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NCERT HISTORY

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NCERT CONDENSED / SUMMARISED CLASS 6

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Chapter 1 - What Where How and When

- People have lived along the banks of rivers for several hundred thousand years. Some of the earliest people who lived there were skilled gatherers, that is, the people who gathered food.
- The Sulaiman and Kirthar Hills to the North-West were some of the areas where women and men first began to grow crops such as wheat and barley about 8000 years ago.
- People also began rearing animals like sheep, goat, and cattle and started living in villages. The places where rice was first grown were situated in the North Vindhya.
- Men and women moved in search of livelihood, as well as to escape from natural disasters like floods or droughts. Sometimes, men marched in armies, conquering other's lands.
- People have shared new ways of carving stones, composing music, and even cooking food, over several hundreds of years.
- Manuscripts were usually written on palm leaves or on the specially prepared bark of a tree known as the birch, which grows in the Himalayas.
- Inscriptions are writings on relatively hard surfaces such as stone or metal.
- Archaeologists study the remains of buildings made of stones and bricks, paintings and sculpture. They also explore and excavate to find tools, weapons, pots, pans, ornaments and coins.
- Archaeologists also look for the bones of animals, birds, and fishes in order to find out what people ate in the past.
- All dates before the birth of Christ are counted backwards and usually have the letters BC or BCE (Before Christ) added on.
- People have lived on the banks of the Narmada for several thousand years. The earliest of them were skilled gatherers – people who gathered their food.
- Near Sulaiman and Kirthar hills in present-day Pakistan, crops like wheat and barley were first grown 8000 years ago. People also began rearing animals like sheep, goat, and cattle. They lived in villages. Rice was first grown in the north of the Vindhya.



- Agriculture developed near the Garo hills and near the Vindhya.
- Some of the earliest cities flourished about 4700 years ago on the banks of the Indus and its tributaries. Cities also developed on the banks of the Ganga.
- People travelled from one place to another and interacted with each other, thus sharing ideas. This has enriched our culture
- Old books, called manuscripts, were usually written on palm leaf or the bark of the birch tree. They are helpful in revealing our past.
- Archaeologists have also found inscriptions, which are an engraved form of writing on hard surfaces, such as stone or metal. They were used for various purposes.
- The people who study objects made and used in the past are called archaeologists. They explore and excavate to find old objects. They also look for bones of living beings to find what people ate.
- The people who study the past are historians. They look for information found from manuscripts and inscriptions, which they call source.

Archaeologists: People who study the objects made and used in the past are called archaeologists.

Excavation: The process of digging under the surface of the earth in order to find old objects is called excavation.

Historians: Scholars who study the past are called historians.

Inscriptions: These are writings on very hard surfaces like stone or metal. Manuscripts. Books that were written long ago by hand on palm leaf or barks of trees are called manuscripts.

Skilled Gatherers: The people who gathered their food. They have lived on the banks of the Narmada for several hundred thousand years.

Tributaries: Smaller rivers that flow into a larger river are said to be its tributaries.

8000 years ago – beginning of agriculture

4700 years ago – the first cities=

2500 years ago – the Magadha Kingdom

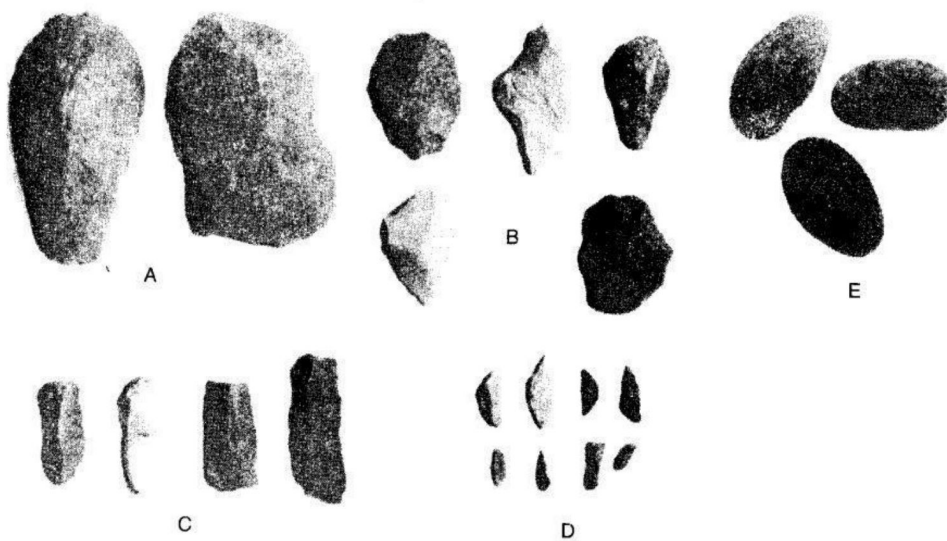


Chapter 2 - On the Trail of Earliest People

- **Palaeolithic:** This term refers to the age where we find a large number of stone tools. It extends from 2 million years ago to about 12,000 years ago and is divided into Lower, Middle and Upper Palaeolithic.
- **Mesolithic:** This period extends from 10,000 years ago to about 12,000 years ago. Stone tools found during this period were generally tiny and were called Microliths.
- **Neolithic:** This was the period that dates back to about 10,000 years ago, and is, therefore, known as the New Stone Age.
- **Earliest People:** They were hunter-gatherers, a name derived from the way they collected food. They hunted animals, collected berries and fruits and gathered nuts, stalks and eggs. To hunt, they needed to move constantly, and to gather plant products, they needed knowledge about the edibility of plants and change of seasons.
- **Archaeological Evidence of Early Man:** How do we know about the early man? This has been possible through an analysis of objects found, which were probably used by the early man. For example, tools made of stones, bones and wood.
- **Uses of Tools:** Stone tools were used to cut meat and bones, scrape bark (from trees) and hides (animal skins) as well as to chop fruit and roots.
- **Making Stone Tools:** Two different techniques were used for making stone tools.
- **Choosing a Place to Live In:** Dwellings chosen by the early man were located near sources of water, such as rivers and lakes as well as where the good quality stone was available for their tools.
- **Painting-Rock paintings:** Paintings on a rock shelter.
- **Finding out about Fire:** At Kurnool caves in Andhra Pradesh, evidence and traces of ash have been found suggesting use of fire. The fire might have been used as a source of light, to cook meat and to scare away animals.
- **A Changing Environment:** About 12,000 years ago, there was a major change in the climate of the world. This change led to a shift to warm conditions, leading to the development of grasslands at many places which helped people to start thinking about the herding and rearing animals.



- **Habitation-cum-Factory Sites:** Places where stones were found and early people made their tools. Sometimes, people lived (habitat) here for a longer span of time.
- **Bhimbetka:** This is a place in Madhya Pradesh where we find examples of habitation sites, natural caves and rock shelters.
- People who lived in the subcontinent about 2 million years ago were Hunter-gatherers. They hunted wild animals and gathered plant produce to get their food. They moved from place to place, in search of more food, water and resources.
- Hunter-gatherers made and used various types of tools — tools of stone, wood and bone.



Stone tools used by early man

- Habitation refers to the place where people lived.
- Stone tools were made using different techniques like a stone on stone (using a stone to give required shape to another stone) and pressure flaking.
- Fire was used by the early people. They used fire as a source of light, to cook meat and to scare away animals.
- Grasslands developed in many areas due to change in climate around 12000 years ago. Herding, and rearing animals and fishing became common.
- Several grain-bearing panes of grass, like wheat, barley, rice grew naturally in different parts of the subcontinent. The people also began growing plants on their own.
- Many old caves have paintings on their walls. They show wild animals and are drawn with great accuracy and skill. A painting from a rock shelter.



- In Hunsgi, a number of early Palaeolithic sites have been found. A large number of tools were also found, most of which were made of limestone.

Factory-Sites: Places where the stone was found and where people made tools are called Factory-sites.

Grasslands: Areas of land with high fertility and thus good for growing crops are called Grasslands.

Habitation-Cum-Factory Sites: Factory-sites, where people lived for some time, have been called Habitation-cum-factory sites.

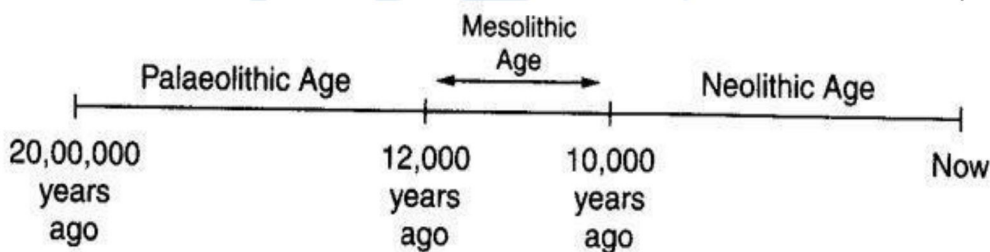
Hunter-Gatherers: People who lived in the subcontinent about two million years ago and who hunted wild animals, caught fish and birds, gathered food to eat, were the Hunter- gatherers.

Palaeolithic: The part of history extending from 2 million years ago to about 12,000 years ago is called the Palaeolithic period.

Mesolithic: The part of history extending from about 12,000 years ago to about 10,000 years ago is called the Mesolithic period.

Microliths: Stone tools of the Mesolithic period are called Microliths.

Dateline:



Chapter 3 - From Gathering to Growing Food

- Farming developed as a consequence of the climate change of the world. People observed plants and how they grow. Gradually, they also started growing crops.

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- People also started taming animals. The dog was the first animal to be tamed. Animals like sheep, goat, cattle were also tamed and so people became herders. Grains were used as seeds, as food, and also as gifts. They were stored by humans.
- Animals were also 'stored' since they can serve as a source of milk and also provide meat. So, animals were used as a 'store' of food.
- Period of history after about 10,000 years ago is called the Neolithic Age. Mortars and pestles and other tools of the Neolithic age have also been found.
- People grew cotton by this time and so weaving of clothes had begun.
- Many farmers and herders lived in groups, which were known as Tribes. Certain customs and practices were followed by them.
- Mehrgarh was situated in a fertile plain, near the Bolan Pass. Here, people learnt to grow barley and wheat. It is one of the earliest villages.
- Different plants grow in different conditions. Different animals also prefer different environments.
- Farming developed as a result of the climate change of the world. People observed plants and how they grow. Gradually they also started growing crops.
- People also got interested in taming animals. The dog was the first animal to be tamed. Animals like sheep, goat, cattle were also tamed and so people became herders.
- Grains were used as seeds, as food, and as gifts. They were stored by humans.
- Animals were also 'stored' since they can serve as a source of milk and also ready meat. So animals were used as a 'store' of food.
- Some sites have given evidence of farmers and herders. Plant remains and animal bones have been found and studied.
- Archaeologists have found traces of huts or houses at some sites. Pit-houses were built by digging into the ground.
- Period of history after about 10,000 years ago is called the Neolithic Age. Mortars and pestles and other tools of the Neolithic age have been found.
- People also grew cotton by this time and so weaving of clothes had begun.



- Many farmers and herders lived in groups, which were called Tribes. Certain customs and practices were followed by them.
- Mehrgarh was located in a fertile plain, near the Bolan Pass. Here, people learnt to grow barley and wheat. It is one of the earliest villages.
- On excavation, levels are found which indicate chronology (order of events).
- In Mehrgarh, remains of houses have been found. They had four or more compartments. Several burial sites have been found in Mehrgarh.
- Stone tools, a stone called jadeite, etc. have been found in DaojaliHading near the Brahmaputra Valley.

Domestication: The taming of animals for various purposes is referred to as Domestication.

Fossil Wood: Ancient wood that has hardened into stone is called Fossil Wood.

Levels: Layers of a mound formed by various waste material over hundreds of years, are called Levels.

Neolithic Age: The part of history after about 10,000 years ago is referred to as the Neolithic Age.

Tribes: Many farmers and herders lived in groups, which are called Tribes.

About 12,000 years ago: the beginning of Domestication.

About 10,000 years ago: the beginning of Neolithic Age.

About 8,000 years ago: the beginning of settlement at Mehrgarh.

Chapter 4 - In the Earliest Cities Class

Life in the City: Harappa was a busy place. Rulers planned buildings, traders travelled to distant places to procure raw materials and scribes prepared exotic seals.

Story of Harappa: The cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation are known as the Harappan cities. Rediscovered in the 1920s after excavations in Sindh and Punjab in present-day Pakistan, these cities flourished since 3300 BC.

Layout of the Cities:



- Harappan cities were divided into two parts: the citadel and the lower town. Walls were fortified with bricks in interlocking patterns.
- Streets were laid out straight and cut each other at right angles.
- Drains ran parallel to each other and had covered.
- Citadel was located at a higher level and had special buildings.
- Great Bath in Mohenjodaro was a tank used for bathing rituals.
- Kalibangan and Lothal had fire altars where sacrifices may have been performed.
- Lower town was the residential area where houses were one or two storeys high and built around a corridor.

About eighty years ago, remains of the site of a very old city called Harappa were found in present-day Pakistan. The city is supposed to be about 4700 years old. More such cities were also discovered.

- These cities were usually divided into two or more parts. The part to the west was smaller but higher and the part to the east was larger but lower. The first part has been called citadel and the second part, the lower town.
- Bricks used were so well made that they have survived thousands of years. The pattern of their use made walls strong.
- A special tank, called the great bath, has been found in the city of Mohenjodaro. Some cities had fire altars and storehouses.

The Great Bath



- Houses were 1- or 2-stories high. Wells supplied water. Cities had covered drains. Houses, drains and streets were planned and built at the same time.
- A Harappan city was a very busy place Rulers planned the construction of special buildings.
- Scribes helped prepare seals.

The Harappan seal



- Crafts-persons made all kinds of Things Archaeologists have found things made of stone, shell and metal in addition to beads, weights and blades. Seals and pots with wonderful designs were also made. Cloth has also been found.
- Harappans got raw materials locally or from other places like Rajasthan, Oman, Iran etc.
- They grew wheat, barley, pulses, peas, rice, sesame, linseed and mustard. A tool called plough was used to dig the earth. Irrigation was also employed. Animals were reared by the Harappans.
- In Dholavira in present-day Gujarat, a large open area for ceremonies, and stones with engravements in Harappan script have been, discovered.
- A storehouse has been found in the city of Lothal.
- However, there was a major change 3000 years ago and much of the Harappan cities perished. It may have been because of rivers drying up, or deforestation, or several other reasons (see Flow-Learning 4).

Bronze: The alloy of tin and copper is called bronze.

Citadel: The part to the west of most cities was small but high in comparison to the eastern part. This part is called the citadel.



Crafts-Persons: Men and women who made all kinds of things-either in their own homes or in special workshops were the crafts-persons.

Lower Town: The eastern part of the cities is referred to as the lower town.

Plough: A new tool in the Harappan cities which was used to dig the earth for turning soil and planting seeds was the plough.

Raw materials: Substances that are either found naturally or produced by farmers/ herders are called raw materials: Raw materials are used to manufacture other materials.

Rulers: People who planned the construction of special buildings in the city were the rulers.

Scribes: People who knew how to write were the scribes.

Around 2700 BC, i.e. 4700 years ago: Beginning of cities.

Around 1900 BC, i.e. 3900 years ago: Beginning of the end of these cities.

Around 500 BC, i.e. around 2500 years ago: Beginning of newer cities.

Chapter 5 - What Books and Burials Tell Us

- **Burial Spots of Families:** Some burial chambers have more than one skeleton, probably meaning that one chamber was used for many members of the same family. A hole in the wall allowed the chamber to be used over and over again. The burial sites were marked by stones.
- **Battles:** Rig Veda tells us about battles fought for land and cattle. People met in assemblies and discussed war and peace. Wealth obtained thereafter was distributed amongst the leaders, priests and people.
- **Vedas:** Initially, the Rigveda was not in written form, but was passed on orally. Knowledge passed on in this way is known as 'Shruti'. The Vedic teachers took great care to teach students to pronounce words and memorise hymns correctly.
- **Sanskrit and Other Languages:** Scholars have discovered many similarities between Sanskrit and European languages such as Latin, English and German. Historians came to the conclusion that Sanskrit belongs to the Indo-European group



of languages. Other languages like Hindi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, etc. also belong to the same group.

- **Skeleton Studies:** Study of the bone structure helps to differentiate between male and female skeletons. The hip or the pelvic area of a woman is generally larger than a man.
- **Special Burial at Inamgaon:** We find burials dated back to 3600 and 2700 years ago. Adults were generally buried in the ground. Special mention may be made of a man who was found buried in a large, four-legged clay jar in the courtyard of a five-roomed house.
- **Writing Evidence:** First evidence of writing in China was found 3500 years ago. These writings were on animal bones and were called oracle bones. However, the Chinese did not know the use of iron.
- **Other languages:** Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam belong to the Dravidian family and the languages spoken in Jharkhand and parts of Central India belong to the Austro-Asiatic family.
- **Megaliths:** These literally mean big stones, which were used by early men to spot burial sites.

There are four Vedas:

- Rigveda
- Samaveda
- Yajurveda
- Atharvaveda.

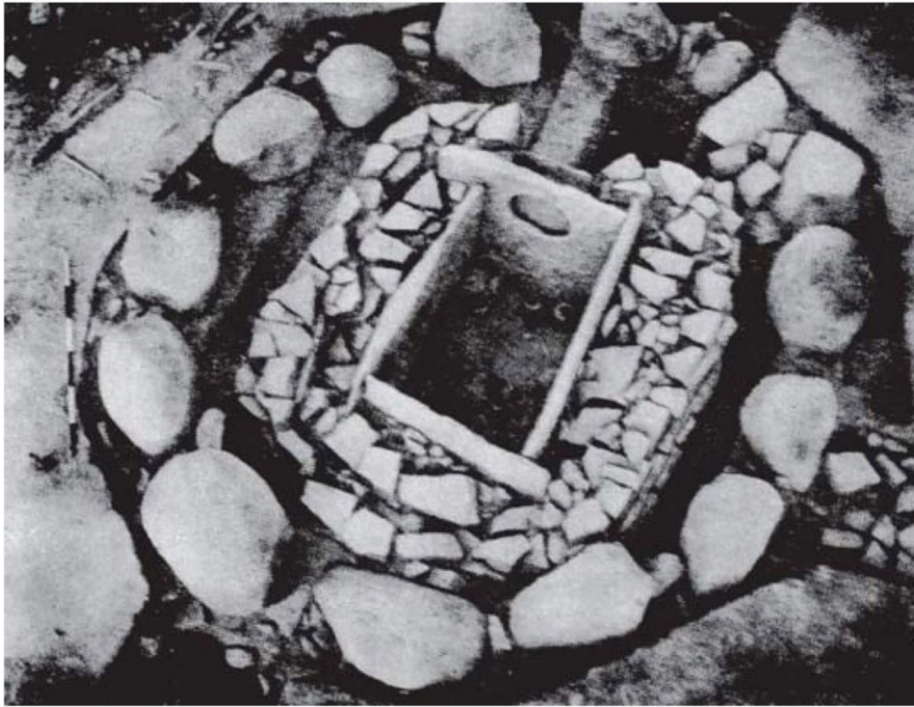
The oldest one is the Rigveda (3500 years ago). It contains over a thousand hymns ("Suktas"). The Vedas are religious texts of Hinduism. The hymns were composed by rishis and students memorised them. The Rigveda has been written in old (Vedic) Sanskrit.

- Vedas were written down much later. Students learnt the hymns and passed it on to other generations by memorizing and not writing.
- Manuscript of Rigveda contains prayers for cattle, children and horses. Wealth was distributed among the leaders, priests and other people, according to the Rigveda. 'Yajnas' were performed. Most men took part in wars.



- Rigveda divides people in two groups on the basis of their work : the 'brahmins' and the 'rajas'. People or the community as a whole have been referred to as 'jana' or 'vish'. The composers of hymns called themselves 'Aryas', and their opponents 'Dasas' / 'Dasyus'.

Stone boulders as the one in figure are called **Megaliths**



Megalith

- They were used to mark burial sites. This practice was used in the Deccan and Kashmir. Some megaliths are on the surface and some are underground.
- The dead were buried with distinctive pots, which are called Black and Red Ware.
- People were buried along with several objects. The objects were chosen probably depended upon the status of the person dead.
- Families were usually buried together.
- In Inamgaon, people were buried with their head towards the north. Vessels containing food and water were placed with them.

Aryas: The people who composed the hymns used the word 'Aryas' for themselves.



Black and Red-Ware: The two distinctive pots, with which the dead were buried, have been called the Black and the Red Ware.

Brahmins: The priests were referred to as the 'Brahmins'. They performed various rituals.

Dasyus/Dasas: The opponents of the 'Aryas' were referred to as 'Dasas'/'Dasyus' by them. This word later meant 'slave'.

Megalith: A stone boulder, used to mark burial site, is referred to as a megalith. **Sukta:** The hymns of the Vedas were called 'Suktas', which translates into 'well-said'. About 3600 years ago – beginning of the settlement of Inamgaon.

About 3500 years ago (i.e. circa 1500 B.C.) – beginning of composition of the oldest of the Vedas, the Rigveda.

About 3000 years ago (i.e. circa 1,000 B.C.) – beginning of the building of megaliths.

Around 2700 years ago (i.e. circa 700 B.C.) – end of settlement at Inamgaon.

Around 2000 years ago – Charaka wrote 'CharakaSamhita'.

Less than 200 years ago (in the 19th century A.D.) – printing of the Rigveda for the first time.

Chapter 6 - Kingdoms, Kings and an Early Republic

- **Janapadas:** The powerful kings who performed big sacrifices and later ruled larger territories termed as Janapadas. The term "Janapada" literally means 'foothold of a tribe'. A Janapada could be a republic like Vajji or a monarchy like Magadha.
- **Vamas:** Later, Vedic texts like Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda mentioned certain rules about the society. There were different groups in the society such as priests and warriors, farmers, herders, traders, craftspersons and labourers.
- **Varna Hierarchy:** The priests divided people into four groups called vamas. Each varna had different sets of functions.
- **Selection of the Rulers:** In ancient India, some of the rajas were probably chosen by the Jana, the people. Some changes



regarding the election of the Raja took place around 3,000 years ago. Some men performed Ashvamedha sacrifice and came to be recognised as rajas.

- **Gana:** This was the method of rule in early centuries where members of society met in assemblies and decided about administration through discussions and debates.
- **Mahajanapadas:** A Mahajanapada was usually ruled from its capital city. There was intense rivalry among the Mahajanapadas, resulting in frequent wars. Huge walls made of mud, stone, wood or bricks were used to fortify these capital cities.
- **Taxes:** Money was required by new rajas for building forts and armies. They started collecting regular taxes from the people. The tax could be paid either in cash or in kind.
- **Changes in Agriculture:** Agriculture prospered in most of the Mahajanapadas as they were located in fertile areas. Two major changes came in agriculture. One was the increasing use of the iron plough. Secondly, people began transplanting paddy which led to increased production.
- Around 3000 years ago, there were some new ways of choosing 'rajas'. Some men became 'rajas' by performing big sacrifices. One of such rituals was 'ASHVAMEDHA' (horse sacrifice). The 'raja' was an important figure.
- Kingdoms were usually called the 'Janapadas', which were ruled by the 'rajas'. People lived in huts and kept animals. They grew a variety of crops.
- Some 'janapadas' later became more important than others, and they were called 'Mahajanapadas'. The capital cities were fortified.
- The new 'rajas' began maintaining armies. Payments were made using punchmarked coins.

Coins



- The 'rajas' needed resources to build forts and to maintain armies. Officials were supposed to collect taxes from people. Taxes were in the form of crops, labour, animals and their produce, etc.
- There were changes in agriculture too. The use of Iron Ploughshares increased, thus enhancing grain production. People started transplanting paddy. This also increased production.
- Magadha became the most important 'mahajanapada' in about 200 years. Transport, water supplies, fertility, forests, elephants, mines, etc. made Magadha important.
- The two powerful rulers of Magadha, Bimbisara and Ajatasattu used all possible means to conquer other 'janapadas'. Rajagriha was the capital of Magadha. Later it was Pataliputra (now Patna).
- Vajji was another kingdom with its capital at Vaishali (Bihar). It had a different form of government called 'gana'/'sangha', which had not one, but many rulers. These rulers performed rituals together and met in assemblies. Buddhist books depict life in the 'sanghas'.
- 'Rajas' of powerful kingdoms tried to conquer the 'sanghas'.

'Ashvamedha': (horse sacrifice) This was ritual in which a horse was let loose to wander freely and it was guarded by the 'rajas' men. If the horse entered other kingdoms, there would be a duel between the two kings.

'Bhaga': Taxes on crops (1/6 of the produce) was called 'bhaga'.

'Gana'/'Sangha': A form of government followed in the kingdom of Vajji. 'Janapadas': Kingdoms were referred to as 'janapadas'. ('jana' – land, 'pada' – foot). 'Mahajanapada': The most important of the 'janapadas'.

'Varnas': Each of the four categories of society, based on occupation and decided by birth, was referred to as 'Varnas'.

About 3000 years ago (around 1000 B.C.) – new kinds of 'rajas'.

About 2500 years ago (around 500 B.C.) – formation of 'mahaj' anapadas'.

About 2300 years ago (around 300 B.C.) – the invasion of Alexander the Great.



Chapter 7 - New Questions and Ideas

- **Sangha:** Both Mahavira and Buddha felt that only those who gave up worldly life and became monks could gain true knowledge. They set up organisations called Sanghas where these monks spent much of their time on religious studies and meditation.
- **Monasteries:** Jain and Buddhist monks went from place to place, and therefore, the need for more permanent shelters was felt. As a result, monasteries were built, which were known as Viharas.
- **Four Ashramas:** In Upanishadic times, the life of an upper-caste man was divided into four stages called Ashramas. These were Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya men were expected to lead their lives according to them, but this was not followed rigidly.
- **Teachings of Mahavira:** Mahavira believed that a person's position in life depends on the karma of his previous life. He preached ahimsa. He instructed his followers not to lie, steal or kill. His followers were known as 'Jains', who led simple lives and begged for food.
- **Buddha:** Gautama (Siddhartha), the founder of Buddhism, was born at Lumbini about 2500 years ago. During those days, certain changes took place in the society of the Mahajanapadas. Dissatisfied with such changes, many thinkers gave up worldly life, went to forests for meditation and Buddha sought the true meaning of life.
- **Buddha's Enlightenment:** He left home at the age of 30 and attained enlightenment under a 'peepal tree' at Bodh Gaya in Bihar. Buddha delivered his first sermon at Sarnath. He preached in Prakrit, the language spoken by the common people.
- **Upanishads:** Various thinkers tried to find answers to difficult questions. These thinkers were of the view that there was the atman or the individual soul and the Brahmin or the universal soul. Upanishads give much importance to Brahmin, the universal soul.
- **Jainism:** Jainism was founded by Vardhamana Mahavira of the Vajji Gana-sangha. He left home at the age of 30 and went to live in the forest. For many years, he led a hard and lonely life but finally attained enlightenment.

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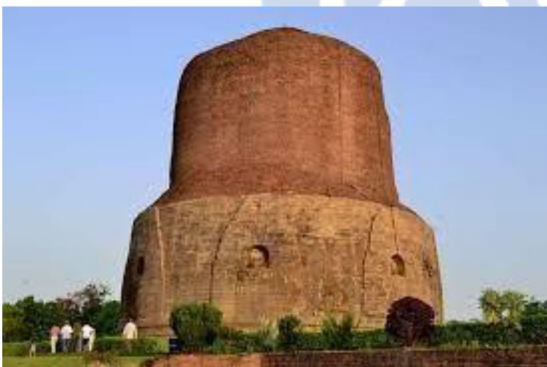
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- Siddhartha (Gautama), who founded Buddhism, was born about, 2500 years ago. He belonged to a 'gana' called the Sakya 'gana'.
- He left his home in search of knowledge. He meditated and got enlightened in Bodh Gaya in Bihar. He preached for the first time in Sarnath. He preached of sufferings and unhappiness in life. He taught in the language of the ordinary people, Prakrit.
- Other thinkers also wanted to know about life after death and about sacrifices. Their ideas were recorded in the Upanishads, part of the later Vedic texts.
- Gargi was a woman thinker. Satyakama Jabala was a slave thinker.
- The founder of Jainism was Vardhamana Mahavira. He was in the Vajji 'sangha'. He also led a life similar to that of Buddha. He said that those who wish to know the truth must leave their homes. He spoke of 'ahimsa'. He taught in Prakrit
- Jainas had to lead very simple lives, begging for food, being honest and men had to shed their clothes. The Jainism teachings were written for the first time about 1500 years ago.
- Rules for the Buddhist 'Sangha' were written down in a book called the Vinaya Pitaka.
- Monks of Buddhism and Jainism started living in monasteries known as 'Viharas'. The earliest 'Viharas' were made of wood and then brick.



Ahimsa: The Jain rule of 'ahimsa' means not hurting or killing living beings. According to Mahavira, each living being "longs to live".

Atman: The individual soul which remains permanent in the universe even after we die was called 'atman' by the thinkers.



Buddhism: The religion founded by the Buddha (Gautama/Siddhartha) was Buddhism.

Jainism: The religion founded by VardhamanaMahavira is called Jainism.

Karma: Our actions have been referred to by Buddha as 'Karma'. Buddha said our 'Karma' – good or bad – affect us both in this life and the next life.

Tanha: The desire for more things have been described by the Buddha as thirst or 'tanha'.

Upanishads: The Upanishads were part of the later Vedic texts. The word literally means 'approaching and sitting near'.

Viharas: The monasteries where monks lives were called 'Viharas'.

Around 2500 years ago (about 500 BC) – Upanishadic thinkers preached. **Around 2500 years ago (about 500 BC)** – Mahavira and the Buddha preached. **Around 1500 years ago (about 500 AD)** – the Jaina texts were written down.

Chapter 8 - Ashoka, The Emperor Who Gave Up War

- **Ashoka, a Unique Ruler:** Ashoka was the first ruler in the history of the world, who gave directions to the people through inscriptions. Most of Ashoka's inscriptions were in Prakrit and were written in Brahmi script.
- **Ashoka's views on Kalinga:** Ashoka tried to conquer Kalinga. However, the violence and bloodshed led him. to decide not to fight any more wars.
- **Ashoka's Dhamma:** These were the set of instructions given by Ashoka to his subjects, which were inspired by Buddha's teachings. He appointed officials and DhammaMahamatta, who taught people about 'dhamma', which was one of the ways to make the society a better one.
- **Capital City:** We come to know about the capital through Megasthenes, who was an ambassador sent to the court of Chandragupta by the Greek ruler of West Asia, SeleucusNicator.



- **Ashoka's Messages to his Subjects:** Ashoka got his messages inscribed on rocks and pillars. He also sent messengers to spread the Dhamma to other lands such as Syria, Egypt, Greece and Sri Lanka.
- **First Empire:** Chandragupta Maurya founded the Mauryan Empire about 2300 years ago. He was supported by Chanakya or Kautilya whose ideas were written down in a book called Arthashastra.
- Chandragupta Maurya founded an empire more than 2300 years ago. His grandson Ashoka ruled the empire later.
- Chandragupta was supported by a wise man called Chanakya or Kautilya who wrote a book Arthashastra.
- Mauryan empire had several important cities like the capital Pataliputra, Taxila, Ujjain, etc.
- The area adjacent to the capital was under the direct control of the emperor. Officials were used to collecting taxes. There were other areas or provinces which had their own provincial capitals. According to Arthashastra, the northwest was important for blankets, and south India for gold and precious stones.
- Most famous of the Mauryan emperors was Ashoka. He sent his message to the general public through inscriptions written in Prakrit (in Brahmi script).
- Ashoka fought a war in the quest to conquer Kalinga (present-day Orissa). But the violence and bloodshed in the war touched him and he became the only king who gave up conquest forever after winning a war.
- Ashoka believed he had a responsibility to instruct his subjects, which he did through his 'DHAMMA'. He was a Buddhist. He appointed officials called as 'DHAMMA MAHAMATTA' who went to places teaching people about 'DHAMMA'. He got his messages inscribed on rocks and pillars as well.
- Ashoka built roads, dug wells, and built rest-houses. He arranged for the treatment of unwell humans and animals.



The Lion Capital



The Rampurwa Bull Brahmi:



- It was a script used to write inscription in Ashoka's time.

Dhamma: Ashoka's ideas which he wanted to use to instruct his subjects were called the 'dhamma'.

DhammaMahamatta: The officials Ashoka sent from place to place to teach the people his 'dhamma' were called 'dhammamahamatta'.



Arthashastra: Chanakya's book 'Arthashastra' contains his ideas. The word means 'economics'.

Around 2300 years ago (about 300 B.C.) – Chandragupta Maurya founded the Maurya empire.

273 B.C. – Ashoka's region began.

232 B.C. – Ashoka's death.

185 B.C. – the end of the Mauryan empire.

Chapter 9 - Vital Villages, Thriving Towns

- **Iron Tools and Agriculture:** Iron came into use around 3000 years ago. About 2500 years ago, the use of iron tools increased. These included axes for clearing forests and expanding land and iron ploughshare in increasing production.
- **Landowners and Labourers:** In the south, large landowners (Vellalar), ploughmen (Ezhava), landless labourers and slaves (kadasiyar and adimai) were amongst the main community members. In the northern parts, the village headman (gramabhojaka) was hereditary, who was the biggest landowner and used to collect taxes for the King.
- **Earliest Tamil Compositions:** Sangam literature was composed 2300 years ago. It was called as Sangao because it was written and compiled in Assemblies known as Sangams of Poets which were held in the city of Madurai.
- **Findings Of Cities:** Jatakas were stories composed by ordinary people, but written and preserved by Buddhist monks. Other kinds of evidence to find out about life in some of the early cities are sculptors' carved scenes depicting people's lives.
- **Cities and Travel Accounts:** Another way of finding out about early cities is from the accounts of sailors and travellers who visited these cities and kingdoms.
- **Coins:** Punch marked coins, which were in use for about 500 years, were called so because the designs were punched on to the metal- silver or copper.



- **Cities and its Functions:** Mathura was important because it was located on the crossroads of two major routes of travel and trade from the North-West to the East and from the North to South. Mathura was also a production centre of fine sculptures.
- **Crafts and Craft persons:** Extremely fine potteries known as the Northern Black Polished ware were produced. There were famous centres such as Varanasi in the North, and Madurai in the South.
- **Arikamedu:** Between 2200 and 1900 years ago, Arikamedu was a coastal settlement where ships unloaded goods from distant lands. A massive brick structure, which may have been a warehouse, was found at the site.
- In the Indian subcontinent, use of iron began about 3000 years ago. It developed more and more 2500 years ago. Axes and the iron ploughshare became popular.
- New tools and the system of transplantation increased production, and irrigation also came into use.
- In the Tamil region, there existed three kinds of people – the large landowners, the ordinary ploughmen and the landless labourers (including slaves).
- In northern India, the village headman, independent farmers, workers, etc. lived in villages.
- Jatakas were stories that were composed presumably by ordinary people and written down and preserved by Buddhist monks.
- These tales give light on the life of people in these times.
- Ring wells (rows of pots or ceramic rings arranged one on top of the other) have been found in several cities. They were probably used as toilets or drains and garbage dumps.
- Accounts of sailors and travellers depict life in early cities. The account of an unknown Greek sailor tells about Bharuch.
- Archaeologists have found several coins belonging to this period. Designs were punched onto the metal to prepare them.
- Mathura, an important settlement for more than 2500 years. It was located at the crossroads of two important travel and trade routes. It became the capital of the Kushanas about 2000 years ago. It was also a religious centre.
- Archaeologists have also found evidence for crafts, like the extremely fine pottery called Northern Black Polished Ware. There were famous cloth centres at Varanasi and Madurai.



Craftspersons and merchants formed associations called 'shrines', that helped them in their work.

- **Between 2200 and 1900 years ago**, Arikamedu was a coastal settlement.

Ring Wells: Rows of pots, or ceramic rings arranged one over the other is known as ring wells.

Sangam' Literature: Ancient Tamil texts that were composed in assemblies called 'Sangams' have been referred to as the 'Sangam' literature.

Shreni': An association of craftspersons and merchants was called 'shreni'. 'Shrenis' provided training, raw material, etc. They also served as banks.

Jatakas: These were stories probably composed by ordinary people and then written down and preserved by Buddhist monks.

About 3000 years ago. (around 1000 B.C.) – beginning of the use of iron in the Indian subcontinent.

2500 years ago (around 500 B.C.) – increase in the use of iron, development of cities and the punch-marked coins.

2300 years ago (around 300 B.C.) – the 'Sangam' literature.

Between 2200 and 1900 years ago between C.100 B.C. and C.100 A.D.) – settlement in Arikamedu (in Puducherry).

Chapter 10 - Traders, Kings and Pilgrims

- **Traders and The Black Gold:** South India was known for its gold, spices, especially pepper and precious stones. South Indian pepper was very popular in the Roman Empire and was known as the Black Gold.
- **Exploring Sea Routes:** In the course of their trading activities, traders explored many sea routes. Other traders reached the western coast of the subcontinent from East Africa or Arabia, sailing during the South-West monsoon.
- **Muvender-Three Chiefs:** The Sangam Literature talks about Muvender, meaning three Chiefs – the Cholas, Cheras, and Pandyas. They were powerful around 2300 years ago.



- **Emergence of the Satavahanas:** The Satavahana dynasty emerged after 200 years and was powerful in Western India. An important ruler of this dynasty was Gautamiputra Shri Satakarni.
- **Silk Route:** Techniques of making silk were first invented in China around 7000 years ago. The Chinese went to distant lands carrying silk with them. The paths they followed came to be known as the Silk Route.
- **Controlling the Silk Route:** Some of the rulers of the earlier times tried to control the Silk Route for collecting taxes, tributes and gifts brought by the traders. The Indian rulers who controlled the Silk Route were the Kushanas.
- **Buddhist Council:** The Kushana ruler Kanishka, who ruled around 1900 years ago organised a Buddhist Council. Ashvaghosha, a poet, composed a biography of the Buddha known as Buddhacharita.
- **Spread of Buddhism:** A new form of Buddhism, 'Mahayana Buddhism' developed and spread throughout Western and Southern India and southeastwards to Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia.
- **Buddhist Pilgrim:** Traders journeyed to distant lands in caravans and ships. With them, pilgrims often travelled. Well-known Chinese Buddhist pilgrims are Fa Xian, XuanZang and I-Qing. They left accounts of their journeys.
- **Beginning of Bhakti:** The word Bhakti (Sanskrit term 'bhaj') means 'to divide or share.' It suggests an intimate, two-way relationship between the deity and the devotee. Bhakti is directed towards Bhagwat.
- **Northern Black Polished** ware was fine pottery which included bowls and plates. They were carried by the traders from the places where they were made and were sold at other places.
- South India was famous for gold, spices, especially pepper and precious stones. Pepper was in great demand in the Roman empire. It was valued as black gold there. Traders carried these goods to Rome in ships and in caravans.
- Traders discovered several sea routes. They took advantage of the monsoon winds to make their journeys quick, easy and comfortable.



- New Kingdoms developed along the coasts of the southern half of the sub-continent. The Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas became powerful in south India around 2300 years ago.
- Puhar or Kaveripattinam, the port of the Cholas and Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas were two important cities.
- Chiefs of the three ruling families demanded and received gifts from the people. They also collected tribute from neighbouring areas. They kept some of the wealth and distributed the rest amongst their supports.
- Around 200 years later the Satavahanas gained power in western India. Gautamiputra Shri Satakarni was the most important ruler of the Satavahanas.
- China invented the technology of making silk around 7000 years ago. While the methods were kept a secret for many years, some people from China who went to distant lands carried silk with them. The paths they followed came to be known as the Silk Route.
- Knowledge of silk spread far and wide. Rulers and rich people in Rome began to wear silk.
- Kushanas rulers controlled the Silk Route. They ruled over central Asia and north-west India around 2000 years ago. Their two major centres of power were Peshawar and Mathura. They also ruled Taxila.
- Credit of the spread of Buddhism goes to Kanishka, a Kushan ruler. He organized a Buddhist council where scholars met to discuss various matters.
- A new form of Buddhism, i.e. Mahayana Buddhism developed. Now Statues of the Buddha were made.
- Bodhisattvas were supposed to be people who had attained enlightenment.
- Buddhism spread throughout Central Asia, China and later to Korea and Japan. It spread to western and southern India too. It also spread to Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, etc.
- Along with travellers pilgrims also travelled. The Chinese Buddhist pilgrims such as FaXian, XuanZang and I-Qing became very popular.
- Worship to Shiva, Vishnu and goddesses like Durga became popular with Hinduism. These deities were worshipped through Bhakti, which means a person's devotion to his or



her chosen deity. No one was barred from following the path of Bhakti.

Muvendar: It is a Tamil word meaning three chiefs, used for the heads of three ruling families, the Cholas, Choras and Pandyas.

Dakshina path: Literally it means the route leading to the south.

Silk Route: The paths through which the traders carried silk are known as silk routes.

Bodhisattvas: These were supposed to be persons who had attained enlightenment.

Bhakti: It means a person's devotion to his/her chosen deity.

Pilgrim: Man and woman who undertake journeys to some sacred places to offer prayers. Around 2300 years ago – the Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas became powerful in south India. Around 2500 years ago – the Satavahanas became powerful in western India.

Around 7000 years ago – techniques of making silk were first invented in China.

About 2000 years ago – wearing silk became a fashion among rulers and wealthy people in Rome.

Around 1900 years ago – Kanishka, the most famous Krishna ruler ruled.

About 1600 years ago – Fa Xian, a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim came to the subcontinent.

Around 1400 years ago – XuanZang, another Chinese Buddhist pilgrim came.

Chapter 11 - New Empires and Kingdoms

- **Mamallapuram:** Mamallapuram is known for its monolithic temples of the Pallavas.
- **Harshacharita:** In the early seventh century, Harshavardhan became the ruler of Thanesar. Information about Harsha's reign is also available in Harsha's biography Harshacharita, written by Banabhatta. The Chinese pilgrim XuanZang spent a lot of time in the court of Harsha.



- **Rulers in South India:** After the decline of the Satavahanas, there arose smaller kingdoms in the South. Of these, the Chalukyas and the Pallavas were the important ones.
- **Prashasti of Samudragupta:** Samudragupta was a famous ruler of the Gupta dynasty. Allahabad pillar inscription is a Prashasti on Samudragupta's military achievements. The poem was composed in Sanskrit by the Court Poet, Harishena. The poet praised the King as a warrior and equal to God.
- **Prashastis and Different Rulers:** The Prashasti described four different kinds of rulers and Samudragupta's policies towards them. These are :
 - The rulers of Aryavarta.
 - The rulers of Dakshinapatha.
 - Neighbouring states like Assam, Coastal Bengal and Nepal.
 - States ruled by the descendants of the Kushanas.
- **Prashastis:** Prashasti is a Sanskrit word, meaning 'in praise of'. Prashastis are long inscriptions, written in praise of the kings. From the time of the Guptas, Prashastis became very important.
- **Chalukyas:** The Chalukya kingdom was centred at the Raichur Doab. The Raichur Doab is located between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra. Their capital was at Vatapi. Pulakeshin II was a famous king of this dynasty. We know about him from a poem composed by his court poet Ravikirti.
- **Pallavas:** The kingdom of the Pallavas was in the far South. They ruled between the mid 6th to the 8th century. The capital of the Pallavas was Kanchipuram, around the Kaveri delta in present Tamil Nadu.
- **Fa Xian:** Fa Xian was a Chinese pilgrim. He visited India and Sri Lanka. He is the most known for his pilgrimage to Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha.
- A Prashasti is a Sanskrit word which means 'in praise of. Although composition of prashastis was not a new thing, it became popular only from the time of the Guptas.
- In Samudragupta's prashasti the poet described the king as equal to the gods.
- Most prashastis also mention the ancestors of the ruler. For example, there is one prashasti that mentions Samudragupta's great grandfather, grandfather, father and mother.



- Chandragupta, Samudragupta's father, was the first ruler of the Gupta dynasty who adopted the grand title of maharaj-adhiraj. This title was also used by Samudragupta.
- Harshavardhana ruled Thanesar about 1400 years ago. He also began to rule over Kanauj after this brother-in-law was killed.
- At the beginning of his rule, he remained successful but finally, his success did not last long. The Pallavas and Chalukyas were important ruling dynasties in South India.
- Pulakeshin II was the famous Chalukya ruler. His court poet Ravikirti composed poems in his praise. It was Pulakeshin II who checked the advance of Harsha.
- Land revenue remained important for the rulers.
- A new kind of army developed. Kings maintained a well-organised army with elephants, chariots, cavalry and foot-soldiers along with military leaders.
- Local assemblies which included the Sabha (an assembly of brahmin landowners) were there. Ur was a village assembly that existed in areas where the landowners were not brahmins. Nagaram was an organisation of merchants.
- The condition of ordinary people was not good. Untouchables were not treated well.

Dakshinapatha: It literally means the route leading to the south. The term also referred to the entire southern region.

Genealogy: It means a list of ancestors.

Kumar-amatya: It referred to an important minister.

Maha-danda-nayaka: It referred to the chief judicial officer.

Nagara-shreshthi: It was the term used for the chief banker or merchant of the city.

Prashasti: It is a Sanskrit word which means 'in praise of'. The court poets used to praise their rulers in glowing terms.

Prathama-kulika: It was referred to the chief craftsman.

Sandhi-Vigraha: It meant a minister of war and peace.

Sarbhavaha: The term used for the leader of the merchant caravans.

Ur: It was a village assembly.

About 1700 years ago – beginning of the Gupta dynasty.



About 1400 years ago – the rule of Harshavardhana.

Chapter 12 - Buildings, Paintings and Books

- **Writing Books:** During this period, epics were composed and compiled. Epics are grand and long compositions about the heroic men, women and God.
- **Building Temples:** During this period, many temples for deities such as Vishnu, Shiva and Durga were built.
- **Iron Pillar in Delhi:** The Iron pillar at Mehrauli in Delhi is the best example of the skill of Indian craftspersons. It is 1500 years old. Till today, the iron pillar has not rusted.
- **Paintings:** Ajanta is a famous place for several caves and monasteries with paintings. Paintings were drawn inside caves in the light of torches. All paintings are 1500 years old and the artists are unknown.
- **Silappadikaram:** A poet Ilango composed the Silappadikaram, a Tamil epic, around 1800 years ago. The Silappadikaram is about the story of a merchant and his wife, Kannagi. This epic mentions about the incident that happened in Madurai.
- **Writings of Kalidasa:** During this period, Kalidasa contributed a lot to Sanskrit literature. Malavikagnimitra, AbhigyanShakuntalam, Vikramorvasiya, Raghuvansham and Kumarasambhava were some of the popular works of Kalidasa.
- **Writing Puranas:** Purana means 'old'. Many Puranas such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana were written during this period. The Puranas contain stories about Gods and goddesses such as Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, Parvati.
- **Stupa:** Stupa means 'mound'. The common features of the stupa are round, tall, big and small. At the centre of a stupa, there is a small box known as a relic casket, which contains bodily remains such as teeth, bone and ashes.
- **Books on Science:** During this period, Aryabhatta, a mathematician and an astronomer, wrote a book of science, "Aryabhatiyam". He also developed a scientific explanation for eclipses. Zero was invented in India during this period only.



- **Madurai:** Madurai is one of the cities in Tamil Nadu known for its temples. In this city, Tamil Sangam (Assembly) emerged and contributed for the development of Tamil literature and it was the first Sangam assembly in the sequence of the three Sangams.
- **The Great Stupa:** It is located at Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh. It dates back to the period of Ashoka and is the best architectural evidence for Buddhist history.
- **Monolithic Temples:** Monolithic Temples are the temples that were carved out of a huge single rock. These temples can be seen in Mahabalipuram near Chennai city in Tamil Nadu.
- **The famous Iron Pillar** at Mehrauli in Delhi is a remarkable example of the skill and art of the Indian crafts people.
- Pillar was made about 1500 years ago.
- Buildings such as stupas and temples also show the skill of country's crafts persons. These buildings were made of brick and stone.
- Great stupa at Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, was built over several centuries. Amaravati was also a place where a magnificent stupa once existed.
- Some finest stone temples were built in towns like Mahabalipuram and Aihole.
- Building stupas and temples was an expensive affair. Therefore, only Kings and queens decided to build them. They spent money from their treasury to pay the crafts people who worked to build these splendid buildings.
- Paintings of Ajanta are world famous. This is a place where several caves were hollowed out of the hills over centuries. Most of these were monasteries and some of them were decorated with paintings.
- Some best-known epics were written during this period. For example – the Silappadikaram and the Manimekalai. These were Tamil epics written by Ilango and Sattanar respectively.
- Writers like Kalidasa wrote in Sanskrit. His best-known poem is the Meghaduta.
- Puranas which contained religious stories were also written during this time. These were written in simple Sanskrit verse and were meant to be heard by everybody including women and shudras.



Notes

- Mahabharata and Ramayana, famous epics in Sanskrit had been popular for a long time.
- Mahabharata is about a war fought between the Kauravas and Pandavas, who were cousins.
- Ramayana is about Rama, who was the prince of Kosala but was sent into exile for fourteen years.
- Jatakas were collections of stories which were told by ordinary people.
- Books on science were also written during this period. Aryabhatta, a mathematician and astronomer wrote a book in Sanskrit called Aryabhatiyam. He stated that day and night were caused by the rotation of the earth on its axis. He also developed a scientific explanation for eclipses.

Epic: It is a grand, long composition about heroic men and women and includes stories about gods.

Garbhagriha: It was an important part of the temple where the image of the chief deity was placed.

Jatakas: These were stories told by common people.

Mandapa: It was a hall like structure built in the temple for the people to assemble.

Painting: It is an art of laying on colours.

Purana: It literary means old. The Puranas contained stories about Hindu gods and goddesses.

Stupa: It is a word that means a mound. Temple: It is a religious place for the Hindus. Shikhara: It refers to the tower of a temple. 2300 years ago – Beginning of Stupa building 2000 years ago – Amaravati

1600 years ago – Kalidasa

1500 years ago – Iron pillar, Temple at Bhitragan, Paintings of Ajanta and Aryabhatta

1400 years ago – Durga Temple

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