

HISTORY: CLASS-6: SUMMARY

CHAPTER 6 - India after the Mauryas

Points of Discussion

- The Satavahanas
- Buddhist monuments
- South India (the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Cheras)
- Sangam literature
- Life of the people
- Religion
- North India (the Indo-Greeks, the Shakas, the Kushanas)
- Art
- Religion

A. The Deccan

- India, south of the Vindhya mountains and the Narmada river – Dakshinapatha, now called -the Deccan
- South of the Deccan is the land of the Dravids or Tamils. From ancient times, these lands were the homes of the Indian peoples of non-Aryan origin.
- Annexed by Mauryans, they were later freed when the mighty empire collapsed.

The Satavahanas –

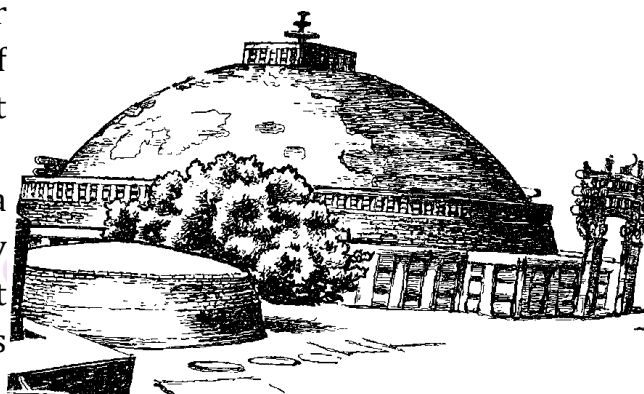
1. The best known was the Satavahana family or Andhras
2. Great ruler- Satakarni who was a conquerer and was described as “The Lord of the West”.
3. Gautamiputra Satakarni- Shakas attacked them and pushed them out of Nasik into Andhra but he defeated the shakas and regained western Deccan.
4. The kingdom acted as a bridge between North India and South India.



5. Port of Broach was used by ships coming from Persia, Iraq and Arabia.
6. The ports in the Godavari delta lay along the sea-route from the Ganga delta to South India.
7. Ships sailed from these ports to Burma and Malaya.
8. The Satavahana kingdom was prosperous. It was well administered.
9. The state was divided into provinces ruled by civil and military governors.
10. The headman of each village was responsible for collecting the revenue or tax.

2. Buddhist Monuments

- Stupas were large semi-circular mounds, in which, the relics of either the Buddha or Buddhist monks were placed.
- The stupa at Amaravati (in Andhra Pradesh), and railing and gateway round of Sanchi stupa are built with money given by merchants and princes.
- Near the stupas were the viharas, or monasteries, where the monks lived.
- Some monks lived in Monasteries which were huge caves (decorated with sculptures) cut into the hills, such as those at Karle and Bedsa (in the Western Ghats near Poona). Religious art at this time was mainly Buddhist with some Jaina sculptures.



The stupa at Sanchi

3. Religion

- Buddhism was very popular- Debates and discussions were held and monks were sent out to teach.
- Ashvaghosha and Nagarjuna helped in spreading of Buddhism by their writings.
- New gods were now worshipped and the cults of Vishnu and Shiva were acquiring support.
- Devotion to God became more important than religious ceremonies. Sacrifices, rites, etc., were not so frequent.



B. SOUTH INDIA

1. The Cholas, Pandyas and Cheras-

- South of the Deccan Plateau and south of the Satavahana kingdom, three kingdoms arose.
- These were the Cholas (whose centre was in the area of Tanjore, south of Madras), the Pandyas (whose centre was at Madurai), and the Keralas or Cheras (along the Malabar coast, now part of Kerala).
- The region of Tanjore came to be called Tamilnad or the land of the Tamils because the Tamil language was spoken there.
- Knowledge of these three South Indian kingdoms is based on Sangam literature.

2. Sangam Literature

- Three assemblies were held at the town of Madurai.
- All the poets and bards and wandering minstrels of the south gathered together and composed poems.
- The gods came to the first of these gatherings.
- But the poems composed at this gathering are now lost.
- At the second gathering, two thousand poems were collected into eight books.
- These poems resemble the hymns of the Vedas but they are not all religious poems.
- They are written in Tamil.
- These poems describe the life of the chiefs and of the common people.
- The 3 kingdoms seem to have been at war with one another as there are many poems describing these wars.

3. The Roman Trade

- The Malabar coast and the east coast of Tamil Nadu were visited by Roman ships in search of trade.
- Spices, textiles, precious stones, peacock, and monkey were taken by Romans and paid for them in gold.
- Arikamedu (close to Pondicherry) has been excavated and many Roman objects were found.

4. Life of the People



- The kingdom was ruled by a king who was assisted by brahman advisers.
 - There was also a general assembly of all the chiefs known as the Sabha where various matters were discussed.
 - The king collected taxes from peasants, herdsmen, craftsmen, and merchants.
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- Musical instruments of various kinds - pipes, flutes, string instruments and drums
 - There was special music for the different hours of the day and night.

5. Religion

- Murugan, known as Kartikeya or Skanda in the north, was the best-loved god of the Tamil people.
- Jainism and Buddhism were known, but they preferred older gods.

C. NORTH INDIA

- In the north, a large number of foreigners came between 100 B.C. and 100 A.D.
- These were Bactrian Greeks, Parthians, Shakas and Kushanas.
- With the exception of the Greeks, all the others came from Central Asia.

1. The Indo-Greeks

- They ruled in Iran, Afghanistan- western Asia; Indo Greeks also ruled in the province of Gandhara.
- They minted many coins, and thus, it is possible to put together the history of this period.
- Some of them became Buddhists, such as King Menander. Others worshipped Vishnu.
- So, there was a mixture of Indian and Greek cultures.

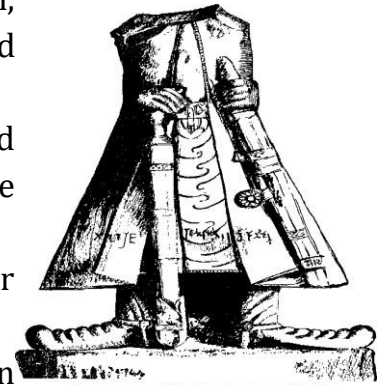
2. The Shakas

- They finally settled down in Kathiawar and Malwa.
- Rudradaman, the best-known kings, stopped the expansion of Satavahana power to the north of the Narmada.

3. The Kushanas



- The original home was in Chinese Turkistan, arrived in Afghanistan in the first century A.D. and displaced the Indo-Greeks.
- Then, they established themselves at Taxila and Peshawar. Mathura was an important centre in the southern part of their kingdom.
- The kingdom was divided into satrapies or provinces ruled by governors.
- Kanishka made the kingdom strong in northern India.
- They came into conflict with the Chinese armies of the Hun empire in Central Asia.
- They supported Buddhism. During his reign, the Fourth Buddhist Council was held.



A broken statue of Kanishka found near Mathura

4. Exchange of Ideas

- As several new ideas on religion, the arts and the sciences entered into various aspects of Indian life, and a number of changes took place.
- India came into closer contact with Iran and western Asia.
- Trade increased and Indian goods were taken to the towns and ports of the Mediterranean Sea.
- Indian trade with the port of Alexandria (at the mouth of the river Nile in Egypt) improved despite the great distance.
- Because of this trade, towns like Taxila, Mathura and Ujjayini became even more important.

5. Art

- Contact with western Asia brought Greek sculpture to the cities of northern India.
- These were images of the Greek and Roman gods and of the people of the Mediterranean.
- Their statues of the Buddha and other scenes from the Buddha's life resembled the Greek style, and this type of art came to be called Gandhara art.



Head of the Buddha, sculptured in the Gandhara style



- Mathura produced a style which did not imitate the Greek, although the images were Buddhist. This is called the Mathura school of art.

6. Religion

- Images of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, whom Buddhists respected. The Bodhisattvas were holy persons who had lived on earth before the Buddha. There are many stories about them in Jataka tales.
- Buddhism got divided into two sects- Mahayana and Hinayana.
- Mahayana was a sect with many rites and ceremonies, and worship of saints. Its monks were powerful.
- However, there were still people in other parts of India who did not accept this type of Buddhism. They were called Hinayana Buddhists.
- The Mahayana Buddhists sent missionaries to China. Soon Buddhism spread throughout Central Asia and China.
- Indian astronomers compared their knowledge with Greek knowledge, and the study of the stars progressed in India.
- Medical knowledge also improved as the works of Sushruta and Charaka show that considerable achievements were made in the field of surgery

