocene period

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				and modern
Cenozoic	Tertiary	a. Pliocene b. Miocene c. Oligocene d. Eocene	(a) 11mya (b) 25mya (c) 40mya (d) 70mya	
Mesozoic	Secondary	a. Cretaceous b. Jurassic c. Triassic	(a) 135mya (b) 180mya (c) 225mya	Large Reptile era
Palaeozoic	Primary	a. Permian, b. Carboniferous c. Devonian d. Silurian e. Ordovician f. Cambrian etc	(a) 270mya (b) 350mya (c) 400mya (d) 440mya (e) 500mya (f) 600mya	

Source: Savindra Singh, Physical Geography

The Pleistocene period began about 1.0 mya and the Holocene (recent period, in which we live) about 10,000 years ago. The earliest known hominids (man like species) lived roughly between 4.4 and 1.8 mya, and their remains have so far been only identified in Africa.

Homo erectus (named for his/her fully erect posture) appeared in East Africa around 1.7 mya. From here, these species seems to have spread to various parts of Africa, Asia & Europe. The modern man '*Homo Sapien*' appeared approximately 30,000 years ago on the earth.

In 1863, John Lubbock divided the Stone Age into two parts, the Palaeolithic & Neolithic. A few

years later, Edouard lartet suggested the division of the palaeolithic into the lower, middle & upper palaeolithic largely on the basis of changes in fauna associated with the different tool types.

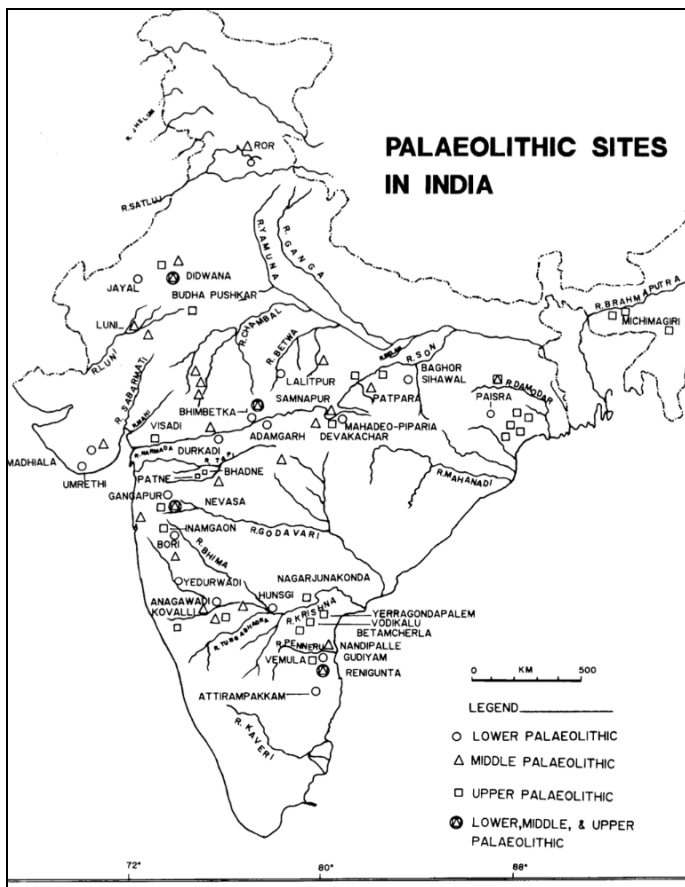
The Indian Stone Age is divided into the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic on the basis of geological age, the type and technology of stone tools, and subsistence base.

A general time range (Paleolithic Stone Age):

For the lower Paleolithic: about 2 mya to 100,000 years ago

Middle Paleolithic: 100,000 to 40,000 years ago

Upper Paleolithic: about 40,000 to 10,000 years ago



MAP 2.1: Palaeolithic Sites in India

The Paleolithic culture belongs to the Pleistocene geological era, while the Mesolithic and Neolithic cultures belong to the Holocene era.

TABLE 2.1 Brief Detail of Paleolithic Stone Age

Terminology	Geological Age	Typical Indian Stone Tool Types	Main Subsistence Base
Lower Paleolithic	Lower Pleistocene	Pebble & core tools, like hand-axes, cleavers & chopping tools	Hunting & gathering
Middle Paleolithic	Middle Pleistocene	Flake tools, including those made by prepared core techniques such as the Levallois technique	Hunting & gathering
Upper Paleolithic	Upper Pleistocene	Blade tools made on flakes- e.g. parallel sided blades & burins	Hunting & gathering
Mesolithic	Holocene	Microliths	Hunting, gathering, fishing with instances

			of animal domestication in a few places
Neolithic	Holocene	Celts (ground and polished hand-axes)	Food production based on animal & plant domestication.

Paleolithic Phase

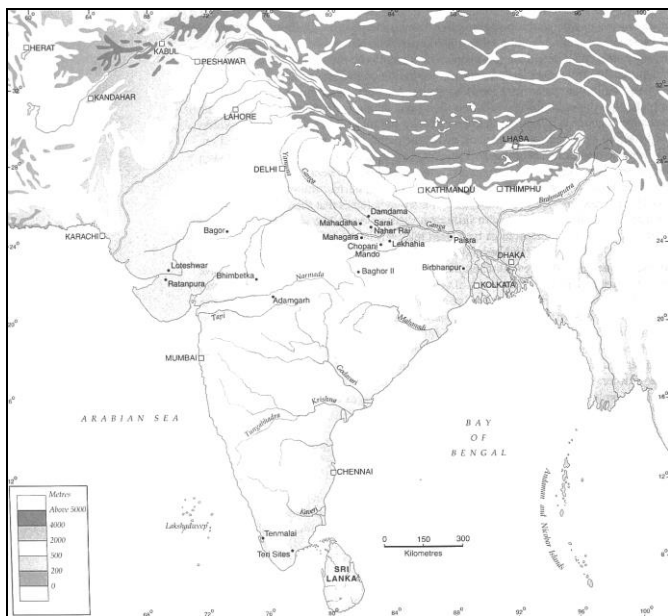
The Paleolithic people used to live by forming very small nomadic communities, and used wood and bone tools and implements of stone, roughly dressed by chipping. The tools they used are found throughout the country except in the alluvial plains of the Indus, Ganga & Yamuna Rivers. Such tools were used for hunting, cutting and other purposes. These people used to cover themselves with the animal skin, bark or leaves of trees in order to protect themselves from the adverse weather conditions and animals. They had no knowledge of cultivation and house building.

Mesolithic Phase

Mesolithic phase is marked by the important practice of domesticating animals. Paleolithic and

Mesolithic people practiced painting, of which evidence comes from several sites. Situated in the Vindhyan mountain range, 45 km south of Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, Bhimbetka has more than 500 caves which gives ample evidence of rock paintings, extending from the Paleolithic to the Mesolithic Periods. The places which provided the evidence of Mesolithic art were Bhimbetka, Azamgarh, Pratapgarh and Mirzapur. These places also provided the evidence of hunting, food gathering, fishing and other human activities like child birth and burial, and thus, gives a good idea of social, economic and other activities of the people of this age.

The C-14 dates available for the Mesolithic culture from various sites in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, M.P., Orissa, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh shows that this culture began around 12,000 B.C. and survived up to 2,000 B.C. Mesolithic communities were in touch with people of the Harappan and other Chalcolithic cultures and traded various items with them. Mesolithic culture and advanced Harappan civilizations belong to the same period.



MAP 2.2 Some Early Mesolithic Sites

Neolithic Phase

During the Neolithic age human beings became less dependent on hunting and food gathering and began to produce their own food. In the world context, the beginning of the New Stone age is assigned to 9000 B.C. in South Asia. The earliest Neolithic settlement at Mehrgarh (Baluchistan, a province of Pakistan) was dated to around 7000 B.C. Some Neolithic settlements in the Vindhyan range may be as old as 5000 B.C. but those in south India may not

be older than 2500 B.C.; some in southern and eastern India may be as late as 1000 B.C.

Neolithic people used tools and implements of polished stones.

Neolithic people cultivated some important crops like rice, wheat and barley. Along with this, another activity of domestication of animals brought about a major change in subsistence strategies. The domestication and successful exploitation of various species of wild plants produced a shift towards sedentary settlements, which led to the economic and cultural development.

In the Indian context, the Neolithic agriculture based regions can roughly be divided into four groups.

- (i) The Indus system and its western borderland.
- (ii) Ganga Valley.
- (iii) Western India and the Northern Deccan.
- (iv) The Southern Deccan.

The economy of all these early Neolithic cultures was based on agriculture and animal domestication. During excavation work bones of sheep, goat, pig and cattle were found which shows that these animals were used for domestication purpose. Some of the most important Neolithic sites are Gufkral and Burzahom in Kashmir, Mahgara, Chopani Mando, and Koldihwa in Belan Valley in Uttar Pradesh, and Chirand in Bihar.

Towards the end of the Neolithic period, a significant development took place and that was the use of metal.

Chalcolithic Culture

Archaeologists have discovered several Chalcolithic cultures and found that the first metal to be used in this culture was copper. Chalcolithic groups were primarily rural farming communities living in different parts of the country. On the other hand, the Harappans were the urban communities using bronze. The Chalcolithic people were expert copper smiths and good workers of stone. They used to manufacture cloth and bead-making of semi-precious stones was also prevalent in this culture. The villagers domesticated animals such as cows, sheep, goats, pigs and hunted deer. People of this culture used to cultivate wheat, rice, *bajra* and several pulses also such as lentil (*masur*), black gram and grass pea. In eastern India mainly rice was produced, which together with fish remains a staple food there even today. In western India mainly barley and wheat were cultivated. In the lower Deccan ragi, bajra & several millets were cultivated.

The Chalcolithic settlement of India is spread over a long chronological span ranging from the early 3rd millennium B.C. to the 8th Century B.C.; some of them are certainly Pre-Harappan, while others are Post-Harappan. Though the Chalcolithic

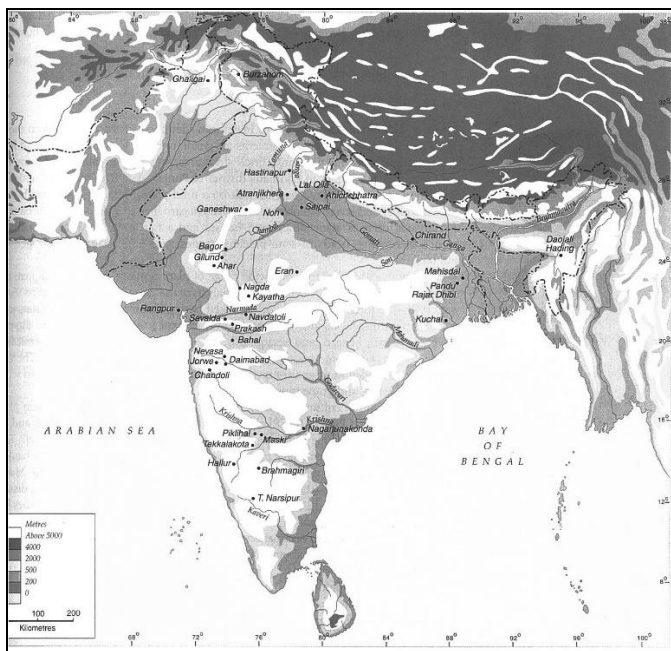
people were good at working in copper, they did not know the art of mixing tin with copper to forge the much stronger metal called bronze which paved the way for the rise of the earliest civilization in Crete, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Indus valley. The people of the Chalcolithic age did not have the art of writing. Also, they did not live in cities. These elements of civilization, however, appeared for the first time in the Indus region.

TABLE 2.3 Culture Detail

Ahar Culture	2800-1500 B.C.	Large number of black & red ware decorated with white designs	Banas Valley in Rajasthan. Old name of Ahar was Tambawati and its capital was Gilund
Kayatha Culture	2450-1700 B.C.	Sturdy red slipped ware painted with designs in chocolate colour red painted buff ware.	Located on the Chambal & its tributaries
Malwa Culture	1900-1400 B.C.	Course in fabric, but has thick buff surface over which designs are made either in red or black	Settled mostly on the Narmada and its tributaries i.e. Navdatoli
Jorwe	1500-	Painted black on	200 Settlements

Culture	900 B.C.	red but has a matt surface treated with wash. Bronze item found in large quantity.	ts are known in Godawari valley in Maharashtra. Prakash, Daimabad (Largest), inamgaon.
Prabhas Culture	2000-1400 B.C.	Have glossy surface with lustrous red ware (derived from Harappan)	It is one of the sub-Indus cultures in Gujarat
Rangpur Culture	1700-1400 B.C.	Have glossy surface with lustrous red ware (derived from Harappan)	Ghelo and Kalubhar rivers in Gujarat.

Almost all these Chalcolithic cultures flourished in the black cotton soil zone. The Chalcolithic people used to trade and exchange materials from the people of other societies. Ahar people settled close to the copper source and used to supply copper tools and objects to other contemporary communities in Malwa and Gujarat. Conch shells for bangles were traded from the Saurashtra coast to various other parts of the Chalcolithics regions. Gold and ivory was supplied to Jorwe people from Tekkalkotta (Karnataka).



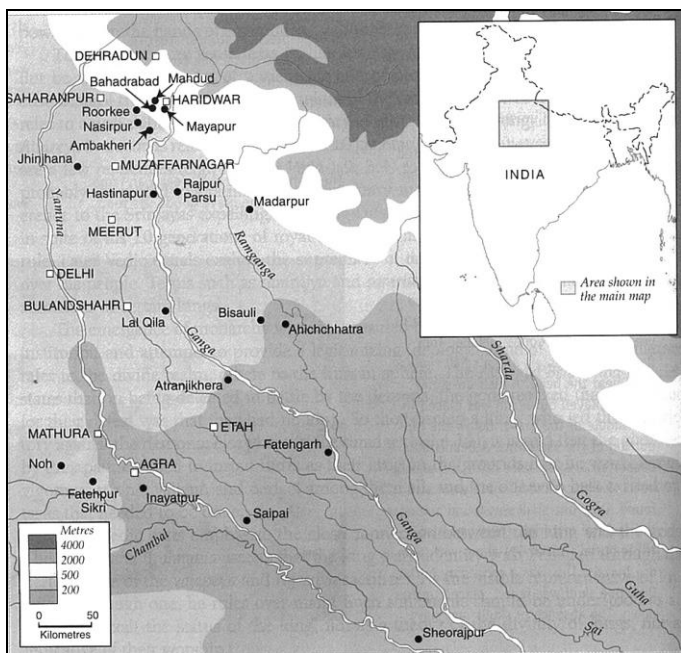
MAP 2.3: Major Neolithic - Chalcolithic sites in the Indian Subcontinent

Ochre Coloured Pottery Culture (OCP)

The Ochre Coloured Pottery Culture (OCP) was almost contemporary to the latter half of the Mature Harappan Civilization. This culture flourished in the Upper Gangetic Plains and is identified by the use of pottery with bright red slip and painted in black.

The OCP people used copper tools and cultivated rice, barley, gram and *khaseri*. The OCP culture has many shapes identical with the Harappan ware. During the course of excavation in

the region it has been found that the sites yielding this pottery have suffered from extensive floods.

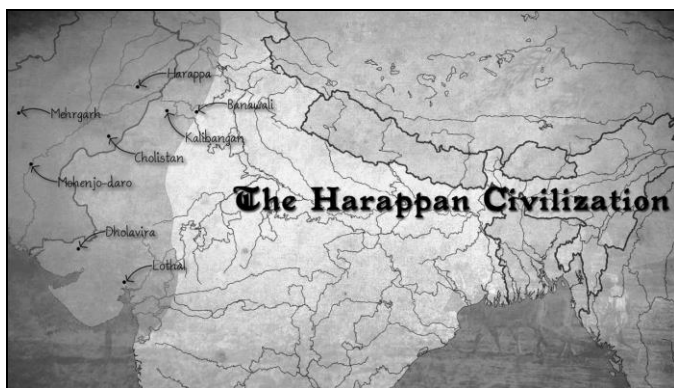


MAP 2.4: Ochre Coloured Pottery Sites

CHAPTER - 3

HARAPPAN CIVILIZATION

Harappan Civilization



The Indus or Harappan Culture originated in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent. The area covered by it was larger than those of its contemporary civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Harappan civilization was discovered in 1920 by Daya Ram Sahni and Mohenjo-daro in 1921 by R.D. Banerjee.

The area covered by the Harappan culture Zone is huge, ranging from 680,000 to 800,000 sq. km. Today, the count of Harappan sites has risen to

about 1,022 of which 406 are in Pakistan and 616 in India. Of these, only 97 have so far been excavated.

Sites have been found in Afghanistan, in the Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan; in Jammu, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and western Uttar Pradesh in India.

The northernmost site is Manda in Jammu district of Jammu & Kashmir.

The southernmost site is Malvan in Surat district in southern Gujarat.

The westernmost site of Indus valley civilization is Sutkagan-Dor (or Sutkagen dor) on the Makran coast of Pakistan, near Iran border.

The easternmost site is Alamgirpur in the Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh.

There is an isolated site at Shortughai on Amu Daria (i.e. Oxus River) in the northern Afghanistan.

The Harappan culture was actually a long and complex cultural process consisting of at least three phases-

- (i) **The Early Harappan-** Formative, proto-urban phase of the culture.
- (ii) **The Mature Harappan-** Urban phase, the full-fledged stage of civilization.

(iii) **The Late Harappan-** Post-urban phase, when the cities declined.

According to John Marshall, who used the term 'Indus Civilization', the Harappan Civilization flourished between 3250 B.C.E. and 2750 B.C.E.

On the basis of the radiocarbon dates obtained from various sites the Harappan Culture was given the following broad chronology:

Early Harappan - 3200-2600 B.C.E.

Mature Harappan - 2600-1900 B.C.E.

Late Harappan - 1900-1300 B.C.E.

Harappa on the bank of the river Ravi in the Montgomery (present name Sahiwal) district (Western Punjab now in Pakistan) was the first to be excavated, whence the name *Harappan* is derived. Covering a circuit of a little less than 5 km, the site has yielded a large variety of objects in the course of excavation and is one of the two most important Harappan cities.

TABLE 3.1: Brief detail of Harappan Civilization

Site	River/ Basin	Location/ State	Country	Excavators	Year	Remarks
Harappa	Ravi	Montgomery, Sahiwal District Punjab	Pakistan	Raibhadur & DR Sahni; MS Vatsa; Wheeler	1921, 1926, 1946 respectively	First site of Indus culture
Mohanjodaro	Indus	Larkana, Sindh	Pakistan	RD Banerji; Mackey; Wheeler	1922, 1927, 1930	Largest site of Indus civilization. approximately 1400 (60 percent of total) Seals of Indus civilization found here.
Chanhudaro	Indus	Nawab Shah, Sindh	Pakistan	Mackey; NG Mazumdar	1925, 1935	Citadel absent

Social and Cultural History of Ancient India

Lothal	Bhog- wa (pres- ent)	Kathiaw -ar, Gujarat	India	S.R. Rao	1954	Duckyard i.e. Port city, Terracotte figurine of horse, Ship, other countries seals
Kalibangan	Ghaggar	Hanumangarh District, Rajasthan	India	AN Ghosh; Lal & Thapar	1951; 1961	Kalibangan means Black bangles. Here baked /burnt black bangles, pottery, Plough field surface and Fire altars found
Banawali	Ghaggar (dried Sarswati)	Fatehabad district in Hisar division Haryana	India	RS Bist	1973	-

Social and Cultural History of Ancient India

Dholavira	Luni	Kutchh, Gujarat	India	JP Joshi	1967-68	The largest Indian site. Water harvesting, Reservoirs, stadium
Alamgirpur (Parasaram ka-khera)	Hindon	Meeruth, Uttar Pradesh	India	Yagyadatta Sharma	1958	Eastern most site
Ropar	Satluj	Ropar, Punjab	India	Yagyadatta Sharma	1953-56	-
Rangpur	Madar	Kathiawar, Gujarat	India	Rangnath Rao	1953-54	-
Kotdiji	Indus	Khairpur, Sindh	Pakistan	Fajal Ahmad	1953	-
Manda	Chenab	Jammu Kashmir	India	-	-	Northernmost site
Daimabad	Pravara (tributary of Godavari)	Srirampur, Ahmadnagar District	India	-	-	Southernmost site

Sutkagen-dor	Dasht	Makran, Baluchistan province	Pakistan	-	-	Western most site, Arabian coast near Iran border
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The Mohenjodaro, in the Larkana district on the river Indus, is the largest Harappan settlement.

Chanhudaro, is located about 130 km south of Mohenjo-daro in Sindh.

Lothal, in Gujarat is situated at the head of the Gulf of Cambay.

Kalibangan, is located near the dry bed of the river Ghaggar (Ghaggar- Hakra River) (some scholars identified it as Saraswati River) in Hanumangarh District of northern Rajasthan.

Banawali, located in Hisar district, Haryana is one of the most important Harappan sites giving evidence of the flourishing phase of the Harappan civilization in India.

Other sites were coastal cities of Surkotada in Gujarat, Sutkagendor near the Makran coast, close to the Pakistan-Iran border. Rangpur and Rojdi in the Kathiawar Peninsula in Gujarat represented the later phase of Harappan civilization. As a part of the ongoing excavations, a lot of new sites have come into light.

Citadel: At both the places i.e. Harappa and Mohenjo-daro the citadel was built on top of a mound of bricks, which may have been deliberately constructed for the purpose. The enclosed citadel area may have been used for religious and governmental purposes. Below the citadel was the town proper, extending no less than a square mile, at both the sites. To the west of both the cities, Harappa and Mohenjodaro, there was a citadel, fortified by crenellate walls. On this were erected the public buildings.

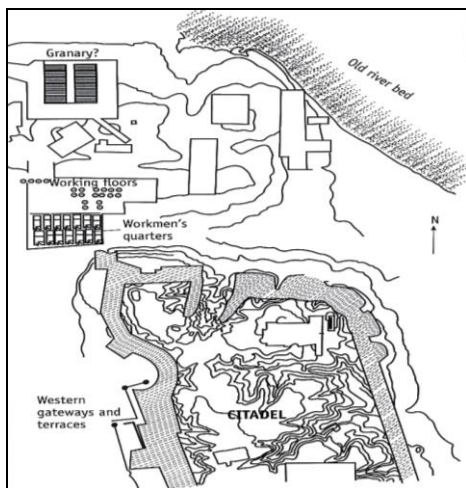


Figure 3.1: Citadel and Adjacent Area, Harappa

At *Harappa* the citadel was in the shape of a parallelogram, 420 m in length from North to South and 196 m from east to west; it was 13.7-15.2 m high.

At *Mohenjo-daro* the citadel rose to a height of 6 m in the south and to 12 m in the north. Below the citadel was the town proper, extending no less than a square mile.

The main streets of the city, some more than 9 m wide, were laid out on a grid plan. They were quite straight and intersected each other at the right angles, thus dividing the city into larger rectangular blocks. The kind of alignment of streets indicates conscious town planning and was not known in Mesopotamia or Egypt. The streets and building were provided with drains made of burnt bricks at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa as well as at several other Indus sites.

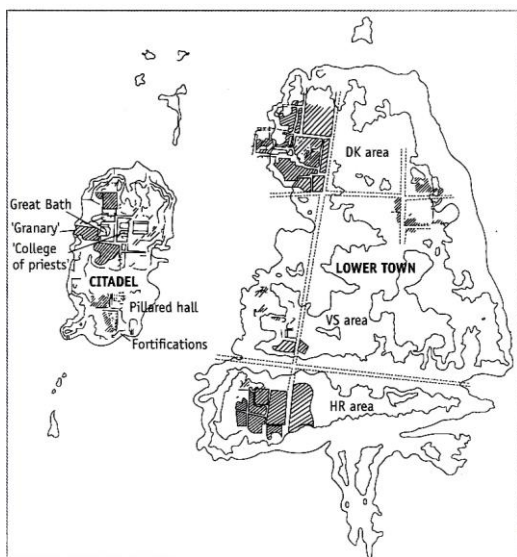


Figure 3.2: Citadel and Lower Town, Mohenjo-daro

The people of Kalibangan used mud bricks for building purposes. The houses were equipped with bathrooms, and occasionally with a privy on the ground or upper floor. The bathrooms were connected by drains with sewers under the main streets. The drainage system is one of the most impressive achievements of the Harappan civilization and indicates the existence of similar kind of municipal organization today we have. The large houses were meant for the rich.

In Harappa, Mohenjo-daro and Kalibangan, the citadel area contained monumental structures which stood on a high mud brick platform.

The Great Bath in the citadel at Mohenjodaro, a specimen of beautiful brickwork, is a rectangular tank and measures 11.88×7.01 m and 2.43 m deep. At the north and south ends of the Great Bath, brick steps led to the bottom of the tank, which could be emptied by a drain. It has been assumed that the Great Bath was meant for ritual bathing.

In *Mohenjo-daro* the largest building is a granary, 45.71 m long and 15.23 m wide. The 'Great Granary' is one of the well-known buildings at Harappa and consisted of a series of brick platforms on which stood two rows of six granaries.

The Chanhudaro lacks the citadel but it had a proper drainage system and the houses were made of baked bricks.

At *Lothal* (in Gujarat) a brick dockyard has been found which was connected with the Gulf of Cambay by a channel (12.30 m wide). In this dockyard ships and boats used to come for loading and unloading of goods. A large number of seals have been found in a warehouse which shows that Lothal was a major trade centre of the Harappan civilization.

Sutkagen-Dor, 48 km from the Arabian Sea on the Makran coast, consisted of a formidable citadel and a lower fortified settlement and may have been a sea port for trading.

Dholavira is located on Kadir Island in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. The architecture of Dholavira shows a large-scale use of sandstone, combined in places with mud-brick – a feature of the Harappan sites of Gujarat. The layout of this settlement is unlike that of any other Harappan site. It is surrounded by an outer fortification wall made of mud-bricks with a veneer of stone blocks on the outer face, with imposing bastions and two major gateways in the middle of the northern and southern walls.

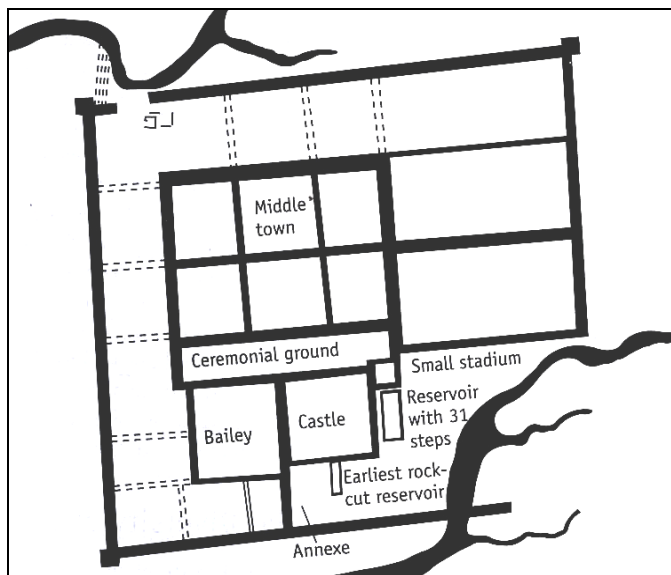


Figure 3.3: Plan of Dholavira (Gujarat)

Crafts & Industries

The tools and weapons used by the people of this civilization were simple in form. These included flat-axes, chisels, arrowheads, spearheads, knives, saws, razors and fish-hooks. The Harappan people used to make copper and bronze vessels, small plates and weights of lead, and gold and silver jewelry. The Harappans continued to use knives of chert blades. Long barrel shaped cornelian beads (up to 10cm. long) are the finest examples of craftsmanship. Steatite was used for making a variety of objects like seals, beads, bracelets,

buttons, vessels etc. but its use in making faience (a form of glass) is noteworthy.

In the Harappan civilization gold objects were made in the form of beads, pendants, amulets and brooches. The Harappan gold is of light colour indicating high silver content. On the basis of alloys, it has been suggested that the gold probably came from Karnataka. Silver was relatively more common than gold which is indicated by the occurrence of a number of large vessels and other objects.

In this civilization the pottery technology was quite advanced. Most of the pots were wheel-made. Big storage jars were also produced by the Harappans. Pots were beautifully painted in black on the bright red surface with geometric designs, plants, animals and a few paintings seem to depict scenes from stories.

Shell working was another flourishing industry. The people of the Harappan civilization used to wear shell ornaments such as pendants, rings, bracelets, inlays, beads etc.



Figure 3.4: Harappan Potteries

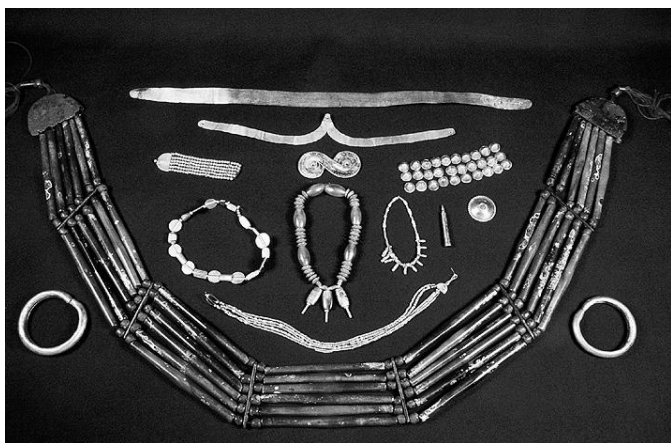
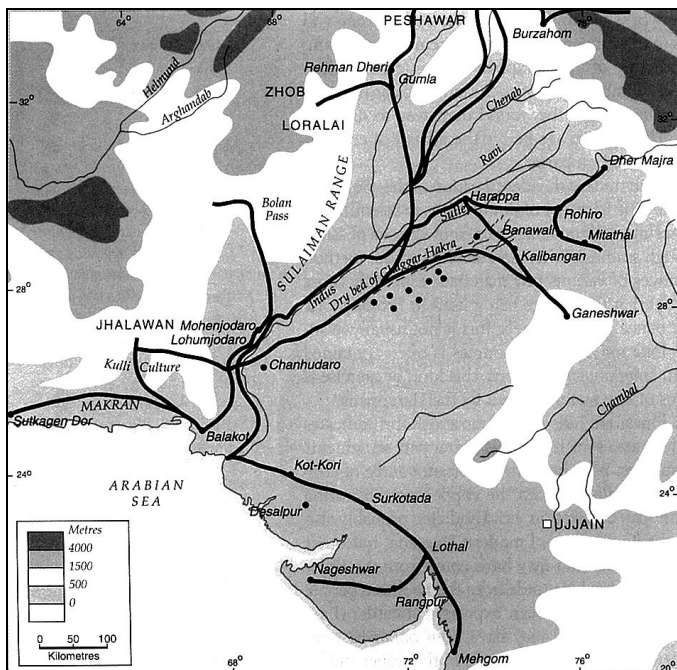


Figure 3.5: Harappan Ornaments

Trade & Commerce

In the Harappan civilization, the elaborate social structure and the standard of living must have been achieved by a highly developed system of communication and a strong economy. Agricultural

production played significant role in the affluence of this civilization.



MAP 3.1: Harappan Routes of Internal Trade

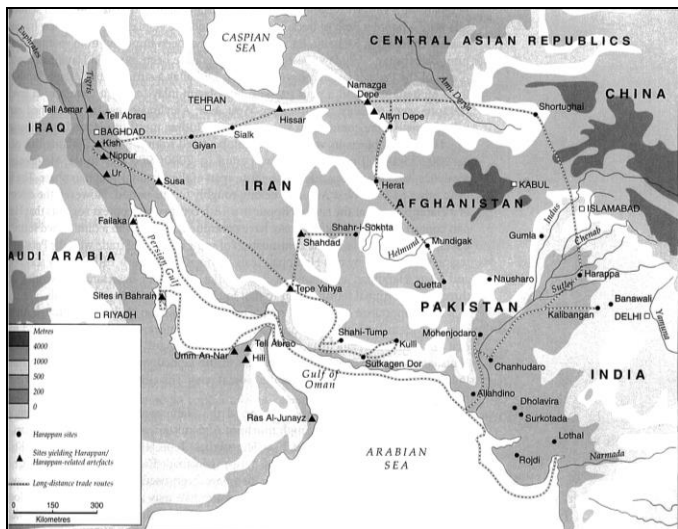
Agricultural produce industrial raw material like copper ores, stones, semi precious shells etc. were traded finished products- pots, pans, weapons, precious stones, ornaments of gold and silver were traded to various areas.

Table 3.2: List of imported items during Harappan Civilization

Items	Imported from
Copper	Khetri mines of Rajasthan, Baluchistan (Pakistan), Arabia
Gold	Kolar (Karnataka) of South India, Afghanistan and Persia
Silver	South India, Afghanistan and Persia
Chert blades	Rohri hills of Sindh
Carnelian beads	Gujarat and Sindh
Lead	South India
Lapis Lazuli and Sapphire	Kashmir and Badak-Shan of Afghanistan
Turquoise & jade	Central Asia or Iran
Amethyst	Maharashtra
Agate, Chalcedony and Carnelian	Saurashtra and West India

Harappan weights and measures were cubical and spherical in shape and were made of chert, jasper and agate. The weights proceed in a series, first doubling from 1,2,4,8 to 64, then going to 160,

and from then on in decimal multiples of 320,640,1600.



MAP 3.2: Long-Distance Trade Routes

CHAPTER - 4

VEDIC AGE

Vedic Age

Indo-Europeans/Indo Aryans were the group of people who used to speak languages closely similar to those which belonged to the Aryan family, i.e. Sanskrit, Russian and Polish (Slav), and Italian, Spanish, French (Romans). On the basis of the similarity among these languages, it has been assumed that the original homeland of the Aryans might be somewhere in the steppes stretching from southern Russia to central Asia. From this region, the Aryans may have migrated to different parts of Europe and Asia. One of their groups migrated to Iran where they lived for a long time. From Iran, they moved towards South-East direction i.e. towards India, where they encountered the city civilization of the Indus valley.

The chief source of information on the early history of the Aryans in India are the *Vedas*. The word 'Veda' means 'knowledge'. There are four Vedas-

<i>Rigveda</i>	Collection of 1028 hymns, mostly prayers to Gods
<i>Yajurveda</i>	Collection of sacrificial formulae
<i>Samaveda</i>	Collection of songs, mostly taken from the Rigveda
<i>Atharvaveda</i>	Collection of magical spells and charms

- *The Brahmanas* – These are the explanatory prose manuals which contain details about the meaning of the Vedic hymns.
- *The Aranyakas* (Forest book) - These are the concluding portions of the Brahmanas. Secret and dangerous owing to their magical power, the Aranyakas could be taught only in a forest.
- *The Upanishads*- These are the commentaries attached in the end of the Aranyakas.

The Vedic texts may be divided into two broad chronological strata:

- The early Vedic period (C. 1500-1000 B.C.)- During this period most of the hymns of the Rigveda were composed.
- The later Vedic period (C.1000-600 B.C.)- The remaining Vedas and their branches belonged to this period.

The two periods correspond to two phases of Aryan expansion in India. The geographical horizon

of the Rigvedic hymns gives us an idea of initial Aryans settlement in the subcontinent. The earliest Aryans lived in eastern Afghanistan, Punjab and the fringes of western Uttar Pradesh. The main focus of the Rigvedic culture seems to have been the Punjab and Delhi Region.

The most frequently mentioned rivers of the Vedic age are the Sindhu (Indus), the Saraswati (now lost in the Rajasthan desert) and the five streams which collectively gave their name to the Punjab (five waters): the Shutudri (Satiej), Vipas (Beas), Parushni (Ravi), Asikni (Chenab) and Vitasta (Jhelum). According the Rigveda, the knowledge of the early Aryans did not extend beyond the Yamuna. The early Aryan settlers were engaged in taking possession of the land of the seven rivers (*saptasaindhava*), represented by the Indus and its principal tributaries. This often led to the conflict between various Aryan tribes. The most important tribal war, mentioned in the Rigveda, was the Battle of ten kings (Dasarajna). Sudas, the king of the Bharata tribe, was settled in the western Punjab. Vishvamitra was his chief priest, who had led him to victorious campaigns on the Vipas and the Shutudri. Later Sudas dismissed Vishvamitra and appointed Vasishtha who possessed greater knowledge of the priestly core. Vishvamitra, feeling slighted, formed a confederacy of ten tribes, five of whom were important and are frequently referred to in the Rigveda as *panchajana* (five tribes).

In the battle that followed on the banks of the Purushni, Sudas was victorious.

Aryans had a general feeling of hostility towards the people known as Panis. These people were wealthy and had refused to patronize the Vedic priests. Panis used to steal cattle of the Aryans. The early Aryans did not have an advanced technology even though their use of horses and chariots, and possibly of some better arms of bronze gave them an edge over their opponents. Their knowledge of metals was not much developed. The Rigveda mentions only one metal called *ayas* (copper/bronze). The early Aryans were not highly skilled to produce tools and weapons superior to those of the Harappans. Rigvedic people did not possess any knowledge of iron. The Aryans came to India as a semi-nomadic people with a mixed pastoral and agricultural economy, in which cattle-rearing played a predominant role.

In the early Vedic period a wealthy person was called *gomat*. People used to offer prayers for raising the cattle population. The cattle-stealing was the chief cause of inter-tribal wars. The word for battle came to be known as *Gavishti*, literally meaning "to search for cows". The social impact of cattle rising can be seen from the fact that those who lived with their cows in the same cowshed came to belong to the same *gotra*. The word *gotra* later came to indicate descent from a common ancestor. Cattle-breeding was the chief source of

livelihood of the Rigvedic people but they also practiced agriculture. The term *Krishi* (to cultivate) occurs rarely in the Rigveda. The well-known term *hala* for the plough is not found in the Rigveda but two other terms for plough, *langala* and *sira*, are mentioned in it. Ploughs were drawn by oxen; and ploughshares of wood were used for cultivation. The early Aryans possessed some knowledge of seasons which promoted agriculture; the Rigveda mentions five seasons.

Fire was used for burning forests and making the land fit for cultivation. This was an easy option as people did not have knowledge of iron.

References to ploughing, sowing, threshing and winnowing occur in the later portions of the Rigveda. The agrarian economy, therefore, may have become more stable towards the end of the early Vedic period. The Rigvedic people are known to have cultivated only one variety of grain called the *yava*, which meant barley.

Polity and Administration

The early Aryans, who were essentially pastoral, did not develop any political structure which could measure up to a state in either the ancient or the modern sense. The Land of the Seven Rivers, the region of their initial expansion in the subcontinent, was held by small tribal principalities, mentioned below in the ascending order:

- (i) The Family (Kula)
- (ii) The People (Jana)
- (iii) The Village (Grama)
- (iv) The Country (Rashtra)
- (v) The Clan (Vis)

The principle of hereditary succession from father to son was not yet established. The king's authority was substantially limited by tribal assemblies like the *Sabha* and the *Samiti*, which discharged judicial and political functions. The *Sabha* was a council of the elder members of the tribe, women also used to attend it. The *Samiti* was a general tribal assembly and less exclusive than the *sabha*. It mainly dealt with the policy decisions and political business. The Rigvedic people did not possess an elaborate administrative apparatus which would have required adequate surplus production. The only surplus that was available was in the form of *bali*, a tribute to a prince or offering to a God.

Society

Early Aryans social organization was essentially tribal, based on Kinship. The *Jana* and the *Vish* are the two terms that repeatedly occur in the Rigveda; the former comprised of whole tribe and the later stood for the clan. The basic unit of Aryan tribal society was the patriarchal family called the Kula. The eldest male member of the family was known

as the *Kulapa* (protector of the family). Women could take part in sacrifices with her husband. Some women are also said to have been authors of Rigvedic hymns. The practice of *Niyoga* was also prevalent, in which a childless widow could cohabit with her brother-in-law until the birth of a son. The Institution of marriage seems to have been established.

The Rigvedic society comprised of four *varnas*:

(i) The Brahmanas

(ii) The Kshatriyas

(iii) The Vaishyas

(iv) The Sudras

A late passage in the earliest Vedas tells us that the brahmana emanated from the mouth of the primeval man, the Kshatriya from his arms, the vaishya from his thighs and the shudra from his feet. But the occupational differentiation did not always coincide with social divisions in the Rigvedic period. We come across a family consisting of a poet son, his father a physician and mother a grinder of corn.

Religion

The Rigvedic Gods were predominantly male as was natural in a patriarchal society. The Rigvedic Gods can be classified into three categories, namely:

1. Terrestrial (Prithivisthana): Prithvi, Agni, Soma, Brihaspati & Rivers
2. Aerial or Intermediate (Antarikshasthana): Indra, Apamnapat, Rudra, Vayu-vata, Parajanya and Apah (water)
3. Celestial (Dyusthana): Dyaus, Varuna, Mitra, Surya, Savitri, Pushan, Vishnu, the Adityas, Ushas and the Asvins.

The Indra (the mighty warrior) and the Varun (the supreme moral ruler) stand out, preeminent above the rest. The largest number of hymns on the Rigveda i.e. 250, are addressed to Indra. 200 hymns of the Rigveda are devoted to *Agni*, (literally meaning 'fire') which acted as an intermediary between God and man. *Varun*, the upholder of the cosmic order (rita), was the third one important after Indra and Agni. *Savitri* is the Deity to whom the famous gayatri mantra is addressed. *Pushan* is the guardian of roads, herdsmen and cattle. Vishnu was not an important God at that time.

CHAPTER - 5

LATER VEDIC AGE

Later Vedic Age



The Later Vedic period refers to the age extending from 1000 B.C. to 600 B.C., when the three Vedas Yajur, Sama and Atharva; the Brahmanas and few early Upanishads were composed. The Later Vedic works provide us a broader geographical knowledge of India in comparison to Rigveda. They have mentioned the 'two Seas', the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean; and several Himalayan peaks. There is also an indirect reference to Vindhya Mountains.

During the later Vedic period the Aryans expanded from Punjab to nearly the whole of present day western Uttar Pradesh covered by the Ganga-Yamuna *doab*. The Bharat and the Purus, the two important tribes, came together and formed the *Kuru* people. From the fringes of the *doab* they moved to its upper portion called Kurukshetra or the land of the Kurus. Later they merged with the Panchalas and thereafter they occupied Delhi and the upper and middle parts of the Ganga-Yamuna and established their capital at Hastinapur (Meerut district).

Towards the end of the later Vedic period, the Vedic people moved further east to Koshala in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Videha in north Bihar. In course of their eastward movement, they encountered a group of people who used a distinctive pottery called the *Ochre Coloured Pottery*; they also used black and red ware. In the later Vedic period the Aryans were aware of the metal iron. This metal is mentioned in the literature as *Shyama Ayas* (dark or black metal). The pottery known as *Painted Grey Ware* is generally associated with the later Vedic people.

They lived a settled life in their wattle-and-daub houses erected on wooden poles. They started domesticating animals and practicing agriculture more extensively than earlier. Agriculture became the chief means of their livelihood and the idea of private possession of land gradually began to

crystallize. The *Shatapatha Brahmana* devotes an entire section to rites connected with ploughing and enumerates various agricultural operations. References to the yoking of six, eight, twelve and twenty four oxen to the plough indicates deep ploughing. The buffalo were also tamed for agriculture. In addition to barley, the chief crop cultivated during this period was wheat (*godhuma*), which continues to be the staple food in the Punjab and the Uttar Pradesh till now. Transition from pastoral to agricultural economy led to the introduction of various new arts and crafts which were mentioned in the later Vedic literature, for e.g. smelting, smithery or carpentry, weaving, leather working, jewellery making, dyeing and pottery making. Weaving was practiced on a wide scale and mainly confined to women. Archeologists found glass hoards and bangles in course of excavation, which shows that the people of that age worked with glass. It is evident that these glass-made objects might have been used as prestige items by a limited number of people. Due to the established form of agriculture life became settled and sedentary. They could perhaps produce enough for themselves and give surplus to the ruling class and for supporting the priests.

Society

Settled life led to a further crystallisation of the fourfold divisions of society. The Caste System

developed during this period was based on: Hereditary occupations, workers guilds, gotra-traditions, the race feeling between the Arya Varna (Vedic Aryans) and Dasyu Varna (Aborigines). In the later Vedic age the doctrine of four castes came into being i.e.,

- (i) ***The Brahmana***- Their duty was to learn and guide.
- (ii) ***The Kshatriya***- The warrior, the protector and the ruler.
- (iii) ***The Vaishya***- These were engaged in economic pursuits.
- (iv) ***The Sudra***- The common man, the tiller, the cultivator, and formed the bulk of the laboring masses.

As per a text of the later Vedic period, ten thousand women slaves were captured from various countries and given by Anga to his brahmana priests; but there is no description of men slaves. With the emergence of the Caste System certain social norms developed, like, marriages between the members of the same gotra were prohibited. But Brahmanas could marry Shudra women. The family became increasingly patriarchal; the birth of a son was more welcomed than that of a daughter. In the Vedic texts, a reference of self-immolation by the widow at the death of her husband is found, and later, the origin of the practice of Sati has sometimes been traced to this period. But till now

sati was not prevalent on a large scale as we hear about remarriage of widows (Niyoga). In this period, women ceased to participate in the deliberations of the tribal council called the *Sabha*. Gargi Vachaknavi, mentioned in the later Vedic literature, was a learned women who attended a discussion with the sage Yajnavalkya and even embarrassed him with her searching questions.

CHAPTER - 6

BUDDHISM

Buddhism

In the Pali Canon, the Buddha is presented as a man, but an extraordinary one, whose body bore the 32 signs of a *Mahapurusha* (great man). He is the *Tathagata*, one who has liberated himself from the cycle of rebirth. Gautama, also known as Siddhartha, was born in 563 B.C. in the Kshatriya tribe of the shakyas headed by his father Suddhodana; his mother was Mahamaya. One night Mahamaya, chief queen of Suddhodhana, king of the Sakyas, dreamt that she was carried away to the divine lake Anavatapta in the Himalayas, where she was bathed by the heavenly guardians of the four quarters of the universe. A great white elephant holding a lotus flower in his trunk approached her, and entered her side.

Next day the dream was interpreted for her by wise men- she had conceived a wonderful son, who would be either a universal emperor or a universal teacher. The child was born in a grove of Sal trees called *Lumbini*, near the capital of the Sakyas, Kapilavastu, while his mother was on the way to her parent's home for her confinement. At birth, he

stood upright, took seven strides and spokes: "This is my last birth- henceforth there is no more birth for me." The boy was named Siddhartha, at a great ceremony on the fifth day from his birth. His gotra name was Gautama (in Pali, Gotama) by which he is commonly referred to in the Buddhist literature. According to Buddhist tradition, a *mahapurusha* can be of two kinds - a world conqueror or world renouncer. Suddhodana did not want his son to turn his back on the world and hence took great pains to shield him from its sorrows, bringing him up in a highly artificial atmosphere, surrounded by luxury and pleasant things. Siddhartha married a young woman named Yashodhara and they had a son named Rahul. The hagiography (sacred biography) tells us that when he was 29 years old, Siddhartha saw four things that completely shattered his composure-

- an old man
- a sick man
- a corpse (dead body)
- a renunciant

The first three scenes brought home to him the harsh realities and inevitabilities of old age, sickness, and death, while the fourth pointed to the way of dealing with these inevitabilities. Siddhartha left his home (*Mahabhiniskraman*) and family, and wandered around for six years, seeking the truth. He attached himself to teachers, but was not satisfied

by their instructions. Accompanied by 5 wandering ascetics, he practiced severe austerities until his body was emaciated. He then realized that he must nourish his body and try to attain peace of mind. His companions abandoned him, thinking he had compromised his asceticism. A young woman named Sujata offered him a bowl of milk-rice. Nourished with food, he once again sat under the *pipal* tree, resolving not to get up until he had attained enlightenment. Siddhartha attained enlightenment at the dawn of the 49th day. Now, he knew the truth. He had found the secret of sorrow, and understood at last why the world is full of sufferings and unhappiness of all kinds and what man must do to overcome them. He was fully enlightened as 'Buddha'. For another seven weeks he remained under the Tree of Wisdom (Bodhi), meditating on the great truths he had found. According to Buddhist tradition, the God Brahma had to implore him three times to go forth and spread his insight. The Buddha gave his first sermon on deliverance from suffering to his five former companions in a deer park near Banaras. This event is known as *dhammachakka-pravattana* (turning the wheel of dhamma).

His first five disciples soon themselves realized the truth and became *arhats*. The Buddha wandered about teaching his doctrine for over four decades. He established an order of monks and nuns known as the *Sangha* (literally meaning, society of

the Buddhist order). He died at the age of eighty (483 B.C.).

At the town of Pava he was entertained by a lay disciple, named Cunda the village-blacksmith, and ate a meal of pork (or truffles) (Sukaramaddava). Soon after this he was attacked by dysentery, but he insisted on moving on to the nearby town of Kusinagara (Pali, Kusinara) about 6 miles away. Suffering from severe pain he reached on the outskirts of the town, he lay down under a sal tree, and that night he died. This was his "Final Blowing-Out" (*Parinirvana*). (Kusinara is presently recognized as Kushinagar district in Uttar Pradesh.) His sorrowing disciples cremated his body, and his ashes were divided among the representatives of various tribal people and King Ajatasatru of Magadha.

The central theme of Buddha's religion is the **eight-step path (ashtangamarga)**

- (i) The first step is the *proper vision* leading to the realization that the world is full of sorrow caused by desire, greed etc.
- (ii) The second step is the *right aim* which leaves no room for covetousness or indulgence and encourage everybody to love others fully and increase their happiness.
- (iii) *Right speech* is the third step; it implies the practice of truthfulness promoting mutual friendship.

- (iv) *Proper action*, the fourth step includes abstention from killing, stealing and fornication and performance of such deeds which would benefit other people.
- (v) The fifth step is *livelihood*, earned by pure and honest means.
- (vi) *Right effort*, the sixth step, means mental exercise to avoid evil thoughts.
- (vii) The seventh step is *correct awareness*, which means understanding the idea that the body is impermanent and meditation is the means of removal of worldly evils.
- (viii) The last step is *right concentration* which will lead to removal of evils generated by attachment to the body and the mind.

Anyone who would follow this noble eightfold path would attain final salvation (*nirvana*) irrespective of his social origin.

The Growth of Buddhism

According to the tradition a great gathering of monks met at the Magadha capital of Rajagrhā soon after the Buddha's death. At this council, Upali, one of the chief disciples, recited the *Vinaya Pitaka*, or Rules of the Order, as he recalled having heard the Buddha taught them. Another disciple, Ananda, recited the *Sutta Pitaka*, the great collection of the Buddha's sermons on matters of doctrine and ethics.

A second general council is said to have been held at Vaisali, one hundred years after the Buddha's death. In this council, the Order broke into two sections, the orthodox *Sthaviravadins* (Pali Theravadi) or "believers in the teaching of elders" and the *Mahasanghikas* or "members of great community."

The third great council, held at Pataliputra under the patronage of Ashoka, which resulted in the establishment of the Sthaviravada School as orthodox. At this council it is said that the last section was added to the Pali scriptures, dealing with psychology and metaphysics. The records show that by this time widespread differences had developed within the Order.

By Ashoka's time India was covered with *Viharas*, which were both monasteries and temples. In becoming a religion Buddhism borrowed and adapted much from the popular beliefs of the time. Its simple ritual was in no way based on sacrificial Brahmanism, but on the cult of Chaityas, or sacred spots.

Soon after the Buddha's death many communities of monks gave up the practice of constant travel except in the rainy season, and settled permanently on the outskirts of towns and villages, often near the local chaityas. It was the cult of the chaityas that Buddhism made its own. According to tradition stupas or tumuli were built by the recipients over the divided ashes of the

Buddha. Other stupas, containing the remains of locally revered monks and ascetics of other denominations, rose up all over India in succeeding centuries. Ashoka unearthed the ashes of the Buddha from their original resting places and divided them still further, rearing stupas for them all over India.

In Kashmir, under the patronage of Kaniska, a fourth great council (1st to 2nd century AD) was held, at which the Sarvastivadin doctrines were codified in a summary, the *Mahavibhasa*. The Buddhism was further divided into "Great" and "Lesser" Vehicles - *Mahayana* and *Hinayana* respectively.

The originally written Buddhist texts were stored in "Threefold Baskets". These threefold baskets are: *Vinaya* (conduct), *Sutta* (sermon) and *Abhidhamma* (Metaphysics) *pitakas*. The largest and most important of the 'Three Baskets' is the *Sutta Pitaka*, which is divided into five groups (Nikayas).

- (i) **Digha (Long) Nikaya** is a collection of long sermons ascribed to the Buddha, which contains the description of his final days and death; it also describes the circumstances in which he preached his disciples.
- (ii) **Majjhima (Medium) Nikaya** is a collection of shorter sermons.

- (iii) **Samyutta (connected) Nikaya** is a collection of brief pronouncements on kindred topics.
- (iv) **Anguttara (Graduated) Nikaya** is a collection of over 2,000 brief statements.
- (v) **Khuddaka (Minor) Nikaya** is a collection of miscellaneous works in prose and verse.

Causes of Decline and Fall of Buddhism

- (i) Doctrine of the Buddhist Sangha was one of the most important cause of the decline of the Buddhism. With the passage of time the Sangha became the hot bed of intrigues and corruption.
- (ii) The revival of Brahmanical Hinduism also gave a setback to the Buddhism.
- (iii) From the 8th to the 12th century A.D., most of northern India was governed by the Rajput princes, who took pleasure in fighting and bloodshed. The Buddhist principle of Ahimsa did not appeal to them.
- (iv) The Muslim conquest of India gave a death blow to Buddhism in this country.

CHAPTER - 7

JAINISM

Jainism

Vardhamana was the contemporary of Buddha and he was popularly known to his followers as Mahavira ("the Great Hero"). Jainism means the "Religion of the conquerors" (Jinas). It never spread beyond India. According to the Buddhist scriptures Mahavira was one of the chief opponents of Buddha. He was born about 540 B.C. in *Kundagrama* (presently in Vaishali district, near Muzaffapur Bihar). He was the son of Siddhartha, a chief of the clan of Jnatikas, the associates of the Licchavis of Vaishali. His mother Trisala was the sister of the Licchavi chief chetaka, and thus like the Buddha, he was wholly the product of the diarchic martial clans which were a powerful political force at the time. Vardhamana was married to his cousin Yashoda, and had by her a daughter who was married to his nephew Jamali. At the age of thirty, Mahavira left his home and wandered 12 years as an ascetic, resting only in the rainy season. In the thirteenth year by severest penances and constant meditation he reached his ultimate state of knowledge (*Kevalya*) under *Sala* tree on the bank of the river *Rijupalika* near the village Jrimbhikgram

whose identification is uncertain. He spent his rest of his life in preaching his religious ideas and organizing the Jaina Order of ascetics in Magadha and Anga.

But in later centuries Jainism found a congenial soil in Gujarat and Rajasthan, parts of north India and Karnataka in the south, especially the Mysore region. The teachings of the Mahavira were first collated and recorded in the 3rd century B.C. but their final compilation did not take place till the Jaina council met at Valabhi in the early sixth century A.D. The theory/doctrine of *Syadavada* is an essential ingredient of the Jaina philosophy. It states that no absolute and final affirmation or denial is possible, because knowledge is relative. Unlike the Upanishads, Jainism preaches that the purification of the soul cannot be achieved through knowledge but only through a long course of fasting, rigorous practice of non-violence, truth, non-stealing, renunciation and sexual continence. The vow of non-killing (ahimsa) was practiced to the point of absurdity. Even an unconscious killing of an ant while walking was against the morals of Jains. They would not drink water without straining it for fear of killing an insect. They also wore a muslin mask covering the mouth not for hygiene but to save any life floating in the air. They had forbidden not only the practice of war but also of agriculture, for both involve the killing of living beings. Fasting and self-

mortification of all kinds occupied an important place in the Jaina monastic life. Mahavira himself discarded all clothing, though Parshvanath had permitted the use of few garments.

He died of self-starvation at the age of 72 in 468 B.C at Pavapuri (20 km), a little town near the Magadha capital Rajagriha. Pawapuri/pava is a holy site for Jain devotees, presently located in the Nalanda District in Bihar, hardly 100 km from Patna.

The *triratna* (*ratna-traya*), or three gems of Jainism are:

- (i) Right faith (Samyag Darshana)
- (ii) Right knowledge (Samyag Gyana)
- (iii) Right conduct (Samyag Charitra)

There are five great vows (*pancha mahavratas*) for monks & nuns (i.e. who wish to become ascetic) which are as follows:

- (i) Ahimsa (non-violence)
- (ii) Satya (truth)
- (iii) Asteya (not to steal)
- (iv) Brahmacharya (Chastity)
- (v) Aparigraha (non- possession).

The above mentioned all 5 vows are not fully and strictly observed by the householders (*Sravakas*) and modified vows termed as *anuvrats*

(small vows) are to be followed by householders. Many supplementary vratas are also prescribed for the *sravakas*. At last, *Sallekhana vrat* is expected to be followed by all the devotees at the end of their lives. The aim of these vows is to bring about inner purification.

After the death of Mahavira Jainism got divided into two sects i.e. *Digambaras* (space-clad i.e. naked) and *Svetambaras* (white-clad). Bhadrabahu, the elder of the community, who led the emigrants, had insisted on the retention of the rule of nudity which Mahavira had established, while Sthalbahu was related with Svetambara community.

Digambara teaching

"Body, house, wealth & wife.

sons & friends and enemies-

all are different from the soul.

Only the fool thinks them his own."

.....

"From all directions come the birds

and rest together in the trees;

but in the morning each goes his own way,

flying in all directions."

.....

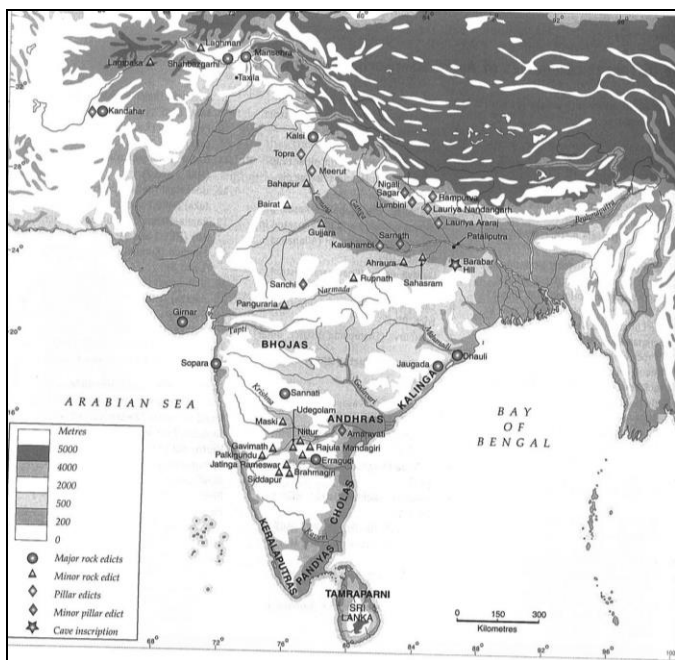
*"Death is not for me. Why then should I
fear? Disease is not for me. Why then
should I despair?"*

*I am not a child, nor a youth, nor an old
man. All these states are only of my body.*

.....

CHAPTER - 8

MAURYAN PERIOD



MAP 8.1: Find- Spots of Ashokan Inscriptions

Mauryan Art

During the Mauryan period sculpture and architecture had reached a developed stage. The

Ashokan Pillars; the animal figures and carvings on the pillars--all represent mature art forms.

A unique feature of the Mauryan art is that it is fashioned in stone; its polished and the smooth, glassy surface not to be found during any other period. In addition to the animal figures, the most famous piece of art is the figure of Yakshini from Didarganj in Patna, Bihar. This art piece tells us about the hairstyle, ornaments and dress of women during that period. During Mauryan period the practice of producing terracotta figurines on a substantial scale continued.



Figure 8.1: Didarganj Yakshi

The best specimens of contemporary are the tall monolithic highly polished columns, standing free in space, often crowned with animal figures. At least fourteen such pillars are known; a few of them may date from before the time of Ashoka. All the Mauryan columns are chiseled out of grey Chunar Sandstone and possess a lustrous polish perhaps because of the application of siliceous varnish on the stone. An important function of these columns seems to have been to impress and overawe the people with the power and majesty of the Mauryan monarchs.

According to Dr. Niharranjan Ray, the sum of the Mauryan treasury of art include the remains of the-

- royal palace and city of Pataliputra.
- a monolithic railing at Sarnath.
- the Bodhimandala or the altar resting on four pillars at Bodhgaya.
- the excavated Chaitya-halls or caves dwelling in the Barabar and Nagarjuni hills of Gaya including the sudama cave.
- the non-edict bearing and edict bearing pillars.
- the animal sculptures crowning the pillars with animal and vegetal reliefs decorating the abaci of the capitals and the front half of the representation of an elephant carved out in round from a live rock at Dhauli in Orissa.

General characteristics of art in the period from 200 BC to 300 AD:

- (i) Art activities in this period were mostly related to religions practiced, symbols and units associated with them.
- (ii) The Buddha image which began to be sculpted in this period was a departure from earlier representations of him in the form of Bodhi tree, stupa, foot prints, etc. Making of images for worship became common among other religions as well.
- (iii) The construction of stupas, chaityas and viharas became popular.
- (iv) The art forms and all of their symbolic representations were not exclusive to any particular religion. For example, the Bharhut and Sanchi Stupas not only depicted scenes from the life of the Buddha but also the reliefs of Yakshas, Yakshinis, Nagar and other popular deities.
- (v) We find that the artists, in order to decorate the stupas, carved many scenes which they observed in nature along with the religious ideas. These are the examples of secular art forms.
- (vi) Because of regular interactions with other cultures in this period we also find elements of

non-Indian art in the artistic creations of this period.

All the works in the field of art were reared up directly under the shadow of the royal throne of the Mauryas. The Mauryas discarded wood and bamboo, perhaps also bricks and clay and took to the employment of stone as the material par excellence for monumental sculpture and architecture and handled it with such perfect ease and mastery as to suggest that the art of hard and large sized stone cutting.

Mauryan Architecture

The Architecture of this period can be broadly divided into two categories:-

(i) Residential structure

(ii) Religious Monuments

(i) Pataliputra and the Royal-Palace

According to Strabo, the city of Pataliputra was situated at the confluence of the *Ganga* and the *Son* rivers. It was 80 stadia in length and 15 in breadth and was in the shape of a parallelogram. It was surrounded by a wooden wall pierced with loopholes for the discharge of arrows, crowned with 560 towers and provided with 60 gates. The gilded pillars of the palace were adorned with golden vines and silver birds. The palace stood in an extensive

park studded with fish ponds. It was furnished with a great variety of ornamental trees and shrubs.

It appears that the Mauryan palace was destroyed by fire and excavations carried out by Waddell and Dr. Spooner have brought to light remains of huge wooden buildings at Bulandibagh and Kumrahan, both situated near Patna. In the palace there was a pillared hall in which stone columns were employed to support the roof of the 80 pillars, that once stood on a wooden platform and supported a wooden roof, Dr. Spooner was able to discover the entire lower of at least one in almost perfect conditions.

Pillars

Pillars were made generally of wood and sometimes of stone and were usually installed in front of religious shrines or places of worship. This becomes evident from one of the edicts of Ashoka which says, "Wherever there exists a stone pillar, it should be utilized for engraving these edicts." The best court art of the Mauryans were the pillars which were highly polished, tall and well-proportioned with slightly tapering monolithic shafts, and standing free in space and complete and independent by themselves. The columns that bear the edicts of Ashoka include those of *Delhi-Mirath*, *Allahabad*, *Lauriya-Araraj*, *Lauriya-Nandangarh*, *Rampurva* (with lion capital), *Delhi-Topra*, *Sankissa*, *Sanchi* and *Sarnath*.



Figure 8.2: Ashokan Pillar of Lauriya Nandangarh, Bihar

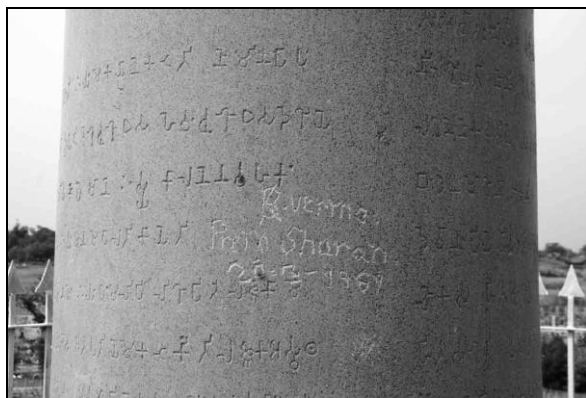


Figure 8.3: Ashokan pillar of Lauriya Nandangarh Bihar

The non-edict bearing columns include those of *Rampurva* (with bull capital), *Basarh-Bakhira* (with single lion capital) and *Kosam* (capital not yet recovered). The columns bearing dedicatory inscriptions are those of *Rummindei* and *Nigali Sagar*. There are thirty or more pillars related with Ashoka but the installed locations of these pillars do not seem to have followed a regular plan. Some places associated with the Buddha such as Lauriya-Nandangarh, Sarnath etc. must have been marked by holy places, but others have been isolated.

The uses of Chunar material suggests that an art centre was perhaps established and it was patronized and favored directly by the Mauryan court.

Four animals are related with the four great events in the life of the Buddha i.e., the Bull with

his birth, as Buddha was born under Vrishabhara-
rashi; the elephant with the conception, as queen
Maya saw a white elephant entering her womb; the
horse, with Buddha's renunciation as Buddha left
the palace to embrace the life of an ascetic riding on
his horse *kantaka*; the lion, as Buddha was regarded
as Shakya Simha. The writings of the inscriptions
on the pillars of Ashoka are not only beautifully
executed but precise also. Every single letter is cut
into the stone with accuracy and care. At Dhau-
li (Bhubaneswar district, Orissa), there is a rock
sculpture of the front part of an elephant. His heavy
trunk curls gracefully inwards. His right front leg is
slightly titled, and the left one slightly bent,
suggesting forward movement. It is a very
naturalistic, powerful portrayal of the animal, and
the whole effect is such that it looks as if the
elephant is walking out of the rock.



Figure 8.4: Dhau-
li Elephant

The Mauryan period saw the beginning of rock-cut architecture. The *Barabar* and *Nagarjuni* hills to the north of Bodha Gaya contain several caves that were inhabited by ascetics in ancient times. Three caves in the *Barabar hills* have dedicative inscriptions of Ashoka, and three in the *Nagarjuni hills* have inscriptions of his son Dasharatha. The caves are simple in plan, with plain but highly polished interiors. The longer side of the cave runs parallel to the rock face. The only sculptural ornamentation is a relief carving on the doorway of a cave known as the *Lomash Rishi Cave*. The doorway is modelled after wooden ones. Over the entrance, framed within the earliest example of what art historians call the *chaitya* or *gavaksha arch* with a carved finial, are two bands of relief carving.



Figure 8.5: Lomash Rishi Cave of Barabar Caves

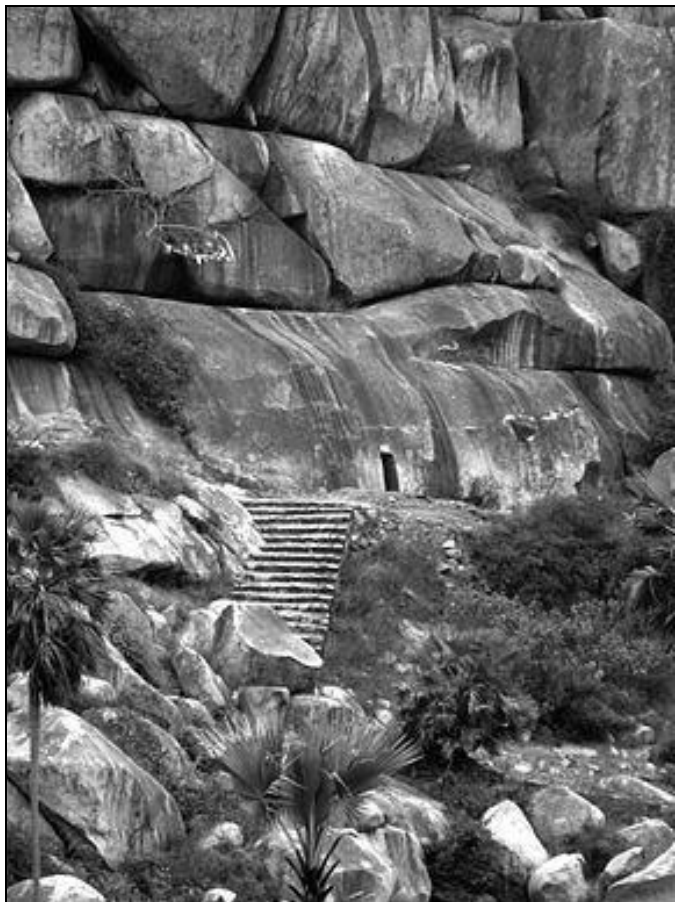


Figure 8.6: Barabar Caves- staircase and cave entrance



Figure 8.7: Rock-cut Caves of Barabar and Nagarjuna Caves

Stupas

Relics of the Buddha were enshrined in the solid core of stupas, which became places of veneration and pilgrimage. The stupa swiftly became an emblem of the Buddha's *dhamma* and an important part of Buddhist monasteries. According to the *Avadana* texts, Ashoka re-distributed portions of the Buddha's relics to every important town in the land and ordered the construction of stupas over them. Ashoka played an important role in popularizing the stupa cult. Ashoka's reign marked an important stage in the history of Buddhist stupa architecture, old mud stupas were rebuilt or enlarged with bricks, as evident from excavations at Vaishali and Piprahwa.

Amravati stupa was constructed at the time of Ashoka. Ashokan pillar at *Sarnath* and the *Dharmarajika* and *Dhamekh* stupas at this place seem to have originated in the Maurya period. The origins of the *Dharmarajika* stupa at Taxila in the north-west may also go back to this period. An important stupa site that definitely dates to Ashoka's time is *Sanchi* (in Raisen district, MP). This was situated on the outskirts of ancient Vidisha. The remains on the sanchi hillside include many stupas, shrines, and monasteries. The brick core of the largest stupa known as stupa number 1 or the Great Stupa, was built in Ashoka's time. The stupa was about 60 feet in diameter at the base and was a low dome (less than a full hemisphere) mounted on a low cylindrical drum. It was probably surrounded by a wooden fence and had entrances at the four cardinal points.



Figure 8.8: Dhamekh Stupa of Sarnath, Varanasi, U.P.



Figure 8.9: Dharamrajika Stupa, Taxila

The stupas had the shape of a bowl turned upside down. The top of the stupa, which was a bit flat, used to be its *harmika* i.e. the abode of the Gods. It was here that the urns containing the remains of the Buddha or a great personality connected with the religion was placed in a gold or silver casket. A wooden rod (*yashti*) was placed in its middle and the bottom of the rod fixed on the top of the stupa. On the top of this rod were placed three small umbrella type discs symbolizing respect, veneration and magnanimity.

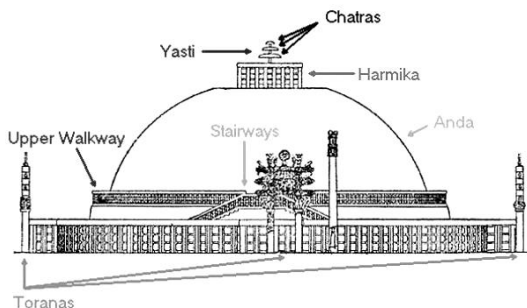


Figure 8.10: Stupa

(1) Bharhut Stupa

The stupa is located 21 kms south of Satna in Madhya Pradesh. The main stupa structure no longer exists. The stupa's remains are preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.



Figure 8.11: Bharhut Stupa

(2) Amaravati Stupa

Located at Amaravati village, 46 kilometers from Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh, the stupa was

built with white marble. Though the stupa has itself has completely disappeared, its sculptures panels have been preserved in Chennai, British and other Museums. Presently, almost all sculptures have been removed from the original village location. The stupa was primarily built with the help of the city-chief and the donations from the public. The magnificent stupa was 42 meter in diameter and its height was about 29 meters. It contained a circular prayer path which was 10 meters high and was made of stone. *Vedika* pillars had beautiful carvings of garlanded Gods and Bodhi-tree, stupa, dharmachakra and the events from the life of Lord Buddha and stories from the Jatakas. The entrance gate (*torana*) of the stupa depicts four lions on the *vedika*. Lotuses have also been covered over the pillars.

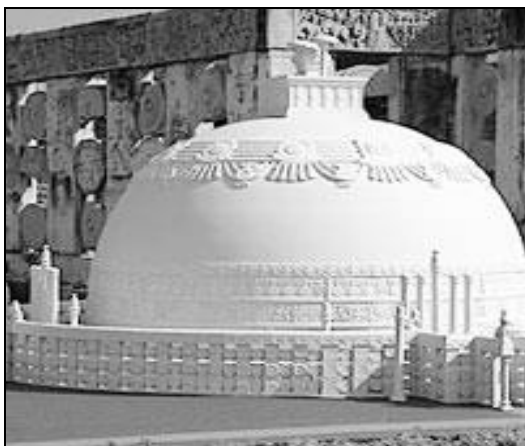


Figure 8.12: Amravati Stupa Guntur, A.P. (an imaginary model of original stupa)

(3) Nagarjunakonda Maha-Stupa

Nagarjunakonda Maha-Stupa is located nearly 150 kms from Amaravati. Nagarjunakonda (meaning Nagarjuna hill) is a popular Buddhist town located near Nagarjun Sagar in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. Nagarjuna name is taken from the Mahayana Buddhist Nagarjun who gave the philosophy of *sunyata* (void). This town, now an island, lies completely under the Nagarjuna dam. The town was once the largest Buddhist centre in south India having many Buddhist monasteries, universities etc. Due to dam construction the archeological sites were submerged but later on by good efforts all sites could be saved by transferring them to a high island (top of Nagarjuna hill), and one museum was also established there.

The Nagarjunakonda stupa was built in a style different from that of Northern India. The stupa is approximately 30 meters in diameter and the height is 18 meters with 4 meter wide circumambulatory. The outer casing of the drum consisted of richly carved marble slabs. The hemispherical top of the drum was decorated with lime and mortar work. The four rectangular projections, one at each cardinal point, supported a row of five free-standing pillars. The importance of this stupa is because of the beautiful panels which illustrate episodes from the life of the Buddha. Some of the important scenes are:

- (i) Gods praying to *Boddhisthva* to take birth on the earth.
- (ii) Buddha's entry into womb in the form of a white elephant.
- (iii) Birth of the Buddha under a flowering tree, etc.



Figure 8.13: Nagarjunakonda Maha-Stupa (Andhra Pradesh)

(4) Taxila (Pakistan)

Sir John Marshall excavated the *Chira-Tope* stupa at Taxila. The casing of the drum in this stupa was of stone-- ornamentally decorated with images of *Boddhisathvas*.

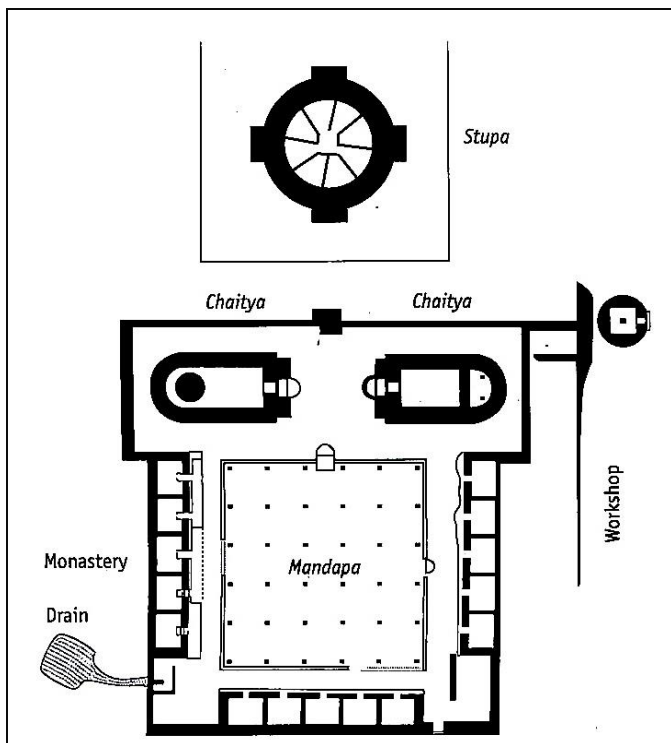


Figure 8.14: Plan of a Stupa-Monastery Complex,
Nagarjunakonda

Terracotta Art

Terracotta art flourished with the expansion of urban centers. The terracottas of this period vary a great deal in terms of theme, style and possible significance, but they do give an important insight into popular practices, beliefs and aesthetics. They include male and female figurines, animals and

carts. Some of them may have been toys, but others, especially certain female figurines may represent religious icons.

Foreign Influence

Most of the scholars agree that the Mauryan art was influenced by Persian and Greek arts, particularly in the field of sculpture and architecture. As per Niharranjan Ray's view, for a long time the Indians were in political and cultural contact with the Persians and Greeks. The Mauryas set up good relations with the Greek rulers of the north-west. The Indians were acquainted with the art that had developed in Iran because of the mutual contacts of the Greeks and Persians. Darius, the ruler of Iran, was the first king whose orders were inscribed on the rocks. Ashoka used the same method to propagate his religious views among the people. Dr. Coomaraswamy is also of the view that the fine arts of India possess less parts of their own and greater parts of what they had acquired from the west Asia.

Mauryan art was not just a copy of the Greek or Persian art. The Indians knew the art of sculpture and wood, and clay art pieces were prepared by the pre-Mauryan Indians. When the Indians of the Mauryan age built up their art, they did not require the help of the Persian or the Greeks. The truth is that the Maurya art was the Indian art which had freely drawn and learnt from whatever it found

good in the Persian and Greek art. Dr. Mukherji claimed that Ashokan art does not reveal any trace of foreign influence. India had her fruitful cultural intercourse with the Western countries and seats of Hellenic culture and civilization. The art of various countries were bound to reveal some common elements and features which in the case of India and Persia might be traced to a common source from which the entire culture of the East or Asia has sprung. Some art historians have emphasized foreign influence, especially Persian influence, on the court art of the Maurya Empire. It has been suggested that Ashoka got the idea of inscribing proclamations on pillars from the Achaemenids.

It has been pointed out that the word *dipi and lipi* occur in the inscriptions of Darius as well as Ashoka. Distinct Greek influence and even greater Persian influence has been identified in the polished surface of the Ashokan pillars and the animal capital. The stiff, heraldic pose of the lion is seen as further evidence of western influence.

There was plenty of interaction between ancient India and ancient Iran, whether in the form of trade or the conquest of Gandhara by the Persian emperors. The use of the Aramaic script in certain Ashokan inscriptions in the north-west and the emergence of *Kharoshthi* from this script were direct results of the interactions between India and the west Asia.

Literature

Kautilya's Arthashastra

The Arthashastra of Kautilya is an extremely sophisticated and detailed Indian treatise on state craft. The Arthashastra states very categorically that artha is superior to dharma (spiritual well being) and Kama (sensual pleasure) because the latter are dependent on it. It explains artha as the sustenance or livelihood of men. Arthashastra is the branch of learning that deals with the means of the acquisition and protection of the arth, which is the source of people's livelihood. Arthashastra also deals with economic policy and military strategy, law systems, trade and market.

Kautilya's work consists of 15 books (*Adhikaranas*) with 150 Chapters. The first five books deals with internal administration (*tantra*). The next eight with inter-state relations (*avapa*) and the last two with miscellaneous topics. A major problem in using the Arthashastra as a source of history is the differences of opinion regarding its date and authorship. It is argued that the mention of Kautilya's name in the colophons of the book could mean 'as taught or held by Kautilya'. It has been pointed out that there is no reference to Kautilya in *Patanjali's Mahabhashya* (which mentions the Mauryas and the assembly of Chandragupta); Megasthenes, who we know was associated with Chandragupta's court, does not mention Kautilya in

his Indica. The objection that the Arthashastra is the work of a scholar and not of someone actively involved in the nitty-gritty of politics is similarly not convincing. The Arthashastra's discussion of inter-state relations seems to refer to a small or moderate sized state not a large empire of the Maurya type, the text does emphasize imperial ideals and ambitions. The entire discussion of statecraft is from the point of the Vijigishu- desirous for or would be world conqueror. In other words, Vijigishu was a kind of king who was looking forward with a desire to have control (upper hand) over the state. The outline of an elaborate administrative structure and the generous salaries recommended for officials do suggest that the author had a large, well-established polity in mind.

The Arthashastra does not contain any references to the Mauryas, their empire, Chandragupta or Pataliputra. This could be because it is a theoretical, not a descriptive work. *The Arthashastra is a treatise on statecraft for a king and discusses a potential not an actual state.* According to Kangle, Vishnugupta seems to be the personal name of the author, Kautilya his gotra name, and Chanakya (son of chanaka) a patronym. He suggests that Kautilya might have written the book after having insulted by the Nanda king, before joining Chandragupta.

Megasthenes Indica

Megasthenes was the representative of Seleucus Nikator at the court of Sibyrtios, the Governor of Arachosia (the Kandahar area of Afghanistan).

After a treaty was made between Chandragupta and Seleucus, he was sent as the latter's ambassador to the Maurya court. As a royal ambassador, Megasthenes exposure to Indian society must have been socially and geographically restricted. Megasthenes wrote a book, called the *Indica* based on his travels and experiences in India. The book has not survived, but fragments are preserved in later Greek and Latin works, the earliest and most important of which are those of - Diodorus, Strabo, Arrian and Pliny. Diodorus Siculus was a historian born in Agyrium in Sicily and lived in the second half of the 1st century BC. He wrote '*Bibliotheca Historica*'. The surviving books describe Alexander's Indian campaign and contain a general description of India based on sources such as Megasthenes Indica.

Strabo (64 BC -20AD) was a geographer and historian, born in about 64 BC at Amasia in Turkey. Most of the books written by the earlier scholars (before Strabo) are not available and if available, are only in fragments but the Strabo work is almost intact with only a very few minor parts are missing. Strabo wrote as many as 43 volumes (books) under the title named "Historical Memoir". Moreover he

wrote 17 books on geographical treatise under the name “Geographica” out of which the fifteenth one deals with India and Persia. Strabo is considered as the father of regional geography. His Geographica is not only a geographic book but it also covers political and historical descriptions, and mostly it is history.

He termed Himalaya as Emodi Mountains. He writes that Ganges originated from Emodi mountains and passed by the side of Polibothra. Polibothra is recognized as Patliputra (Patna). Strabo gave the name Ariana for the region between India and Persia. Strabo’s work on India is mainly based on Nearchus, Aristobulus and others who were with Alexander (*Sikander*) in his great eastward expedition of the world. He also consulted the work of Megasthenes.

Arrian (Flavious Arrianus) was the statesman, soldier, philosopher and historian, born in Nikomedia in Bithynia. He wrote the *Anabasis*, an account of the Asian campaigns of Alexander and Indica was a continuation of this work. The first part describes India, mainly on the basics of the accounts of Megasthenes; the second, gives an account of the voyage of Nearchus (he had been commissioned to make this Voyage by Alexander) down the Indus along the coast to the Persian Gulf and up the Euphrates River to Babylon.

Gaius Plinius Secundus, better known as Pliny the elder, was a roman scholar. His book

Naturalis Historia (Natural History) consists of 37 books dealing with diverse subjects such as geography, ethnography, physiology and zoology. We do not know whether they had direct access to Megasthenes work or whether they relied on some secondary account of what he wrote. Nor were all their statements necessarily based on Megasthenes Indica alone.

All these writers were part of an older Greek tradition of writing about other lands and people. They wrote for an educated Greek audience and their aim was not only to inform but also to entertain. Later writers selected from Megasthenes' book the bits they thought would interest their audience the most and left out what they considered were the boring parts which might have been of great use to historians. They highlighted the fact about India that was similar to Greece.

Megasthenes Indica described the country, its size and shape, rivers, soil, climate, animals, produce, administration, society and legends.

CHAPTER - 9

SCULPTURAL ART OF POST-MAURYAN PERIOD

Sculptural Art

Gandhara and the Mathura school developed in the north while in the south, Amaravati was the major early center in the lower Krishna - Godavari valley (popularly known as K-G Basin). The art of the post-Mauryan period i.e. Sunga-Kanva period, had a much wider social base. The art of this period is mostly represented in the Buddhist images and relief sculptures carved on the railings, gateways and plinths of the stupas and also on the facades and walls of the Viharas and Chaitya. Brahmanical sculptures for this period are very few. However, an important development of this period is modeling of the image of the Buddha both in the Mathura and Gandhara schools. Among the Buddhists, it was the Mahayana sect that propagated image worship. Seated and standing images of Buddha were carved in Mathura and Gandhara.

Gandhara School



Figure 9.1: Specimen of Gandhara Art

Gandhara art was an amalgam of Hellenistic-Roman, Iranian and Indigenous arts. The Gandhara School, often called Graeco-Buddhist, was influenced less by Greek than by Roman art. In this art, a number of compositional traits were taken from Roman while divine attributes and decorative elements were adapted from Hellenistic (Greek) and Iranian roots. Its feeling is Indian but design is

influenced by foreign. Gandhara is located in the north-western part of the Indian sub-continent on both banks of the river Indus. It included the valley of Peshawar, Svata, Buner and Bajjora. It was ruled by the Achaemenids of Iran in the sixth-fifth centuries BC. Later it was occupied by the Greeks, Mauryas, Shakas, Pahlavas and Kusanas. Thus, this area was a hub for business covering silk route and political activities. As a result this place produced a mixed culture. It is mainly Buddhist and was profoundly influenced by Hellenistic art. It is seen that most of the sculptures from this art are related with Buddhist, and Hellenistic sculptures are found in very less numbers. We found that these sculptures follow a deliberate iconographic pattern with pose of figures, standard composition, and incidents of Buddha's life. The chief patrons of Gandhara art were the Shakas and the Kusanas. The main centers from where the art pieces of Gandhara School have been found are Jalalabad, Hadda, Bamaran, Begram and Taxila. Gandhara art can be divided into two schools-

(i) Early

(ii) Later

During the early school, which existed during the first and second century A.D. usually blue-grey schist stone was used to make idols. In the later school, instead of schist stone, mud, lime, pilaster and stucco was used to make the idols. Besides idols we find beautiful carvings on reliefs and bas-

reliefs the theme being the life of Buddha and Bodhisattvas, for example:- the drum of the chira stupa, at Taxila, is decorated by images of Bodhisattvas placed in niches for worship. On the ramparts of small pillars, of the Sehibhelol Stupa, the images of the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas and incidents from their life have been carved out. A bronze reliquary was recovered from the side walls of the stupa at Shah-ji-ki-dheri. It depicts symbolic of wandering monks.

The chief characteristics of Gandhara art are the realistic representation of human figures, distinguished muscles of the body and transparent garments. It indicates that style of Gandhara Art is natural in body form, drapery and it is pictorial scale. Body figures are shown as youthful, musculature and with a squarish torso. The most characteristic feature of this style is “standing Buddha” images and these images have uniformity of pose, uniformity of costume and uniformity of lakshana etc.

Generally, Buddha is depicted standing frontally and one leg is shown bent. He wore a heavy robe which covers his both shoulders and his right hand upraised with left hand hanged down. This posture of Buddha is called *abhaya* or *varada mudra*. We can see a top knot (*unisha*) on Buddha's head and he is shown generally without jewelry, except elongated ear lobes. Elongated ear lobes suggest that as a noble prince Buddha was used to

wear heavy ornaments. The Buddha image had a halo in the form of lotus bud around his head. Seated Buddha or the sitting position of Buddha i.e. position for teaching is called *dharmachakra mudra* while figures of meditation position is termed as *dhyana mudra*. The images of Buddha are so beautiful that they look like the images of Apollo, the Greek God of beauty. The rendering of drapery with sharp flowing folds is similar to that seen in Roman toga i.e. many early Gandhara Buddhas have Apollonian faces, their draperies arranged in the style of a roman toga. A distinctive feature of the Gandhara art is wavy curled hair and sharp features.

Other than Buddha, Bodhisattvas and attendant deities are an important category of sculptures in Gandhara region and are related with Mahayana Buddhism. Many bodhisattvas can be seen in figures e.g. Maiterya. The Gandhara school of art has been recognized as one of the best schools of sculpture and the images of Buddha built under its patronage were the best specimens of Indian art. Stucco (lime - plaster) for sculpture was in use in the Gandhar region as early as the first century AD. By the third century it largely replaced stone as the material for the decoration of stupas and viharas. Ivory was also used to carve the figures and its proof has been found from Begram.

In Kashmir the effect of Gandhara art can be seen up to early medieval period.

Mathura Art



Figure 9.2: Specimen of Mathura Art

The Mathura school is said to have begun at the end of the first century BC. Later, it received the patronage of the Kushana King, some of whose portrait statues have also been discovered near Mathura, the most well known being a statue of Kanishka of which only the headless trunk has survived. Mathura is renowned as a great centre of sculpture. Its early phase is contemporaneous with Bharhut and Sanchi schools. Its great phase coincide with the rise of the Kusanas. The most significant contribution of the Mathura school of

sculpture is the image of Buddha which did not exist before. This school produced a variety of sculptures and other pieces of art for the followers of Buddhist, Jaina and Brahmanical faiths. Mathura school of art also produced images of kings and other notables. This shows that Mathura artists were aware of various forms of art activities of the period and were catering to the requirements of different social groups of Indian and non-Indian origin. This school of art depicted various jabbbers of life on the votive pillars. The votive pillars from Kankali Tila demonstrate how feminine beauty has been utilized by the sculptor.

The art of Mathura is generally characterized by the use of mottled **red coloured Sikri sandstone** which is found in this area. The majority of the sculptures have been found in and around the Mathura city. Most of the sculptures belong to the Buddhism, Jainism and few other religions. The oldest Buddha sculpture is found in the Mathura art style. Few Buddhist sites are Chaubara, Katra Keshavdev and Jamalpur, while Kanakali Tila is famous for Jain sites. The influence of Mathura art can be well seen in and out of Mathura especially in the northern India. We found the specimens having Mathura style from places such as Sarnath, Kausambi, Rajgir & Bodhgaya (Bihar), Sanchi (MP), Bengal, Gujarat, and Taxila in Pakistan.

The description of the features of the Mathura art can be seen in its sculptures, which is as follows:

Many figures have round type or oval face, thick lips, open eyes, sharp nose and fleshy full body. Male figures are in slight V-shaped torsos while females have narrow waist with heavy figures. Generally, figures are shown wearing almost a transparent diaphanous, clinging *dhoti*, while a scarf (*uttariya*) is emerges from behind one shoulder over one forearm. The God/divine figures are generally shown in *abhayamudra* (one hand upraised and other one placed on the waist near the knot of waist band). These divine figures also have halo atop and behind the head. Animals, plants, birds are rendered in a realistic manner. We can see many times the presence of deities e.g. *bodhisattvas* or Indra and Brahma on both sides of the Buddha. Ahichhahtra inscription (probably of Kanishka era) and large number of Bodhisattvas sculptures indicate that Mahayaan Buddhism was popular in that region in that time. The Buddha sculpture shown as standing royal personages, lavishly bejeweled and crowned is called *Dhyani Buddha*, while a lotus in his hand indicates *Maiterya* or *Avalokiteshvara*. The iconographic traits are the main characteristics of the Mathura art. The identification of particular deities on the basis of posture, form etc. are called 'iconographic traits'. The Mathura art generally have a large number of female figures in various poses and it is the most distinctive feature of this art. This feature is termed as *plethora*. Some poses are bathing, playing, holding lamp, tying a waist band etc. and these are carved on pillar railing and

Torana. Lotus or scenes from jatak stories are also carved on the pillars.

Under the Kushan era there was a strong royal cult and royal family was worshiped in a shrine or *devakula*. One such shrine has been found at a place called Mat near Mathura and the other one in Surkh Kotal, Afghanistan. Here portrait sculptures of the first four kings of this family have been discovered of whom Wima Kadphises seated on lion throne is represented as the first king. There is also the standing headless figure of Kanishka holding a sword, wearing a stiff tunic and boots. During the Kushan period Mathura became the capital and it emerged as a major city of art centre.



Figure 9.3: Headless Statue of Kanishka

CHAPTER - 10

GUPTA PERIOD

Literature of Gupta Period

The Gupta period has rightly been called the *golden age of Sanskrit literature*. This time period was adorned by various prominent authors and scholars. Here are a few names and works of the authors of the Gupta time period.

Kalidas:

Kalidas was contemporary of king Vikrama, the founder of the Vikrama era. Kalidas gives minute details about the Sunga times. He was patronized by Chandragupta-II. According to a Sanskrit inscription Kalidas was born and flourished in Ujjain during the reign of Vikramaditya. Kalidasa was the son of a Brahmana. He lost his father in his childhood and was brought up by a cowherd. He was coarse, uneducated but handsome. His works show that he was really a Brahmana, a follower of Siva and the Vedanta. The most important works of Kalidas are:

- Abhijnana Shakuntalam,
- Ritusamhara,

- Malavikagnimitram,
- Kumarasambhava,
- Meghaduta,
- Raghuvams,
- Vikrama Urvashiyam.

Critics point out that the poetry of Kalidas is famous for its grace, simplicity, sentiments and figures of speech.

Sudraka:

Author of Mrichchhakatika or the little clay cart appears to have flourished in the fourth century AD. The Mrichchhakatika is one of the most interesting dramas in Sanskrit literature.

Visakhadatta:

Visakhadatta wrote Mudra-Rakshasa which gives the story of the revolution which put Chandragupta Maurya on the throne of the Magadha.

Vishnunarman:

Vishnunarman wrote Panchatantra during Gupta period. This book has played an important part in the literature of the world. About 200 versions of the book exist in more than 50 languages of the world e.g., English, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, Greek, etc.

The Puranas were brought up-to-date in this Gupta period. The Smritis of Yajnavalkya, Narada, Katyayana and Brihaspati were written during this period. The Hitopadesha or the book of wise counsels was written during this period.

Aryabhatta, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta were the foremost astronomers and mathematicians of the world. Aryabhatta wrote 'Surya Siddhanta' and 'Aryabhattiyan' and he was the first Indian astronomer to declare that the earth revolves round its axis. He explained the variations in planetary motions also.

Aryabhatt discovered zero and the term 'Bhugol' was first used in his book Suryasiddhanta. He also wrote: Pancha Siddhantika, Brihajjataka and Laghujataka. Varahmihira has considered the effects of eclipse month wise. It is highly surprising that size, life of the earth, as estimated by Varahamihir and Aryabhatt is very convincing.

Table 10.1: Dimension of the earth

Source	Yojan (unit)	miles	kms
Panch Siddantika by Varahmihira	1018.6	8148.8	13038
Aryabhatt	1050.0	840.0	13440
<i>While the diameter of the earth is approx. 12800 km as per science.</i>			

Brahmagupta was an astronomer and a mathematician of his age. He anticipated Newton by declaring that “all things fall to the earth by a law of nature, for it is the nature of the earth to attract and keep things.”

Palakapya wrote ‘Hastyayurveda’ on the veterinary science. Harishena, the general foreign minister of Samudragupta wrote ‘Prasasti’ on Samudragupta which is found on the Allahabad pillar inscription. The *prasasti* (in Sanskrit) is a poem of great merit. Ravisanti wrote Harsha Prasasti of Maukhari King. Vatsabhathi wrote the Mandasor Prasasti of Kumar Gupta and Bhandhuvarman.

The Gupta Art

The glories of the Gupta period is related to the Gupta art. Sculpture, architecture, paintings and terra-cotta made items are such achievements which have not been excelled after that. Some of our most beautiful monuments are a heritage of the Gupta period. Mathura, Banaras and Patna were the centers of artistic activities during this period. The Gupta artists relied more on elegance than on volume. Their art showed simplicity of expression and spiritual purpose. In their art there is a balance and freedom from conventions is found. There is naturalness in the Gupta art. The Gupta artists seem to have been masters of technique. The Gupta art is famous for *Rupam* or concept of beauty. We find in

Gupta art a profound religious and spiritual appeal. They painted forms of Gods, sages, kings, queens and their attendants in the Ajanta caves gives an idea of good and evil. We find in Gupta art the naivety of style and felicity of expression. Great ideas are given in a concrete form in a natural and easy manner. Painting was a developed art during this period.

Literary references prove that apart from professional artists, men and women of the upper classes could only handle a brush. Remains of Gupta paintings may be seen in the caves at Bagh (cave IV, AD 500), Ajanta caves (caves 16, 17, 1 & 2) and Badami (cave 3) besides faint traces at several other places.

The Ajanta murals supplied the norm for all contemporary paintings. The Ajanta artists displayed full-fledged skills in delineating human and animal figures. Decoration on ceilings, pedestals of columns, doors and windows- frames speak of the artist's extraordinary powers of conception and technique. Although, the themes at Ajanta are religious, one can see in the painting a dramatic panorama of the life of princes, nobles, warriors and sages.

Sculpture

The Gupta artists employed drapery to conceal the charms of the flesh. This can be seen from the images of the Buddha belonging to the Gupta

period. We have the seated Buddha at Sarnath, the standing Buddha in the Mathura Museum and the copper statue of Buddha from Sultanganj. The images of Buddha of Gupta period have beautiful curly hair. Bands of graceful ornamentation of different kinds are introduced in the halo of the figure of the Buddha. The Gupta artists used transparent drapery. We find freshness and vitality of art in those images. Most beautiful Shiva images belong to the Gupta period. Ekamukhi and Chaturmukhi Shiva-Lingas were introduced by the Gupta artists. The Gupta artists also created the *Ardhanarisvara* form of Siva where the deity is represented as half male and half female. The images of Vishnu from Mathura are a good example of the best plastic art of the Guptas. We find in it a celestial contentment and immaculate spiritual contemplation. The Gupta artists showed an image of Vishnu combining a human head with those of a boar and a lion. The images of Vishnu from Garhwal and Mathura have a central human figure surrounded by a number of radiating heads. The great Varaha image at Udayagiri (400 AD) has been rightly regarded as a monument to the genius of the Gupta sculptures. The Gupta artists handled successfully the stories of the various incarnations of Vishnu and Shiva in a spanking manner. In Deogarh temple, we find the representations of the epic stories of Rama and Krishna. We also find a scene in which Krishna, Rukmini and Sudama are shown together.



Figure 10.1: Vishnu as Varah; Udaygiri Caves.

We also find certain scenes from the Ramayana such as the departure of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita to the jungles, their visits to Agastya Rishi, the cutting of the nose of Surpanakha by Lakshmana etc. The iron pillar at

Mehrauli near New Delhi is an outstanding example of Gupta craftsmanship. Its total height, inclusive of the capital, is 23 feet and 8 inches. Its entire weight exceeds 6 tons. The pillar consists of a square abacus, the melon shaped member and a capital. The Gupta sculpture which was recovered by excavations ranks among the noblest products of Indian art.

Architecture

The chief surviving temples of the Gupta period are:

- (i) The Vishnu temple at Tigawa in Jabalpur district.
- (ii) Shiva temple at Bhumara in the former Nagod state.
- (iii) Parvati temple at Nachno-Kuthara in Ajaigarh state.
- (iv) Buddhist shrines at Sanchi and Bodhgaya.
- (v) Dasavatara temple at Deogarh.
- (vi) Ekmukhi Linga.

A mass of sculptures showing ganas from temple khoh in former Nagod state are now deposited in the Allahabad Museum. Gupta temples were made entirely of brick from Bhitargaon in Kanpur district, Paharpur in Bengal and Sirpur in Madhya Pradesh. The temple at Bhitargaon has a pyramidal roof. Its wall is decorated with terracotta

panels. They show scenes from Hindu mythology. The Dasavatara temple at Deogarh had originally a shikhara of about 40 feet.



Figure 10.2: The Dashavatara Temple at Deogarh, Jhansi, U.P.

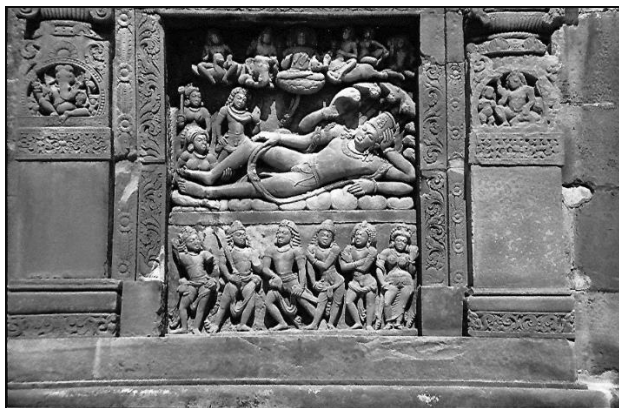


Figure 10.3: Vishnu Resting on Sheshnaga, Deogarh, Jhansi, U.P.

A stupa at Rajgir and the Dhamekh stupa at Sarnath belong to the Gupta period. The stupa at Sarnath is 128 feet high. It has four niches at four points on the image of Buddha. Narsimhagupta Baladitya built a brick temple of Buddha at Nalanda. It was 500 feet in height. The main cave structures of the Gupta period belong to Ajanta and the Andhara country. Both chaitya and vihara caves were excavated at Ajanta during the Gupta period. Vihara cave nos. 16 and 17 and the chaitya cave no. 19 are the most important. These caves are the best artistic monuments of the Gupta period. Each cave has a large number of pillars. Their beauty is as remarkable as their variety. The roofs and pillars have beautiful designs in bold outlines and pleasing colours.

The caves at Mogulrajapuram, Undavalli and Akkannamadanna belong to the Gupta period. Their architecture is simple, also their pillars are simple but massive. The cave temple at Udaygiri in Vidisha district near Bhopal is strictly rock cut and partly stone built.

Terra-cotta

Terra-cotta formed an important branch of Gupta art. The clay modelers of the Gupta period created beautiful things. The clay figures became the sculptures of the poor and this made Gupta art popular with the common man. The terra cotta figures are of three kind's i.e.,

- (i) Gods and Goddesses
- (ii) Male and female figures
- (iii) Animal figurines and miscellaneous objects.

A large number of figures of foreigners from Persia and central Asia are also found. We have figures of grooms, elephant riders, jesters and dwarfs also.

Was Gupta Age the Golden Period of Indian History?

According to M.A. Mehendale, the political unity and prosperity of India under the Guptas, combined with the staunch patronage that they extended to Sanskrit learning resulted in the flourishing of Sanskrit Literature in all its branches. That period saw the full development of the Puranas and the last phase of the Smriti literature. Possibly the Epics also got their final touches and received their present shape during that age.

This period produced the best authors in almost all the branches of literature, including sciences like astronomy and mathematics. This is evident from the works of some authors given below:

Dramatists and poets:	Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Bharavi and Magha.
Prose writers:	Dandin, Subandhu and Bana.
Rhetoricians:	Bhamaha

Grammarians:	Chandra, Vamana and Bhartihari.
Lexicographers:	Amara
Philosophers:	Gaudapada, Kumarila & Prabhakara.
Astronomers:	Aryabhatta, Varahamihira, Brahmagupta.

Dr. A.K. Majumdar writes that Sanskrit Literature reached its peak of glory during this age. The contribution of the Gupta age in the realm of art is also considered classical, for that period set the standard which was to be the "ideal and despair of succeeding ages". Dr. R.C. Majumdar is of the view that the Gupta Empire rose and fell but left a deep impression upon posterity by the standard which it set in all departments of life and culture. In science, arts and crafts it evoked the highest intellectual expression that India was ever capable of. The Gupta Empire lasted longer than most of the empires that flourished in India, thus it established an imperial tradition which long lasted after it had disappeared and inspired a series of able dynasty in a long and almost unbroken line of succession, to build up an empire after their model.

In the realms of art and literature, in political and economic enterprises, in religious and philosophical speculations, in short, in almost every sphere of life, we get in this period the best and the highest of which the ancient Indians were capable.

It was an age of unique and most typically Indian achievements in the realms of thought and deed, and amply deserves to be called the '*Golden Age of Indian History*'.

The greatest achievements of the Gupta Empire was the propagation and active promotion of Indian art and thought which the Gupta emperors had made possible, even in the remotest parts of the country through the agency of the Agraharas or religious endowments.

R.N. Dandekar further points out that the result of the highly organised administration of the Guptas was to be clearly seen in the prosperity and happiness of their subjects. The economic stability and development formed the true basis of the all-round cultural progress made in the period of history. Several industries, even heavy industries, seem to have grown under the patronage of the imperial Guptas. The casting of iron pillar at Mehraulli would not have been possible except in a fully equipped iron and steel plant and advanced metallurgy technique.

The Allahabad pillar inscriptions mentions a large number of weapons which must have been manufactured in such iron works. Ship building was another big industry which had developed in the age of the Guptas and it must have considerably facilitated the trade and the colonising activities of the Indians in that period.

Prosperity was due to the great progress made in agriculture, rural economy, over land and sea borne trade and commerce, corporate activities in the economic field and the execution of works of public utility. Under the Guptas, India attained a high state of material civilization and the national wealth of the country increased considerably.

The great cultural activities which characterised the Gupta age, would not have been possible without such universal economic security and prosperity. According to Dr. Romila Thapar, the Gupta age is referred to as the Classical Age of ancient India. The description is true in so far as we speak of the upper classes, amongst whom living standards reached a peak never before attained, and that was largely true for northern India. However, the classicism of the Gupta period was restricted to northern India alone, since in the Deccan and South India it was the post Gupta period that saw the evolution of a high level of civilization.

As per Dr. Jha new Gupta period is not at all Golden period of India. He refers to a multi volume work in which it is stated about the Gupta period that "Life was never happier". He points out that it was during the period of the Guptas that in certain parts of the country serfdom appeared leading eventually to the economic bondage of the peasantry live in the perpetual tutelage of men next withstanding their idealisation in art and literature, cast distinctions and caste-rigidity became sharper

than ever before. Law and justice showed a definite bias in favour of the higher castes. According to Dr. Jha the upper classes were happy and prosperous and lived in comfort and ease but that was not true of the lower orders, as it is clear from the condition of the chandalas mentioned by Fahien. The untouchable class as a whole came to be degraded further in the social scale. Social tensions continued. Religion was used as an instrument for maintaining the Varna divided society. Dr. Jha concludes, "For upper classes, all periods in history have been golden; for the masses, none."

In the light of what has been stated by R.C. Majumdar, Dr. A.K. Majumdar, and M.A. Mehendale in support of the view that the Gupta period was the golden age of Indian history, the criticism by Dr. Romila Thapar and Dr. D.N. Jha does not seem to be convincing. Hence, on the basis of the above discussions we can say that Gupta age was the Golden period of Indian History with respect to the other periods.

CHAPTER - 11

THE SANGAM AGE

In ancient times the association or academy of the most learned people of the Tamil land i.e. south India was called 'Sangam' or Cankam. The word '**Sangam**' is the Tamil form of the Sanskrit word *Sangha* which means a group of persons or an association. Promotion of literature was the prime purpose of such association. The Tamil Sangam was an academy of poets and bards who flourished in three different periods and in different places under the patronage of the Pandyan kings. But it is notable that many Pandyan rulers seemed to be mythical kings only. Naturalism and romance were salient features of the poems of the Sangam bards. The last academy is credited with the corpus of literature and it is generally known as 'Sangam Works' now.

According to the tradition, the first sangam was held under the chairmanship of the sage Agastya and its seat was Thenmadurai (south Madurai) which is said to have been submerged in the sea. The Madurai was the old capital of the Pandyas rulers.

The members of the first sangam were *Agastya*, *Murugavel*, *Mudinagarayar*, *Murinjiyur*

etc. It is believed that as many as 4449 poets, bards were associated with this Sangam which lasted for 4400 years and was patronized by 89 Pandyan kings. It is also believed that God also participated in the first Sangam. The important works of this sangam were *Agathiyam*, *Paripadal*, *Mudukurugu* and *Kalriyavirai* but all have perished hence no work of first Sangam is available.

Kabadapuram (kapatapuram) Alvai, another capital of the Pandyas was the seat of the second Sangam. Its important members were **Agastya** (the founder chairman), **Tolkappiyar** (the later chairman), *Irundaiyar*, *Karungoli*, *Pandurangan*, *Tiraiyanamaran*, *Vellurkappiyanar* etc. Third Sangam was attended by 3700 poets and lasted for 3700 years under the patrons of 59 Pandyan kings. The important works of the second Sangam were **Tolkappiyam** (written by Tolkappiyanar), *Mapuranam*, *Isainunukam*, *Bhutapuranam*, *Kali*, *Kuruku*, *Vendali* etc. **Tolkappiyam** is the only surviving work of the second Sangam and it is an example of early (oldest) work on Tamil grammar and is an exception of general style of Sangam bards. The seat of the third Sangam was the present Madurai in Tamil Nadu. It had 449 poets and the important ones among them were **Nakkirar** the chairperson, *Traiyanaar*, *kapilar*, *Paranar*, *Sattanar*, *Auvikyan* etc. The third sangam was lasted for 1850 years and was patronised by 49 Pandyan kings. *Ettutogai*, *Pattupattu*, *Patinenkilakanakku* etc. are

considered as the important works of the third Sangam. Like the second Sangam, the third Sangam also produced vast literature but only a fraction of it is available today and this fraction constitutes the extant body of Sangam literature.

As a general conception, it is considered that the age of Sangam is the age to which the Sangam literature belonged. It is not possible to estimate the exact time period for the Sangam literature but the historians have discussed and suggested a period during which such literature was produced and prevailed.

It is also difficult to determine the chronology of the works of the Sangam age. Modern writers have dismissed the first two Sangams as pure myths. The inclusion of 197 (89+59+49) Pandyan kings for an incredible period of 9990 years reign for Sangam age has weakened the historicity and chronology of the Sangam age. The generally accepted period of the Sangam, especially the third Sangam is somewhere in between 500 B.C. and 300 A.D. Historically, only the third sangam is accepted as having existed in the early centuries of the Christian era. The historians of south India agree that the Sangam age was the period of a few centuries immediately preceding or succeeding the Christian era and researchers on the basis of Greek and roman sources have correlated that some of the earliest extant Tamil literature works (like, epic

Manimekhala or Silappadikaram etc.) belonged to the early centuries of Christian era.

It is quite notable that from the 6th century AD when Pallava era begins there was a healthy and continuous growth of society and culture and Pallava period did not see any violent changes. But in Sangam work we see the complete absence of any reference to the Pallavas kingdom which is an additional proof that the Sangam work belonged to the pre-Pallava period.

According to Dr. N. Subramaniam the entire body of the eight anthologies, the ten poems, the eighteen minor works and two epics (Silappadikaram and Manimekalai) belonged to the pre-pallava period.

However, L.D. Swamikkannu Pillai assigns the Sangam age to the seventh and eighth century A.D., Dr. N.P. Chakravarthy pushes it back to the sixth century A.D.

The academy at Madurai (third Sangam) produced a large mass of literature dealing with a large variety of subjects ranging from grammar to pure romance, social customs, religious practices, popular deities, music, art, dance, war, folk tales, foreign trade and philosophical problems were dealt by the Sangam poets. The Sangam seems to have done very useful work in the literary field. It collected the scattered literary pieces, edited them

properly with proper norms and tried to preserve them.

Sangam Literature

Sangam literature gives a clear picture of the Tamil Society. Sangam literature and literature of the post Sangam (Tamil) period is different and Sangam literature can be called 'the unadulterated Tamil literature'. We find almost all types of descriptions related with government, war, charity, renunciation, worship, business and agriculture, nature like mountains and rivers and private thoughts and activity like conjugal love and domestic life of the family. *Puram* (exterior) and *Aham* (interior) are two broad categories of anthologies/literatures. *Puram* covers the distinctive poems which deals with men's social i.e. external behavior on the other hand *Aham* category deals with all the phases of (internal) love between men and women from embryo, body, soul to final phase of love. The division of *Aham* and *Puram* is essentially Tamilian and *sui generis* to their literature.

The Tamils were not strangers to another form of classifying literary themes viz., Aram, Porul, Inbam and Vidu. These are the four goals of life and the literature which deals with them falls under the corresponding sections. This classification is not much different from the *Aham Puram* classification because Aram, Porul and Vidu come under *Puram* and Inbam under *Aham*.

The poets played an important role in the social life of the people. They were a source of education and they performed functions of laudatory and instructive nature. Among the poets and thinkers of the Sangam age, Tolkappiar, Valluvar, Inlango Adigal, Sittalai Sattanar, Nakkiranar, Kapilar, Paranar and few others are outstanding.

The great grammatical work *Tolkappiyam*, the eight anthologies (*Ettuttogai*), ten poems (*Pattuppattu*) and the eighteen minor didactical texts (*Ptinenkilakanakku* or *Padinen-kizhk-kanakku*) works and two epics (*Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai*) all belong to Sangam age.

Tolkappiyam is the oldest extant Tamil grammar written by Tolakapiyyar in second Sangam and it is dated around 500 B.C. It is divided into three major parts named *ezhuttu* (orthography), *Sol* (etymology), and *porul* (literary conventions and usages).

Ettuttogai is a collection of poems and consists of 8 anthologies namely *Narrinai*, *Kuruntogai*, *Padirruppattu*, *Paripadal*, *Kalittogai*, *Ahananuru* and *Purananuru*. In these poem collections Padirruppattu is of high importance as it gives a true political picture of early Tamil people (ancestors of modern Malayalis), their customs, manners and about Chera king history. Ahananuru, as name indicates, is a collection of Aham (Love) poems while *Purananuru* is its counterpart type i.e.

Puram type poems dealing with war, culture, polity, etc.

Pattupattu is a collection of 10 short type poems called idylls written by 8 different authors. Out of 10 Poems *Mulaippattu*, *kurinjipattu* and *Pattinappalai* belong to *Aham* style and the rest are in *Puram* style. These collection of poems reflects light on early Tamil society and culture, village life, and kings. Love, hope, chastity etc. are beautifully expressed in these poems.

Melakanakku: *Pattupattu* and *Ettutogai* are written in narrative form of poems and both together are called Melakanakku (18 major works).

Kilakanakku or Kihkkanakku: It is in didactic form and *Patinenkilakanakku* i.e. *Padinen-kizhk-kanakku* (18 minor didactical works) comes in this category. Though these collections are called minor works but they have sound importance in Sangam literature with respect to literary view. They belong to third Sangam and post Sangam period and give the picture of that time period.

The two epics, *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai* are grand epic treatment of an indigenous story. It is notable that the epics belong to the post Sangam period.

Silappadikaram (story of Anklet): This epic is regarded as the ‘*Illiya*d of Tamil poetry’. It is written by Ilango Adigal who was the younger

brother of Chera King, Cenkuttuvan. This work is the earliest Tamil work in drama style. All 3 aspects of the Tamil literature i.e. *iyal*, *isai* and *natakam* are found in Silappadikaram epic. It gives a very clear description of the stage, the singer the drummer, fluit player and other actors, many classical musical plays with many instruments e.g. *yazh* (*vina*). Hence, this epic is a good and invaluable source of ancient Tamil classical music (either vocal or instrumental) and dance. Epic deals with the story of Kovalan and Madhavi of Kaveripattinam, the main characters of the epic.

Manimekalai: Composed by Sittalai Sattanar is a sequel of first epic Silappadikaram and is strongly related with Buddhism. It describes about Manimekalai, the daughter of Kovalan and Madhavi.

The ***kural*** i.e. *Tirukkural* also called *Mupal* a part of *Patinenkilakanakku* i.e. *Padinen-kizhkanakku*) was composed by Valluvar (Tiruvalluvar) and is considered 'The Bible of Tamil Land'. It consists of 133 chapters each containing 10 stanzas so 1330 stanzas are in this work. It is treaties on ethics, polity and social norms, hence many authors compare the *Kural* with the Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. The *Kural* mainly discusses three aims of life:-

- (1) ***Aram*** (righteousness),
- (2) ***Porul*** (wealth), and

(3) *Inbam* or *kamam* (*kaam* i.e. pleasure).

And on the basis of the aims given above *Kural* work is divided into three main parts:-

- 1. Arattuppai:** The first part of *Kural* gives essentials of yoga philosophy. It discusses happy house life and way to renunciation. Thus, this part covers *aram* stage of life.
- 2. Porutpal:** The second part describes polity, administration, social relation and explain how to gain and manage *porul* (wealth).
- 3. Inbattuppai:** Also called *kamattuppai* is the last and third part of *Kural* and discusses about love etc.

It also pays considerable attention to matters pertaining to government and hence the Sangam polity has often been called the *Kural* polity. In *Kural*, the author Valluvar mentions the king and his associates, their qualifications and some of their functions. He does not mention the contemporary condition in a factual record. He speaks of an ideal king. He does not exhaustively deal with all the contemporary institutions. He only chooses the prominent and major political institutions and draws an ideal code of behavior for them.

Few other works in post Sangam or later period of Tamil literature are related with *Jain* authors and now we see the influence of Sanskrit on these Tamil works. *Jivak Chintamani* also called

Mudi-porul-todar-nilai-seyyul written by Jaina ascetic Tiruttakka Devar in tenth century AD discusses about *Jain* teachings.

Social Life and Society

The Sangam literature speaks of many tribes and refers to the traditional castes also. This means that the caste divisions and the tribal arrangement stood side by side. The fishermen community was known as the Minavar or the Valainar.

The bards or the Panar were a special class of people whose business was to wander about singing popular songs or the praises of the kings. Entire families of these bards were always on the move along with their musical instrument. The Vedars were hunters. The Marakkudi were a separate section of society and they had their own traditions and beliefs. They worshiped the Goddess of victory and sacrificed to her. The Kuravar were hill tribes and they were engaged in gathering the yield of the hills. The Ulavar belonged to the plains and they were concerned with producing food from the farm land.

The Sangam society was not priest-dominated although the priests were slowly trying to assume powers of advice and supervision. The social life seems to have been on the "heroic scale".

Though in a general way, the entire caste system revolves around the Brahman axis, it was

also so in Tamilaham. The most distinctive feature of the Tamil Caste system was the Brahmin, for the king, the merchants and the peasants did not correspond to the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras of the Aryan Caste system. The Velalas of South India were not the Shudras of North India.

The Brahmanas of Tamilaham of the Sangam age were ideal priests, scholars and philosophers and they were venerated by all alike. Many of the Brahmanas were not imported aliens but were the natives of Tamilaham. They were the community of seers, ascetics, priests, philosophers and scholars who were attracted by the metaphysics of the Aryan Brahmins and so converted themselves to Brahmanism and became the sponsors and custodians of Aryan culture and Vedic rituals.

The Sangam society accepted the view that the learned man or the man of character and integrity to whatever stratum of society he belonged was superior to the unlettered or characterless person to whatever stratum he might belong. The rigours of the caste system based upon birth were mitigated in its practical application by the leaders of society and the rest continued as of old in their tribal ways. Untouchability was practiced. Tolkappiyam written by Tolkappiyar mentions four fold division of Sangam society. He refers to Andanar (Parppar), Arasar, Vaisiyar and Velalar. There were Buddhist and Jain ascetics also in the Tamil region. Though, the number of the Brahmins

in Tamilaham was small, they played a vital role in the development of Tamilian culture.

The Tamil Brahmins of the Sangam age were a respectable and learned community who lived apart in their streets. They performed their caste duties scrupulously. They served the king occasionally as judicial officers and always as purohits and astrologers. They performed ambassadorial duties to the kings. They gave and received patronage. They were strictly vegetarian in their food habits.

Some Brahmins did not take up the traditional occupation of the priestly class. Some of them were known as dealers in bangles. Some of them became musicians. Adherence to traditional and prescribed ways of life was considered to be the first social virtue. This gave extraordinary stability to society.

The Brahmin community had taken roots in the social structure of Tamilaham. The Brahmins were attached to the land and were proud of their country and their mother tongue. They considered Sanskrit the language of their religion and nothing more.

It seems that trade was common to Vaishyas and Velalas. It appears that learning, performing sacrifice, making gifts, agriculture, protection of cows and trade were the prescribed duties of a Vaishya. Considerable confusion existed between the Vaishyas and Velalas. They were known mostly

by the profession in which they were engaged for the time being. The merchants and traders largely belonged to the cities. The extensive foreign trade was managed by the Vaishyas. The fisherman owned the small fishing boats and the big merchants owned the bigger ocean going vessels. The Minavars were the fishermen. The Umanar were the manufacturers and sellers of salt.

The weavers were next in importance to the agriculturists. They were famous in foreign countries for the fine textile goods they produced. The shepherds and cowherds were a very important and large community. The Vedars were the hunters. They accompanied the king on hunting expeditions.

The status of women in Sangam society was not equal to that of men either in theory or in practice. There were female ascetics of Buddhist or Jain sangam like Kaundi Adigal and Manimekalai. There were also a large number of courtesans. They acted as bodyguards. Women were not recruited as soldiers, ministers, ambassadors or other advisers of the king. They did not own property. As every woman did not commit sati after the death of her husband, she had to lead a very hard life as a widow. It was a degraded life. Though we see that there were many women writers in the Sangam period. Out of 473 poets about thirty were women and Avvaiyar was the famous one.

There were many forms and qualities of dress worn by the various classes of people. The kind of

dress varied from class to class and individual to individual. The labouring classes were on the verge of nudity. Shepherds and cowherds wore only loincloth and dispensed with the upper cloth. Stitched garments were also in vogue but not largely. Many valuable ornaments or special metals or jewels were worn by the rich people. The others put on simple ornament like glass beads string together. The people loved perfumery. Flowers were the greatest favorites of Tamil women.

CHAPTER - 12

STYLE OF TEMPLES

Temple is the place of gathering for the purpose of religious activities and Buddhism was the first religion to feel the need of large space for such purpose. This need resulted in the construction of stupas, viharas, and chaityas architectures. In the course of time these worship places got various architectural designs and styles. In Hindu religion free standing shrines and structural temples were started to develop. Each religion and region put its attributes in the architecture of temple. On the basis of region we mainly consider three types of (hindu) temple styles namely, Nagara, Dravida and Vesara styles. The *Nagara* style is associated with the region between the Himalayas and Vindhya. The *Dravida* style is associated with the region between the Krishna and Kaveri rivers to Kanyakumari while the Vesara style is sometimes associated with the area between the Vindhya and the Krishna river. But these styles are not fully independent of each other and generally overlap in design and region. For example, nagara style temples are found in Karnool, Andhra Pradesh which are mainly built on Dravid style temples. In Ellora, we see Dravida style temples. Note that the main distinction among

the three styles is based on the shape and design of the tower, the ground plan and elevation of the temple.

In almost all the Hindu temples built in any style there is a square inner sanctum (*garbhagriha* “embryo chamber”) in the heart center of the temple where devotee is meant to feel the presence of deity. This *garbhagriha* is set within a covered enclosure i.e. *shikhara*.

Nagara Style of Temple

In the Nagara style temple, the tower (*shikhara*) has a curvilinear slope with a fluted disc (*amalaka*) at the pinnacle. The basic ground plan of the Nagara temple is square, with a number of projections (*rathas*) in the middle of each side, giving it a cruciform shape. The temple's elevation is marked by a conical or convex *shikhara* or temple tower, consisting of several layers of carved courses, usually crowned by an *amalaka* (notched ring stone). These two features- **the cruciform plan** and **curvilinear shikhara**, are visible in northern temples from the 6th century (the late Gupta Period), for example in the Dashavatara temple at Deogarh Jhansi and the brick temple at Bhitargaon Kanpur (both in U.P.). The beginnings of the typical Nagara shikhara can be seen in the Mahadeva temple at Nachna Kuthara (7th Century) and the brick Lakshmana temple at Sirpur (both in M.P.). Nagara style shikhara can be well seen in lingraj temple,

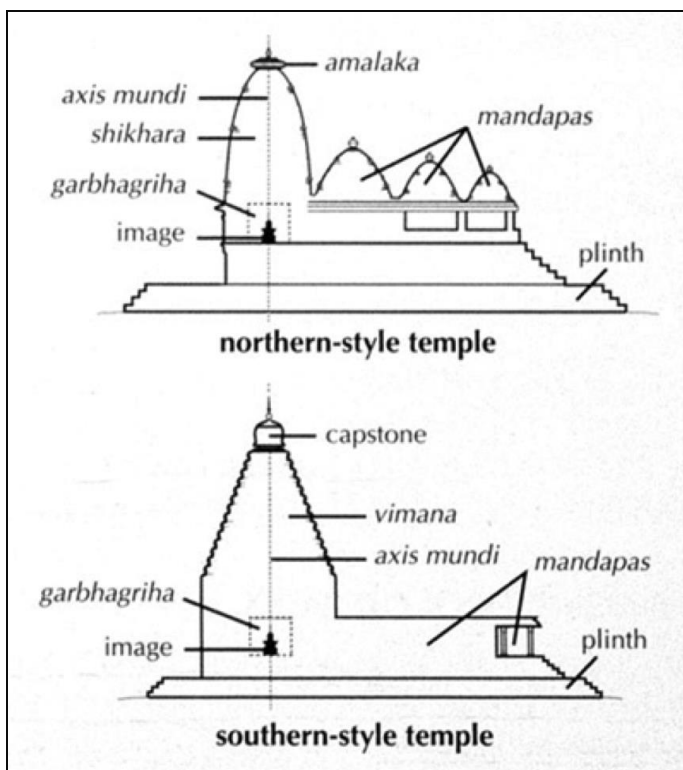
Bhubaneswar, Orrisa. The fully developed Nagara style is evident by the 8th century.

Central India	Dashavatara Vishnu temple, Deogarh, Jhansi, U.P. and Brick temple Bhitargaon, Kanpur, U.P. Temples at khajuraho, M.P.
West India	Sun temple, Modhera, Gujarat.
East India	Assam, Bengal, Odisha (Kalinga)- Sun temple, Konark Jagannatha temple, Puri, Lingraj Temple, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Dravida Temple

The most striking feature of the Dravida temple is its pyramidal Shikhara (here shikhara is termed as *vimaan*), which consists of progressively smaller and smaller stories (*tala* pronounced as tal), culminating in a slender pinnacle surmounted by a small dome (*stupika*). In Brihadshvara temple at Thanjavur, the Dravida style *shikhara* can be well seen. It's top surmount may be in the square, polygonal or a round dome shape. In a later stage, south Indian temples came to be covered by boundary wall and one main entrance gate was designed. This gate is generally very big and have a good height and is called Gopuram. Dravida temples were enlarged by constructing many functional buildings like *mandap* (big pillared halls), added portico (*ardh-mandapa*) and corridors

(*antaral*) to connect the sanctum sanctorum. The earliest traces of such features go back to the Gupta period and are not restricted to the far south, e.g. they occur in northern and central India and the Deccan. They can be seen in the Parvati temple at Nachna Kuthara and the Lad Khan, Kont Gudi, and Meguti temples at Aihole.



Vesara Style Temple

The Vesara style also called *Chalukyan style* or '*Karnataka-Dravida*' style is a hybrid style (Vesara literally means 'Mule') that was borrowed from the northern and southern styles and is found generally in Deccan India. Temples built in the Deccan under the later Chalukyas of Kalyani and Hoysalas are considered examples of this style. Actually, Chalukya had the same source of inspiration as the Dravidian and in Aihole, Badami, and Pattadakal (in Karnataka) we can see the examples. Aihole alone has as many as 70 temples and it is called the '*town of temples*'. The architecture of Deccan temples is a combination of northern and southern elements means missing out on its distinctiveness and variations, for example, Hoysaleswara temple at Halebid in Karnataka.



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