



**Centre for Distance and Online  
Education, Punjabi University, Patiala.**

**Class: B.A.I (History)**  
**HISTORY OF INDIA UPTO 1000 A.D.**  
**Unit:I**

**Semester : I**  
**Medium: English**

***Lesson No.***

- 1.1 Geographical Features of Ancient India and their impact on Indian History
- 1.2 Major Sources of History
- 1.3 The Indus Valley Civilization, Origin, Age and Causes of Decline
- 1.4 Rig Vedic Civilization : Original home of the Aryans their Social, Political, Economic and Religious Life
- 1.5 Later Vedic Civilization : Political, Economic and Religion Life
- 1.6 Jainism : Mahavira - his Life, Teachings' and its Impact on India.
- 1.7 Buddhism : Mahatma Buddha, Main Teachings' and their impact

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PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA  
( RUSA SCHEME 2014)

**HISTORY**

**B.A. PART-I SEMESTER-I (2023-24)**

**PAPER-I: HISTORY OF INDIA UPTO 1000 A.D.**

FOR REGULAR STUDENTS OF AFFILIATED AND CONSTITUENT COLLEGES AND  
CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION STUDENTS

**For Regular Students**, lectures to be delivered: 9 Periods per week, 6 period's theory and 3 periods  
tutorials (45 minutes each)

Max.Marks:100

Internal Assessment: 30 Marks

External Assessment: 70 Marks

Maximum Marks: 100

Time allowed: 3 hours

Pass Marks: 35

Combined for internal and external

Teaching Hours (For Regular

Students): 55

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PAPER SETTER/EXAMINER**

**For Regular Students of affiliated and Constituent Colleges and center for Distance and  
online Education Students**

**NOTE:** The paper setter should keep in view the topics specified in each paper and not the title of the  
paper. Candidates are required to attempt two questions each from the sections A, B and the entire  
Section C.

1. The syllabus prescribed should be strictly adhered to. The paper-setters should keep  
in view the topics specified in each paper. Map questions can be asked in  
section A & B.
2. The question paper will consist of three sections: A, B, and C. Sections A and B will  
have four questions from the respective sections of the syllabus and will carry 12  
marks each and the candidates will attempt two questions from each section.
3. Section C which is compulsory, it will consist of 11 short-answer type questions of  
2marks each which will cover the entire syllabus So it will carry 22 marks in all. The  
candidates are required to attempt all the 11 short answer type questions. The  
answers to each of these questions will be of 20-25 words
4. If there is a question on notes, the choice offered in such a question should at least  
be fifty percent.
5. The wording of the questions should be simple and easily understandable by an  
average student. There should be no vagueness.
6. The number of questions based upon quotations should not exceed two in a  
question paper.
7. The general standard of the questions should cater to the different intellectual level  
average, above average and below average.
8. Each paper is of 70 marks and of three hours' duration and 30 marks of internal  
assessment.

**ONLY FOR BLIND CANDIDATES:** In lieu of Map question the blind candidates will attempt the short  
answer type questions. The short answer type questions will be set from the entire syllabus. These  
questions will be based upon terms, concepts, institutions and historical sources within the purview of

the syllabus. Out of four, the blind candidates will attempt any two short answer type questions. Internal choice will be given. The answer to each of these questions will be 50-60 words and will carry 5-1/2 (five and half marks each). Thus the total marks of these question will be 11.

#### For Private Students

The question paper will consist of three sections: A, B, and C. Section A and B will have four questions each which will carry 15 marks each. Section C which is compulsory will consist of two parts: first part of section C will consist of 8 short answer type questions of 24 marks from the entire syllabus. The candidates are required to attempt all short answer type questions. The answer to each of these questions will be of 30-40 words and will carry 3 marks each. Second part of section C will contain a question on map, internal choice will be offered on Map question. The Maps are specified in Section C. The Map question will carry 16 marks out of which 10 marks are for filling the map and 6 marks for explanatory note

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES

Candidates are required to attempt two questions each from the sections A, and B of the question paper and the entire Section C. The candidate is required to give answer of each short answer type question in 30-40 words i.e. in 7-10 lines.

##### SECTION - A

1. Geographical features of India and their impact on ancient Indian history; Major Sources.
2. The Harappan Civilization: Origin, Date; Extent, main features and the causes of its decline.
3. Rig Vedic Civilization: Original home of the Aryans; their social, political, economic and religious life.
4. Later Vedic Civilization: political, social and religious life.
5. Socio-Religious Reform Movements: life of Mahavir and Mahatma Buddha, Main teachings and their impact. Map of Important Sites Connected with Buddha and Mahavir.

##### SECTION-B

6. The Age of the Mauryas: Establishment and expansion of the Empire under Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka, Polity and Administration, Ashoka's Dharma, Ashoka's achievements and his place in history, Decline of the Mauryan Empire. Map of the Mauryan Empire under Ashoka (about 250 B.C.)
7. The Gupta Age: Establishment of the Gupta Empire, its expansion under Samundragupta and Chandragupta -II, Decline of Gupta Empire, Map of the Gupta Empire
8. The Age of Vardhanas: Establishment of the Vardhana Kingdom, Harsha's campaigns and political relations, Literature and Education, Map of The Empire of Harsha (647 A.D.)
9. Dynasties in the South: Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas and Cholas.
10. The Rajputs: origin of the Rajputs and Administration.

##### SECTION-C (COMPULSORY)

Part-I : 10 Short-Answer type Questions.

*Signature*  
Principal, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Mumbai

**For Regular and Distance Education Students:** Ten short answer type questions will be set from the entire syllabus. The candidates will attempt 11 questions. The answer to each of these question will be of 30-40 words and will carry 2 marks each. Thus the total marks of these questions will be 22.

**Part-II:** The paper-setter will set one question on map out of the 4 maps mentioned below. There will be internal choice. The outline map will be provided. The map question will carry 11 marks, 7 marks for filling the map and 4 marks for the explanatory note.

**For Private Students:** Ten short answer type questions will be set from the entire syllabus. The candidates will attempt 8 questions. The answer to each of these question will be of 25-30 words and will carry 3 marks each. Thus the total marks of these questions will be 22.

**MAPS:**

- a) Important sites connected with Buddha and Mahavira
- b) The Mauryan Empire under Ashoka (about 250 B.C.)
- c) The Gupta Empire
- d) The Empire of Harsha (647 A.D.)

**Essential Reading:**

Romila Thapar : History of Early India From the Origin to AD 1300

R.S. Sharma : India's Ancient Past

D.N. Jha : Early India : A concise History

V.C. Pandey : Political and Cultural History of India

R.N. Meekerji: Ancient India

A.L. Basham : The Wonder that was India.

Davies C.C: An Historical Atlas of Indian Peninsula

A.C. Arora & R.S. Arora : Historical Atlas of Ancient India

ਡੀ. ਡੀ. ਕੋਸ਼ਿਭੀ : ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਭਿਅਤਾ (ਰਘਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਅਨੁਵਾਦਕ )

ਰੋਮਿਲਾ ਥਾਪਰ : ਅਸ਼ੋਕ ਅਤੇ ਮੌਰੀਆ ਦਾ ਪਤਨ (ਸੁਜਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਪੰਨੂ, ਅਨੁਵਾਦਕ )

ਦਿਵਸੇਂਦਰ ਨਰਾਇਣ ਝਾਅ : ਉਤੱਰ ਮੌਰੀਆ ਤੇ ਗੁਪਤਾ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ

R.S. Tripathi : Prachin Bharat Ka Itihas (Punjabi and Hindi)

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**LESSON NO. 1.1**

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**GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF INDIA AND THEIR IMPACT OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY**

- 1.1.1 Objectives
- 1.1.2 Introduction
- 1.1.3 The Physical features of India
- 1.1.4 Impact on Political Life
- 1.1.5 Effect on Social Life
- 1.1.6 Effect on Economic Life
- 1.1.7 Effect on Religious Life
- 1.1.8 Effect on Cultural Life
- 1.1.9 Summary
- 1.1.10 Keywords
- 1.1.11 Long Questions
- 1.1.12 Short Questions
- 1.1.13 Suggested Readings

**1.1.1 Objectives**

The main objectives of this lesson are:

1. Identification of physical features of Indian living
2. To revive the relationship between geographical features and development of civilization.
3. To identify the merits of Indian's unity, vastness and liberalism.

**1.1.2 Introduction**

The word 'Ancient' means in time long past. The study of 'Ancient' history of India is generally taken as the one before the Muslims invaded and settled in India. R.C. Majumdar has divided the ancient period of Indian history into three broad divisions. These are (1) From the Earliest times to 600 B.C. (2) From 600

B.C. to 300 A.D. (3) From 300 A.D. to 1200 A.D. This division not only follows the natural course of cultural development in ancient India (Vedic culture, Buddhism, Jainism, Neo-Brahmanism) but also facilitates chronological treatment of broad cultural topics which do not admit of being dated within narrow limits of time.

India for the purpose of Ancient history denotes a vast sub Continent in Asia. It is a peninsula lying between the Himalayas and Cape Comorin and stretching as far as Baluchistan on the West and Burma on the East. On the North, it is separated from the rest of Asia by vast mountain ranges. These

mountains ranges have their off-shoots extending along the whole of that boundary to the north east and the north-west. On the south, it is 'girdled' by an extensive sea- board of 3400 miles. Isolated thus by land and by sea, the country forms a distinct territorial unit.

India is often regarded as a separate world, which has remained apart from the general current of civilization. This is due to the fact that it is a peninsula cut off from the continent of Asia by the mightiest chain of mountains in the world. However, no country has been more frequently invaded and occupied by foreigners, and on the other hand, with the exception of civilization of Islam and Europe, no civilization had spread abroad more widely than that of India. In fact, it is most characteristic of Indian history that in spite of geography, the country has not been isolated by the mountains and the ocean. Thus the total isolation of the Indian world is a myth. In fact, ancient India was well advanced from cultural point of view. Foreigners often used to come to India to seek knowledge in different arts and education. Indian rulers had established their colonies in the Far east viz. Burma, Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, Combodia, Bali, Champa Bameo etc. Hence for a time India was termed as 'Greater India'. With its fertile plains and being deposits of gold, silver, diamonds and other mineral wealth, India was a rich land. It was during ancient India that it has all round development in science, religion, art, education, literature and trade. Peace and prosperity reigned here.

Certain outstanding facts of the physical geography of India have always exerted a direct and far-reaching influence on the course of its history. Hence these features must be clearly understood before we begin the study of the subject.

The physical features of India are most varied in character. The country can however geographically be divided into following well marked regions :

- (i) The Himalayas
- (ii) The Great plains of Northern India
- (iii) The Deccan Plateau
- (iv) The coastal Plains.
- (v) The Vast Ocean

The most prominent feature of the physical geography of India is the great Himalayas or 'the abode of Snow'. These mountains are stretched over whole of the Northern frontier of the country, running closely parallel to each other, for some 1500 miles long and 150 to 200 miles in breadth. These mountain ranges have some lofty peaks which serve as jealous sentinels of India's northern plain- lands. The highest peak of the Himalayas, Mount Everest is 29140 feet followed by Kanchan Junga 28, 176 feet, Dhaulgiri 26,826 feet, Naga Parbat 26,620 feet, Nanda Devi 25,661 feet. In the

Himalayas; there are 74 peaks over 24000, 48 peaks over 25000', 5 peaks over 27000', and 3 peaks over 28000'. These peaks are among the highest in the world. In recent history, adventurers from all over the world take pride in scaling these peaks.

**(I) Passes :**

In the North-west there are several passes viz. Khyber, Gomal, Tochi and Bolan. The Khyber Pass which is 3400 feet above the sea level, connect Peshawar with Kabul. The Bolan Pass which is very wide one, connects India with Kandhar. Tochi, Gomal and Kurram passes also connect India with Afghanistan. These passes have always been the route followed by invaders to enter this country. There are a few passes on the North-East too but being higher and over-grown thick forest they have remained hazards to any influx of the foreigners from that side in India. The North-Eastern chain of mountains also contains a remarkable gap through which the Brahmaputra enters India.

**(II) The Northern Plains :**

The great Northern Indian plains stretch from the foot of the Himalayas down to the Vindhya ranges and from the Baluchistan in the west to Burma in the East.

Irrigated by the Ganges and Indus system of rivers, the Northern plains of India are famous for their rich soil and fertility. The Valleys of the Indus and the Ganges with their tributaries may conveniently be divided into three parts : (i) The Punjab, from the Indus to Yamuna; (ii) the Gangetic Valley from Delhi to Benaras has formed the principal areas in which nearly all the famous events of Indian history have happened and (iii) Rajputana, the waterless desert, which acted as a break-water against flood tides of Muslim invaders, lies west to the Gangetic Valley.

**(III) The Deccan Plateau :**

Deccan is a plateau commencing with the Ajanta range. Isolated by Vindhya mountains from the Northern India, it has played a passive role in the history of India. Its important rivers, the Narmada and the Tapti flow from the East to the West and the others from the West to East. Unlike the rivers of the North these are not navigable. Very few rulers of the North could subdue the Deccan and that too with little control

**(IV) Coastal Plains :**

The region consists of the long but narrow strip of plains situated between the sea and the Eastern and Western Ghats. These plains are about 1000 miles long. In the West, they are between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats. In the East these plains are between the Bay of Bangal and Eastern Ghats. The coast line of India was not very inviting in ancient times. On the west, Western Ghats, run down parallel to the coasts, in an unbroken

lines for 700 miles. The low Eastern coast, on the other hands was without many good harbours. Anyhow, the vast coast line helped Indians in developing a very lucrative trade with their western and eastern neighbours from very ancient times. The people inhabiting this region grew up to be very adventurous.

#### **(V) The Vast Ocean :**

In the words of K.M. Panikkar, "He who rules on the sea will rule on the land", sums up the importance of sea in the history of nations. Surrounded by sea from three sides the history of any other country hardly illustrates this principle better than that of India. In fact, next to the Himalayas, which has affected Indian history more than any other geographical factor is the Indian sea. But unfortunately this physical feature of India has generally remained ignored by the historians. The control of the Indian seas belonged predominantly to India till the thirteenth century A.D. While Arabian sea was used mainly for trade purposes, the case of Bay of Bengal was different. The supremacy over the sea was naval and political. It was based on an extensive colonisation of the islands and it ceased only with the breakdown of Chola power in the thirteenth century.

It is generally said that Hindus had some kind of a superstitious objections to the Sea. This was perhaps true only in respect to the people of North India, but it was never true in respect of the people of the South. Peninsula India was maritime in its traditions and this is borne out also by Chinese records. Fahien writing in 415 A.D. states that in the ship which carried him from Ceylon to India, there were two hundred Indian merchants. The Chalukyas, the Pandyas, the Cholas and other dynasties ruling in the South led powerful navies.

The Arabina Sea, a vast expanse separating two peninsulas of India and Arabia is one of the vital seas of the world and has been serving as a chief area of navigation. The bay of Bengal, lying to the East of India, is said to be one of the four sea areas in the subject to the phenomena of revolving storms.

Though India is surrounded by seas on three sides, and has for over 500 years subjected to political and economic pressure by maritime powers, there had been yet hardly any appreciation of the relation of sea-power to Indian history.

#### **1.1.3 Impact of Physical Features on Indian History**

Geography constitutes the permanent basis of every nation's history. It is in deed one of the major factors that determine the historical evolution of the people. Unfortunately Indian historical thinking was necessarily confined to a large extent to the growth and decline of local dynasties with the result that the overall factors which shaped our life seldom entered into our calculations. But



a nation can neglect its geography only at its peril. Both the internal policies of a country and its external relations are governed largely by its geographical conditions.

India's geographical features have also effected its civilization and culture. We can have a true perspective of the effects of India's geographical features on its history from the following account.

#### **1.1.4 Impact on Political Life**

Natural Protection from Three Sides :

India is geographically placed in a manner that it is protected by nature itself from three sides. In the North, the Himalayas have acted as its great Sentinel. It was not possible for the invaders to make an easy walk into India. Himalayas stood like a wall to block their way.

Similarly, India is surrounded by seas from three sides in the South. In the South East is the Bay of Bengal, in the South-West is the Arabian sea and a vast Indian ocean lay in the down south. In the ancient days, it was virtually impossible to cross these seas. Of course, some of the Indian rulers had their political and economic activities around these seas. Portuguese adventurer Vasco-de-Gama was the first to reach the Indian shores in 1498 from the west. No other foreign invader could make their way to India from the sea.

#### **Effect of North-West Frontier :**

It is generally held that India having been surrounded by mountains and seas from all round had largely remained isolated from the rest of the world. High mountain peaks in the south kept it aloof from even some of the Asian countries. Similarly, surrounded by sea from three sides in the south, India could hardly make contracts with coastal countries on that side. Even R.K. Mookerji observes that "India as a whole have been effectively isolated from the rest of the world by prominent geographical barriers between the Northern mountains and the Southern seas that India stands out as an indisputable geographical unit." But in fact, the idea of isolation of India from rest of the world is more a myth than a reality. True the Himalayas in the north stood like a wall and protected India from any invasions from that side. But the North West frontier has proved the weakest point in India's defence. Suleiman ranges and Kirthar mountains separated India from Afghanistan and Baluchistan. But these mountains are hardly covered with snow. So it was not very difficult for the invaders from the North-West to cross mountains and invade India. Moreover, there were many passes viz. Khaiber, Gomal, Tochi and Bolan, which served the invaders as gateways to India. Greeks, Huns, Turks and Afghans all attacked India from the North-West. Some of the invaders came to India exclusively attracted by its wealth. They came here to loot and

plunder and went back. Others attracted to settle here and set up their empires in India. Of course, the North-West frontier with its passes also proved blessing for India. It were through these passes that India could have trade ties with the western world and religious leaders and missionaries found it convenient to go to foreign lands and preach their gospel. Hence, Indian civilization and culture were spread abroad.

### **Punjab As a Gate-way to India :**

Placed on the foot-hold of North-Western Frontier of India, Punjab came to be known as the Gateway of India. Any invader, with a view to capture her and establish empire first had to capture Punjab. Alexander had fought against Porus in the Punjab. Of course, he could not go further from Beas towards Delhi and had to take to return journey. Chandra Gupta Maurya, Kushans, Huns and even Mughals had their first encounters in the lands of five rivers. It is, therefore, no more accident that the Punjab has been a battle field for many of its fiercest conflicts in Indian history. The battle-field of Kurukshetra, Tarain, Panipat where some decisive battles of Indian history were fought, were found in the Punjab only if it proved a gate-way of India. Punjab also served as an admirable frontier for defence of the Gangetic Valley against invaders from the North-West. Punjab also provided sturdy soldiers to the neo-empire builders for their further conquest of India. In this way it served as a recruiting ground for them.

### **Rise of Important Empires in the Northern India :**

The Indo-Gangetic Valley had been main seat of Indian empires. These plains have served as centres of nearly all important religious and cultural movements. It was largely due to the richness of the soil which attracted the great empire builders to this land. Fertile plains, large navigable rivers, vast timber forest, mineral wealth—all these factors combined to make human life in this enviable region very easy and full of comfort. Moreover, empire-builders, who came and settled here were able to make use of the local wealth for capturing further India. Chandra Gupta Maurya, Ashoka, Samundra Gupta, Alau-ud-Din Khilji and Akbar all flourished their empires from this region. Famous ancient cities of India like Patliputra, Benaras, Allahabad, Kanauj, Agra and Delhi are found to be proud centres of Indian civilization in this region.

### **Delhi—the Capital of India :**

It was Largely because of its geographical position that Delhi has served as the capital of big Indian empires since time immemorial. During ancient period, it was known as Indiraprastha. Rulers who had their capitals, other than Delhi had to undergo great hardships. Iltutmash had his capital at Delhi. Mughals also had it at Delhi and Agra. Realising its importance, even the British shifted their capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911. According to R.K.

Mookerji, "Delhi is Central city of Bharatvarsha, the ancient Indiraprastha the imperial city."

### **Lack of political Unity in India :**

Many blessings of the geographical features of India apart, it was largely because of physical features that India lacked political unity in different periods. Its high mountains, big rivers, deserts and valleys, divided India into various fragments and served to carve out independent states. Its rivers served as interstate boundaries. It was not easy to attack on other states across the river.

Hence the states continued multiplying. According to V.A. Smith "In all ages, the crowd of principalities and power had been almost past counting." No doubt, Ashoka, Sumundra Gupta, Alauddin Khilji and Akbar were able to carve out big empires by fighting various battles. But it was largely because of their policies and mighty strength that they were able to do so. Even at the time of Indian Independence, there were more than 500 states in India. Each state had its own history which definitely had some imprint of India's geography in its creation.

### **1.1.5 Effect on Social Life**

Character of the People of Gangetic Plains :

The Character of the people of the vast Northern Indian plains had varied according to the climatic conditions. In the Sind desert and the Punjab the climate is dry and the earth yields her produce only after hard labour but in the Ganga Doab the climate is more damp with the result that the people are densely populated together. They are physically weaker. The general fertility of the soil provides means for ease and luxury and by enabling the crops to grow with attention, renders unnecessary that severe labour in the field that hardens the body. Abundance of leisure and absence of a keen struggle for existence made the inhabitants of this region devote to the development of thought and culture.

### **Composite Culture of the Country :**

It is largely due to its geographical features that a sense of tolerance and hospitality have developed among the Indians. India's sub-continent is a land of great diversity. Every extreme of climate, every variety of fauna and flora, every stage of human culture, and numberless types of races are to be met within the different parts of the country. Religion and castes divide the society into hundreds of sections. Linguistic differences too are very numerous. In spite of this, bewildering diversity, geographical features of India helped in the evolution of the so-called composite culture of the country. It also enabled the growth of the spirit of toleration and hospitality.

**Courageous and Brave Inhabitants of the Punjab :**

The Punjab, being the frontier portion, has naturally felt the first shock of every invasion from the North-West. It was in this tracts that a large number of decisive battles were fought for capturing India. Hence, the inhabitants of this region had to fight wars with every invader from across the borders. The Punjabisturned to be vigorous, brave courageous and also enterprising.

**Peace-loving Inhabitants of the Gangetic Valley :**

The rich Gangetic Valley is separated from the valley of the Indus by the desert of Rajputana and the narrow plains of Southern Punjab are the only connecting links between them. Since most of the decisive battles of Indian history were fought in the plains of the Punjab, they served as an admirable frontier for defence of the Gangetic valley against invaders from the north-west. Hence the people of this region remained devoid of any fear of a foreign attack and grew to be comparatively peace-loving. Abundance of leisure and absence of a keen struggle for existence made it possible for the intellectual classes of this region to devote themselves to the development of thought and culture.

**South-Indian Culture :**

Isolated from the rest of the country by its geographical position in Deccan has been a region apart from the rest of the country. There is no denying the fact that in ancient times, people from the North hardly ventured to go to the South. Only on a few occasions did the kings of the North could be subdued by the South. The dress, diet, languages, customs and standard of Living of the South- Indian people, by and large remained different from that of the people of North India.

**Simple and Hard-working People of South :**

South India being a plateau and largely a mountainous region, its people had to work hard for earning their livelihood. In spite of the existence of large rivers like the Mahanadi, the Godavri, the Krishna, the Narmada and the Tapi which flow across India, the economic development is limited in these areas. The reason is that these rivers flow through uplands and not valleys, and do not therefore spread their fertilising waters on the countryside, till they reach the Delta areas. The Ganga-Jamuna system on the hand, once it leaves the Himalayas spreads out its water and covers an immense area of fertile land. Similarly, Cauvery once it leaves behind the Mysore table land enters a plain which it waters and fertilises. Hence, South India being a plateau and largely a mountaneous region, its people had to work hard for earning their livelihood and led a very simple life.

### **1.1.6 Effects on Economic Life**

#### **India—a rich Country :**

India has been very rich country from times immemorial. Its fertile plains, with easy means of irrigation, made it one of the richest agricultural countries of the world. The alluvial soil made the land very fertile contributed to a great extent to prosperity of the country. Its metallic wares, deposited in the soil, and large timber forest stimulated industry and manufacture. It was through its navigable rivers and vast sea-coasts that inland and foreign trade was stimulated. Apart from it, India is also rich with its precious mineral wealth like gold, jewels, pearls and other precious stones preserved in abundance in its soil and sea. It was India's wealth which attracted the hungry nomads from abroad and indirectly resulted in its downfall and degradation.

#### **Growth of Big Trade-Centres in the Gangetic Plains :**

Largely, because of its physical features, many big cities came up throughout the plains of northern India. The cities of Lahore, Multan, Taxila, Peshawar, Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Benaras, Kanauj, Ujjain and Patliputra played a great role in political and economic life of country. Situated on the river banks, these cities came to be great trading and industrial centres of country. People living in the cities and around grew to be rich and prosperous.

#### **Agricultures :**

India is a country of villages. 80% of its people still live in villages and 66% are engaged in the agricultural profession. They may be in the plain or in the mountains. Their main profession is agriculture. Different crops are cultivated in different regions of the country as per the soil available. The needs of the one region for a particular crop are fulfilled by the other and vice-versa. Of course, the city people are largely in trade and industry that is coming up every where, but existence of sound Indian economy still depends on its agriculture. Failure of a single crop by some natural calamity frustrates all economic planning.

#### **Foreign Trade :**

Due to its physical features, India had its trade links with foreign countries right from the ancient days. Its trade with foreign countries was carried by land and sea both. It were the North-western passes which served as trading routes for merchants to trade between India and the nearest and western countries. On the other hand it was the vast sea in the South which served the Indian merchants to trade in the far-east. Certain goods had enormous output in India hence, they were exported. These included cotton, Jute, sugar, wheat, groundnut, spices, tea etc. many things needed in India were also imported from other countries. India had trade ties with Java,

Samatra, Borneo, Champa, Combodia in the east and Rome, Greece Egypt etc. in the west.

### **1.1.7 Effects on Religious Life**

#### **Nature Worship :**

Physical features of India had their impact on the religious life of its people too. Rigvedic people were situated by the natural surroundings of India and were motivated to worship nature itself. Hence, they used to worship sun, air, water, sky, earth, rain etc. Later Vedic Aryans took to worship nature's Gods like Indra, Varun, Mitra, Rudra, Surya, Agni etc. Even great religious Granths like the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata etc. were written by the Rishis sitting in the lap of nature.

#### **Birth of Buddhism and Jainism :**

Even the birth of neo-religious movements like Buddhism and Jainism in ancient India is also ascribed to the geographical features of India. No doubt, foreign invaders attacked time and again, but the Gangetic plains comparatively remained peaceful. With the passage of time, many evils had cropped up in the then Hinduism. Many religious leaders of the Gangetic Valley had the time as also favourable circumstances to think of the prevailing condition of Hinduism. They reacted to it and suggested measures to bring reforms in Hinduism, but their teaching proved so revolutionary that it gave rise to two new religious Movements— Buddhism and Jainism. These movements revolutionised the religious life of the people in ancient India. Hindu leaders were also compelled to introspect and make reforms in their ancient religion. Buddhism spread even across the borders of India particularly during the rule of Ashoka and Kanishka.

#### **Advent of Islam in India :**

India witnessed large number of invasions from the North-West. Some of the Invaders came here with the express motive to capture India's wealth whereas others came with three-fold object i.e. to capture India's wealth, to spread their religion and if possible to establish their empire in India. Some of Muslim rulers who were able to conquer India and set up their empire also took systematic conversion of Indians to Islam. They were successful in converting large number of Indians throughout India. Since most of them were not able to go down in the South, that region had a different kind of Islam.

### **1.1.8 Effects on Cultural Life**

#### **Northern Plains-A Centre of Learning :**

For its geographical position, the Northern Indian plains served as centres of great learning. These plains proved a convenient abode for learned men. According to R.C. Majumdar, "void and sublime beauty of nature in which India is peculiarly rich, gave a philosophic and poetic turn to the Indian mind

and remarkable progress was made in religion, philosophy, art and literature." Since Gangetic plains remained comparatively free from battle, hence, great political, social, religious and philosophical ideas were born in their region. Taxila, Nalanda, Sarnath came to be the seats of learning in this region. In the scholastic works in Patanjali, Nagarjun, Vasakhadutt, Kalidas, Bana Bhatt, Chand Bardai, Harisen, Kabir, Surdas, Ramanad, Tulsi Dass, we find a great touch of nature. They wrote great Granths sitting amidst the calm natural surroundings.

### **Development of Fine Arts :**

India's physical features also led to the development of fine arts in India. Different types of rocks, stones are available in India which proved very useful to developing fine architecture. Big forts, places, temples and mosques, pillars and Satupas were built in India in different times. Sanchi Stupa of Ashoka's times, Allahabad Pillar inscription of Smudra Gupta's time, Mehrauli iron Pillar inscription of Chandragupta Vikramaditya's times, Ellora caves and its rock-cut temples, painting of Ajants, caves of Khujraho and Dilwara Jain temples and hundred of other temples built in ancient India are best specimens of the developed art. Physical features of India gave incentives to the development of art, of music, painting, sculpture etc. too.

### **Indian Culture Preserved in the South :**

Deccan remained free from the political upheavals of the North. There is no denying the fact that Decan came to preserve the real Indian culture.

Isolated from the rest of the country by its geographical position, it has been a region apart and has played but a secondary part in the history of India. But the belief does not seem to be all true. It was Deccan which preserved the real Indian culture. When Buddhism was dominant in the North, Deccan was still a centre of Hinduism. Buddhism could hardly have inroad to the South. As a result of the conquest of Northern India by the Muslims, real Hindu culture was always in danger of being obliterated. But it found refuge in the Hindu State of Vijaynagar. Moreover, Deccan also preserved many of its own peculiarities of race and language. Moreover it was from the sea-coasts of the south that Indian culture spread in the Far-East colonies Jawa, Sumatara, Bali, Barneo, Champa and Combodia etc. Some of these places are still centres of Indian culture. Unfortunately, this crucial role played by the South in the Indian history has often been neglected by the historians.

### **Self Check Exercise**

1. Role of the South in Indian history.

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2. The unity in diversity.

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### **1.1.9 Summary**

Thus, physical features of India had great impact on the political, social, economic, religious and cultural life of its people. According to B.G. Gokhale, "The mighty mountains and rivers have played a great part in shaping of ancient Indian history." There is no denying the fact that the development of great civilization and culture of India is as a result of the impact of its geographical features.

### **1.1.10 Keywords**

1. Ghats
2. Deserts
3. Valleys
4. Fauna and Flora
5. Vedas

### **1.1.11 Long Questions**

1. What do you know about the physical features of India? Discuss their effects on the political, social and cultural life of the people?
2. The course of Indian History is in a large measure determined by its geography." Comment.

### **1.1.12 Short Questions**

1. Meaning of 'Ancient India'
2. The Great Himalayas
3. The Rivers and their impact

### **1.1.13 Suggested Readings**

- |    |                         |   |   |
|----|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. | Panikkar, K.M.          | : | <i>Geographical Factors in Indian History</i> .passim   |
| 2. | Mookerji, R.K.          | : | <i>Ancient India</i> .passim                            |
| 3. | Tripathi, R.S.          | : | <i>Ancient India</i> .passim                            |
| 4. | Romilla Thappar,        | : | <i>Ancient India</i> .passim                            |
| 5. | Irfan Habib             | : | <i>Pre History</i> , pp 1-10, 48-68                     |
| 6. | Sikri S.L. & A.C. Arora | : | <i>'Prachin Bharat da Itihas'</i> (In Punjabi) (Passim) |



**B.A. PART I (SEMESTER-I)**

**HISTORY—PAPER A**

**HISTORY OF INDIA Upto 1000 A.D.**

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**LESSON NO. 1.2**

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**MAJOR SOURCES OF HISTORY**

- 1.2.1 Objectives
- 1.2.2 Introduction
- 1.2.3 Inscriptions
- 1.2.4 Coins
- 1.2.5 Monuments and Buildings
- 1.2.6 Traditional Literature
- 1.2.7 Vedic Literature
- 1.2.8 Buddhist Literature
- 1.2.9 Jain Literature
- 1.2.10 Ancient Historical Work
- 1.2.11 The writings of Foreigners
- 1.2.12 The Chinese writings
- 1.2.13 The Islamic writings
- 1.2.14 Summary
- 1.2.15 Keywords
- 1.2.16 Long Questions
- 1.2.17 Short Questions
- 1.2.18 Suggested Readings

**1.2.1 Objectives**

The main objectives of this lesson are:

1. To study major sources of Ancient Indian History.
2. To study the classification of sources of Ancient India.
3. To study method adopted by the historian for using the sources.

**1.2.2 Introduction**

The Historian of Ancient India faces many difficulties while writing her history. First, difficulty is clarity about chronology. It is very difficult to fix dates. History of India before 7th century B.C. is undated history. There is nothing definite or precise about this undated history. Secondly, literature is the main source of information for early ancient India except the Indus valley civilization phase. The literature is in abundance, it is in more than one language and form. It is very painstaking to construct history on the basis of this huge literature.

In spite of these difficulties the story Ancient India has been fairly well

told. Thanks to the efforts of both Indian, European and American Historians. Sources of this history can be divided into the following classes :

1. Inscriptions or Epigraphic Evidence
2. Coins or Numismatic Evidence
3. Monuments, Buildings and works of art (Archeological evidence)
4. Traditional Literature
5. Ancient Historical works.
6. The writings of Foreigners

Let us see these classes of sources in some detail by taking them one by one

### **1.2.3 Inscriptions**

According to a western scholar named Fleet Inscriptions are the more useful source of history. These gave information about political and cultural developments. They help in fixing and checking dates. Also, they help in checking the facts and information given by the other sources such as literature, coins or monuments.

Different regions of India had different types of inscriptions. An inscription is a writing that can be inscribed on a stone, pillar, coin or even on the idols or temple walls. The most famous inscriptions known to Ancient India are the Ashoka Inscriptions. These are on the pillars especially built for this purpose. But these are also in shape of Edicts. Most of our knowledge about the Mauryan empire, Ashoka's personality and polity comes from them.

You can make the list of important inscription of Ancient times in the following way

- (i) The Pillar inscription and Edicts of Ashoka
- (ii) Hathigopha inscription of King Kharewal
- (iii) The Allahabad inscription of Samundar Gupta
- (iv) The Mehrauli inscription of Chander Gupta II
- (v) Bhattari pillar inscription of Sikander Gupta

Besides the above mentioned kings, the rulers like Pushyamitar Sunga, Rudramann and Pulkesan, the second, also had their inscriptions. In central India and Rajputana numerous forts and temples contain inscriptions giving interesting informations about polity, religion and even architecture and its techniques.

### **1.2.4 Coins**

A coin is a symbol of kingship or royalty. A king and kingdom are known by their coins. Making of coins involves technique and science because coins are made of metals like Gold, silver, bronze etc. Further they may be 'pure' or

mixed. The study of coins is also a science. It is called Numismatics.

Ancient India had a variety of coins. Some of them were locally made, the others were introduced by the foreigners who had conquered and ruled India. It is from the coins only that we know how different parts of India were ruled from time to time by the people called the Indo-Greeks, the Indo-Parthians and the Indo Bacterians.

Coins of the same king, kingdom and era may be different in metal, size, weight, normally, every coin carried either the figure of the ruler or deity and also a motto or inscription. Some time they carry the date also. With their help one can see the particulars of the rulers and also the general condition of the economy under him.

### **1.2.5 Monuments, Buildings and Works of Art**

These sources can also be named Archeological evidence. Archeology is a science used to discover the ruined monuments and buildings lying beneath the earth's surface. Digging or excavations is made to discover them. The place from where such discovery is made is called the site. The Indus valley civilization was discovered by the Indian archeology in 1922-23 A.D.

An archeological evidence does not always mean monuments or buildings. But it covers all the remains of past that could be anything ranging from pitcher or well to the seal of king or Merchant or priest. Even a comb or razor could be useful to know the kind of culture and the level of civilization.

Like the ruins and the temples, the stupas and caves also throw light upon the social and cultural life of a people. Ashoka is famous for his stupas or Bodhi temples at Sanchi and Barhut. Similarly the Gupta rulers are known for their temples at Devgarh, Bhittharigaon and Tiggaiva. Kanishka made Taxila a world fame centre of Buddhist art. In this way the archeological evidence is a very rich source of Indian history.

### **1.2.6 Traditional Literature**

Traditional literature here means (i) the religious literature and (ii) the literary works on customs, manners and taste. The Sanskrit or Aryan literature began with the Rig Veda. It developed through the three more Vedas and various other forms of ancient literature including philosophical, educational, literary and semi political works. But Ancient literature also included non-Sanskrit works. Tamil and Buddhist literature was its essential part. This literature on the whole was produced in India and also outside it-in Tibet and Sri Lanka etc.

### **1.2.7 Vedic Literature**

The vedic literature begins with the Rig Veda. There are three more Ved, namely

(i) Sam Veda (ii) Yajurved (iii) Atharva Veda . Veda literally means

'knowledge' It is also regarded as the source and standard of knowledge. In this way Vedic literature is a tradition of knowledge because it is a matter of faith also. But Vedic literature is not confined to the four Vedas. The Brahmnas, the Upanishads and the Forest books are also Vedic literature.

Yet there is another form of literature. In this form knowledge is not a matter of revelation but human experience. This kind of literature is called Smriti. The Puranas and various Sutras are included in this form. The Puranas are eighteen in number. A Sutra may be a work of grammar. It may also be a law manual, or book of history (Itihasa) It could also be a work on customs, rites or language.

Epics are yet another class of ancient literature. Ramayana and Mahabharata are the two famous epics. Their characters and places help us in identifying the important cities and tribes in ancient India and the struggle among them for domination and survival.

The various kinds of Sanskrit literature show the different stages of evolution of Indian society, or specially the Aryans. In fact, the difference in form of literature was because of the changing political, economic, religious and cultural life of them. For example Rig Veda shows the existence of numerous kings or chiefs, a very high position of women and unlimited powers of the Sabha and Samiti. Unlike this picture of polity and society given by the Rig Veda, the Puranas refer to Empire or the imperial system as Ideal polity. Under these military monarchies both the status of women and the powers of popular councils (Sabha and Samiti) diminished. Epics clearly record the break up of smaller and tribal kingdoms and struggle for domination by the more powerful chiefs. It is because the epics

themselves were the product of an age that had already given birth to powerful kingdom of the Pandavas, the Kauravas and the Panchalas.

### **1.2.8 Buddhist Literature :**

The books of Buddhism are called Pitakas which means a box or collection. The early Buddhist literature was written not in Sanskrit but the Pali language. There are four ancient Pitakas. These are (i) Tripitaka (ii) Suttapitaka (iii) Vinayapitaka (iv) Abhidhammapitaka.

The Pitakas record the teachings and sayings of Lord Buddha. The Vinayapitaka defines the rules governing the behaviour of monks.

The Mahavamsa and the Deepavamsa are the two ancient works of Buddhism that throw light upon political and social conditions of India as well as Sri Lanka.

Another important work called Lalitavistara was composed during the 2nd or 3rd century A.D. in Nepal. This work was in Sanskrit. The Buddhist practice to write in Sanskrit became more widespread under the royal patronage of king

Kanishka. Like Asoka and Kanishka, Harsha was also a great patron of Buddhism. *Buddhcharitar* by Ashavghosa and *Mahavibhasha* by Vasumittra are two other important sources on Mahatma Buddha's life and teachings.

The *gathas* or stories associated with Buddha, the enlightened, are called Jattkas/Pitakas. There are estimated to be 549 in numbers

### 1.2.9 Jain Literature

The oldest granth of Jainism is called the Baranga. It informs about the life of teachings of Mahatma Mahavira. Besides it, there are (i) twelve up-angas (ii) Ten Prakeeran (iii) Six suttras and (iv) Malsuttras. All these works are related to the teachings, cannon and rituals of Jainism and its attitude towards the other religion.

*Kapilavastu* and *Prasishet purva* are another two Jain books that show its development and condition in the middle age. The former was written by Bhadharbahu while the latter was composed in the 12th century A.D.

### 1.2.10 Ancient Historical Works

Author	Times	Work	Subject
1. Bana Bhatt	Harsha-era (604-647)	Harshacharitra	Life and conquests of king Harsha Achievements of
2. Chand Bardai	12th Century A.D.	Prithvirajraso	Prithviraj Chauhan
Historical or Semi-Historical writing appeared only after the 5th century B.C. following are the note worthy in this connection.			
3. Kalhanna	"" ""	Rajtrangini	History of Kashmir
4. Someshwar	"" ""	Rasmala	History of Gujrat
5. "" ""	"" ""	Keertkaumdi	-do-
6. Vakpatti	"" ""	Goddvaho	History of Bharat
7. Hemchandra	"" ""	Kumarpalachari	-do-
8. Vishakhadutta	Gupta era	Mudrarakshasha	Chander Gupta Maurya's life
9. Kalidassa	"" ""	Sihakuntla	Religious and Social life and the condition
10. "" ""	"" ""	Meghdutta	of Gupta Time
11. "" ""	"" ""	Malivikagnimitrar	---do--
12. Harshavardhan	(604-647)A.D.	Priyadarshaka	Social and cultural life
13. "" ""	"" ""	Rattanvali	life under Harsha
14. Kautilya	(320-B.C.-	Arthashastra	Mauryan Polity and

### 1.2.11 The Writings of Foreigners

There are four classes of the accounts of ancient India by the foreigners —These are :

(i) Greek Accounts (ii) The Chinese writers (iii) Sinhali and the Tibettian works and (iv) The Islamic writings

#### Greek Accounts

Author	Work	Subject
1. Herodotus	Historica	Relations of India with central Asia and Greece
2. Arrian	Historica	Alexander's conquests including that of India.
3. Megasthenes (302-298 B.C.)	Indica	Description of Mauryan Empire, capital and its administration and social structure.
4. Plutarch and Strabo	"" ""	Mauryan India
5. Demetrius	"" ""	The Mauryas under Bindusara
6. Ptolemy	"" ""	The Description of Trade routes and sea ports
7. Ptolemy	"" ""	Geography and Trade with west and South India.

### 1.2.12 The Chinese Writings

Three names among the Chinese writers are very significant. These are :

Author	Times	Subject
1. Fahien	405-411 A.D.	India's political and social condition under Chandragupta, the second.
2. Hien-Tsang	629-645 A.D.	Author of the book Si-u-Kai, described Harsha's capital and the Buddhist Assemblies of Paryag and Kannauj
3. I-tsing	7th century A.D.	Political and Social Condition of India

### **Tibbetian Accounts :**

Of all the Tibbetian writers Taranath is the most prominent. He wrote Tangayurra.

### **1.2.13 The Islamic Writings**

Like in Kashmir the historiography in the Muslim countries was more developed than in India. Among the early muslim writers on India, Abu Rihan Muhammad- bin-Albruni was the famous. His book Tahkik-i-Hind throws light upon all most every aspect of pre-Muslim India her political and social system, customs, geography, astrology and philosophy. Albruni studied many ancient works of India and introduced them to the Muslim world.

Besides Albruni, mention can also be made of the following muslim writers

1. Al-Biladari ii) Sulemann (iii) Allmasudi (iv) Hassan Nizam and (v) Minhas-ud-din.

The varetiful sources on Ancient India may also include the travellers and their accounts. Two of them can be mentioned. One Morcopollo of Italy. Two, Ibbin Battuta of Africa.

### **Self Check Exercise**

1. Mention the accounts of the Buddhists and the foreigners.  
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2. Classify the sources of Ancient History of India and explain their significance.  
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### **1.2.14 Summary**

Our knowledge is not sufficient because of insufficient sources. While writing history of Indi we find difficulties in finding out the chronology, dates and places, etc. The available sources are discussed above.

### **1.2.15 Keywords**

1. Chronology
2. Mahavammsha
3. Monuments
4. Baranga
5. Tehkik-i-Hind

### **1.2.16 Long Questions**

1. Mention the important sources of Ancient Indian history.
2. Write an essay on the Vedic literature as a source of history.

### **1.2.17 Short Questions**

1. Inscriptions
2. Coins
3. Vedic Literature
4. Kautilya

### **1.2.18 Suggested Readings**

- |    |                 |   |   |
|----|-----------------|---|---|
| 1. | S. S. Sen       | : | Ancient Indian History and Civilization |
| 2. | Percival Spear  | : | The Oxford History of India             |
| 3. | Arora and Sikri | : | <i>Prachin Bharat da Itihas</i>         |



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**LESSON NO. 1.3**

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**THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION ORIGIN AND DECLINE**

- 1.3.1 Objectives
- 1.3.2 Introduction
- 1.3.3 Pre-Historic Age
- 1.3.4 How Indus Valley Civilization came to light?
- 1.3.5 Some Important Centres of Indus Valley Civilization
- 1.3.6 Who were Indus People?
- 1.3.7 Its relation with other Civilization
- 1.3.8 Summary
- 1.3.9 Keywords
- 1.3.10 Long Questions
- 1.3.11 Short Questions
- 1.3.12 Suggested Readings

**1.3.1 Objectives**

In this chapter we will study the Indus Valley Civilization and its extent. We will also study important centers, Indus people, their social, political and religious life.

**1.3.2 Introduction**

After the end of stone age Indian history entered Harappan age. Mohenjodaro and Harappa were the two cities of this civilization. It is known as Harappa or Indus Valley Civilization because both cities were situated on the river Indus and its tributaries.

**1.3.3 Pre-Historic Age**

Before we study the origin and evolution of Indus Valley Civilization, it is desirable to have an idea of the genesis of the features of Civilization during the Pre-historic Age. Geologically speaking, the age of the earth is considered billions of years old, but the signs of human habitation are believed to be only 400,000 years old. Since then, Civilization has grown through various stages. First, in order came the *Eolithic (Old Stone), Age* wherein the only implement used by man was the stone tools and after it he started using the unpolished and chipped-stone tools. Then came the Neolithic Age which was characterised by the use of bone and flint in various forms. Besides, bow, arrow, domesticated dog and pottery also appeared during this period. Spear

illustrates that age by saying". There are traces of this age, in Mysore, the Vindhya Mountains, the Narbada Valley and in Gujarat." With the advent of this age man became acquainted with wheel, cultivation of grain, fruit weaving and settled village life. Thereafter the knowledge and use of copper and bronze, featured in *the Neolithic Age*, which is considered the last stage of the Pre-historic Age. End of the Stone Age also marks the beginning of the civilised man. The first necessity of man was water, therefore, he settled near the rivers. Thus the first stage in the march of civilization was marked by the appearance of the river valley civilization of Nile (Egyptian civilization), Euphrates, Tigris (Mesopotamia) Indus, etc. In this lesson, we shall study the Indus Valley Civilization.

It was nearly in 5000 B.C. that some pastoral and agricultural community inhabited the plateau of Iran. A Portion of them (approximately in fourth millennium B.C.) came the Tigris — Euphrates Valley in Iraq and developed the famous Mesopotamian Civilization. Although, according to Spear, "Eastward the movement was slower" yet, "sometime in the third millennium B.C., these people descended into the Valley of Indus and its tributaries."

#### **1.3.4 How Indus Civilization came to Light in 1922 A.D.**

In the opening years of the second decade of the twentieth century A.D., there occurred a momentous event which has greatly influenced the study of Indian History that earlier started with Vedic Aryans. The event was the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization which came to light during the excavations on the

Buddhist Stupa in Sind. Some bricks of extraordinary size and some other remains were found simultaneously in Mohenjodaro in Sind and Harappa in the Montgomery district of the Punjab (now in Pakistan). The project was undertaken by Sir John Marshall then the Director General of Archeology of India. After sometime remains of a similar kind were found at Ropar in Punjab, Lothal near (Ahemdabad), and in Baluchistan. The discovery of these remains, has raised questions concerning the antiquity, span and the extent of this advanced civilization.

**Antiquity and Span :** The nature of the evidence derived from the excavated seals and pottery is dubious, pictographic script of the seals, that could provide, almost a correct data of its origin and span has not been deciphered so far. The day the scholars are able to read them, there may be revolution and changes in our knowledge of the Indus civilization. It is due to this reason that the date of its origin and the period of its survival vary with different scholars. Some have held fifth millennium B.C. as its starting age. They argue that some seals found in Harappa and Mohenjodaro are similar to those excavated in Egypt and Mesopotamia whose civilizations are believed to have originated in fifth millennium

B.C. On the other hand, Wheeler, Spear, Moreland and Chatterjee and Powell- Price concur in holding that it originated in third millennium B.C. More accurately, it is considered approximately 2500 B.C. old. In support of his view Wheeler argues that prior to 2500 B.C. Harappa was occupied by some alien people. He identifies the authors of the Cemetery at Harappa with the Vedic Aryans and it were these, latter people he opines, who sometime in or about 1500 B.C. barbarously destroyed Indus Civilization. This view is further supported by the findings at Harappa and Mohenjodaro which indicate that in about 1500 B.C. Indus people were confronted with mightier people (Vedic Aryans) who destroyed them but at the same time assimilated some features of their civilization.

**Its Extent :** Historians have held different opinions on the extent of the Indus Civilization. Stuart Pigget's holds that it extended from Himalayan foothills to the Waziristan planes. Moreland, while agreeing with Pigget's northern limit, believes that in south it extended upto the Arabian Sea. Some historians, like Spear hold that it spread from Gujarat in the West to the banks of Jamuna in the east, and still there are others, who include Ganga Valley also. On the analysis of all views, it seems that Indus Civilization spread beyond Sind and included Punjab, Rajputana and Kathiawar. It may be called Indus or Harappa Civilization.

### **1.3.5 Some Important Centres of Indus Civilization**

Unlike the Aryans who lived a rural life, Indus people lived in towns. Some of their important towns are given below.

**Mohenjodaro :** Its English rendering is the 'mound of the dead', is situated in the plains lying in between the river Indus and Nara canal in the Larkana region of Sind. There flowed another river Mehtun in this region but it had disappeared subsequently. The valley seems to have very fertile, and we learn from *An Advanced History of India* that the surrounding region is called 'Nakhlistan' of the 'Garden of Sind' even today. It is believed that the first city of this site was built some five thousand years ago and afterwards it was successively destroyed and rebuilt 'No less than Seven times' Though exact causes of its repeated destruction remain unknown as yet, still floods of Indus, Nara and Mehtun rivers cannot be ruled out as a potent factor. As regard the size of the city, *Advanced History of India* mentions that it was fairly large in size, but according to Spear, the circumferences of Mohenjodaro was three miles which comes close to the observation of other historians who hold that the city was one mile square.

**Harappa :** As mentioned earlier, harappa, is located in Montgomery district. It is believed by some historians that Harappa might have been larger than Mohenjodaro in size, but P.Spear is of the opinion that like Mohenjodaro, it was also three miles in circumference. At present it is completely a ruined

city.

**Ropar, Jaiselmer and Lothal :** Excavation in Ropar (in the present Punjab), Jaiselmer (In Rajasthan) and Lothal (near Ahmedabad) lead to the existence of some cities which belonged to the Indus civilization.

**Comparison of Harappa and Mohenjodaro :** Among the above cities, Harappa and Mohenjodaro are more important. Spear writes that both Harappa and Mohenjodaro have all the appearance of metropolitan cities. These are alike in various respect. Spear records that either they were the centres of two kindred political unions or the twin centres of a single community. But undoubtedly, their culture is identical. However, it may be noted that Mohenjodaro was a bigger centre of social and other activities than Harappa.

### **1.3.6 Who were the Indus People? :**

Who were the Indus people racially has so far remained an absorbing riddle for the historians. Various hypotheses have been propounded. Firstly, it is believed that the Indus people were Indo-Aryans. But despite some common attributes of the two, this theory does not find favour with many historians. Secondly, some historians say that they belonged to the Sumerian race, some regard them as the Daravadian aborigines. In support of the last it is argued that once, Dravadians inhabited the whole of Indian sub-continent including Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan. Then some of them migrated to Mesopotamia. Occupation of Baluchistan, by them, is further proved by the language spoken by Brahui people of Baluchistan, which is similar to Dravadian. But this argument is rebuttable as it is belived conversely also. In the light of the above theories the authors of *An Advanced History of India* say, that the Indus people might not have belonged to an altogether separate race.

### **Political System :**

Indus Civilization was an advanced one and the people must have got some political system to administer themselves. Moreland writes that the uniformity of the remains excavated throughout the area (from Himalayan foot-hills to the Arabian Sea) Suggest corresponding political unity. Almost, similar architecture and size of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, in spite of their having been separated by four hundred miles speaks of two possibilities as discussed earlier. Either they were the alternate capitals of the same empire or they were the capitals of two 'adjacent and kindered principalities' Citadels defended by walls located on high elevations appear to have been the main centres of administration. What form of government they had adopted is not yet possible to say with certainty. From Spear's observation that religion prominated that Indus society, it seems that they were ruled by the 'priest-kings of the Mesopotamian model.'

From the discovery of a large number of state granaries, it is deduced that the main source of the state income was land revenue based upon the Mesopotamian and Egyptian patterns which could be paid in Kind. Land revenue came in big quantum, but nothing is known about the exact share of the state.

### **Social Life :**

From the seals and evidences available, it is here concluded that the Indus people enjoyed the luxuries and comforts of highly developed civic life "to a degree unknown elsewhere in the ancient world."

**Domestic Articles :** They reflect upon their domestic and family life. Vessels were of two types : earthen and metallic. Earthen wares were made with potter's wheel, and were generally plain, but sometimes painted and glazed also. The metallic articles were needles, knives, axes, fish hooks, razors. These were made of copper and bronze, because iron was totally unknown to them, Combs were made of bones and ivory Spindles, wheeled carts, chairs, baked-clay, dolls and dicepieces both tabulars and cubical were present almost in every house.

**Domestic Animals :** Skeletons discovered point out that humped bulls, buffaloes, sheeps, elephants, camels, dogs etc. were domesticated. It appears that the use of horse was altogether unknown to them.

**Diet :** Wheat, barley and milk products formed staple items of their food. Palmdate was their only fruit. Discovery of fish-hooks indicates that fish was a common dish. Mutton, pork and eggs were used by a few.

**Dress :** Carving on different seals and statues tell us about the use of cotton and woollen garments, and give us some idea of their fashion. Baked clay spindles indicate the manufacture of cloth. Women wore skirts along with cloaks that covered the arms and shoulders leaving the breast region bare. Men generally wore a cloth around the waist and a wrapper which covered the left shoulder and passed beneath the right.

**Ornaments :** Both men and women were fond of ornaments which were of two types. Some were used by both and this category included necklace, finger-rings and bangles. Ornaments of the second type were used exclusively by women- folk. These were girdles, nose-studs, ear-rings and anklets. Ornaments of both the categories were very beautiful and had a great variety. These were made of silver, gold, bronze, copper, bone-shell and many precious and semi-precious like Jade, crystal, agate and carnelian etc.

**Hair and Shave Style :** While the discovery of a large number of combs points out that hair dressing was popular both with men and women, at the same time razor found during the excavations indicate that men shaved also. To keep their hair tight and in a fashionable manner women used fillets and

hair-pins made of ivory bone and metals. Men mostly kept long hair. Either their formed bun in the middle of head in the Sumerian fashion, or were rolled into a lock at the back. Statues depict that they got their hair-cut also in a fashionable manner. Man kept beard in three fashions : in one seal, a tuft of hair is visible just beneath the chin and the rest of the face is shaven; in another beard is flowing inward; the third fashion was the short-trimming of the beard and of the upper lip.

**Cosmetics :** The bronze statue of dancing girls reveals that women used collyrium, face paint and many other cosmetics.

**Amusements :** Like the people of all the advanced civilization, Indus people also had some leisure hours. Recreation formed a part of the life of all. Excavation of the dice-piece evinces the existence of this evil game among them. Some boards and pawns belonging to the Indus Civilization indicate that they played some game like the chess of modern times, and 'sent' a game of the contemporary Egyptians. Baked clay toys, small carts, dolls, rattle, whistles and small chairs amused the little children. It appears from the above description that the Indus people unlike the Aryans had devised a number of indoor games.

### **Religions Life :**

Information about the religion, deities and beliefs of the Indus people has been deduced from the seals, statues and figures excavated. It seems that they worshipped both male and female deities. Except K.N. Shastri who holds that it was the male ('Pipal') god who predominated, almost all other historians including Marshall, Powell-Price, Spear, Mackay and the authors of *An advanced History of India* concur at the supremacy of the Divine Mother. The majority of the Indus deities constituted female gods. Indus people unlike their Egyptian counterparts did not construct any temple for their deities. No signs of nature worship are traceable.

**Important Deities:** Chief among the male gods was the multi-faced composite god. He has been shown on the seals in 'Yogic' posture on a platform with his arms stretched, loaded with bangles and touching the knees. His legs—are folded heel to heel with the toes turned downward. The upper part of the body is covered. But the lower zone of the body is naked. Whether he is wearing lion's cloth or not, and whether it is the phallus that is exposed we can not say anything. But most probably, it is the end of the waste band. Three faces of this deity are clearly visible and resemble those of the trimurti. But some hold that the fourth face is there at the back. Still others mention that it has the fifth face also, but without giving any clue about its location. Most probably it is three- faced. He wears a head dress with two horns turned inward and the third a straight one. Thus, it forms the figure of the 'Trishul' of

Shiva. Around him are tiger, an elephant, a rhinoceros and a buffalo. In the front, there are two pregnant deers. Almost all the historians including Marshall hold him from the 'Yogic' posture and the presence of animals as the mahayogi and 'Pashupati' like Shiva. His being Shiva is further vouchsafed when *Advanced History* compares his three faces with the 'three eyes of Shiva'. The presence of the bull which mostly goes along with Shiva and the discovery of the stone pieces having shape like Shiva as it is worshipped these days, supports this view. Some of their male gods are chimeralike or the demi-gods like those of the Sumerian Civilization with human body and the hoofs and tail of the animals.

Their supreme deity was the Mother Divine. She wore many ornaments and a head dress looking like a fan. Statues of virgin goddesses have also been found. From above, it appears that they practise Bhakti Cult or personal worship also.

Trees, Idol, spirit and Animal Worship : They worshipped trees, stones, animals and spirits, good and evil. Ample traces to the same effect have been found in Mohenjodaro. Among the trees 'Pipal' was worshipped as the Brahma-Taru or the trees of knowledge and Acacia as the 'Jivan Taru' or the tree of life. Among animals, reptiles and birds, bull, snake and dove were worshipped mainly.

Some beliefs and Customs : From some of the seals, it is concluded that the Indus people knew the subtle doctrine of transmigration of soul together with their belief in the world above or the sky-world to which, they had spirits repaired after death. Though their faith in the doctrine of transmigration is similar to that of the Vedic-Aryans, yet unlike the latter they disposed of the dead through inhumation or burial because Powell-Price holds that sometimes they were burnt also. But most of the historians do not conform to this view.

### **Economic Life :**

Period between 2500 B.C. and 1500 B.C. was that of prosperity of a high degree. Main reasons of this prosperity were the soil and climate of the Indus Valley. During those days, neither the climate was dry as we find it today nor the land was a desert. Spear and Moreland tell us that the use of baked bricks instead of sun-dried, the drainage system and the figures on seals suggest a damper climate and no shortage of water in the valley.

### **Occupations :**

Agriculture was their principal profession. It included the cultivation of wheat, barley and cotton. Cotton provided raw material to the professional weavers. Large number of spindles excavated point out that weaving had become a cottage industry. Artisans worked skilfully on ivory, bone shells, gold, silver, copper, bronze and did brick-laying, carpentry and sculpture. It

appears that cattle breeding and fishing were also the professions of some people. The discovery of bull-driven carts indicates that these might have been used for the trade purposes.

**Technical Knowledge :** Use of wheel in various forms, breaking of hard substance like carnalium and alloying of metals etc. clearly speak of their advanced technical knowledge.

**Import and Export :** They traded within the country as well as did import and export business. It is believed that copper and precious stones used to be imported. Historians like Powell-Price hold that it was a great kingdom of merchants and they appear to have traded with the great valley civilization of Mesopotamians and other people. How the goods were exchanged within the country and foreign trades; where they bartered or used some currency, is yet obscure to us.

**Weapons :** Their weapons of warfare were made of stone, copper and bronze. Stones were used also with the aid of slings. Besides, they also used bow and arrows, axes, spears, daggers or spikers etc.

**Script :** On the seals found in Mohenjodaro and Harappa there are pictographic signs of syllables instead of letters. These have not been deciphered so far. But the day scholars are able to read them, it is possible that there may be revolutionary changes in what we know, till now about the Indus civilization.

**Architecture :** According to *Advance History of India* the architecture had attained a high degree of perfection. It is evident from the following description of the citadels, baths and dwellings which they raised.

**Citadels and Cities :** It seems, from the material evidence available that in each cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, there is mound with a citadel raised upon it. Each citadel has palaces, halls, granaries and baths. Possibly there might have been a place of worship in each or atleast in Mahenjodaro, which lies, hidden under the Buddhist stupa. Cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa lay below at a little distance from their respective citadels. Cities were either rectangular or square as is suggested by the squares and blocks of the houses. According to Powell-Price, Indus people had constructed 'well planned cities.'

**Lanes and Drains :** Streets intersected each other at right angles and all the roads led either from north to south, or from east to west. Streets were wide and their width varied between 9 and 12 feet. Streets had an elaborate drainage system and soak-pits for sediment. Drains made of mortar were covered with adjustable bricks, which could be removed to clean them. Some of the bigger drains meant to carry rain water ranged in circumference from 2.5 feet to 5 feet. Domestic drains joined the main drains. But house wives were restrained from throwing ashes and refuse into them. Perfection of their drainage system is evident from the remarks of Powell-Price and Spear. While former says that their 'good drainage system', was "more advanced than that of many Indian towns."



Spear adds that "Nothing comparable with the Indus drainage system is known in an Indian city until the nineteenth century."

**Dwellings :** Dwellings of the Indus people had neither a uniform design, nor a uniform size. There were one room or two quarters, together with palatial buildings having a frontage of 85 feet, depth of 97 feet, and other walls 4 to 5 feet thick. Stairways as found in many buildings towards the streets and had a width of 3 to 7 feet. Traces of windows have also been found but nothing can be said about their width. Similarly, it is difficult to point out exactly about the fashion and style of fixing the doors and windows, whether or not woods have been used at all; or it had been not eaten out completely. But there is no doubt the use of baked-bricks. The bricks were of extraordinary size measuring 20-25 inches long 10.5 inches wide and 3.5 inches thick. Floors were either kacha or paved. Single storey houses seems to have been roofed with thatched reed matting.

But two or more storeyed structures must have been covered with some harder roofing material. Courtyards, drains, kitchens, bathrooms and latrines formed the essential features of every structure whether big or small. In a corner of every house, a kitchen was provided. But it is believed by many historians that cooking was done in the courtyard. In all the kitchens, raised platforms have been found, of course, it does not mean that woman cooked while standing. As we find these days, rather it might have been used for placing utensils and other articles in the kitchen. A well is found, invariable, in every courtyard, but the place meant for bathing and washing was bathroom located prior to the latrine that touched the outer-wall. Bathrooms were floored water-tight and sloped towards a corner. Thus, water passed swiftly through the latrine into the street drain. On seeing the remains of the bathrooms both public and domestic, it appears that taking bath, was a significant daily ritual of everybody. It may be that either like the ancient Romans. Indus people were very fond of baths or the hot climate of the valley badly necessitated or it could be both. Significance attached to bathing can be well calculated from the strength, size, design and the capacity of the Great Public Bath of Mohenjodaro. It is solid structure and it was an example of great advance in architecture which has let it survive the onslaught of past five millenniums. It is 180 feet long, 108 feet wide and its outerwalls are 8 feet thick. On all the sides : there are galleries, rooms and flight or steps together with swimming pool in the centre. It measures 393 feet long 23.2 feet wide and 8 feet deep (Its dimension slightly vary according to different historians) Bath in a room there is well-connected tank, through a big covered drain which is more than 6 feet high.

**Fine Arts :** Painted and glazed pottery, lifelike images of humped bulls, buffaloes, tigers, monkeys and deers, statues and figurings, both of men and

women speak of their skill in the fine arts. Their perfection in sculpture is only comparable with that of the Later Greeks.

### **Impact of the Indus Civilization**

The Indus Civilization had been a source of great inspiration to the subsequent development of the Indians civilization. Spears adds that even Aryans also borrowed some of their features from the Indus Civilization.

#### **1.3.7 Its relations with other Civilizations**

Stray references to the relations of Indus and other civilizations like the Egyptian Sumerian, and Vedic have already been made in the lesson. Pottery discovered at Hastinapur (A centre of Aryan Civilization) is similar to that of the Indus Valley Civilization. Evil of the dice and the agriculture based economy were again the common features of the civilizations. But they differ also. Chronologically, it is accepted almost by all the historians that the Indus Civilization, belongs to the 3rd millennium B.C. Indus people did not know of iron, horse and the defensive arms, but with the Vedic arya, these were very popular. Indus people lived urban life and the amenities of a highly developed civic life were available to them. But Vedic arya were mostly rural. Image, bull and phallus worships were popular with the former while the latter worshipped cow, nature and dislike the phallus worship. Vedic Aryans amused themselves with outdoor games like hunting and chariot racing, but the Indus people patronised indoor games.

Indus civilization had affinities with the Sumerian and Mesopotamian civilization also. Potter's wheel, carts, baked copper bricks, bronze and pictographic writing were the common features of all of them. Seals of Mohenjodaro type have been discovered in Mesopotamia, while Mesopotamian type seals have been found in Mohenjodaro. With their trade intercourse, we are already acquainted. We find that the Sumerians, like the Indus people buried the dead and believed in the life after death. But they differed also. Indus people believed in the sky or the solar world but the Sumerians and Babylonians on the contrary believed in the underworld. After observing their close ties, now we are confronted with a serious problem. Whether these were the civilizations of Mesopotamia and Sumeria which influenced the Indus Civilization, or was it vice versa? Probably all these civilizations existed independent of each other. At least, it is greatly in the case of the Indus Valley Civilization.

Causes of the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization : There were no specific causes which led to the disappearance of the Indus Valley Civilization. different scholars have given different reasons for its decline. According to B.G. Gokhale, "Man and Nature must have combined to bring about the downfall of this Civilization."

The following are the possible causes for the destruction of the Indus

Valley Civilization :

1. The Indian floods
2. Climatic changes
3. Spread of desert in the lower Indus Valley
4. Earthquakes
5. Invasions of aggressive tribes

### **Self Check Exercise**

1. Harappan

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2. Mesopotamian

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### **1.3.8 Summary**

Harappan civilization of superlative degrees which was witnessed by in Ancient times. The harappan people were advanced in several ways. The life of those people was marvelous from political-social, economic cum art skill etc. Domestic articles were made of bronze copper. Potter's wheel, carts, baked copper bricks, bronze and pictographic writing were the common features of all of them. There were no specific causes which led to the disappearance of the Indus Valley Civilization. different scholars have given different reasons for its decline.

### **1.3.9 Keywords**

1. Eolithic
2. Stone Age
3. Mohenjodaro.

### **1.3.10 Long Questions**

1. Describe the important features of life in Indus Valley civilization
2. Discuss the Date, extent and the causes for the disappearance of Indus Valley civilization.

### **1.3.11 Short Questions**

Write short notes on the following :

- (a) Discovery of Indus Valley Civilization
- (b) Age and Extent
- (c) Political System

- (d) Economic Life
- (e) Causes of Downfall.

### **1.3.12 Suggested Readings**

1. Narang, K.S. and Sethi, R.R. : *A History of Bharat to 1526*, pp. 40-47
2. Spear, Percival : *India*, pp. 27-32
3. Powell-Price, J.C. : *A History of India*, pp. 7-8
4. Moreland W.H. and Chatterjee A.C. : *A short History of India pp.*, 9-10
5. Shastri K.N. : *A New Light on Indus Civilizations* pp. 1-35, 46-53
6. Majumdar, R.C. Raychaudhry : *An Advanced History of India*, and others K.K. pp. 16-23

**B.A. PART I (SEMESTER-I)**

**HISTORY—PAPER A**

**HISTORY OF INDIA Upto 1000 A.D.**

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**LESSON NO. 1.4**

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**RIG VEDIC CIVILIZATION**

- 1.4.1 Objectives
- 1.4.2 Introduction
- 1.4.3 Original Home
- 1.4.4 Political Institutions
- 1.4.5 Social Life
- 1.4.6 Caste System
- 1.4.7 Economic Life
- 1.4.8 Religious Life
- 1.4.9 Summary
- 1.4.10 Keywords
- 1.4.11 Long Questions
- 1.4.12 Short Questions
- 1.4.13 Suggested Readings

**1.4.1 Objectives**

In this lesson we will study:

1. The original home of the Aryans
2. Social, Political, Religious and Economic life of the Aryans

**1.4.2 Introduction**

Aryan Civilization succeeded the Indus civilization which we have studied in the previous lesson. Now we shall study the Aryan civilization under the following two heads:

- (i) Early Vedic Civilization
- (ii) Later Vedic Civilization

**1.4.3 Original Home**

When did the Aryans come to India ? To find a definite answer to this question is both interesting and difficult. There are various views on the subject. Western scholars like J.G. Rhode and Max Mullar hold that the original home of the Aryans was Central Asia. Some other European scholars believe that the Aryans lived originally in the vast fields of Austria- Hungary. B.G. Tilak is of the opinion that they came from North Pole. Swami Dayanand holds that they were the natives of Tibbet. The traditional Indian view regards Aryans as the natives of India. This view is also supported by Pargiter, who

points out that there is no evidence to prove that Aryans invaded India from the north -west and then advanced eastward. Again, it is supported by A.C. Dass who says that the Aryans were the original inhabitants of "Sapt Sindhu". Dr. Peter Giles and Macdonell believe that original Aryans' cradle was in south-east Europe, i.e. the plains of Austria and Hungary. Thus one cannot say with certainty what the origin habitat of the Aryans was.

(1) **Dr. A.C. Dass's views:** Many historians of whom Dr. A.C. Dass and Babu Sampurnanand are of the view that Sapt Sindhu was the original home of the Aryans. They mean by Sapt Sindhu, the Punjab including the North- West Frontier Province. They hold that the Aryans were the real inhabitants of India and not foreign invaders as held by European scholars. In addition to it, all the animals, trees and plants, mentioned in the Rig Veda and other ancient books were found only in the Punjab in those days. They hold that it was from India that the Aryans migrated to other parts of the world. But there are historians who do not recognize this theory of Sapt Sindhu on the following grounds: (1) Punjab was not a centrally situated area. (2) The oak-trees as well as the elephant mentioned by the Aryans were not found in the Punjab. (3) What was the need of migrating to other parts of the world, leaving their home town, Punjab ?

(2) **Dayanand's Tibetan Theory :** Swami Dayanand wrote in the Satyarth Parkash that the original home of the Aryans was Tibet but in the course of time with the rapid growth of their population, they could no longer continue to live in a small region like Tibet. They, therefore, came to India which was so near to Tibet and shifted here. They migrated into India from a very near place, and not from a distant country. Of all the countries near India, Tibet alone is the country where all the things mentioned in Rig Veda were available in those days. Later on, F.E Pargiter supported this view. But a large number of historians do not agree to this theory. They said that Tibet was not a central country from which the growing number of Aryans could migrate into other countries.

(3) **Dr. Peter Giles's view :** He believes that the Aryans lived on the banks of the Danube in central Europe. The opinion is based on the linguistic relationship among all the countries beginning from the Gangetic plains right to the Ireland in the West. In simple words, the languages spoken in all these countries have in them something common and similar to the Aryan language. It naturally indicates that the ancestors of these people who speak these languages lived at one place together in the beginning. This was the same Aryan race whose different branches spread over different parts of the world in diverse countries. Dr. Giles also writes that cow, the horse and iron with which they were fully acquainted, were found in Central Europe in these days. Many other articles like natural phenomena and trees

mentioned in the ancient books of the Aryans were found in the same regions Austria and Hungary in the ancient times. Any how this theory too has not been given so much significance.

(4) **Central Asian Theory :** Prof. Max Muller holds that the Aryan's original home was in central Asia. He writes that the ancestors of the Indians, Romans, Greeks, Germans, and the English lived at one common place in ancient times. The similarities of their languages prove that they must have lived together at the same place once. They affirm that certain words retained the same form in many languages and got conceptualised with slight changes. For example, there is a little difference in pronunciation of the words like pita and father or mata and mother, though they convey the same meaning. According to them, all the Aryans originally lived in Central Asia where from they migrated to India and to the other countries in Europe.

**Most Acceptable Theory and Why :** Of all the different theories in respect of the original home of the Aryans, the most acceptable one seems to be Max Muller's central Asian Theory. It is, indeed, difficult to say anything with certainty in this respect, but still there are many grounds on which the truth of Prof. Max Muller's theory can be established. These are:

(a) A great majority of Western and Indian historians support his theory. Dr. Tripathi writes that the idea that the people of Europe and India lived in the ancient times in one place is not out of place.

(b) Discovery of certain inscriptions at Boghaz koi in Asia minor shows that the Aryan gods like Indra and Varun were worshipped in that country. This inscription proves that the Aryans migrated into India from central Asia through this route.

(c) Moreover, Central Asia was a very fertile region in these days. It contained all sort of products and grasses necessary for their needs. Their chief occupation was domestication of animals. It is, therefore possible that they should have lived in such place where they could satisfy their needs properly. It is established that their original home was central Asia which satisfied these conditions. Later on, they spread to other countries owing to increase in their population.

(d) Last but not the least is the reason the Central Asia is equidistant from India and Europe. It is from this place, their common home in Central Asia, that some of them migrated westwards while others came to India in the east. Therefore, it is established that they should have originally lived in central Asia where they could get grasses and other products from Land for their daily use. However, here are still many scholars who agree with the opinion that other theories or hypotheses are also equally legitimate, and that the facts are too imperfect to allow definite conclusion being drawn.

**Antiquity :** There are controversial views regarding the date of the origin of the Vedic civilization. Authors of An Advance History of India opine that the Vedic civilization originated by the 14th Century, B.C. and Wheeler holds it about 1500 B.C. old. Max Muller and some European scholars hold its date in the later half of 20th century B.C. However, Tilak and Jacobbi push it back to 2500 B.C. approximately. Recently, some historians have started opining that the Vedic civilization originated in 6000 B.C. which challenges the antiquity of the Indus civilization as well. However, the more acceptable view is that it is about 1500 B.C. old.

The section of the Aryans which crossed to India is known by the name of Indo-Aryans. The source which tells us about the life of early Aryans is the earliest book, Rig Veda. Therefore, the civilization of early Indo-Aryans is also known as the Rig Vedic age or civilization.

**Extent :** We can have a clear picture of the Rig Vedic India from the references to rivers given in the Rig Veda. It mentions in the west rivers like Kabul, Gomati and Swat. It also mentions Indus, the five rivers of the Punjab the Jamuna, the Ganges and Sarayu. It seems that the Early Vedic civilization extended "from eastern Afghanistan to the upper valley of the Ganges" .

#### **1.4.4 Political Institutions**

Politically, the Rig Vedic India was divided into many tribes. One tribe included the Srinjayas and the Bharatas. The other groups consisted of five people- the Yadus, Turvasas, Drubys, Anus and Purus. The Rig Vedic political institutions were of an advanced nature which afforded to the people a settled life and a high civilization. These were :

- (i) Kula (Family) : It was administered by its head.
- (ii) Grama (Village) : It had its head man gramini. He was usually a vaisya and looked after the village administration both civil and military.
- (iii) Vis : It constituted of many gramas and was probably itself a sub division of the Jana.
- (iv) Jana People : It denoted the whole people but some hold that it was territorial-unit, headed by the king.
- (v) Rashtra (Country) : The head of the rashtra or the state was the king.

**King :** Although there are references to ganas with elected heads, namely Gunpati or Jveshta yet the most prevalent form of government was hereditary monarchy or kingship. King was named Rajan. Apart from the king or rajan we come across the title Samrat also, but its exact significance is yet to be known. However, the king was without any rival. He was the lord



of the people, but he governed with their consent.

**King's Duties :** His principal duty was to protect the tribe, its territory, or to fight against the enemies. He acted as a judge also. He employed spies (spasa) in the discharge of civil and military duties. He performed religious duties too. He maintained a number of priests whose function was to perform the sacred rites and to receive contribution (bali) from the people.

**The Sabha and the Samiti :** King's autocracy was limited by two assemblies Sabha and the Samiti. As to their composition and function, nothing definite can be said. But the accepted view is that samiti was the national assembly of the people while the Sabha was the council of elders. These assemblies worked on democratic principles.

**Justice :** King was the supreme judge. The Panchayats decided the cases in villages. Punishments were very harsh. But the capital punishment was not given to the Brahmans.

**Staff :** King was assisted in his work by his subordinates. Among the foremost was the Purohita (Chaplain). Purohita gave advice to the king, prayed for his success and -praised and celebrated his achievements. He accompanied the king to the battlefield also. Another important officer was Senani or the commander - in - chief, who was the leader of the army. Besides, there were messengers or dutas also.

**Army :** Although not certain yet it seems that the army was divided in subdivisions namely, Sardha, Vrata and Gana. Heads of families (Rulates) went to the battleground under the flag of Varajpti who was the head of the village military organisation.

**Weapons :** The chief weapons were bows, arrows, swords, lances, spears and axes. Sometimes, poisoned arrows were also used but the Aryans never attacked an unarmed or wounded enemy.

#### **1.4.5 Social Life**

Rig Vedic society, in contrast to the Indus society, was rural and not urban. Family and Dwelling : Rig Vedic society was family based, rather the individual oriented, on the patriarchal pattern. The eldest male member of the family called Grihapati was usually affectionate, was its head and exercised full control. All the family members lived in the same house which was most probably built of wood and reeds. Each dwelling had a drawing room, and an apartment for ladies and a fire place.

**Marriage :** It was regarded sacred and indissoluble. Widow remarriage was allowed. Many hymns point to the practice of bridegroom going to the bride's house where he married her and brought her to his own house. Marriage generally occurred at a mature age and women exercised their

choise. Examples of love marriages are also found. People merely practised monogamy. But polygamy was also known though not polyandry. The birth of a son was regarded essential, and their abundance was prayed for, but the daughter was also treated with no less kindness.

**Property :** Father's property was inherited by the sons. Daughter had no share therein. People had the right to possess private property. Private ownership of lands was also recognised.

**Position of Women :** Although formally women were not independent and looked to their male relations for support yet they commanded an honourable position in the society. After marriage "wife was the queen of the house" and participated in all the religious offerings of the husband. They were not imprisoned in the four walls of the house rather they assembled and enjoyed amusements.

#### **1.4.6 Caste System**

**Origin :** It is a controversial issue whether the caste system existed in those days or not, but the white hued Aryans, or Svetnva invaders did distinguish themselves from their dark skinned opponents, who were called dasa, dasya or sudra. Some scholars believe that by the time the Rig Veda, was compiled, atleast the class distinction was well understood. In Rig Veda, a hymn Parusashukta (Rig Veda X. 9.0) assigns divine origin to the classification of castes. According to the hymn, when the gods divided the primeval giant : "The Brahmana was its mouth, Rajanya becomes his arms, the Vaisya became his thighs and the Sudra Sprang from his feet". However, we should not confuse caste with class. From a very early time, Aryans were divided into classes, according to their professions. The noble class which had the ruling power in the tribe was known as Rajanya. Next to the Rajanya were priests who composed hymns and supervised sacrifices. They were known as Brahmins. The common people were known as Vis (Vaisya) and formed the economic backbone of the society. Occupations in the Rig Vedic times had not become hereditary. Thus, Rig Vedic society was classified but casteless.

**Not Rigid :** There existed no rigid restriction on intermarriage and the choice of profession. Persons of Non priestly class were admitted to the profession of priests. The author of hymn says, "I am a poet, my father was a doctor and my mother is a grinder of corn". Rig Vedic age did not know of ceremonial purity or rigidity in social system.

**Dress :** It consisted of three parts, the undergarment (nivi) , a garment (vasa or Paridhana) and the upper garment (adhivasa or atka or drapi). God embroidered garments were common. Clothes of various colours were made of cotton. Wool and deer's skin. Men and women both wear turbans.

**Ornaments :** These were made of gold. Ear rings, necklaces and garlands were in common use. Floral ornaments and garlands, were also in vogue, especially on festive occasions.

**Hair Styles :** Men kept long hair which they oiled and combed. Women wore long locks in plaits. Men grew bearded but shaving was also in fashion. Food : Milk and its products like curd and butter, parched grain, vegetables, fruits etc. constituted their favourite food. Cake was made of rice or barley and was eaten, especially on gatherings and festive occasions. Drinks : Sura was an intoxicating drink which was condemned later on. The use of another drink soma was restricted to religious festivals. It was extracted from a plant which grew on mountain.

**Amusements :** These including chariot-racing, horse racing, hunting, boxing. Dicing, dancing and music. Among these, Chariot racing was most popular. Animals frequently hunted were lions, elephants, wild bears and deers, but birds were also hunted. Dicing was played with stakes. Gambling often led to ruin and slavery. A gambling son used to be rebuked by his father. Both men and women, indulged in dancing to the accompaniment of music. Women particularly loved to display their dance and singing. We find references of musical instruments also.

**Literature and Learning :** The greatest example of the literature of the period are hymns of Rig Veda and especially those addressed to the goddess of Dawn. "Rik Samhita with 1017 hymns is a splendid collection of lyrics which was in full bloom". Learned people were known as rishis. Whether any script existed during those days is a matter of controversy, but mostly it is believed that literature was transmitted orally from generation to generation.

Method of education was simple. The teacher acquired knowledge by the process of meditation which he imparted to his pupils orally in the ashram. He recited the text and the pupils repeated it and this would commit it to memory by constant repetition and collective recitation.

#### **1.4.7 Economic Life**

**Agriculture :** The main occupation of the people was agriculture. Land was cultivated by the plough drawn by oxen by teams of six, eight or twelve. Cultivated land was called Uravra or Kheshta, Manure was also used. Irrigation was obtained from the lakes and canals. In the earliest times, the main crop sown was dhana or yava. Its exact meaning is not known but during the later times by it was meant rice or barley.

**Cattle Breeding :** The cattle grazed on pastures under the herdsman called gopa. Yamuna valley was famous for its cow wealth. Domesticated animals included sheep, goats, asses, dogs, bulls and oxen.

Dogs were used for keeping watch at night, for hunting and for guarding animals. Bulls, Oxen, and Horses were used for agriculture and trade purposes, provided wool, and ewes of Gandhar were famous for it.

**Other Occupation :** Carpenter worked with his tools and made chariots both for war and peace purposes. He also produced fine carved work like the artistic cups. Smith made weapons, implements and ornaments from various metals namely gold and aryas (copper and iron). Art of tonning leather was also known. Leather workers made water cases bow strings and handguards for the protections of archers. There was also the weaver working on his loom. Weaving was generally done by women. Women also did sewing and made of mats or grass or needs.

**Trade :** There were traders in the Rig Vedic age. Main articles of trade according to 'Samhitās' were clothes, conchshells and skins. People carrying wholesale trade were called *pani* and were famous for their niggardliness. Goods were carried through carts (*anas*) drawn by oxen. Mention of *Pothikri* or *Path* -maker proves that there were roads and naturally those must have been for trade purpose also.

**Foreign Trade :** Some of the Rig Vedic passages point to foreign trade through sea. There are references to *Samudra*, ships with hundred oars, and persons being shipwrecked.

**Currency, Barter System and Weights :** Coins are probably unknown but we have some terms like *Nishka* which was a piece of gold and served as means of exchange. Mostly goods were exchanged through barter system. Cows were quoted as the price of an article.

#### 1.4.8 Religious Life

##### Features :

**Nature Worship :** The Religion of Vedic India can be termed in the phrase "From Nature to Nature's God". Religion was simple. Neither there were worship places nor idol or image worship.

**Monotheism :** We learn from many hymns that they had faith in One God (monotheism). Following lines of a hymn illustrate the point :

"They call him Indra, Mitra, Taruna

To what is one, the poets gave many a name. They call it Agni, Yama, Matarivan"

**External God :** They held their belief in one God also, as its evident from following lines of hymn.

"Neither death nor deathlessness excited; Alone that One breathed calmly self supported Other than it was none, not aught about it".

**Sacrifices :** These were held in great esteem and these included milk, grain, ghee fish and juice of the "Soma" plant. Cow was an

object of great religious reverence. Cow was named Aghny or not to be killed and cow slaughter was, therefore, held a great sin as well as crime.

**Predominance of Male God :** Unlike the Indus religion where the Mother Devine predominated, in the Vedic religion, female gods were subordinated. Goddesses like Prithvi, aditi, ushas and sarswati occupied a very junior place in the pantheon.

**Deities :** Broadly speaking, there were three types of gods of nature :

- (i) Heavenly Gods.
- (ii) Atmospheric Gods.
- (iii) Earthly Gods

Heavenly gods were dyaus (shining god of heaven), Varuna, Asvina, Surya, Savitri, Mitra, Pushana (the Nourisher), and Ushas. Atmospheric gods were Indra, Vayu (wind god), Storm Gods, and Pajanya (god of rain). Earthly gods were Prithvi, Agni, Soma, and Saraswati (goddess of learning). Among the above deities, Vasura (God of sky) occupies the place of honour and has been praised in many hymns of the Rig Veda. Next came Indra, the god of thunder, storm and rain. He caused the rain to fall. Also, there were abstract deities like Prajapati (lord creatures), Sardha (faith) and Manju (wrath) etc. Vishnu and Shiva of the later mythology were also known to them.

**Worship :** The highest form of worship was meditation. Hymns were recited in extolling of gods, Priests helped in worshipping. There is a reference to the seven classes of priests who recited hymns and performed different specialized functions.

**Other Beliefs :** The concept of the transmigration of soul was not yet ripe and it was believed that the dead dwell in the realm of yama, the beneficent king of the departed dead were either cremated or buried.

### **Self Check Exercise**

1. Sabha and Samiti of the Rig Vedic Aryans

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### **1.4.9 Summary**

After Harappan civilization, Rig vedic civilization is considered significant in ancient Indian history. It was a rural civilization. The main occupation of the people was agriculture. Barter System was prevalent. Rig Vedic society was family based, rather the individual oriented, on the patriarchal patterns. The women enjoyed good position in the society. They were free to read and write. They had the rite to choose their husbands. Child marriages were missing. In Rig vedic times caste system had not become rigid.

#### **1.4.10 Keywords**

1. Purohita
2. Gunpati
3. Grihapati
4. Varjptti
5. Uravra

#### **1.4.11 Long Questions**

1. Describe the approximate date of the arrival of the Aryans in India. Who were they?
2. Write a brief note on the various theories about the original home of the Aryans ?

#### **1.4.12 Short Questions**

Write Short Notes on:

1. "From Nature to Nature's worship". Discuss the religious life of the Rig Vedic Aryans in light of the above statement.
2. Caste System
3. Economic Life
4. Religious Life

#### **1.4.13 Suggested Readings**

- |                              |   |  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Narang, K.S. & Sethi R.R. | : | A History of Bharat in 1526 A.D. pp. 50-79     |
| 2. Majumdar Raj Chaudhri     | : | Ancient India pp. 42-92                        |
| 3. Ghosh, N.N.               | : | Early History of India, pp. 28-38              |
| 4. Tripathi, R.S.            | : | Ancient India, pp. 26-81                       |
| 5. Mukerjee, R.K.            | : | Ancient India, pp. 48-86                       |
| 6. Smith, V.A.               | : | Oxford History of India pp. 50-70              |
| 7. Majumdar Ray Chaudhri     | : | An Advanced History of India pp. 21-54 & Datta |

**B.A. PART-I (SEMESTER-I)**

**HISTORY—PAPER A**

**HISTORY OF INDIA Upto 1000 A.D.**

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**LESSON NO. 1.5**

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**LATER VEDIC CIVILIZATION**

- 1.5.1 Objectives
- 1.5.2 Introduction
- 1.5.3 Ramayan and Mahabharat
- 1.5.4 Political System
- 1.5.5 Social Life
- 1.5.6 Economic Life
- 1.5.7 Religion
- 1.5.8 Six Systems of Philosophy
- 1.5.9 Literature
- 1.5.10 Summary
- 1.5.11 Keywords
- 1.5.12 Long Questions
- 1.5.13 Short Questions
- 1.5.14 Suggested Readings

**1.5.1 Objectives**

This lesson discloses the sources of Later Aryans. The objective is to give information of changes brought about in political, social, economic and religious life of the Later Aryans.

**1.5.2 Introduction**

**Expansion :** The later Vedic age indicates their expansion from Punjab towards east Kurukshetra which was later known as "firm middle country". (Dhruva Madhvama etc.) and became the centre of the Aryan world. In this period, the Kuru and Panchalas were the leading tribes of the Aryans, Parikshit and Janamejaya were their famous rulers. Under their Kings, the Kuru Panchals attained the zenith of their property and glory. Besides, new states rose in the such as Kosala, Kasi, Videha, Magadha and Anga. Due to the rise of big kingdoms, kings began to aspire to be king of kings. In this way, imperialism took its birth.

The combining of the tribes and wars of expansion led to the formation of large kingdoms which were unknown in the Rig Vedic period. The age produced the bloody sacrifices such as, Vajapeya, the Raj Suva and the Asvamedha.

As the kings extended their sway, their title also changed. Raja was

used for an ordinary king. Adhiraja, Rajadhiraja, Smrat, Ekarat and Virat denoted the various gradation of kings. The literature of the times mentions the names of the kings who became big emperors by their conquests.

Thus, by the end of the later Vedic period, the Aryans had begun to advance towards southern India. The Vindhya unknown to the Rig Veda are mentioned in the later Vedic literature.

### **1.5.3 Ramayan and Mahabharat**

**Their Importance :** The most important event in the traditional history of India was the great war of Mahabharat which marked the termination of one epoch and the beginning of another.

The story of the war centers round the struggle between the Kurus and Pandus which developed into a big war involving many chiefs from all parts of India. Ramayan recounts adventures: of Rama, King of Kosala or Oudh and was written by Balmiki.

The event that the two epics describe seems to be much earlier than the time of their composition. There are additions to the original books and the epics cannot be taken to belong to anyone author.

**Antiquity :** Hopkins suggests that the Mahabharata began about 400 B.C. The date of Ramayana began about 500 B.C. and additions were made to these until as late as 2nd century B.C.

**Historical Significance :** The historical value of the two epics is very great. The story of the Ramayan may be taken as the story of the conflict between the northern kings and those from the South as far as Ceylon. The Mahabharata represents that India that was the one of the Aryans and non

Aryans and the extension of the Aryan civilization. The two epics are valuable records which furnish us with facts regarding the social, religious, and political conditions of the times. The Mahabharata is very important from the political points of view as well. The Mahabharata tells us that during that period there were both monarchies and republics. The Santipadva of Mahabharata calls republic as gana. The gana was ruled by a council of many members. Mahabharata also mentioned about the king, his council of ministers and the assemblies. King's important functions were protection of the laws of the land and the people, especially the Brahmans. He played a major part in the administration of justice in the kingdom.

### **1.5.4 Political System**

**King :** With the increase in the size of the kingdom there was growth in the power and importance of the king. King in the latter Vedic age was no longer a tribal chieftain. He enjoyed great power, but the old assemblies, the Sabha and Samiti still played an important role in the political life of the



people. It is mentioned in Atharva Veda that "concord between the king and assembly was essential for the latter's prosperity". Tyrannical kings were disposed by it.

However, these assemblies did not meet as frequently as they had done in the Rig Vedic times. With the establishment of large states there was little possibility of the frequent meetings of the assemblies which reduced their control over government. King's excessive powers were also checked by his bowing before the Brahmins in the performance of certain rites. Brahmins were in ascendancy and in later literature differences between the king and the Brahmins are found.

**Other Officials :** The administrative machinery in the later Vedic age also became elaborate. The number of the officials increased. The ministers were aided in the discharge of the duties by the king.

The important ministers were the purohita, senani (commander of the army), village headman (gramani). Chamberlain, treasurer, collector of taxes and superintendent of dicing.

### **1.5.5 Social Life**

**Caste System :** The later vedic age witnessed important changes in the society. It was during this period that caste system in Indian society took its roots. Choice of Profession became hereditary and restricted. The work of teaching, learning and performing sacrifices was assigned to the Brahmins. The function of government and ruling was assigned to the Kshatriyas or Rajanyas. The work of trade, agriculture and industrial arts was taken over by the Vaishyas. The service of the upper classes was the work of the Sudras. Thus Indian society became divided into the well known four castes : Kshatriyas, Brahmins, Vaishyas and the Sudras. Kshatriyas nobles acquired greater privileges and became predominant in the society. The vedic rituals and language became much elaborate and difficult. Thus it became difficult for the non priestly classes to perform the functions of the priests. This enabled the Brahmins to close their ranks and deprive the non -Priestly section to get admittance into their caste. Thus Kshatriyas and the Brahmins became quite distinct from the common people. As a natural result, the Vaishyas lost their social importance. The Sudras were also affected by the strict rules of the caste system e.g. marriage with Sudras was discouraged.

However, the number of Sudras increased by the constant addition of new aboriginal in the Aryan society. Besides, we find two important groups outside the four castes namely - Vratyas and Nishadaya. Vratyas were tribal people who could be admitted to "brahmanical community by the performance of some prescribed rites." The Nishadaya were non -Aryan rural

people and were ruled by their own rulers called Sathapati.

**Position of Women :** Another great change that we find in the later Vedic age is position of women. The Status of women had become low. They were now denied the right of Upanayana - a social ceremony of the investiture of thread. All their sacraments except marriage were celebrated without Vedic mantras. Child marriage and Sati system were growing. The education of women was much neglected. We seldom hear of women rishis in the later Vedic period compared to the Vedic age.

### **1.5.6 Economic Life**

**Rise of Cities:** While there were only a few cities in the Rig Vedic period. There is evidence of few towns like Hastinapur, Mithila, Ayodhya etc. which existed in the later Vedic age.

**Agriculture :** Agriculture was still main occupation of the people but a large number of crops were being grown. Landlord class was emerging although it was not liked. The value of animal manure as fertilizer was well understood. Large and heavier ploughs than those of the Rig Vedic times were used. There were now better facilities for irrigation. However mention of hail storms, industry and locusts harming the crops is also found in the texts.

**Industries and Occupations :** There is a great advance in industry in comparison with the Rig Vedic period. Number of professions also increased while the Rig Veda mentions only a few occupation. In the later Vedic period, we find potters, carpenters, jewellers, leathers workers, dyers, brewers, rope -makers and weavers. The smiths had a more extensive knowledge of metals silver, tin, lead and iron.

**Trade and Commerce :** Trade and commerce had progressed. The later Vedic Indians knew of sea and understood navigation. Certain amount of import and export was perhaps carried with Babylon.

**Coins and Weight :** More units of value were used and the cow as transaction unit was gradually going out of fashions as a means of exchange. Nishka a garland of gold or a lump of gold was used as definite weight (300 raits) and Krishanala (one rati) also seem to have been pieces of gold indicating weight. However, there is no direct reference to any currency system. Thus, later Vedic India was on the threshold of momentous economic development which we find in the 5th century B.C.

### **1.5.7 Religion**

The later Vedic age is known for the elaboration of the ritualistic worship. New and costly sacrifices were invented requiring the services of as many as sixteen priests. Much significance was attached to animal sacrifices. The mushroom growth of ritual affected the domestic life of individual because they had to perform many ceremonies. Even the domestic ceremonies

became so complicated that every house hold had to invite a Brahman to perform religious rituals. In the later Vedic age, the older Vedic gods gradually lost their place. New gods like Vishnu and Rudra captured the minds of the people. Rudra was also known as Siva (propitious), Mahadeva (great god) and Pasupati (lord of animate - beings).

**Asceticism (Tapas):** It also begun to effect strongly the religious outlook of the people. With it came the ideas of renunciation of the world and self- mortification. The extreme religious persons began to dwell in forests or outside the villages and towns and exercised austerity. King and prince held the seers etc. in high esteem. Four stages of life (Ashrama) were considered the essentials of an ideal life.

The life span of spiritual man was divided into four stages i.e. Brahmachari, Grihasth, Banprasth, and Sanyas.

The later Vedic age is also known for the development of abstruse religious philosophy. The people began to ponder upon such things as ultimate reality, God, soul, life death, virtue, immorality etc.

#### **1.5.8 Six Systems of Philosophy**

We have already noted that the later Vedic age was known for its sublime religious and intellectual activity. The ideas of monotheism, universal soul, transmigration of soul, Karma and Moksha took birth during this period. These ideas were further developed in "Six Systems of Hindu Philosophy (shad Darsan)". These system are (i) The Sankha school of Kapila (ii) the Yoga system of Patanjali (iii) Nyaya school of Gautama (iv) the Vaisheshika of Kanad (v) the Purva Mimamsa of Jaimini and (vi) the Uttar Mimamsa of Vyasa.

In the Sankha school of Kapila, there is no place for God. According to it the two real things are nature and soul. They are permanent. Kapila also believed in transmigration of soul and the law of Karma. He also believed in moksha. When the soul is finally liberated, it lives apart from the body. He attached no importance to Vedic rites or ceremonies. Patanjali was the founder of the Yoga systems. According to him God is the supreme being and controls soul and matter. Gautama, the founder of the Nyaya school believed in God. Moksha the law of Karma God is above soul and is eternal. He is the creator of the universe. Nyaya means logic. Gautama discussed of what things it was possible to obtain knowledge and what is correct knowledge. Kanad, who founded the Vaisheshika school believed that all material things were made up of innumerable atoms. The atoms are eternal and they were perishable. There is no God. The atoms are not under the will of God. When the atoms combined they assume the form of knowledge that helps in the liberation of soul. The Mimamsa schools believed in the infallibility of the Vedic rites. Jaimini believed that Vedas were eternal.

According to them matter, soul and nature are all his manifestation.

### **1.5.9 Literature**

Literature of the later Aryans can be broadly classified in two categories namely, sruti and samriti. Sruti constitutes those works which are believed to be the revelation of God and includes the following :

**Vedas** : They are four namely Rigved, Samaved, Yajurved and Atharvaved. **Brahmans** : They are treaties pertaining to prayer, sacrificial ceremonies and old legends pertaining to the exploits of the reputed kings.

**Aranyakas** : Contains instructions for hermits and are supplement to the Brahmanas.

**Upnishadas** : This word derives its name from up - in - sad (to sit near some one) i.e; pupils. These contains instructions for the pupils. Their main contents revolve round two concepts. Brahman (The universal soul) and Atman (Absolute or the individual soul).

**Samriti** : Samriti means the tradition of the great ancient sages descending from generation to generation through memory. It includes the following Vedangas (limbs or parts of Vedas). Siksha (phonetics), Kalpa (ritual), Vyakarna (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), chhandas (metrics) and jyotisha (astronomy).

### **1.5.10 Summary**

1000 B.C. to 600 B.C. period is known as later vedic period. During this period the Aryan expansion towards east Kurukshetra which was later known as “firm middle country” and became the centre of the Aryan world. There was revolutionary in religious life. Religious life had become complicated. Influence of Brahmanism was increased in the society. New ministers were appointed and principles were made so that political administration may be administered properly. Excessive literature was created during this period which is also significant from historical point of view. In this period, trade and commerce industry had progressed.

### **1.5.11 Keywords**

1. Ritualistic worship
2. Asceticism
3. Ashrama
4. Moksha
5. Karma

### **1.5.12 Long Questions**

1. Write a brief note on the origin, merits and demerits of caste system.

2. Write a note on Social and Economic life of Rig Vedic Aryans.

### 1.5.13 Short Questions

Write Short note on the following :

- (i) Sabha and Samiti of the Rig Vedic Aryans.
- (ii) Significance of Ramayan and Mahabharata.
- (iii) Six Systems of Hindu Philosophy

### Self-Check Exercises for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> lessons

- Q. 1. What is the traditional view about original home of the Aryans?
- Q. 2. What were the approximate territories, where the early Vedic civilization prospered ? Name the Areas.
- Q. 3. Was the Aryan civilization predominantly urban or rural ?
- Q. 4. Was woman's position better in the early Vedic civilization or in the later Vedic civilization ?
- Q. 5. Was caste system rigid under the early Vedic civilization ? Explain.
- Q. 6. In which civilization did horse make its appearance ?
  - (a) In the Indus civilization.
  - (b) Early Vedic civilization.
- Q. 7. What was the most popular form for the sale and purchase of goods during the Rig Vedic period ?
- Q. 8. When did the landlord class start emerging ?
  - (a) In the Rig Vedic civilization
  - (b) Later Vedic civilization
- Q. 9. How many systems of philosophy marked the Vedic civilization?

### 1.5.14 Suggested Readings

- 1. Narang, K.S. & Sethi R.R. : A History of Bharat in 1526 A.D. pp. 50-79
- 2. Majumdar Raj Chaudhri : Ancient India pp. 42-92
- 3. Ghosh, N.N. : Early History of India, pp. 28-38
- 4. Tripathi, R.S. : Ancient India, pp. 26-81
- 5. Mukerjee, R.K. : Ancient India, pp. 48-86
- 6. Smith, V.A. : Oxford History of India pp. 50-70
- 7. Majumdar Ray Chaudhri : An Advanced History of India pp. 21-54 & Datta

**B.A. PART I (SEMESTER-I)**

**HISTORY—PAPER A**

**HISTORY OF INDIA Upto 1000 A.D.**

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**LESSON NO. 1.6**

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**JAINISM : MAHAVIRA -HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS  
AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIA**

- 1.6.1 Objectives
- 1.6.2 Introduction
- 1.6.3 Causes of Religious Reform Movements
- 1.6.4 Jainism
- 1.6.5 Early Life of Mahavira
- 1.6.6 Doctrines of Jainism
- 1.6.7 Organisation of Jain Church
- 1.6.8 Why Jainism could not have a strong hold over India?
- 1.6.9 Summary
- 1.6.10 Keywords
- 1.6.11 Long Questions
- 1.6.12 Short Questions
- 1.6.13 Suggested Readings

**1.6.1 Objectives**

This lesson will disclose the causes responsible for the rise of new religious movements like Jainism. This will intimate you about the origin and development of Jainism.

**1.6.2 Introduction**

The 6th century B.C. was an age of extraordinary intellectual and spiritual ferment and excitement throughout the world. Confucius in China, Zoroaster in Persia, etc. were promulgating their religious doctrines in this remarkable age. In India, the same century gave birth to two great religious reformers, namely, Mahavira and Buddha.

**1.6.3 Causes of Religious Reform Movements :**

The two religious reform movements, Jainism and Buddhism were revolts against the orthodox Brahmanical religions. Many abuses had crept into Brahmanism. An enlightened reaction set in against the many corrupt and superstitious practices prevailing in those times. People began to turn against worthless ceremonies, meaningless rituals and animal sacrifices. The prominent thinkers of the age travelled extensively in the country and with a view to condemning Brahmanism and undermine respect attached to Sanskrit Scriptures and language.

The profound doctrine of transmigration of soul, the journey of soul through a series of births until it was finally emancipated took a deep hold on the mind of the people. Simultaneously, all the material world, body and life came to be regarded as something evil and opposed to the pious. This gave rise to the suppression of impulses, self mortification and pure life. In social life, people began to hate caste rules, the ascendancy of Brahmans, and inferior treatment towards other classes. Apart from it, Vedic religion had become very costly and thinkers of the age attacked the extravagance of Brahmanism. The great sacrifices performed by kings increased the tax - burden of the people. Besides, Brahmin's attempt at declaring the Vedas as infallible was causing such resentment. These unintelligible conditions instigated the religious revolt. However, it is notable in the present context that Buddhism and Jainism originated in Maghda which was not a strong hold of Brahmanism. First came Jainism. The founders of the two great religions were Kashatriyas.

#### **1.6.4 Jainism**

Hence, complication and Ritualism in Hinduism, costly ceremonies, animal sacrifice, faith in magic and charms; predominance of the Brahmins; sinful life of priesthood : difficult language (Sanskrit), caste system; freedom of thought and finally the efforts of the intellectuals and reformers were the most significant factor, which did rise to religious reform movements during this period.

It is generally believed that Jainism was founded by 23 tirthankaras or prophets. Among them, first was Rishabhdev and the Last Parsava. Parsava was a prince but had renounced the world. After 84 days of deep meditation, he attained the highest knowledge. He lived for 100 years and died on the summit of a hill. Parsava's teaching was based on the following four prohibitions - (i) not to injure life; (ii) not to tell lie; (iii) not to steal and (iv) not to possess property. After Parsava the next important figure in Jainism was Mahavira who came 250 years after Parsava. Mahavira added two more vows, chastity and not to eat anything at night. While Parsava allowed clothing to his monks, Mahavira did not. This ultimately resulted in the bifurcation of Jainism, namely into Svetambars and Digambara. Svetambars put on white clothes and Digambara remained naked. Now we turn to the early Career of Mahavira who is regarded the founder of the Jainism in 6th century B.C.

#### **1.6.5 Early life of Mahavira**

His original name was Vardhamana and he was born in about 599 B.C. (According to some 568 or 540 B.C.) at Kundalgrama, in the family of the King Siddhartha. His mother Trisala was the sister of Lichhavi ruler Chetaka. Mahavir received education in all the branches of learning. He was married to princess Yasoda and had a daughter who became the wife of Jamali, a

disciple of Mahavir who later on revolted against him.

In his thirtieth year after the death of his parents and with permission of his elder brother and authorities of the Kingdom, Mahavira renounced the world.

**Penance and Preaching :** For 12 years, Mahavira practised extreme mortification led a very hard life, left wearing clothes and suffered terrible physical pains. He was also busy in meditation not for caring meals, water and bathing. At the age of 42. Mahavira attained enlightenment and became Jina (conqueror). Mahavira, Kavatin (possessing the highest knowledge). He obtained final deliverance from pleasure and pain. Thus, he became a Jina (conqueror) or Nirgantha (free from letters).

Followers of Mahavira were known as Nirgantha or Jainas. Mahavira preached his religion for 30 years and moved from place to place visiting Champa, Vaisali, Rajagriha, Nalanda, Mithila, Sarasvati, Pawa etc. Many kings assisted Mahavira in these missions. He frequently met the Kings of Maghada, Bimbisar and Ajatshatru, with whom he was related. The Lichhavi Chief and the kings of Champa, Kausambi and Avanti were also considerably influenced by his teachings.

Mahavira died at the age of 72 at Pawa near Rajagriha in 468 B.C (According to some in 564 B.C.)

### **1.6.6 Doctrines of Jainism**

Mahavira preached that salvation may be attained by freeing the soul from earthly bondage. Because according to him, spirit and matter were opposed to each other, universe was inhabited by innumerable souls but they were in the grip of impure matter of Karma. The contact with matter and Karmas made the soul dark and impure. According to him, there is a soul even in the smallest particle, and man has two fold nature i.e. earthly and spiritual, The earthly nature is perishable but the spiritual nature is eternal; but there are ways to free the soul from bondage of Karma or matter. This can be done by means of right faith, right knowledge and right action. These are the 3 jewels (Tri Ratna) of Jainism. No injury to the animal life and inanimate thing is an important doctrine of Jainism. Salvation can also be obtained by extreme Tapas or modification of the body. The worship of the 24 Tirathankaras is another predominant of the five great vows pertaining of eating, sleeping open body, performing of religious duties like asking his followers to live under fed. Mahavira did not believe Vedas and the existence of God or Yajnas.

**Aim :** The only aim of Jainism was to attain salvation from the cycle of birth and death blissful abode the acquiring Kaivalya or Kevalajanana. With highest knowledge without this one was bound to commit sins and when sins



had been committed he was bound to take birth again and face problems of the world,

**Scriptures :** The teachings of jains originally were contained in fourteen Purvas. Besides, jains have religious Upangas and Sutras.

### **Impact**

Unlike Buddhism, Jainism took deep roots in India, but Jains never attempted to spread their faith through missionaries either within India or abroad. During the Mauryan rule, Jainism lost the royal patronage which it had enjoyed in the beginning. However, later on Jainism spread in western and southern India. Ujjain and Mathura became the great centres of Jainism. It is note - worthy to state here that while Buddhism has almost disappeared from India. Jainism still flourishes in several parts of India.

Other important centers of Jainism in India have been Malwa, Gujrat, Rajputana and some district in South. It is interesting to know that Jains are a rich prosperous community. They have also made important contribution towards fine arts. Similarly, their temples are fine example of architecture. They build many dharamshalas, schools, colleges, and hospitals for both men and beasts, Thus, this religion influenced the political framework of our country to a great extent, for instance, it inculcated the spirit of peace; given more historical information and condemned the martial spirit. Jainism also influenced the social and religious life. Hinduism was pacified; caste system was condemned; works of public utility were undertaken. Indian arts was enriched.

### **1.6.7 Organisation of Jain Church**

Lord Mahavira organized an order of monks. He put his disciples under the charge of Gandharas i.e. heads of groups, who were responsible for the proper instruction and discipline of the disciples. Besides, there was also an order for nuns. The monks and nuns led a life of great hardship and performed severe austerities so much, so that some starved themselves to death. It may also be noted that Mahavira guided the religion for 30 years.

Jainism and Mahavira : The history of the Jaina church from its beginning to the 3rd Century B.C. is known to us from Jaina Kalpsutra written by Bhdrabahu. The first Jain Council was held at Patliputra in about 300 B.C. The destructive result of it was that Jainism came to be divided into two sections - Digambaras and the Svetambaras. However, we do not know the exact time and cause of split. It is said that Jain saint Bhadurbahu migrated with a large number of disciples to south When a sever famine broke out in Magdha. The Jains, who were left says the Jain literature, gave up nudity and began to put on white clothes. After some years of return

to Magdha, Bhadrabahu rejected these changes and his followers came to be known as Digambaras (sky dressed).

#### **1.6.8 Why Jainism could not have a strong hold over India ?**

Jainism could not remain popular after a long time. Its first reason was that Jain did not make vigorous efforts to spread it. They remained peaceful and did not compel to embrace their religion. It preached extreme self-penance which did not appeal the masses. Even their main principle of Ahinsa was too far and was not accepted by the people. Jainism could not get sufficient state help. Though the kings like Bimbsara and Ajatshatru helped it in many ways but after them no other king of Maurya dynasty extended any help in the spread of this religion. This religion therefore, could not spread far and wide.

#### **1.6.9 Summary**

Jainism became popular on account of the orthodoxy of Brahmnism. Many abuses were crepted in Brahmanism. Mahavira gives his instruction in the public language. Effects were made to remove social evils. And arosed social love and brotherhood. Though Jainism could not remain popular after a long time yet deciples of Jainism are found in some parts of India.

#### **1.6.10 Keywords**

1. Ahinsa
2. Tirthankeras
3. Kaivalya

#### **1.6.11 Long Questions**

1. Give an account of teachings of Mahavira.
2. What were the causes of religious unrest in India which gave rise to new religious movements such as Buddhism and Jainism?

#### **1.6.12 Short Question**

Write Short Notes on:

1. Life of Mahavira
2. Digambaras and Svetambaras
3. Three jewels (Tri Ratna)

#### **1.6.13 Suggested Readings**

1. Narang K.S. & Sethi, R.R.: A History of Bharat to 1526 A.D. pp. 89-119.
2. Majumdar, R.C. : Ancient India, pp. 160-70
3. Ghosh, N.N. : Early History of India, pp. 42-67

4. Tripathi, R.S. : Ancient India, pp. 97 -104
5. Mukerjee, R.K. : Ancient India, pp. 112-20
6. Smith V.A. : The Oxford History of India, pp. 176-817.
7. Majumdar Ray, Chaudhri : An Advanced History of India, pp.& Data 85-91

**Note** : For Self-Check Exercise See Back Page of the Next Chapter.

**B.A. PART I (SEMESTER-I)**

**HISTORY—PAPER A**

**HISTORY OF INDIA Upto 1000 A.D.**

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**LESSON NO. 1.7**

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**GAUTAMA BUDDHA : THE FOUNDER OF BUDDHISM  
TEACHINGS AND IMPACT**

- 1.7.1 Objectives
- 1.7.2 Introduction
- 1.7.3 Early Life
- 1.7.4 Enlightenment
- 1.7.5 Teachings of Lord Buddha
- 1.7.6 Spread of Buddhism
- 1.7.7 Decline of Buddhism
- 1.7.8 General Councils of Buddhists
- 1.7.9 Comparison and Contrast to Jainism and Brahmainism
- 1.7.10 Mahayanism
- 1.7.11 Summary
- 1.7.12 Keywords
- 1.7.13 Long Questions
- 1.7.14 Short Questions
- 1.7.15 Suggested Readings

**1.7.1 Objectives**

In this lesson we will provide knowledge about the development of Buddhism and its teachings. We will also obtain knowledge about the sects of this religion. How the development of art took place and affected various aspects of life. We will also take notice of causes responsible for decline of Buddhism.

**1.7.2 Introduction**

As the time passed on, Hindu religion was inflicted by caste system, superstitions and artificial convictions. People were naturally expecting such a religious order which would be simpleton and facilitating particularly devoid of malpractices mentioned above. Gautam Buddha initiated a new religious order in such circumstances which came to be known as Buddhism. This religious order received prominence not only in India but also in abroad on account of its simplicity and equality.

**1.7.3 Early Life**

Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism was a prince by birth. He was born in 566 B.C. to Mahamaya. She was going to the capital of Sakyas where Suddhodana (Buddha's father) ruled. The place where Gautama was

born can now be identified as Lumbini, where Ashok set up a pillar with an inscription in 250 B.C.

Seven days after his birth, his mother died and he was brought up by his aunt Gomati (also step - mother). Many miracles are associated with his birth. One such being the appearance of a spring at the time of his birth, in whose water he was bathed and then walked seven steps. He grew up in luxury and was married at 16 with Yashodhara (also known as Gopan or Bimba). But the pleasures of married life and the comforts of the palace did not bind Gautama to the miseries of life which he himself described as "birth, old age, sickness, death, sorrow, and impurity". A son, named Rahula (also called obstruction) was born of Gautama. On his son's birth, Gautama said that a bond was born to him, which would check his search for truth. Buddha felt that by giving to the Sakyas a heir to carry on the succession of the ruling line. He had fulfilled his chief duty as a house holder and that he could claim the right and privilege of following the traditional Aryan way of becoming in an ascetic to seek the path to Moksha (salvation).

**Great Renunciation :** Thereafter, leaving behind the baby and his wife sleeping, Siddhartha left the palace on his favourite horse 'Kanthaka'. He also took along his servant Channa. He became an ascetic, cut off his hair and started wearing yellow robes.

Buddha's leaving his family and becoming an ascetic is known as Buddhist literature as the Great Renunciation - "a black -haired youth in the prime of life going forth from home to a homeless life".

#### **1.7.4 Enlightenment**

After renouncing the world, Buddha first went to Rasgriha, the capital of Magdha. His teachers at Rajagriha were Alara and Udraka. Being dissatisfied with his teachers, Buddha went to the forest of Uruvela where he set on his task of achieving salvation through self -mortification. He performed extreme austerities and reduced himself to a skeleton. But soon he realized that torture of the body was fruitless and could not lead him nearer his goals. So he began taking some "solid food, rice and sour milk". Now Buddha sat with full determination under a pipal tree to get enlightenment through deep meditation and achieved it ultimately. At the site of "The Bodhi Tree" now, there is a temple, named the "Mahabodhi Temple" (in Gaya). Gautama now became "Buddha" the enlightened. Lord Buddha now decided to re-enter social life and give his message of truth to the people.

#### **Preaching Tours**

After attaining enlightenment. Lord Buddha gave his first sermon at Sarnath near Benaras. It was here that Buddha pointed out that sorrow was the principal feature of human life on earth. Salvation could be attained by following the eightfold path.

From Sarnath, Lord Buddha went to Rajagriha. He also visited Gaya, Uruvela, Nalanda and Patliputra. Thereafter, Buddha went to the Vaisali and also visited the state of Mallas. He also visited Kausambhi, Varanja, Champa, Apana and Anga. Up the last movement of his life Buddha continued travelling and preaching.

As the result of the above travels. Rajagariha, Kapilavastu, Sarasvati and Vaisali became the great centers of Buddhism. He made last tour to Kosala where he delivered the largest number of discourses.

While doing this, Lord Buddha died at the age of 80 at Kushinagara in the district of Gorakhpur.

#### **1.7.5 Teachings of Lord Buddha**

Four Truths : The Buddhist philosophy is rational and its bases are the following four great truths :

- (i) Sorrow or pain.
- (ii) Cause of sorrow or pain.
- (iii) The remedy of sorrow or pain.
- (iv) True path to conquer sorrow or pain.

Thus, the Buddhists believes that human life is full of sorrows i.e. old age, disease and death. The cause of sorrow is birth. Birth is caused by desire for earthly things and material endowments which can never be satisfied. Desire leads man from birth to rebirth. If a man destroys desire, the very cause of sorrow would be removed i.e. birth. Thus, it lays within the power of man to get rid of rebirth by following the noble eightfold path of Ashtmarga.

**Ashtmarga :** It enjoyed upon every person desirous of attaining salvation to cultivate the following virtues :

(1) right faith; (2) right thought; (3) right action; (4) right speech; (5) right means of livelihood; (6) right end endeavours; (7) right remembrance and; (8) right meditation.

**Belief in Karma and Attaining Salvation :** Lord Buddha believed in the law of Karma as also evident from above. A man reaped the consequences of his actions done during the previous life. While the aim of man was to attain nirvana, it could be achieved through good actions. So, Lord Buddha always emphasized individual efforts for self-improvement. Thus, self - exertion and moral life were essential for attaining salvation.

Lord Buddha laid stress on living a life predominantly featured by austerity, non-violence, respect for animal life, truthfulness, respect for elders, service to humanity etc. Like Mahavira, he asked his disciples to refrain from sensual life and intoxicants.

**Miscellaneous Teachings and Principles :** Lord Buddha did not believe in the divinity of Vedas. He also condemned animal sacrifices. He rejected the caste system and the superiority of the Brahmins. Regarding the existence of God, he neither acknowledged nor denied it. Unlike the Brahmanical religion, he did not consider Sanskrit a sacred language.

### **Organisation of the Buddhist Church of Sangha**

Lord Buddha organized a church of monastic order known as Sangha. He laid down rule for the monks. Membership was open to all persons, male and female above 18 years of age. There was no caste restriction, but the butchers and bad characters were not admitted to the order of monks and nuns. If a person was desirous to become a member of the Sangha, he had to attach himself to a monk who gave him some preliminary training. Thereafter, the monk presented the candidate before an assembly of monks, made the proposal of admitting him to the Sangha.

Then permission being given the candidate read the words Buddha Sharanm. Gachchami (I take refuge in Buddha). Sangham Snarnam Gachchami (I take refuge in Sangha). Thenceforth, he began to lead a life of poverty, chastity, devotion and austerity. Local administration of the orders was in the hands of local monks; and ultimate authority rested with General Council which was convened wherever any difference arose.

The Buddhists lived the life of house-holds and made contribution to the maintenance of the sangha.

### **1.7.6 Spread of Buddhism**

There were various causes for the rapid progress of Buddhism in India and abroad in early stages which can be summed up as below :

**Magnetic Personality of Buddha :** The attractive personality and the simple teachings of Lord Buddha made a deep impression upon the minds of people. He did not enter into controversial-speculations about God and soul, felt relieved from the priest - ridden and caste - ridden Brahmanism.

**Simple Teachings :** Buddha's teachings were in a simple and popular language which was understood by the priests, princes, and the poor alike. By condemning worthless and costly ceremonies, he made his life of the community happier and healthier. Religion became thoroughly personal and reflected itself in the day to day life.

**Buddhist Sangha :** Buddhist Sangha also made appeal to the people. Buddhist monks were a devoted band of preachers and led a detached life from all worldly lures. They held nothing more dear to their hearts than the welfare of their church and service of the people. They were intelligent, able-bodied, possessed moral and spiritual stamina, and were always wandering to preach their mission. It was due to the above causes that the

people and princes of such powerful kingdoms as Maghada, Kosala, Kausambi, and the republic of Sakyas, Vajjis and Mallas, etc. accepted Buddhism.

**Royal-Patronage :** The Patronage of the powerful Kings, like Ashoka and Kanishka made Buddhism an international religion. Ashoka and Kanishka not only spread Buddhism in India but during their time Buddhism, which hitherto had been only a local sect. spread in foreign countries as well.

#### **1.7.7 Decline of Buddhism**

Later on, Buddhism began to decline due to numerous factors, more importance for them may be summarised as follows :

**Revival of Hinduism :** When large number of Hindus began to embrace Buddhism, Brahmans realized their mistakes and made reforms in Hinduism. This revival of Hinduism gave a set-back to Buddhism.

**Division among the Buddhist monks :** For some time, The Buddhist monks worked together but then they were divided into sections i.e. Hinayanism and Mahayanism. Their mutual differences led to the decline of Buddhism.

**Corruption in the Buddhist Sangha :** In its early stages, Buddhist monks led a very pious and simple life. But with the passage of time they degenerated. They began to lead a life of luxury. They began to worship the images of Buddhists. Consequently, people began to hate them and subsequently lost faith in Buddhism.

**Loss of Royal Patronage :** After the death of Kanishkas, Buddhism could not get royal patronage. Rather, the Gupta rulers were great patrons of Hinduism. They also discouraged Ahimsa. Samudra Gupta even performed ashvamedha yajna. Apart from it, with the rise of Rajputs, Buddhism lost completely royal patronage because they were warriors and had to faith in Ahimsa or Non-violence.

**Muslims and Hun invasions :** Muslims and Hun invasions also created disastrous effect on Buddhism. They not only reduce the Buddhist temple to the ground but also slaughtered Buddhist monks in the thousands.

#### **1.7.8 General Councils of Buddhists**

To collect and classify the teachings of Lord Buddha and decide other religious, doctrines, four Buddhist General councils were held. The first General Council was held a few weeks after the demise of Buddha near Rajagriha. Five hundred monks representing local Sanghas attended the assembly. The division of the teachings of Buddha into two Pitakas, Vinaya and Dhamma dealing respectively with the discipline of monks and doctrines was made. Besides, lectures of Buddha were collected, classified



and adopted. The second General Council was held in about 387 B.C. at Vaisali, 100 years after the death of Buddha. The reason was that the monks of Vaisali had adopted certain practices which were against the rules of Vinaya, They refused to change their views. To settle the dispute, the General Council was convened but the attempt at bringing about unity failed. Thus, there came a great division in Buddhism. Those who stuck to the old Vinaya Pitaka were called Sthaviras while the changers were known as Mahasanghika.

The third General Council was held at Patliputra during the reign of Ashoka. The Council made a new classification of Buddha's teachings. It added 3rd Pitaka known as Abhidhamma Pitaka which contained the philosophical explanations of the previous two Pitaks. Now came the saying and literature of Buddha called Tripitakas. It also settled all disputes regarding religious literature and restored complete unity. The fourth General Council was held in Kashmir during the time of Kanishkas. The two great leaders at the conference were Vasumitra and Asvaghosha. The Council also prepared their commentaries on the 3 pitakas.

### **1.7.9 Comparison and Contrast to Jainism and Brahmanism**

All the outset, it is noteworthy that Buddhism and Jainism represents attempts by the Kshatriyas princes of reforming Brahmanism which had been corrupted. Both Buddhism and Jainism denied the authority of Brahmans (priests), Brahmanic ceremonies, caste system and the infallibility of the Vedas. Both Gautama Buddha and Mahavira drew their inspiration from the teachings of Upanishadas. Again both Jainism and Buddhism seem to be offshoots of Hinduism as they retained its fundamental principles. The aim of Buddhism and Jainism was the same as that of Brahmanism - Moksha or freedom from birth and rebirth. Both have accepted the Brahmanical doctrines of Karma and the transmigration of soul. Both laid much emphasis on the law of Karma which is above all the creatures whether men or Gods. All must obey that law. Both Jainism and Buddhism condemned the idea of performing Vedic rite of chanting the Vedic hymns for attaining salvation. Salvation could come only by meditating over god and gods who were themselves subject to the law of karma. Both Gautama Buddha and Mahavira advocated the virtue of leading a peaceful, pure, holy and moral life. Both Buddhism and Jainism organised their respective orders, but Brahmanism had no such church or order to spread its faith.

The main difference between Jainism and Buddhism was that while the performer believed that a man obtained salvation by performing extreme self-torture. Buddhism did not enjoin upon its followers to indulge in painful self-mortification. Lord Buddha asked his followers to observe a middle

path. Another significant difference between the two is that while Jainism does not believe in the existence of God, Buddhism maintains silence over this issue.

#### **1.7.10 Mahayanism**

In the times of Kanishka, a change in the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism appeared. This is known as transformation of Buddhism. Thenceforth, Buddhism was permanently divided into two wings Mahayanism and Hinyanism. Mahayanism known as the great vehicle differed in many essential points from old Buddhism or Hinyanism which is known as the little vehicle. The main cause of the rise of Mahayanism was the contact between Buddhism and the foreigners who occupied north-western India.

It is important to note in this context that north-western India had been over run and occupied by the Greeks, Parthians and the Sakas. These foreigners brought with them new customs and beliefs. The most important of them was the worship of deities and making images of gods. Therefore, the Buddhist also began to make images of Buddha. Another reason was that Hindu doctrine of Bhakti was becoming popular and influenced Buddhism. According to the Bhakti cult, a follower of the creed should worship the object of his devotion with single mindedness, emotion, sentiment and love. Another factor was that since the time of Ashoka the practice of building monasteries and stupas over the relics of Buddha had become common. Gradually the Buddhist monks began to think that an image was a better reminder of the master than his relics or teachings.

#### **1.7.11 Summary**

To summarize this we can say that Buddhism became popular due to its simplicity. The Patronage of the powerful Kings, like Ashoka and Kanishka made Buddhism an international religion. Ashoka and Kanishka not only spread Buddhism in India but during their time Buddhism, which hitherto had been only a local sect. spread in foreign countries as well. Buddhism began to decline due to numerous factors.

#### **1.7.11 Keywords**

1. Karma
2. Upnishadas
3. Monks
4. Tripitakas

#### **1.7.12 Long Questions**

1. (a) Discuss in short the early career of Lord Buddha.
- (b) Bring out the points of difference between Hinyanism and

Mahayanism.

2. (a) Compare and contrast Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanical Hinduism.
- (b) Describe the causes which led to rise of religious reform movements in the 6th century B.C.
3. Discuss the contribution of Buddhism towards the cultural advance of India.

### 1.7.13 Short Questions

Write Short Notes on:

1. Ashtmarga
2. Sanghas
3. Hinayanism
4. Mahayanism

### 1.7.14 Suggested Readings

1. Narang K.S. & Sethi, R.R. : A History of Bharat to 1526 A.D. pp. 89-119.
2. Majumdar, R.C. : Ancient India, pp. 160-70
3. Ghosh, N.N. : Early History of India, pp. 42-67
4. Tripathi, R.S. : Ancient India, pp. 97 -104
5. Mukerjee, R.K. : Ancient India, pp. 112-20
6. Smith V.A. : The Oxford History of India, pp. 176-817.
7. Majumdar Ray, Chaudhri : An Advanced History of India, pp. & Data 85-91

### Self-Check Exercise for Lessons 1.6 and 1.7

- Q.1. Which Century was the age of religious reform movements in the ancient world ?
- Q.2. When was Mahavira born?
- Q. 3. Did Mahavira believe in the divinity of the Vedas?
- Q. 4. Did Mahavira believe in the existence of God ?
- Q. 5. When was the first Jain Council held ?
- Q. 6. When was the first Gautama Buddha born?
- Q. 7. The tree under which Buddha received enlightenment, what is it known as ?
- Q.8. What is the cause of sorrow, according to Buddhism ?

- Q. 9. What is the name of path prescribed by Lord Buddha for attaining salvation ?
- Q. 10. How many General Councils were convened by the Buddhists ?

**Key to Answers**

1. 6th century B.C.
2. In 599 B.C. but according to some in 568 or 540 B.C.
3. No.
4. No.
5. In about 300 B.C. 6. In 566 B.C.
7. Bodhi Tree
8. Birth and desire
9. Asht Marg
10. Four