

# Lesson 6

## POST MAURYAN DEVELOPMENTS

### Summary

In around 187 BC, the Mauryan Empire met its end. This led to the rise of many regional kingdoms in different parts of the country. At the same time, we witness invasions by various groups of people based in Central Asia and western China. It was through such political processes that India came in closer contact with the central Asian politics and culture. In this lesson you will read about the developments that took place after the decline of the Mauryan and the introduction of new features in art, architecture and religion.

**Political History of North India-** The disintegration of the Mauryan empire led to the rise of many regional kingdoms in different parts of the country.

- At the same time, we witness invasions by various groups of people based in Central Asia and western China.
- These were Indo-Greeks, the Scythians or the Shakas, the Parthians or the Pahlavas and the Kushanas.

### The Kushanas-

- originally belonged to western China.
- They are also called Yueh-chis.

- The first prominent ruler of the Kushana dynasty was Kujula Kadphises
- He was succeeded by his son Wema Kadphises

- Kanishka was the most famous of the Kushanas
- Started a new era, now known as the Shaka era.

- Kanishka is a great patron of Buddhism
- In the Fourth Buddhist Council, Buddhism got split into two schools – Hinayana and Mahayana.

- Kanishka also patronized the Gandhara and Mathura schools of sculptural art

- Kanishka built in the city of Purushapura a giant *stupa* to house the Buddha's relics.

### Kushana Polity and Administration

- The whole empire was divided into provinces, each ruled by a mahakshatrapa who was assisted by a kshatrapa.
- A prominent feature of Kushana polity was the title of *devaputra*, i.e., son of God, used by the Kushana kings.

- It indicates the claim to divinity by the Kushana kings.

### Contribution of the Kushanas

Charaka, known as father of Ayurveda, wrote a book on medicine called *Charaksamhita*

Asvaghosha a Buddhist scholar, wrote *Buddhacharita*.

### EMERGENCE OF EARLY STATES IN ORISSA AND THE DECCAN

#### Kalinga

- After Ashoka, Kalinga became prominent under the kings of Chedi dynasty.
- Kharavela achievements are recorded on an inscription, known as Hathigumpha inscription.
- The inscription tells us that he was a follower of Jainism

## THE SATAVAHANAS

- Gautamiputra Satakarni (first century AD) is considered to be the greatest of the Satavahana rulers.
- capital at Pratishthana near Aurangabad in Maharashtra.
- Satavahanas kings were succeeded by the Kings of Ikshvaku dynasty

### Satavahana Polity and Administration

- kingdom was divided into subdivisions called *aharas* or *rashtras*
- lowest level of administration was a *grama*
- Amatyas -perhaps ministers or advisors of the
- Revenue was collected both in cash and kind
- Satavahanas kings were the first in Indian history to make tax free land grants to Buddhists and Brahmanas to gain religious merit

## TRADE AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

### Internal and External Trade Routes

- There were two major internal land routes in ancient India- Uttarapatha and Dakshinapatha.
- After the discovery of monsoons by Hippatus a Greek navigator in 45 AD, more and more sea voyages were used for trading purposes.
- Important ports of India on the western coast were (from north to south direction) Bharukachchha Sopara, Kalyana, Muziris, etc.
- Ships from these ports sailed to the Roman Empire through the Red Sea.
- Prominent ports on the eastern coast of India were Tamralipti (West Bengal), Arikamedu (Tamil Nadu Coast) etc.
- Sea trade was also conducted between Bharukachchha and the ports of Southeast Asia.

## Trade with West and Central Asia

- Thriving trade between India and the West
- Account of Indo-Roman trade is given in the book called *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*

- Romans exported gold and silver to India
- Imported several precious and semiprecious stones

- Spices, perfumes, jewels, ivory and fine textiles, i.e., muslin were the main requirement of the Romans.

### Crafts and Industries

- *Milindapanho* mentions 75 occupations of which 60 were associated with crafts.
- Ujjain was a prominent bead making centre.
- Mathura and Vanga (east Bengal) were famous for variety of cotton and silk textiles.
- Dying was a thriving craft in South India during this period

### Guilds

- The communities of merchants were organised in groups known as Shreni or guilds under the head called *sreshthi*.
- *Sartha* which signified mobile or caravan trading corporation of interregional traders.
- The leader of such a guild was called *sarthavaha*
- All craft vocations were also organized into guilds, each under a headman called *Jyestha*.
- These included weavers, corn dealers, bamboo workers, oil manufacturers, potters etc.
- They also served as banks and received deposits from the public on a fixed rate of interest.

## ART AND ARCHITECTURE

### Stupas

- Three prominent *stupas* of this period are at Bharhut and Sanchi (both in M.P), which were originally built by Ashoka but enlarged later, and Amravati and Nagarjunkonda.
- The sculptures on stupas are drawn on the themes based on Jataka and other Buddhist stories.

### Rock Cut Architecture

- The place of worship was known as a chaitya and residence for monks was called a *vihara*.

### Schools of Sculptural Art

#### The Mathura School:

Images of Buddha were carved for the first time perhaps in this art form.

use of local red stone with black spots

#### The Gandhara School of Art:

- use of blue-grey schist stone
- beautiful portrayal of human figures
- Buddha is depicted with a garment draped in Graeco-Roman fashion, and with very curly hair.

#### The Amravati School of Art:

narrative art

use of white marble like stone

## EARLY HISTORY OF SOUTH INDIA

### The Megalithic Cultures of South India

- Megaliths were tomb spots consisting of burials or graves covered with huge (mega) stones.
- Megalith burials have yielded the first iron objects from south India.
- Use of Black and Red ware pottery was also a distinctive feature of the Megalithic people.

- Megalithic people followed for their livelihood agro-pastoral and hunting activities.

### The Sangam Age-

- The term Sangam refers to an assembly or "meeting together" of Tamil poets.
- All the three Sangams took place under the patronage of the Pandya kings of Madurai.
- Love and war was the two broader themes of poem.
- Women in the Sangam period appear to have been educated
- Practice of Sati was also prevalent

### Evaluate Yourself

Q. Differentiate between Gandhara and Mathura Art School.

Q. Describe the condition of women during the Sangam age.

Q. Explain the structural features of the Sanchi Stupa.